



Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Equality Awareness in Northern Ireland: General Public

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Introduction

1. Introduction

In March 2016, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland ('the Commission or Equality Commission') commenced work to conduct a survey of awareness of and attitudes to, equality amongst the general public in Northern Ireland. The fieldwork was conducted in June 2016 by Social Market Research and covered three core areas:

- Attitudes to equality groups;
- Perceptions, and support for equality issues;
- Awareness of equality and anti-discrimination issues, rights and protections; and
- Confidence in the Commission.

This report presents the findings of this survey.

1.1. *Role of the Equality Commission*

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is an independent public body established under the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Commission has the responsibility for overseeing, reviewing and enforcing equality laws in regards to religious belief, political opinion, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation and age. The statutes make discrimination unlawful in respect to employment and the provision of goods, facilities and services, with certain exceptions with regard to age.

In addition, the Commission has roles and responsibilities, in relation to the duties placed on public bodies under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998)¹ and the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006². The Commission also has joint responsibilities (with the Northern Ireland Human rights Commission) as the independent mechanism in Northern Ireland of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

¹ Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) places a statutory duty on public bodies to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity amongst people of different age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, political opinion, race, religious belief, those with and without disability and those with and without dependants in policy and practice. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) also places a statutory duty on public bodies to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations amongst people of different religious belief, political opinion and race.

² The Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 places a duty on public bodies to have due regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people, and encourage their participation in public life.

1.2. *Background to the survey*

The current survey builds on previous Equality Awareness surveys in 2005, 2008 and 2011. These surveys established baseline data on awareness of, and attitudes towards key equality issues, with the intention that this would be used in subsequent years to monitor change over time. Furthermore, the 2016 survey included similar questions to the Eurobarometer surveys to gain comparability on particular equality issues within the United Kingdom and other European regions.

1.3. *Context of the Survey*

Fieldwork for this survey was undertaken during the period July 2016 to August 2016. The findings of this survey must be taken within the context of the socio-economic and political circumstances of this time. This period was associated with relative political stability in Northern Ireland, with the Northern Ireland Assembly sitting following an Assembly election on 5 May 2016. This election returned the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Fein as the two main power sharing parties, and for the first time, the small parties decided not to nominate Members to take up Executive positions. This period was also associated with the aftermath of the United Kingdom's decision to exit the European Union. On 23rd June 2016, a referendum was held on whether the United Kingdom (UK) should leave or remain in the European Union (EU), from which a UK-wide majority (51.9%) voted to leave. However, in Northern Ireland, 55.8% of those who voted in the referendum voted to remain within the EU. Furthermore, the survey was held in between the May 2015 County Court and October 2016 Court of Appeal judgements concerning the high profile case of *Lee v Ashers Baking Co Ltd*, which the Commission supported.

1.4. *Survey Aim*

The overall aim of the survey was:

'to provide robust data on the general public's attitudes to key equality issues and groups; their awareness of equality and anti-discrimination issues and protections; and their awareness of, and confidence in, the Equality Commission.'

1.5. Research Objectives

The project's objectives covered three core areas:

- *Attitudes:*
To equality and anti-discrimination; to equality groups; and views on selected equality themes.
- *Awareness:*
Of equality and anti-discrimination laws; and of the Commission and its remit.
- *Confidence:*
In the Commission as independent and fair; its ability to fulfil its duties; and, key strengths/weakness of the Commission.

An additional area asked respondents:

- *About You:*
Contact with the Commission; any personal experience of discrimination; and personal key characteristics (demographic and equality ground and wider).

1.6. Methodology

The fieldwork for the survey was conducted on a face-to-face³ basis by Social Market Research (SMR) with an achieved sample of 1,143 adults aged 16 years and over. Interviews were conducted in respondents' homes using Computer Assisted Personal interviewing (CAPI). The survey used a stratified random sample to ensure the sample was fully representative of the Northern Ireland adult population (aged 16 years and over).

1.6.1. Sample size and selection (n=1,143)

Defining a sample size is always a trade-off between the level of precision of sample estimates and cost. For the purposes of this survey +/- 3.0% was considered an acceptable level of sampling error⁴. The survey was conducted among a sample of 1,143 adults, which, in turn, allowed sufficient disaggregation of the survey data by, for example, age, gender and religion.

³ In 2005, survey respondents were interviewed by telephone, rather than on a face-to-face basis, which may account for some of the observed difference in results.

⁴ Sampling error refers to the amount of potential inaccuracy in estimating the results of a survey when a sample is used to infer patterns in the total population.

The sample was stratified by Local Government District (LGD) on a proportionate basis using Probability Proportionate to Size (PPS). This facilitated analysis by the three main areas⁵ on Northern Ireland, namely: East of Northern Ireland, West of Northern Ireland and Belfast. Within each LGD a number of electoral wards were randomly selected to represent the LGD. Individuals were then selected within each electoral ward based on quotas for age, sex, social class, religion and area of residence.

1.6.2. Quotas and Confidence Intervals

Table 1.1 sets out the quotas applied to the sample, which were based on 2012 (age and sex) Northern Ireland Census of the Population mid-year estimates and 2011 (religion) Northern Ireland Census of the Population. Table 1.1 also presents an overview of the representativeness of the sample in terms of the key variables of age, sex, social class and religion.

Table 1.1 also presents confidence intervals at the 95% confidence level. The use of confidence intervals is best illustrated by means of an example from the survey. The sample estimated that the proportion of males in the Northern Ireland population to be 50%. The margin of error at the 95% confidence level is +/- 2.0% (Table 1.1). In other words, we can be 95% confident that the true proportion of males in the Northern Ireland population (16+years) is within the range 47.0% to 52.8%.

⁵ Based on NUTS 3 categorisation of Northern Ireland: as used by NISRA

Table 1.1: Quotas and Confidence Intervals for Key Variables

| | | Quota | % p (Sample) | 95% Confidence Intervals | |
|--|-------------------|-------|-----------------|--------------------------|------|
| Age | 16-29 | 24 | 26 | 21.6 | 30.2 |
| | 30-49 | 35 | 35 | 31.1 | 38.7 |
| | 50-64 | 22 | 22 | 17.3 | 26.3 |
| | 65+ | 19 | 17 | 12.6 | 22.2 |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| Sex | Male | 48 | 50 | 47.0 | 52.8 |
| | Female | 52 | 50 | 47.1 | 52.9 |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| Social Class | ABC1 | 47 | 47 | 43.8 | 50.0 |
| | C2DE | 53 | 53 | 50.4 | 55.8 |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| Religion⁶ | Catholic | 45 | 43 | 39.9 | 46.9 |
| | Protestant | 48 | 45 | 41.9 | 48.7 |
| | Other/None | 7 | 11 | 5.8 | 16.8 |
| <hr/> Source: Age and Sex Estimates are based on Northern Ireland Mid-Year Population Estimates, aged 16+ years (2012); Social Class is based on 2011 NI Census of Population (Approximate Social Grade) for those aged 16+years and Religion is based on 2011 NI Census of Population for those aged 16+ years | | | | | |

1.6.3. Booster Sample

In an effort to increase representation of minority groups, the overall sample sought to include booster samples of respondents from minority ethnic backgrounds (n=52), migrant workers (n=40) and respondents defining their sexuality as either lesbian, gay or bisexual (n=51).

1.7. ***Profile of the sample***

Table 1.2 presents an overview of the sample profile by each of the key equality groupings⁷. A copy of the full survey questionnaire can be found in the accompanying Technical Report⁸.

⁶ Based on the response to a question asking respondents which religion they were brought up in and excluding refusals

⁷ Excluding refusals / don't know or unknown responses. For full profile see Table A1.1 in the accompanying ECNI (2018) Equality Awareness in Northern Ireland: General Public: Technical Report: Equality Awareness Survey 2016. ECNI: Belfast. (Technical Report)

⁸ ECNI (2018) Equality Awareness in Northern Ireland: General Public: Technical Report: Equality Awareness Survey 2016. ECNI: Belfast.

Table 1.2: Profile of the sample (n=1,143)⁹

| Key Variables | | % |
|--|--|-------|
| Age | 16-29 years | 25.9% |
| | 30-44 years | 28.5% |
| | 45-64 years | 28.2% |
| | 65+ years | 17.4% |
| Gender | Male | 49.9% |
| | Female | 50.0% |
| | Refused | 0.1% |
| Do you identify as Trans? | Yes | 0.1% |
| | No | 99.2% |
| | Refused | 0.7% |
| Marital Status | Single | 31.5% |
| | Married / cohabiting / civil partnership | 54.9% |
| | Widowed / separated / divorced | 12.6% |
| | Refused | 1.0% |
| Limiting disability¹⁰ | Yes, Limited (A little or a lot) | 14.3% |
| | No | 85.1% |
| | Refused | 0.5% |
| Religion | Catholic | 37.0% |
| | Protestant and Other Christian | 39.1% |
| | Other/None | 12.5% |
| | Don't Know | 0.2% |
| | Refused | 11.2% |
| Community Background¹¹ | Catholic | 38.4% |
| | Protestant | 40.1% |
| | Non-determined | 21.5% |
| Ethnicity | White | 94.0% |
| | Other | 5.8% |
| | Refused | 0.3% |

⁹ Due to rounding or multiple response questions, row and column percentages within the tables and charts may not always sum to 100. For full profile see Table A1.1 in the Technical Report

¹⁰ Are your day-to-day activities limited due to a disability?

¹¹ Religion / religious denomination brought up in. Non-determined are those who are of another or no religious background (10%), those who don't know (0.3%) and those who refused to answer (11.2%)

Table 1.2 (continued): Profile of the sample (n=1,143)¹²

| Key Variables | | % |
|---|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Country of Birth | Northern Ireland | 83.1% |
| | Great Britain and Ireland | 5.9% |
| | Other | 10.4% |
| | Refused | 0.6% |
| Highest educational qualification | Third level | 19.2% |
| | Post-primary | 52.8% |
| | No Qualifications | 23.8% |
| | Refused | 4.2% |
| Employment Status | Economically Active ¹³ | 62.9% |
| | Economically Inactive ¹⁴ | 36.5% |
| | Refused | 0.6% |
| Social Grade¹⁵ | ABC1 | 46.9% |
| | C2DE | 53.1% |
| Dependent children under 18 years | Yes | 32.0% |
| | No | 67.6% |
| | Refused | 0.3% |
| Caring Responsibilities other than childcare | Yes | 5.4% |
| | No | 94.1% |
| | Refused | 0.5% |
| Urban/Rural status¹⁶ | Urban | 58.1% |
| | Rural | 32.5% |
| | Unknown | 9.4% |
| Political Affiliation | Nationalist | 15.7% |
| | Unionist | 26.7% |
| | Other | 5.4% |
| | Refused | 52.4% |

¹² Due to rounding or multiple response questions, row and column percentages within the tables and charts may not always sum to 100. For full profile see Table A1.1 in the Technical Report

¹³ Employed full-time or part-time, self-employed and/or unemployed and actively seeking work

¹⁴ Retired, full-time student, on government training scheme, not working and not actively seeking work

¹⁵ Derived from Occupation or HOH

¹⁶ Derived from NISRA postcode – locations were unknown due to incomplete postcodes, postcodes not found or postcodes not categorised as urban/rural.

Table 1.2 (continued): Profile of the sample (n=1,143)¹⁷

| Key Variables | | % |
|---|--|-------|
| Sexual Orientation | Same sex / Both sexes | 7.1% |
| | Different Sex | 79.9% |
| | Not Sure | 0.3% |
| | Refused | 12.8% |
| Household Income¹⁸ | Less than £15K | 15.0% |
| | £15K-£25,999K | 11.1% |
| | £26K+ | 9.4% |
| | Don't Know | 16.0% |
| | Refused | 48.6% |
| Area of Northern Ireland | Belfast | 19.4% |
| | East of Bann | 42.5% |
| | West of Bann | 38.1% |
| Do you live in an area where all / most people are...? | The same community background as you, and your family | 33.0% |
| | Of a different community background as you, and your family | 8.7% |
| | From mixed community backgrounds (i.e. it is hard to tell which community background is the most common) | 49.8% |
| | Don't Know | 4.8% |
| | Refused | 3.8% |

1.8. Notes on socio-demographic analysis variables

The survey sought to identify differences, not only across the sample as a whole but also between different subgroups. The accompanying Technical Report¹⁹ provides a breakdown of findings across these subgroups. This subgroup analysis has been used, in some instances, to illustrate key findings identified within this report. In order to identify differences between subgroups, a number of derived variables were created.

¹⁷ Due to rounding or multiple response questions, row and column percentages within the tables and charts may not always sum to 100. For full profile see Table A1.1 in the Technical Report

¹⁸ Total income of household from all sources including benefits and tax credits and before tax and National Insurance.

¹⁹ See ECNI (2018) Equality Awareness in Northern Ireland: General Public: Technical Report: Equality Awareness Survey 2016. ECNI: Belfast.

Highest educational qualification was divided into three categories: no formal educational qualifications, post-primary (up to and including A-level and equivalent) and third level (degree level or higher). **Social grade** was categorised into two groups: ABC1 (higher) and C2DE (lower)²⁰. **Household income** was derived from total income of respondent's household and was re-categorised into lower income (less than £15k per annum); middle income (£15,000-£25,999 per annum); and higher incomes (greater than or equal to £26k per annum).

Religion consisted of three categories: Roman Catholic; Protestant and Other Christian; and, Other / None. **Community background** was re-categorised into Roman Catholic and Protestant²¹. **Political affiliation** was re-categorised into Nationalist; Unionist; and, Other. **Marital status** was re-categorised into three categories: Single; Married/ Co-habiting / Civil Partnership; and, Widowed /Separated /Divorced. **Ethnicity** was re-categorised into White and Other, as the sample size did not allow for disaggregation of ethnicity at a lower level. **Country of Birth** was re-categorised into Northern Ireland; Great Britain and Ireland; and Other, as the sample size did not allow for disaggregation of Country of Birth at a lower level.

Employment status was categorised into Economically Active²², and Economically inactive²³, while the **Limiting Disability** variable was re-categorised as Yes, limited (a little or a lot), and No and is based on the 2011 census definition of 'limiting long-term illness'²⁴.

Further, the **Urban / Rural status** category was derived from the postcodes of survey respondents using the urban / rural classification in NISRA's 2015 Central Postcode Directory²⁵. Finally **Sexual Orientation** was re-categorised into two categories, namely, those attracted to people of a Different Sex (heterosexual persons) and those attracted to people of the Same sex / Both sexes (lesbian, gay, bisexual persons)²⁶. Only significant demographic variables are reported in the survey.

²⁰ These categories are based on Market Research definitions for specific groupings

²¹ Community background was derived from two questions which mirror those used in the Northern Ireland census questions (see the survey questionnaire in the Technical Report).

²² The Economically active category meets Labour Force Survey definitions.

²³ The Economically Inactive category meets Labour Force Survey definitions.

²⁴ The Census 2011 defines limiting long-term illness as 'any day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability (including problems which are due to ageing) which has lasted or is expected to last, at least 12 months'.

²⁵ For more information see: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/support/geography/central-postcode-directory>

²⁶ Refused and questioning / not sure removed. See Table A1.1 in the Technical Report.

1.9. Statistical significance

Differences between subgroups reported in the text are tested as being significant at the 95% confidence interval or greater. Where no differences between sub-groups are reported, the reader may assume that no significant differences were found.

Please note that while reporting is at the 95% confidence level, as indicated, tables in the accompanying Technical Report may also indicate where findings meet a higher confidence interval, for example:

- * Statistically significant at or greater than the 95% confidence interval;
- ** Statistically significant at or greater than the 99% confidence interval; and,
- *** Statistically significant at or greater than the 99.9% confidence interval.

1.10. Notes on tables

The refused category was treated as missing data in the analysis, and therefore this category is not reported. Note that base totals may change in tables due to this missing data. Due to rounding or multiple response questions, row and column percentages within the tables and charts may not always sum to 100. It should be noted that dash marks [-] are used in some tables to indicate that the figure is less than 1% or where there is no comparable data. In some circumstances, the “don’t know” category was removed for the purpose of analysis of differences between sub-groups and this is indicated in the relevant tables.

This report is accompanied by the Technical Report²⁷, which provides detailed tables.

²⁷ ECNI (2018) Equality Awareness in Northern Ireland: General Public: Technical Report: Equality Awareness Survey 2016. ECNI: Belfast.

2

**Social Attitudes
and Perceptions of
Equality**

2. Social Attitudes and Perceptions of Equality

Summary

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions on their attitudes towards specific equality groups. In particular, their:

- attitudes toward different equality groups;
- attitudes towards specific groups in different situations including, social distance and leadership scenarios;
- attitudes to the acceptability of prejudice; and,
- perceptions of discrimination (unfair treatment) against particular equality groups.

Key Findings

- In 2016, **attitudes toward different equality groups** were overwhelmingly positive.
- The likelihood of negative attitudes towards different equality groups has decreased from the survey findings of 2008 and 2011. The stand out reductions in negative attitudes were those towards Travellers, Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people, and Trans people.
- However, and despite the reductions in the likelihood of negative attitudes, the five equality groups most likely to be subject to negative attitudes were those associated with minority ethnic and / or newcomer status: Travellers (19%); Roma (18%) and minority ethnic groups (10%); migrant workers (11%); and, asylum seekers and refugees (15%).
- To explore **attitudes toward specific groups in social distance scenarios**, respondents were asked whether they would personally mind or not mind specific equality groups being: a work colleague, a neighbour, and married to a close relative. The likelihood of negative attitudes towards all the equality groups, and for all three social distance scenarios, decreased markedly between 2011 and 2016.
- All equality groups experienced increased negative attitudes towards them as the social distance to them decreased, from work colleague, to neighbour, to being married to a close relative.
- In 2016, the most negative attitudes were towards Travellers in each of the three social distance scenarios: 25% of respondents would mind having a Traveller as a work colleague, 33% would mind having

a Traveller as a neighbour and 33% would mind having a Traveller married to a close relative.

- Negative attitudes were also displayed towards those of minority ethnic and / or newcomer status in each of the three situations: Roma people (23% to 27% to 29%), migrant workers (16% to 19% to 20%), and members of minority ethnic groups (16% to 18% to 20%).
- Examination of **attitudes to specific groups in leadership scenarios** revealed that respondents were more ‘comfortable’ than ‘uncomfortable’ with a member of each of the specified groups being in the highest elected position in Northern Ireland. However, respondents were most uncomfortable having a Traveller (mean score = 6.4), a Roma person (6.5), a Trans person (7.2), a member of a minority ethnic group (7.4), and a person aged under 25 years (7.4) as First Minister of Northern Ireland.
- When asked about their **attitudes toward prejudice**, two-thirds (66%) of respondents thought there were no circumstances in which they thought prejudice was “acceptable”. A small minority of respondents (7%) indicated that there were certain circumstances in which they felt prejudice was “acceptable”.
- To understand **perceptions of unfair treatment against particular equality groups**, respondents were asked which groups are treated unfairly in Northern Ireland. The majority of respondents (50%) were of the opinion that no groups were treated unfairly compared to other groups in Northern Ireland. However, the group mostly likely to be perceived as being treated unfairly was lesbian, gay or bisexual people (17%), followed by disabled people (10%) and people over 70 years (9%).
- Perceptions of unfair treatment for all equality groups have decreased since 2011, with the proportion of people who feel no groups are treated unfairly increasing from 17% to 50%.

2.1. Attitudes towards different equality groups

Respondents to the survey were asked how positive or negative they felt towards fifteen different equality groups in Northern Ireland (Table 2.1). For the most part, attitudes were positive, with the majority of respondents displaying either positive or neutral attitudes towards each of the fifteen equality groups.

Table 2.1²⁸:

In general, how positive or negative, do you feel towards each of the following groups in Northern Ireland?

| | Negative (%) | | | Neither Negative or Positive (%) | | | Positive (%) | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|------|------|----------------------------------|------|------|--------------|------|------|
| | 2008 | 2011 | 2016 | 2008 | 2011 | 2016 | 2008 | 2011 | 2016 |
| Travellers | 28% | 30% | 19% | 26% | 30% | 15% | 46% | 40% | 66% |
| Roma | - | - | 18% | | | 15% | | | 68% |
| Asylum seekers and refugees | - | - | 15% | | | 15% | | | 71% |
| Migrant workers ²⁹ | - | - | 11% | - | - | 12% | - | - | 77% |
| Minority Ethnic Groups ³⁰ | - | 13% | 10% | - | 22% | 14% | - | 66% | 77% |
| Trans people | - | 22% | 9% | - | 30% | 13% | - | 48% | 78% |
| Lesbian, gay or bisexual people | 21% | 15% | 6% | 22% | 28% | 11% | 57% | 57% | 83% |
| People of a different religion to you | 7% | 7% | 3% | 20% | 23% | 11% | 73% | 70% | 86% |
| People under 25 ³¹ | - | 5% | 2% | - | 18% | 7% | - | 77% | 92% |
| People over 70 | 4% | 4% | 1% | 13% | 15% | 6% | 82% | 81% | 93% |
| Disabled people | 4% | 6% | 1% | 14% | 18% | 6% | 83% | 75% | 93% |
| People with caring responsibilities | - | - | 1% | - | - | 5% | - | - | 94% |
| Pregnant women | - | - | 0% | - | - | 7% | - | - | 93% |
| Women | 5% | 1% | 0% | 10% | 11% | 6% | 85% | 88% | 94% |
| Men | 4% | 2% | 0% | 13% | 12% | 5% | 83% | 87% | 94% |

²⁸ Due to rounding or multiple response questions, row and column percentages within the tables and charts may not always sum to 100.

²⁹ In 2008 and 2011, this question referred to Eastern European migrant workers rather than the broader category of migrant workers used in 2016.

³⁰ In 2011, this question referred to Black and minority ethnic groups rather than minority ethnic groups used in 2016. Caution should be used in interpretation of results for minority ethnic groups due to the change in wording of this category between 2008, 2011 and 2016.

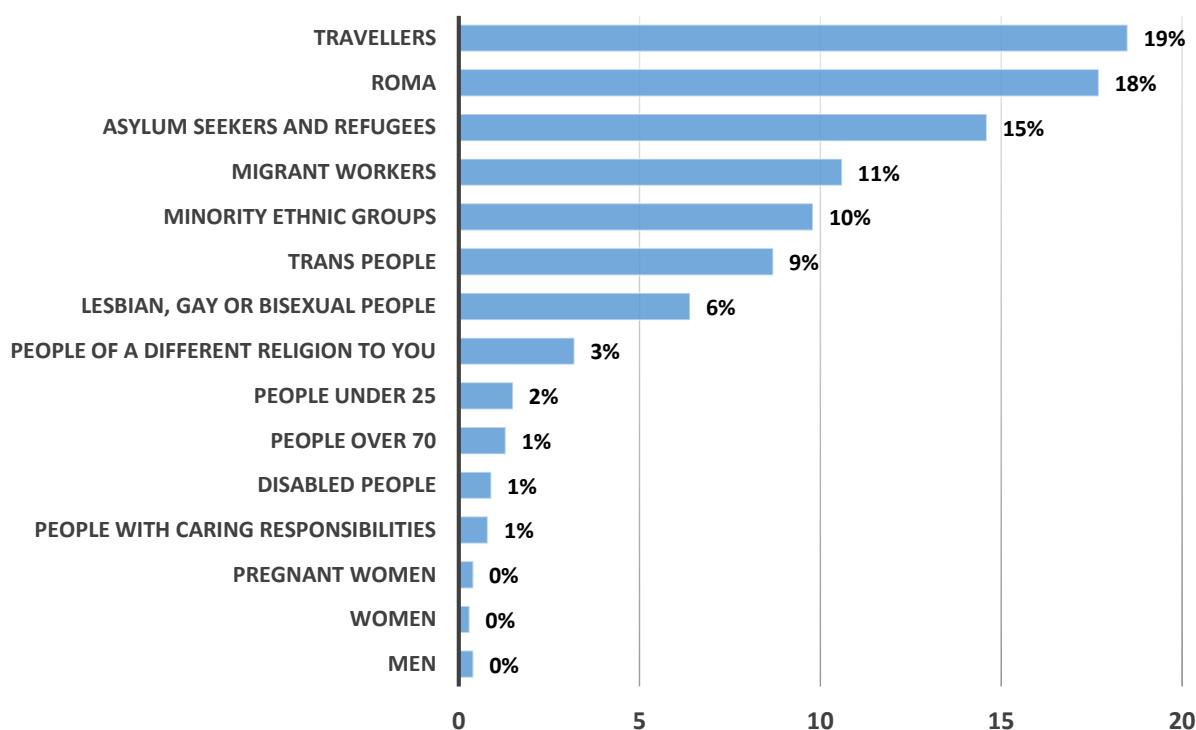
³¹ 'People under 30' were asked in 2008 – responses were 7% negative; 15% neutral; and 79% positive.

However, the survey identified a minority of people who expressed negative social attitudes towards the various equality groups, the level of which depended on the group being considered. Overall, negative attitudes were most likely to be expressed toward Travellers and Roma with nearly a fifth of people (19% and 18% respectively) holding a negative opinion of these groups (see Chart 2.1).

Asylum seekers and refugees, who appeared for the first time in the 2016 survey, were also viewed negatively by a small minority of respondents, as were migrant workers and minority ethnic groups at 15%, 11% and 10% respectively.

Chart 2.1:

Proportion of each of fifteen equality groups who are viewed negatively by the general public in Northern Ireland?³²



³² All percentages are rounded to one decimal place. Pregnant women, women and men were viewed somewhat or very negatively by 0.3%, 0.4% and 0.4% of respondents respectively. See Table A2.2 in the Technical Report.

Nine per cent of respondents held negative views towards Trans³³ people, with only 6% of respondents holding negative views toward lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

2.1.1. Comparisons with previous EQAS surveys

Compared to 2008 and 2011³⁴, the proportion of respondents in 2016 who expressed negative views toward many of the specified equality groups has decreased (see Chart 2.2; Table 2.1), while those expressing positive views have increased overall (see Table 2.1).

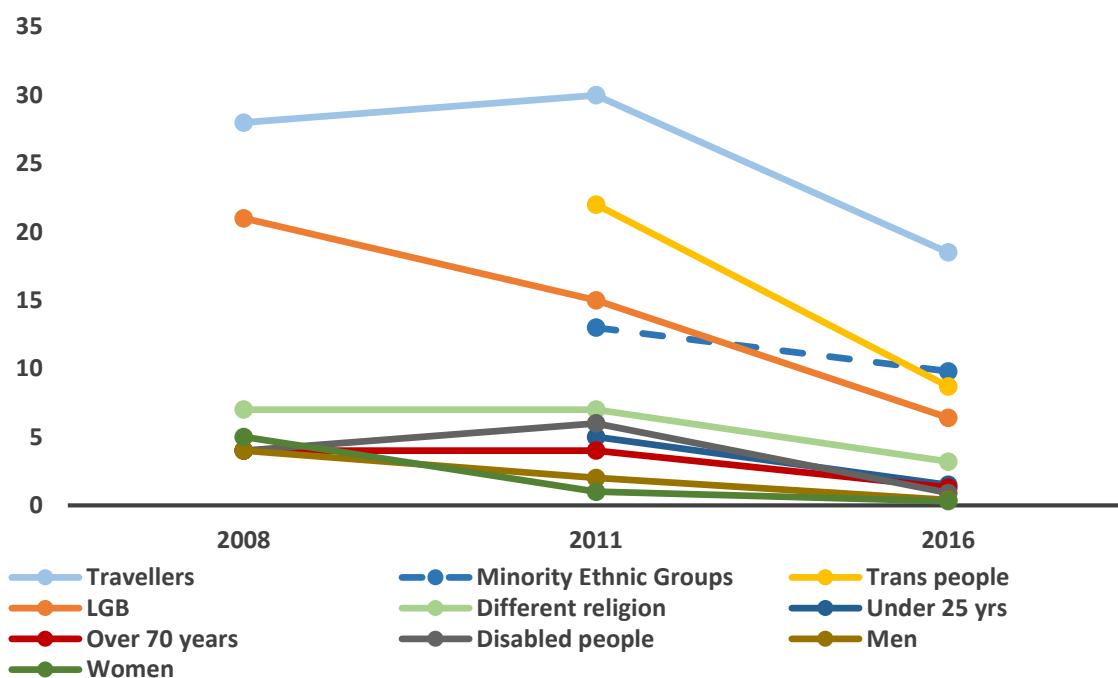
Similar to the 2011 survey, Travellers attracted the greatest amount of negative feelings; however, the proportion of respondents who expressed negative views toward this group has decreased from 28% in 2008 to 19% in 2016 (see Chart 2.2).

³³ The term ‘Trans’ is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differ(s) from the sex assigned to them at birth.

³⁴ No comparison question is available for 2005.

Chart 2.2:

Proportion of equality groups in 2016 who are viewed negatively by the general public in Northern Ireland, compared to 2008 and 2011?³⁵



Lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people received the second highest proportion of negative views in 2008, while, in 2011, Trans people received the second highest proportion of negative views (see Table 2.1). However, the proportion of respondents expressing negative views towards lesbian, gay and bisexual people has fallen from 21% in 2008 to 6% in 2016 (see Chart 2.2), moving this group from the second to the seventh most negatively viewed group (see Table 2.1). Similarly, negative views toward Trans people have fallen from 22% in 2011 to 9% in 2016 (see Chart 2.1), moving this group from second to sixth most negatively viewed group (see Table 2.2).

³⁵ Some groups in Table 2.1 (Roma, Asylum seekers and refugees, people with caring responsibilities and pregnant women) are new to the 2016 survey, and therefore, cannot be compared to 2011 and 2008. In addition, the migrant workers category used in the 2016 survey, cannot be compared to the Eastern European migrants category used in the 2008 and 2011 survey. These groups are not depicted in this chart. In addition, trend lines for minority ethnic groups are depicted with hashed lines to reflect the need for caution in interpretation of these results due to the change in wording of these categories between 2008, 2011 and 2016.

Between 2008 and 2016, the proportion of respondents expressing negative attitudes has decreased overall, towards all other equality groups³⁶ (see Chart 2.2).

2.2. Attitudes towards equality groups in social distance scenarios

Another measure of prejudicial attitudes is that of social distance, which explores how positively or negatively respondents react to varying levels of closeness and intimacy with members of a particular equality group³⁷. A series of ‘social distance’ questions were asked to assess public attitudes towards ten specified equality groups. The scenarios explored how comfortable people felt with varying degrees of closeness to a member of a ‘different’ group. Respondents were asked to indicate their opinion on whether they ‘would mind’ or ‘would not mind’ having a member of each group as a work colleague, a neighbour or if one of the group members were to marry a close relative. The ten groups were as follows:

- a person of a different religion;
- a person with a learning disability;
- a Traveller;
- a person who experiences mental ill-health;
- a lesbian, gay or bisexual people;
- a person with a physical disability;
- a Transgender person;
- a migrant worker;
- a member of a minority ethnic group; and
- a Roma person.

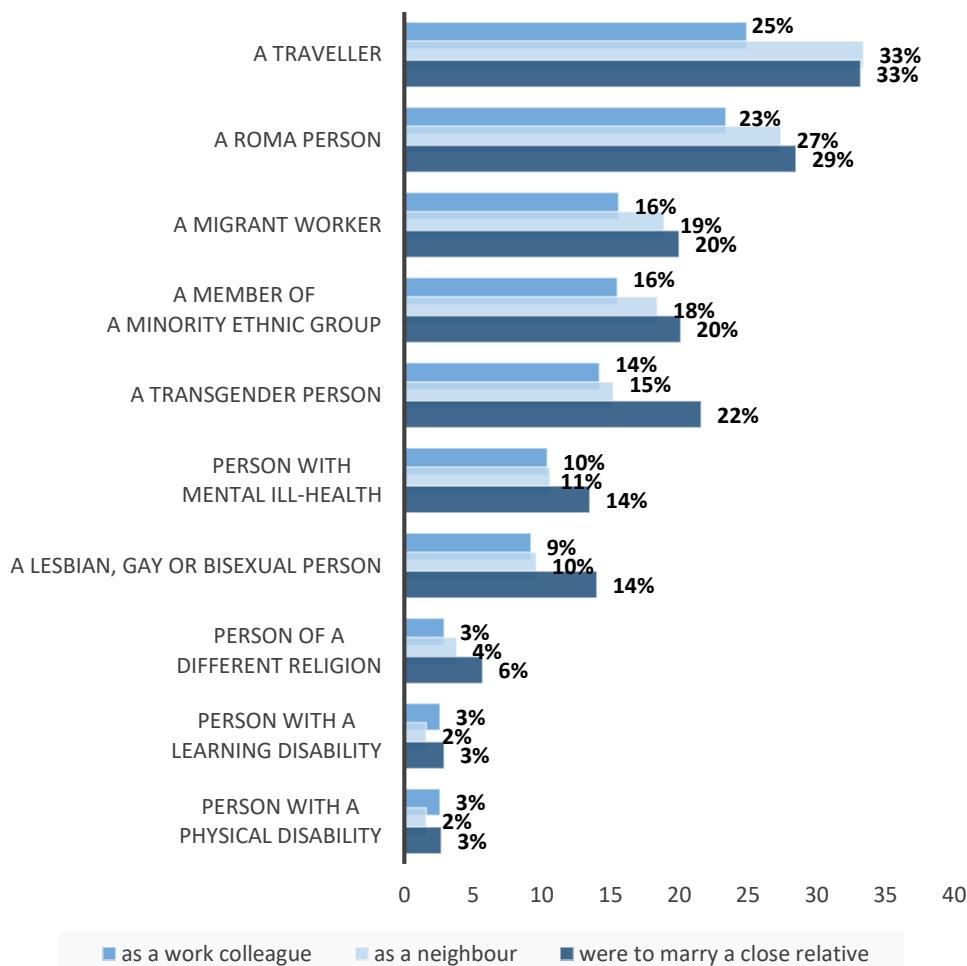
³⁶ All those equality groups for which data from 2008 and/or 2011 exists. Caution should be used in interpretation of results for minority ethnic groups due to the change in wording of these categories between 2008, 2011 and 2016.

³⁷ See Abrams, D (2010) Processes of prejudice: Theory, evidence and intervention. Manchester: Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Chart 2.3. presents the overall patterns of social distance for each of the ten groups among those respondents who had an opinion³⁸. Overall, attitudes were positive towards all of the equality groups across all three scenarios. However, a notable minority of respondents expressed negative attitudes towards various equality groups, in particular towards Travellers, Roma, migrant workers, people from minority ethnic groups and Transgender people.

Chart 2.3:

Proportion of people who ‘would mind’ a person from the following groups as a work colleague, neighbour or a close relative?



³⁸ Don’t knows are excluded from the analysis. Revised values for sample size excluding ‘Don’t knows’ are: A person of a different religion (n=1118, work colleague; n=1114, neighbour; n=1105, in-law); A person with a learning disability (n=1117, work colleague; n=1128, neighbour; n=1111, in-law); A Traveller (n=1068, work colleague; n=1056, neighbour; n=1048, in-law); A person who experiences mental ill-health (n=1039, work colleague; n=1031, neighbour; n=1004, in-law); A lesbian, gay or bisexual person (n=1096, work colleague; n=1100, neighbour; n=1061, in-law); A person with a physical disability (n=1117, work colleague; n=1130, neighbour; n=1103, in-law); A Transgender person (n=1032, work colleague; n=1040, neighbour; n=982, in-law); A migrant worker (n=1071, work colleague; n=1061, neighbour; n=1040, in-law); minority ethnic group (n=1079, work colleague; n=1067, neighbour; n=1043, in-law); A Roma (n=1026, work colleague; n=1011, neighbour; n=995, in-law).

The chart reveals that Travellers were the most negatively perceived group across all three scenarios, followed by Roma people (Chart 2.3). In terms of the three types of disability considered, mental ill health evoked the greatest proportion of negative responses (Chart 2.3). Of all ten groups, persons with a physical or learning disability and people of a different religion were least likely to be viewed negatively (Chart 2.3). With the exception of physical and learning disability, the closer the social distance to a person from a particular equality group (e.g. an in-law is socially closer than a neighbour or work colleague), the greater the proportion of negative responses observed.

Of all ten groups, the greatest proportion of negative attitudes across all three scenarios were directed toward Travellers. A third of respondents (33%) said they would mind if a close relative were to marry a Traveller or if a Traveller was a neighbour, while a quarter (25%) would mind having a Traveller as a work colleague. Similarly, 29% of respondents said they would mind if a close relative were to marry a Roma person, over a quarter (26%) would mind having a Roma person as a neighbour while 23% would mind having a Roma person as a work colleague (Chart 2.3).

Migrant workers and people from minority ethnic groups were also associated with negative responses from a minority of respondents (Chart 2.3). A fifth (20%) of respondents said they would mind if a migrant worker or a member of a minority ethnic group married a close relative; while, nearly a fifth said they would mind having a migrant worker (19%) or a member of a minority ethnic group (18%) as a neighbour. In addition, 16% of people surveyed said they would mind working with a migrant worker or a member of a minority ethnic group (Chart 2.3).

Similarly, negative attitudes were observed toward Transgender people. Over a fifth (22%) of respondents said they would mind if a Transgender person married a close relative while, 15% said they would mind having a transgender person as a neighbour. A further 14% of respondents said they would mind having a transgender person as a work colleague (Chart 2.3).

A minority of people held negative attitudes toward lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Fourteen percent of respondents said they would mind if a lesbian, gay and bisexual person was in a relationship with a close relative, while 10% would mind a lesbian, gay and bisexual people as a

neighbour. A further 9% of respondents would mind a lesbian, gay or bisexual people as a work colleague (Chart 2.3).

Those surveyed held different attitudes toward people with disabilities depending on the nature of the disability. Respondents were least likely to hold negative attitudes towards people with a physical or learning disability compared with all other equality groups (Chart 2.3). However, a greater proportion of people surveyed held negative attitudes towards people with mental ill health across the three scenarios compared to learning disability and physical disability (Chart 2.3). Fourteen per cent of respondents said they would mind if a person with mental ill health married a close relative while 11% would mind a person with mental ill health as a neighbour. Moreover, 10% of people surveyed would mind having a person with mental ill health as a work colleague.

Finally, attitudes towards people of a different religion were mostly positive. Only 6% respondents said they would mind if a close relative were to marry a person of a different religion, while 4% would mind a person of a different religion as a neighbour. In addition, just 3% would mind having a person of a different religion as a work colleague.

2.2.1. Comparisons with previous Equality Awareness (EQAS) surveys

No comparative information was available for attitudes to Roma and minority ethnic groups in the three social scenarios as these questions are new and were not asked in previous surveys. In addition, no comparisons are available for attitudes to migrant workers, as the wording of this category has changed from “Eastern European migrant workers” in 2008³⁹ and 2011⁴⁰. Comparative data for some equality groups is not available for 2005 (e.g. physical, learning and mental ill health disability) or is only available for 2011 (Transgender people).

In 2016, the proportion of people surveyed who held negative attitudes toward equality groups across all three scenarios, had decreased since 2008 and 2011(see Chart 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6).

As a work colleague

Between 2005 and 2011, the proportion of respondents who held negative attitudes towards having a member of a specific equality group as a work colleague had increased overall. However, between 2011 and 2016 there has been a rapid decline in negative attitudes. The greatest decrease observed was for Transgender people, where the proportion of

³⁹ ECNI (2012) Do You Mean Me? Equality Awareness Survey 2011. ECNI: Belfast.

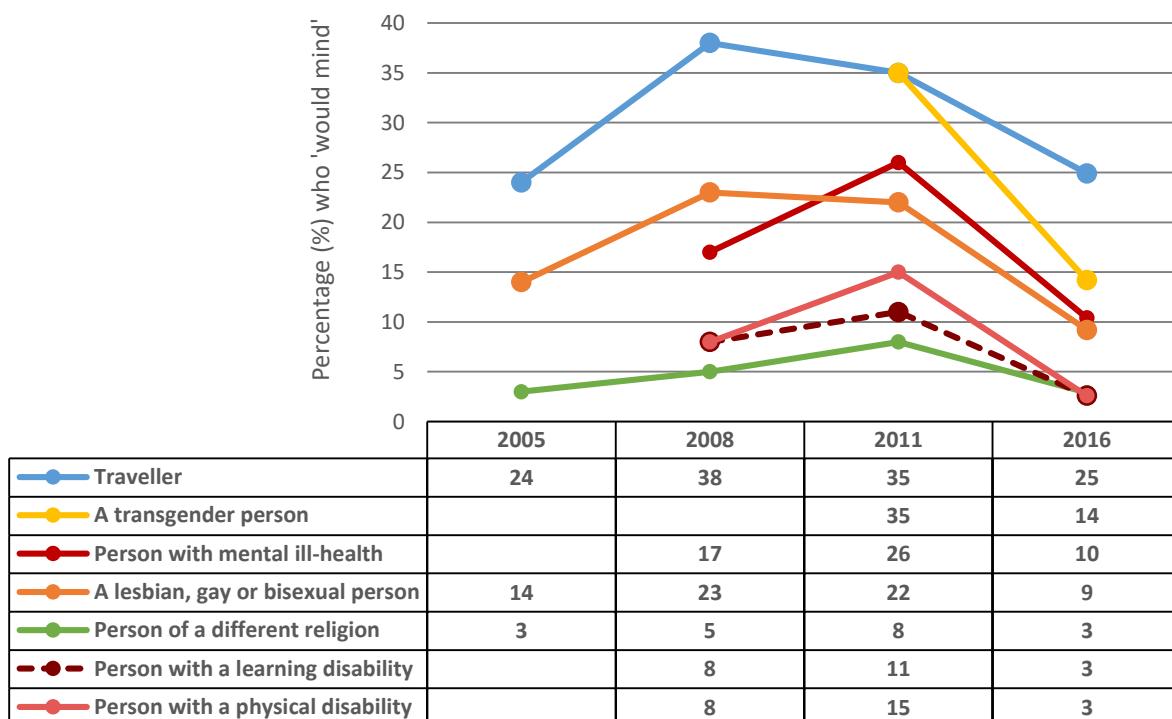
⁴⁰ ECNI (2009) Equality Awareness Survey 2008. ECNI: Belfast.

respondents who held negative attitudes towards this group fell by 21 percentage points from 35% in 2011 (see Chart 2.4).

Similar large decreases in negative attitudes were also observed toward people with mental ill health, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, Travellers and people with a physical disability in the workplace (see Chart 2.4). In 2016, negative attitudes toward having a person with mental ill health in the workplace had decreased by 16 percentage points from a peak of 26% in 2011; while negative attitudes toward having a lesbian, gay or bisexual person as a work colleague had decreased by 14 percentage points from a peak of 23% in 2008 (see Chart 2.4). Similarly, the proportion of people who would mind a person with a physical disability as a work colleague has decreased by 12 percentage points from a peak of 15% in 2011.

While negative attitudes were most likely to be directed at Travellers than any other group, the proportion of people surveyed who would mind a Traveller as a work colleague had fallen by 13 percentage points from a peak of 38% in 2008 to levels similar to that observed in 2005 (see Chart 2.4).

Chart 2.4:
Proportion (%) of people who said they “would mind” having the following equality groups as a work colleague, 2005-2016.



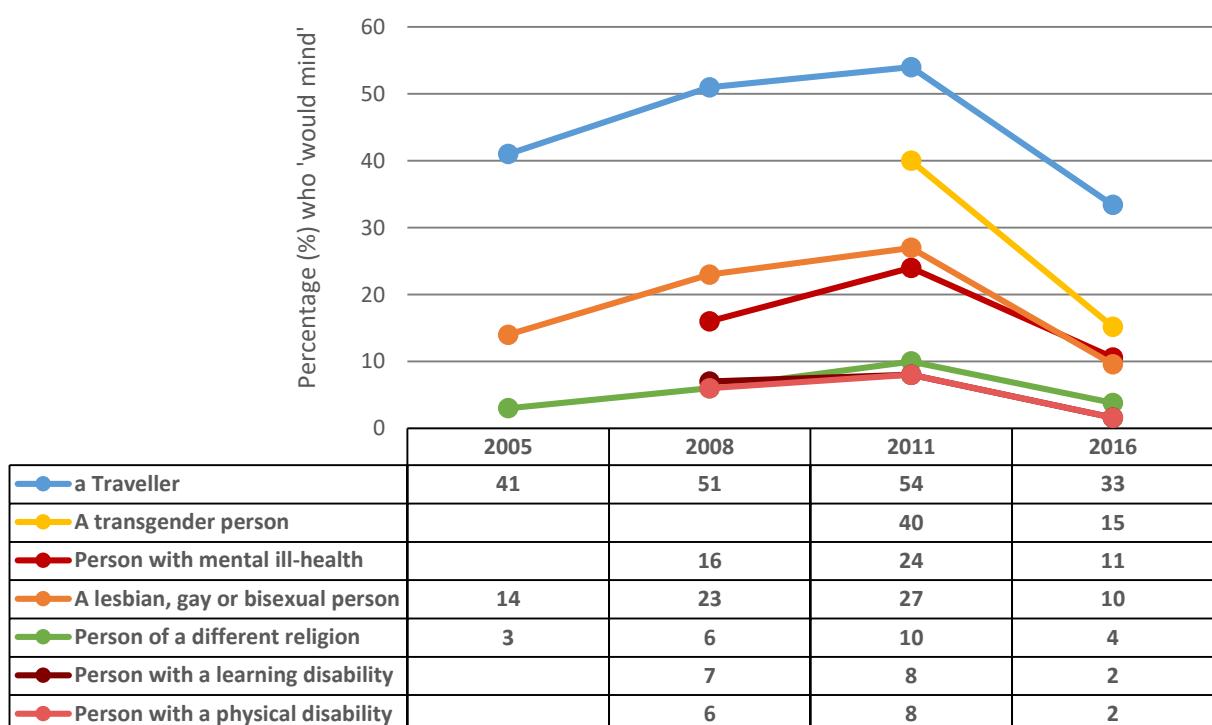
In 2016, the proportion of people who held negative attitudes toward migrant workers, people with a learning disability and people of a different religion as a work colleague had also decreased by 10 percentage points, 8 percentage points and 5 percentage points respectively, from their 2011 peak (see Chart 2.4).

As a neighbour

Between 2005-2011, the proportion of people who held negative attitudes toward members of the specified equality groups as a neighbour had also, increased overall. Similarly, between 2011 and 2016 there has also been a rapid decline in negative attitudes (see Chart 2.5).

Chart 2.5:

Proportion (%) of people who said they “would mind” having the following equality groups as a neighbour, 2005-2016.



In 2016, the greatest decline in negative attitudes was in relation to transgender people. The proportion of people surveyed who said they would mind having a transgender person as a neighbour decreased by 25 percentage points from 40% in 2011.

Similarly, large declines in negative attitudes were observed in relation to Travellers, lesbian, gay and bisexual people and people with mental ill

health (see Chart 2.5). Negative attitudes were more likely to be directed at Travellers as a neighbour than any other group, however, the proportion of people who expressed negative attitudes toward having a Traveller as a neighbour decreased by 21 percentage points from a peak of 54% in 2011 (see Chart 2.5). In 2016, the proportion of respondents who said they would mind having a lesbian, gay or bisexual person or a person with mental ill health as a neighbour also decreased by 17 percentage points and 13 percentage points and 9 percentage points respectively from their peaks in 2011 (see Chart 2.5).

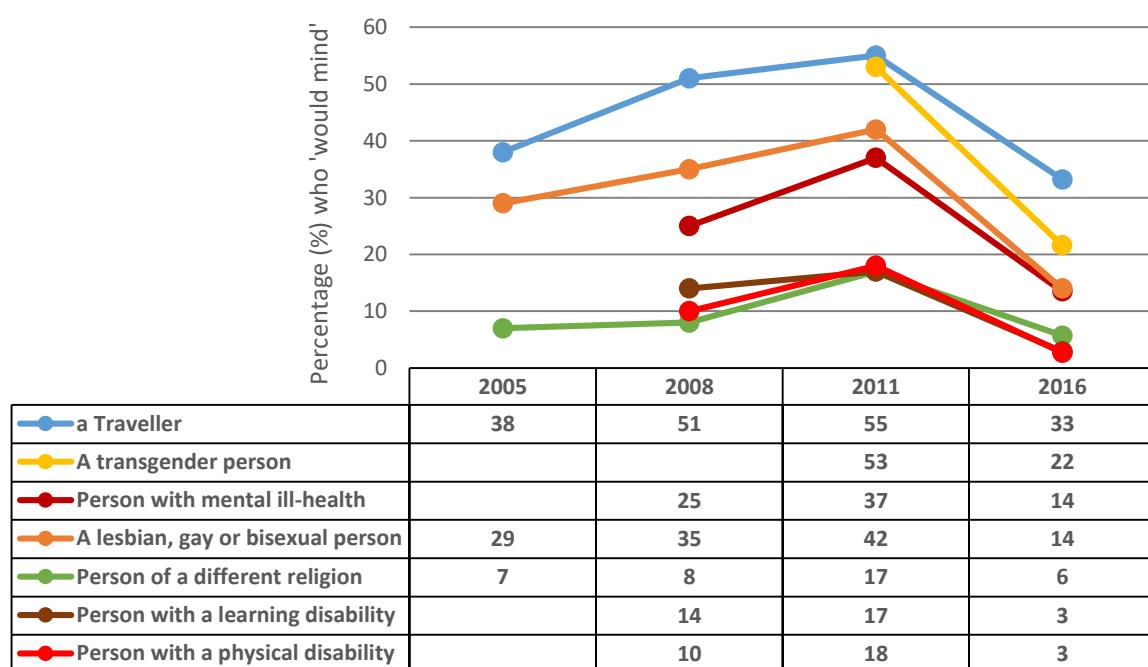
The proportion of people who expressed negative attitudes toward having a person with a learning disability, a physical disability and a person of a different religion also decreased (all by 6 percentage points) from their peak in 2011 (see Chart 2.5).

Married to a close relative

Between 2005-2011, the proportion of people who held negative attitudes toward members of the specified equality groups being married to a close relative also, increased overall. Similarly, between 2011 and 2016 there has also been a rapid decline in negative attitudes (see Chart 2.6).

Chart 2.6:

Proportion (%) of people who said they “would mind” if a member of the following equality groups married a close relative, 2005-2016.



In 2016, the greatest decline in negative attitudes was in relation to transgender people. In 2016, the proportion of people surveyed who held negative attitudes toward having a transgender person married to a close relative declined by 31 percentage points from 53% in 2011 (see Chart 2.6). Similarly, the proportion of respondents who said they would mind a lesbian, gay or bisexual person married to close relative declined by 28 percentage points from 42% at its 2011 peak (see Chart 2.6).

While Travellers remained the group most likely to experience negative attitudes at all levels of social distance, the proportion of people who expressed negative attitudes toward having a Traveller married to a close relative had also decreased by 22 percentage points from a peak of 55% in 2011 (see Chart 2.6).

A rapid decline in negative attitudes was also observed for other equality groups. In 2016, the proportion of respondents who said they would mind a person with mental ill health married to a close relative declined by 23 percentage points from a peak of 37% in 2011 (see Chart 2.6).

Between 2011 and 2016, a decline in negative attitudes of 15 percentage points, 14 percentage points and 11 percentage points respectively was also observed in relation to having a person with a physical disability, a person with a learning disability or a person of a different religion married to a close relative (see Chart 2.6).

2.3. Attitudes towards various equality groups in the highest elected position in Northern Ireland⁴¹.

This section sought to identify how comfortable or uncomfortable respondents felt towards having a member of a particular equality group in a position of leadership in the country, and, in, this scenario, being in the highest elected position in Northern Ireland. This scenario has been explored previously in EQAS 2011 and was based on a question in the Eurobarometer 2009⁴², Eurobarometer 2012⁴³ and Eurobarometer 2015⁴⁴. Using a scale from one to ten, where '1' meant they would be 'very uncomfortable' and '10' meant they would be 'totally comfortable', respondents were asked to indicate how comfortable they would feel

⁴¹ For full details see Tables 2.55-2.67 in the Technical Report.

⁴² European Commission (2009) Discrimination in the EU in 2009. Special Eurobarometer 317. European Commission: Brussels.

⁴³ European Commission (2012) Discrimination in the EU in 2012. Special Eurobarometer 393. European Commission: Brussels.

⁴⁴ European Commission (2015) Discrimination in the EU in 2015. Special Eurobarometer 437. European Commission: Brussels.

with a member of one of these groups as First Minister in Northern Ireland. The groups were as follows:

- a woman;
- a man;
- a person aged over 70 years;
- a person aged under 25 years;
- a Trans person;
- a Traveller;
- a person from the Roma community;
- a disabled person;
- a person with caring responsibilities;
- a lesbian, gay or bisexual person;
- a member of a minority ethnic group; and
- a person from a different religion to you.

Chart 2.7:
Comparison of the mean comfort score for each of the twelve equality groups in 2016 with eight comparable groups from 2011: First Minister of Northern Ireland

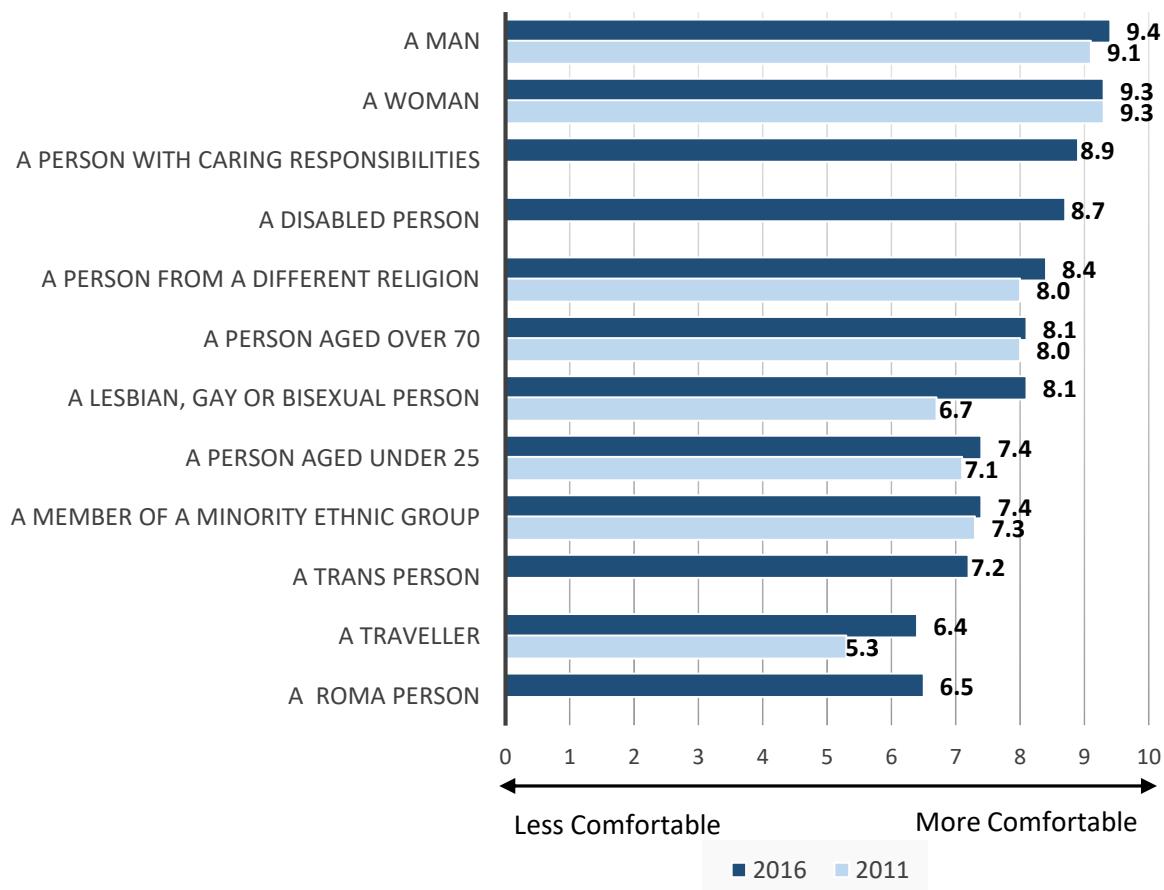


Chart 2.7 illustrates that, overall, respondents were more ‘comfortable’ than ‘uncomfortable’ with a member of every specified groups being in the highest elected position in Northern Ireland (i.e. mean score of 5 or above).

However, Chart 2.7 reveals that respondents were most uncomfortable having a Traveller (mean score=6.4) and a Roma person (6.5) as First Minister of Northern Ireland. This was followed by a Trans person (7.2), a member of a Minority Ethnic group (7.4) and a person aged under 25 years (7.4).

Respondents were almost equally highly comfortable with a man (9.4) or a woman (9.3) as First Minister of Northern Ireland.

2.3.1. Comparisons with EQAS 2011

Chart 2.8 revealed that, the mean comfort score has risen since 2011 for comparable categories⁴⁵ indicating that respondents were more comfortable in 2016 than 2011 with various equality groups being in a position of leadership in Northern Ireland.

Since 2011, the greatest increase in mean comfort scores has been in relation to lesbian, gay and bisexual people and Travellers. In 2016, an increase of 1.4 in the mean comfort score was observed in relation to a lesbian, gay, or bisexual person being First Minister of Northern Ireland from a mean score of 6.7 in 2011 (see Chart 2.8). Further, an increase of 1.1 in the mean comfort score was observed in relation to a Traveller being First Minister of Northern Ireland from a mean score of 5.3 in 2011 (see Chart 2.8). All other comparable categories experienced a small increase in mean comfort scores, except women, where the mean comfort score (9.3) experienced no change from 2011 (see Chart 2.8).

2.3.2. Comparisons with the UK and EU

In 2015, the Eurobarometer 437⁴⁶ asked respondents across the 28 European regions, including the UK, to indicate how comfortable they

⁴⁵ Only eight of the categories from 2011 are comparable to 2016. The categories: people with caring responsibilities, a Trans person and a Roma person are new to 2016. In addition, three categories on disability were included in 2011 and only one in 2016. Caution should be used when interpreting changes to the ‘minority ethnic’ category as the name of this category was slightly different (Black and Minority Ethnic) in 2011.

⁴⁶ Special Eurobarometer 437 (2015) Discrimination in the EU in 2015. European Commission: European Union.

would feel about having a member of each of the following equality groups in the highest position in their country⁴⁷:

- a woman;
- a gay, lesbian or bisexual person;
- a person from a different ethnic origin than the majority of the population;
- a person under 30 years old;
- a person from a different religion than the majority of the population;
- a person with a disability;
- a person over 75 years old; and
- a transgender or transsexual person.

However, in 2015, the Eurobarometer 437 survey did not use mean comfort score as previously used in both the Eurobarometer 2009 and 2012 survey⁴⁸. In 2015, its one to ten scale was re-categorised into three categories:

- ‘1-4’ = ‘Uncomfortable’;
- ‘5-6’ = ‘Moderately comfortable’; and,
- ‘7-10’ = ‘Comfortable’.

To assist with comparability of scales with the Eurobarometer, the one to ten scale for this question in the EQAS 2016 was re-categorised in a similar manner. It should be noted that four of the equality groups in the EQAS (i.e. a man; a Traveller; a Roma person and a person with caring responsibilities) are not in the Eurobarometer survey. Results for these groups are illustrated in Chart 2.9 but are not reported in the context of Eurobarometer findings from the UK and EU.

United Kingdom only

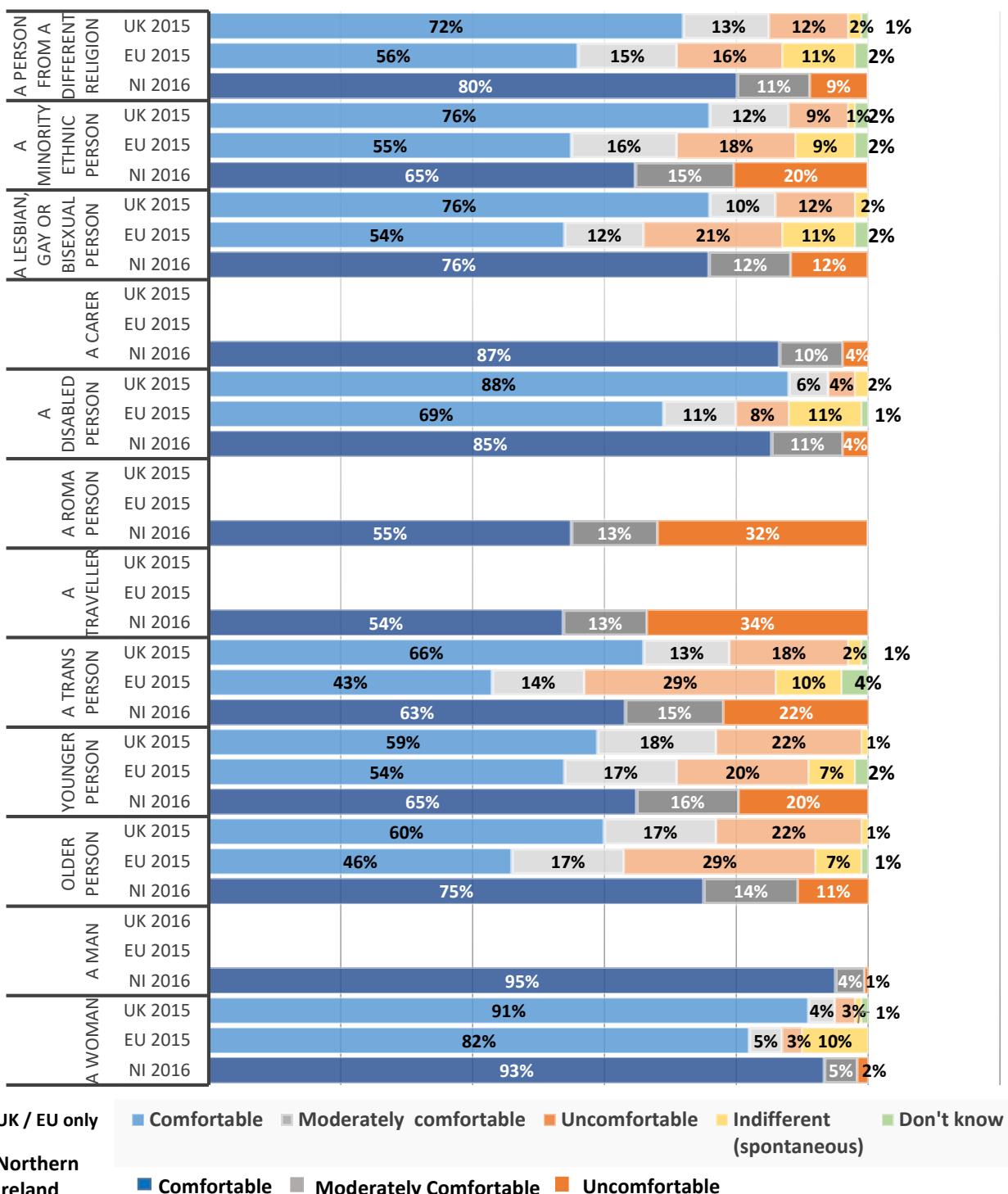
UK citizens surveyed in the Eurobarometer were most uncomfortable with an older person aged over 75 years (22%) and a younger people under 30 years (22%) in the highest elected position in their jurisdiction (see Chart 2.8). They were most comfortable with having a woman (91%) in the highest elected position (see Chart 2.8).

⁴⁷ Some categories used in the Eurobarometer survey differ in their phrasing and parameters to those used in the Equality Awareness Survey. Thus care should be taken when comparing the findings across the two surveys.

⁴⁸ See European Commission (2009) Discrimination in the EU in 2012. Special Eurobarometer 317. European Commission: Brussels and European Commission (2012) Discrimination in the EU in 2012. Special Eurobarometer 393. European Commission: Brussels.

Chart 2.8:

Proportion of people surveyed (Northern Ireland, UK and EU 28) who are comfortable with different equality groups holding the highest elected office in their jurisdiction⁴⁹



⁴⁹ Some categories used in the Eurobarometer survey differ in their phrasing and parameters to those used in the Equality Awareness Survey. The 'Indifferent' and 'Don't know' categories are only in the Eurobarometer survey. Care should be taken when comparing the findings across the two surveys.

People in the UK were less comfortable than Northern Ireland respondents with having older people (75% NI; 60% UK), younger people (65% NI; 59% UK) and people of a different religion (80% NI; 72% UK) in the highest elected position (see Chart 2.8).

Conversely, people in the UK were more comfortable than Northern Ireland respondents with having a minority ethnic person (65% NI; 76% UK) in the highest elected position compared to respondents in Northern Ireland.

European Union 28 countries

Citizens surveyed across the EU28 countries were most uncomfortable with an older person aged over 75 years (29%) and a Trans person (29%) in the highest elected position (see Chart 2.8). They were most comfortable with having a woman (82%) in the highest elected position in their country (see Chart 2.8). EU28 respondents were less comfortable compared to Northern Ireland respondents in having a member of any of the equality groups in the highest elected position in their country (see Chart 2.8).

2.4. Attitudes towards prejudice in Northern Ireland

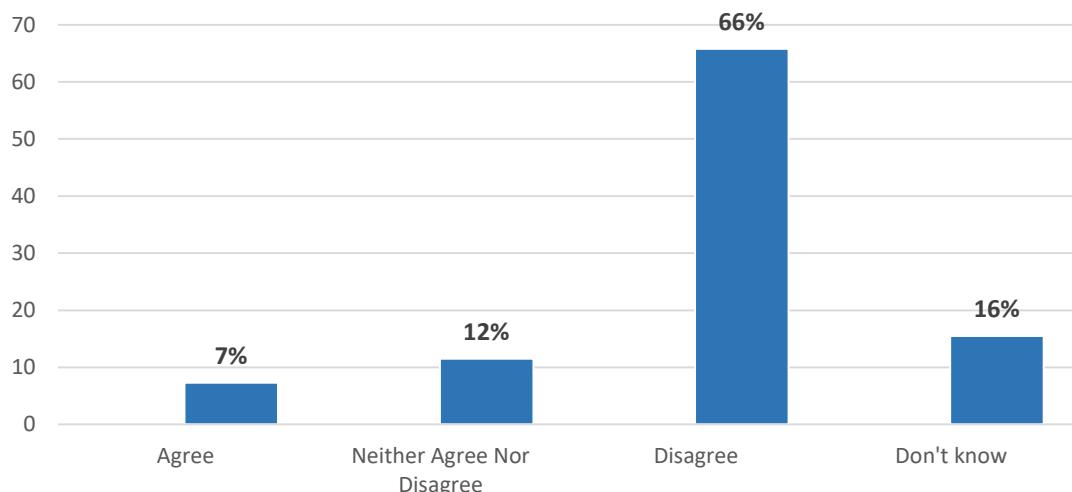
To explore the degree to which the general public regarded prejudice as acceptable or not acceptable in Northern Ireland, respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that sometimes there is a good reason for people to be prejudiced against certain groups⁵⁰.

Two thirds (66%) of respondents disagreed with this statement, indicating that they thought there were no circumstances in which they thought prejudice was “acceptable” (see Chart 2.9). Twelve per cent of respondents neither agreed or disagreed with this statement; while 16% said they didn’t know. A small minority of respondents (7%) agreed with this statement, indicating that there were certain circumstances in which they felt prejudice was “acceptable” (see Chart 2.9).

⁵⁰ For full details, see Table A.268 in Technical Report.

Chart 2.9:

Proportion of people surveyed who agreed or disagreed that there is sometimes good reason for people to be prejudiced against certain groups⁵¹

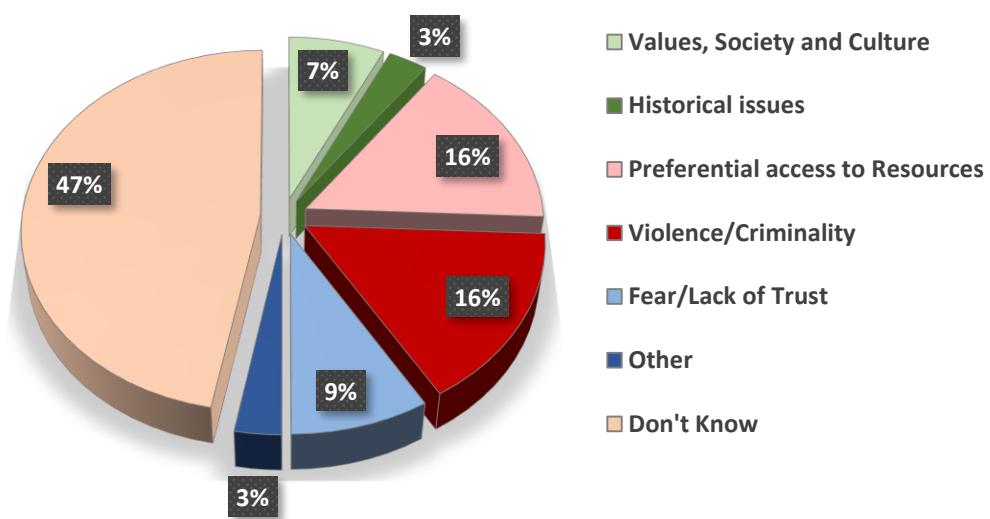


2.4.1. Reasons for being prejudiced against certain groups

Those who agreed with the statement (7%) where asked why they thought there sometimes is good reason to be prejudiced against certain groups. Responses were received in open format and qualitative thematic analysis was carried out on the responses.

Chart 2.10:

Thematic responses for why there is sometimes good reason for people to be prejudiced against certain groups⁵²



⁵¹ Combined categories. See table 2.68 in Technical Report for full details.

⁵² Responses provided in open format by those who agreed that there is sometimes good reason to be prejudiced against certain groups, (n=70), excluding those who refused to answer. See Table A2.70 in Technical Report for full details.

Chart 2.10 summarises the proportion who provided thematic reasons given for being prejudiced in the open format responses. Of those who answered the question (n=70), just under half (47%) said they didn't know⁵³ (see Chart 2.10). Other responses covered preferential access to resources (16%, n=11), violence / criminality (16%, n=11), fear / lack of trust (9%, n=6), values, society or culture (7%, n=5), historical issues (3%, n=2) and 'other' issues (3%, n=2).

2.5. Perceptions of unfair treatment against particular equality groups.

Respondents (n=875) were asked their opinion on whether any of the following groups are treated unfairly when compared with other groups in Northern Ireland⁵⁴. The eighteen groups were as follows:

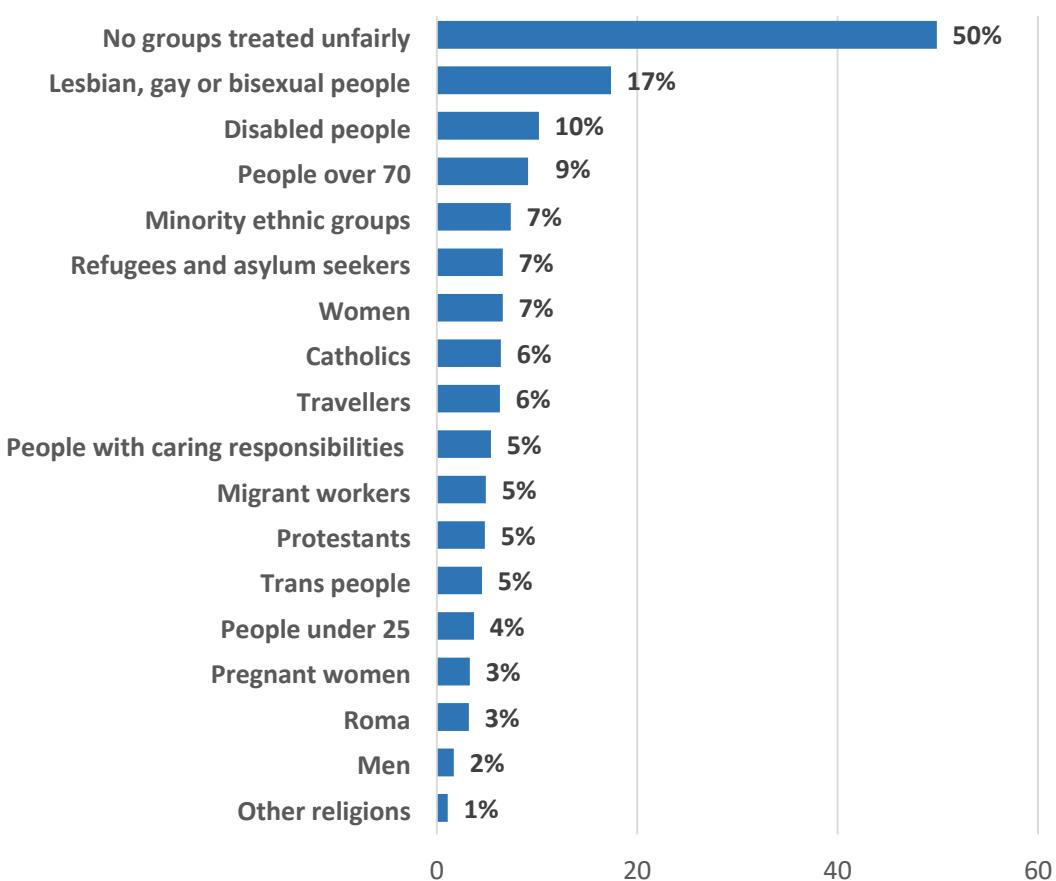
- women;
- men;
- pregnant women;
- people over 70 years;
- people under 25 years;
- Trans people;
- Travellers;
- Roma;
- disabled people;
- people with caring responsibilities;
- lesbian, gay or bisexual people;
- minority ethnic groups;
- migrant workers;
- refugees and asylum seekers;
- Catholics;
- Protestants;
- other religions; and
- no groups treated unfairly.

⁵³ Revised sample size of n=70 excluding those who refused to answer (n=13). See Table A2.70 in Technical Report.

⁵⁴ For full details, see Tables A2.71-2.74 in Technical Report.

Chart 2.11:

Proportion of people who believe that the following groups are treated unfairly when compared with other groups in Northern Ireland



The majority of respondents (50%) were of the opinion that no groups were treated unfairly compared to other groups in Northern Ireland. However, the group mostly likely to be perceived as treated unfairly were lesbian, gay or bisexual people (17%), followed by disabled people (10%) and people over 70 years (9%).

Women, minority ethnic groups, and, refugees and asylum seekers were equally likely to be considered unfairly treated, with 7% of respondents selecting these groups (Chart 2.11). Of those who said that minority ethnic groups were unfairly treated ($n=65$), 20% said that all minority ethnic groups were unfairly treated, 17% said that Polish people were unfairly treated, and 11% said that Africans were unfairly treated⁵⁵.

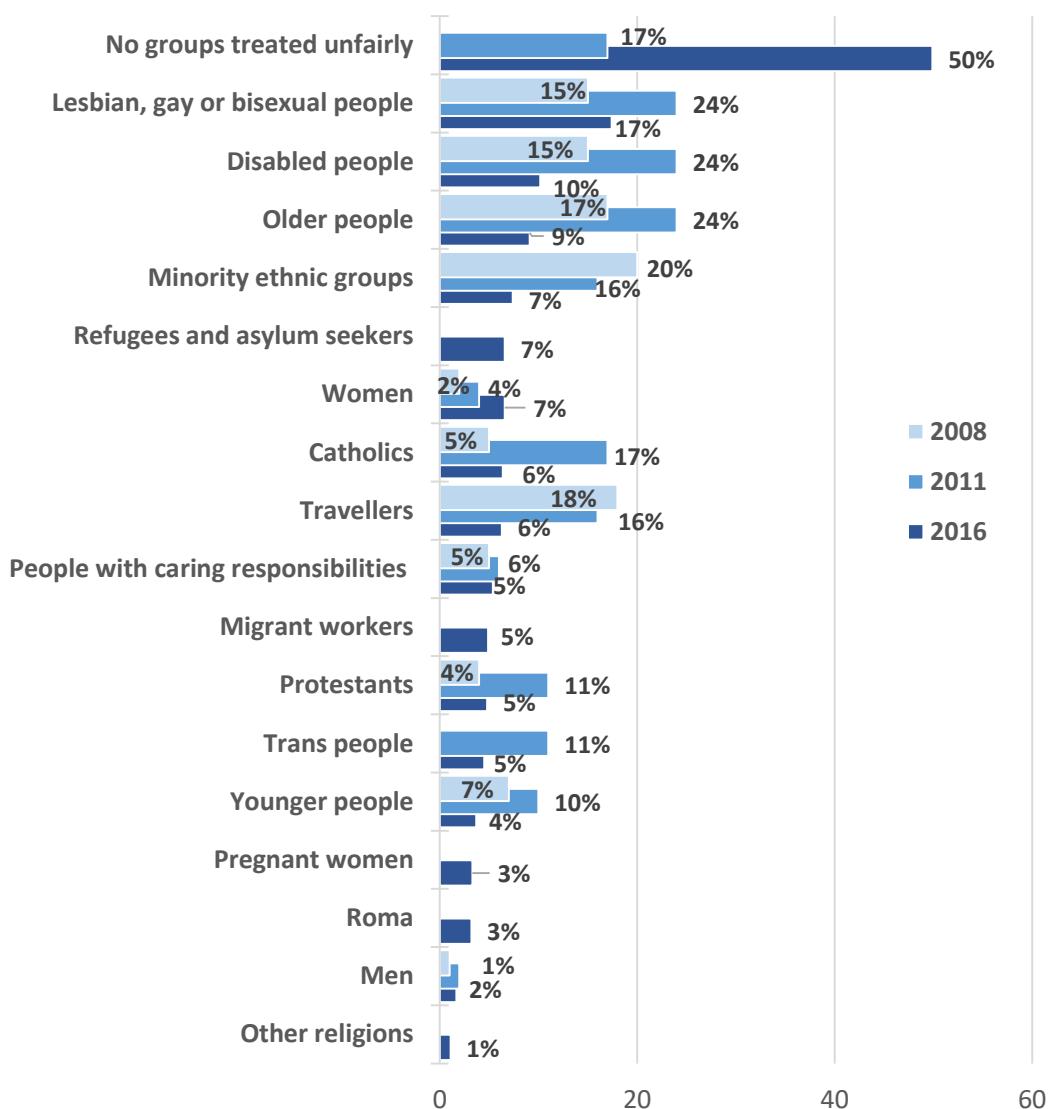
⁵⁵ See Table A2.72 in Technical Report for full details.

2.5.1. Comparisons with previous EQAS surveys

In the 2011 survey, the groups most likely to be perceived as treated unfairly were older people, disabled people and lesbian, gay and bisexual people at 24 per cent each (see Chart 2.12).

Chart 2.12:

Proportion of people who believe that the following groups are treated unfairly when compared with other groups in Northern Ireland, 2008-2016⁵⁶



⁵⁶ No comparison can be made with the 2005 survey due to changes to the wording and format of the question. Caution should be used when considering minority ethnic groups are not directly comparable with the 2008 or 2011 survey as these categories have been redefined from racial or ethnic groups in 2008 to black and minority ethnic groups in 2011 to minority ethnic groups in 2016. Migrant worker groups are not comparable with the 2016 survey, and are not included as this category have been redefined from Eastern European migrants in 2011. In addition, younger people have been redefined from people under 30 years in 2008 to people under 25 years in the 2011 and 2016 survey.

However, Chart 2.12 illustrates that the proportion of people who considered these equality groups to be unfairly treated has decreased for most groups from 2011, with the greatest decreases observed for people over 70 years (15 percentage point) and disabled people (14 percentage points).

While there has been an overall decrease in perceptions of unfair treatment for most groups, the proportion of people who considered women to be unfairly treated has increased slightly by 3 percentage points. In addition, Chart 2.12 highlights a substantive increase of 33 percentage points in the proportion of people who consider no groups to be unfairly treated.

2.5.2. Groups perceived to be treated most unfairly

Respondents who identified equality groups in the previous section were then asked to identify the group they thought was treated *most* unfairly (see Table 2.2). Of those that answered the question (n=185) the most common perception was that no one group was treated most unfairly (20%), followed by lesbian, gay and bisexual people (15%) disabled people (10%) and refugees and asylum seekers (9%).

A smaller proportion of people felt that people over 70 years were treated most unfairly (7%), followed by migrant workers, women and Travellers (6% each), Protestants, people with caring responsibilities and people under 25 years (4%) and minority ethnic groups (3%).

Respondents were least likely to perceive Roman Catholics, men, Trans people and people of other religions to be treated most unfairly (1% each) followed by pregnant women and Roma (2%).

2.5.3. Comparisons with previous EQAS surveys

In the 2011 survey, older people over 70 years were perceived to be treated most unfairly (15%), followed by lesbian, gay and bisexual people, disabled people and Roman Catholics (13% each).

As illustrated by Table 2.2, perceptions of whether a group is most unfairly treated has decreased for the majority of groups since 2011. The largest decrease in perceptions of unfair treatment was observed between 2008 and 2016 for minority ethnic groups (21 percentage points). There has also been a substantial decrease in perceptions of unfair treatment for Roman Catholics (12 percentage points) and older people (8 percentage points) between 2011 and 2016; and, for Travellers (10 percentage points) between 2008 and 2016.

However, the proportion of people who consider women, and lesbian, gay and bisexual people, to be unfairly treated has increased since 2005 by five percentage points (see Table 2.2).

Table 2.2:
Proportion of people who believe that the following groups are treated most unfairly in Northern Ireland, 2005-2016⁵⁷

| | 2005 % | 2008 % | 2011 % | 2016 % |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| No groups treated most unfairly | - | - | - | 20% |
| Lesbian, gay or bisexual people | 10% | 12% | 13% | 15% |
| Disabled people | 13% | 10% | 13% | 10% |
| Refugees and asylum seekers | - | - | - | 9% |
| Older people | 15% | 15% | 15% | 7% |
| Migrant workers | - | - | - | 6% |
| Women | 1% | 2% | 1% | 6% |
| Travellers | 11% | 16% | 8% | 6% |
| Younger people | 2% | 6% | 5% | 4% |
| People with caring responsibilities | 3% | 5% | 3% | 4% |
| Protestants | 4% | 4% | 8% | 4% |
| Minority ethnic groups | 20% | 24% | 5% | 3% |
| Roma | - | - | - | 2% |
| Pregnant women | - | - | - | 2% |
| Catholics | 3% | 5% | 13% | 1% |
| Trans people | - | - | 3% | 1% |
| Men | 0% | 0% | 1% | 1% |
| Other religions | - | - | - | 1% |

2.5.4. How groups are perceived to be unfairly treated

Those respondents who had identified a specific equality group as most unfairly treated (N=149) were then asked in what way did they feel the equality group identified had been treated unfairly⁵⁸. Responses for the equality groups were too small to permit a meaningful analysis and are not reported here⁵⁹.

⁵⁷ Caution should be used when considering minority ethnic groups as this group are not directly comparable with the 2005, 2008 or 2011 survey as these categories have been redefined from racial or ethnic groups in 2005-2008 to black and minority ethnic groups in 2011 to minority ethnic groups in 2016. Migrant worker groups are not comparable with the 2016 survey, and are not included, as this category has been redefined from Eastern European migrants in 2011. In addition, younger people have been redefined from people under 30 years in 2008 to people under 25 years in the 2011 and 2016 survey.

⁵⁸ Multiple response question (n=391 responses).

⁵⁹ For full details see Table A2.94 - A2.96 of the Technical Report.

3

Perception of Equality Issues

3. Perception of Equality Issues

Summary

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions, which examined public attitudes to, and support for, equality in Northern Ireland, in particular:

- importance of equality issues over time;
- importance of specific equality issues
- support for equality and good relations;
- support for equality and anti-discrimination laws; and,
- support for affirmative action measures.

Key Findings

- Respondents were asked to consider the relative **importance of equality issues** to them in 2016 compared with 12 months ago. In 2016, the majority of respondents (57%) said equality issues had the same level of importance to them.
- A respondent's age, education, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status impacted on the relative importance of equality issues over time, with, for example, lesbian, gay or bisexual people more likely to say that equality issues had become more important to them in the last 12 months (28%) compared to people who were heterosexual (16%).
- Respondents were asked to identify **the importance of specific equality issues** to them. The top four equality issues identified as important to respondents' were religion (28%), ethnicity (19%), age (19%) and gender (18%). However, a quarter (25%) of respondents indicated that no equality issues were important to them.
- Respondents' religion, geographical location and socioeconomic status impacted on the relative importance of specific equality issues: for example, those of a Protestant or other Christian religion, those who lived East of the Bann and those of a lower social grade were more likely to identify that no equality issues were important to them.
- In 2016, there was broad **support for equality and good relations in Northern Ireland**. The majority of respondents (57%) agreed that "*there are benefits to having a more equal society in Northern Ireland*", while nearly half of respondents (49%) agreed that "*more*

needs to be done to promote equality of opportunity". In addition, the majority of respondents (52%) agreed that "*more needs to be done to promote good relations in Northern Ireland*".

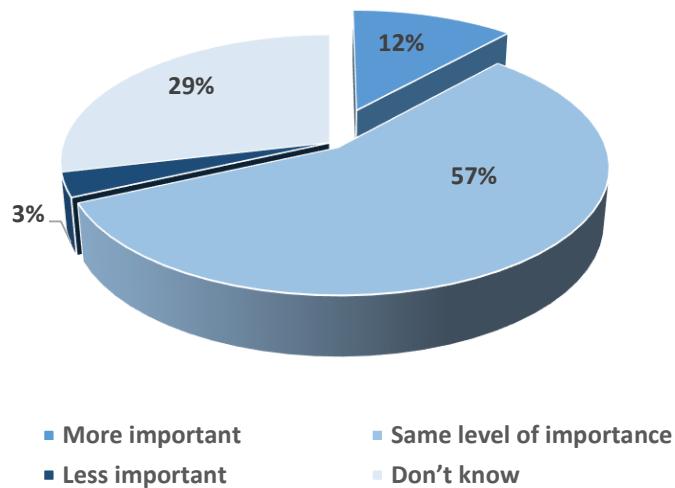
- Overall, in 2016, there was broad **support for equality and anti-discrimination laws**. The majority of respondents agreed that "*there is a need for equality and anti-discrimination laws in Northern Ireland*" (54%), while nearly half of respondents (47%) agreed that "*equality and anti-discrimination laws should be strengthened*".
- Respondents indicated broad **support for affirmative action measures** in the public sector in Northern Ireland. Half of respondents agreed that "*public bodies in Northern Ireland should be more representative of both the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities*" (51%), and that "*a police service whose religious composition is more representative of the protestant and Catholic communities will offer a better service*" (50%).
- The proportion of respondents who support affirmative action measures in the public sector in Northern Ireland has decreased substantially between 2005 and 2016; however, this decrease is mostly attributable to a large increase in the proportion of respondents who said they did not know.
- Respondents supported affirmative action measures in the private sector in Northern Ireland. The greatest proportion of respondents agreed that they would be more likely to apply for a job in a company "*if their advertisements said they particularly welcomed applications from members of your community*" (46%) or "*if they took practical steps to develop contacts with your community*" (48%), while only a minority of people said they would not apply (12% and 10% respectively). A large proportion of respondents said they did not know (42% and 41% respectively).

3.1. Importance of equality issues over time

Respondents (n=1,143) were asked to consider the relative importance of equality issues to them in 2016, compared with 12 months ago⁶⁰.

Chart 3.1:

Proportion (%) of people surveyed who said that, compared with 12 months ago, equality issues have become more important, less important or the level of importance has remained unchanged (n=1,143).



For the majority of people surveyed (57%), the perception was that the importance of equality issues had not changed for them in the last 12 months (Chart 3.1). Twelve per cent of people surveyed said that equality issues had become more important and a small minority (3%) said equality issues had become less important. Nearly one in three people (30%) did not know⁶¹.

3.1.1. Importance of equality issues by characteristics of respondents

The degree to which respondents perceived the relative importance of equality issues was examined by the demographic characteristics of the people surveyed. Of those survey respondents who had an opinion (n=815)⁶² the following characteristics emerged as the strongest factors influencing the relative importance of equality issues for people in Northern Ireland⁶³:

⁶⁰ For full details see Table A3.1 in Technical Report.

⁶¹ No comparison can be made with data from the 2005, 2008 or 2011 EQAS as the time period over which this question was considered changed in 2016 from 3 years to 12 months.

⁶² Don't know category excluded. Revised values excluding don't know responses are n=815; 16%, more important; 79%, same level of importance; 4%, less important.

⁶³ For details of full demographic analysis, see Table A3.2 in the Technical Report.

- *Age*

People between 30-44 years old were more likely to say that equality issues had become more important to them in the last 12 months (22%) than any other age group (12%, 16-29 years; 17%, 45-64 years; 12%, 65+ years). However, **older people over 65 years** were more likely to say that equality issues had become /less important to them in the last 12 months (9%) than any other age group (4%, 16-29 years; 2%, 30-44 years; 4%, 45-64 years). Similarly, respondents with characteristics often, but not exclusively, associated with older age, such as **having a limiting disability or being economically inactive**, were more likely to say that equality issues had become /less important to them in the last 12 months⁶⁴.

- *Education*

People with third level qualifications: were more likely to say that equality issues had become more important to them in the last 12 months (23%) than people with post-primary (14%) or no qualifications (17%). However, people with third level qualifications were also more likely to say that equality issues had become /less important to them in the last 12 months (8%) than people with post-primary qualifications (3%).

- *Sexual Orientation*

People who were lesbian, gay or bisexual⁶⁵: were more likely to say that equality issues had become more important to them in the last 12 months (28%) than people who were heterosexual⁶⁶ (16%).

- *Socioeconomic*

Respondents with a middle band household income of £15K-25,999 were more likely to say that equality issues had become more important to them in the last 12 months (27%) than those with the highest household incomes (20%, £26k+) or the lowest household incomes (11%, less than £15k).

⁶⁴ The economically inactive are those who are not in work and not actively looking for work. People with a disability were more likely to say that equality issues had become less important to them in the last 12 months (11%) than people without a disability (3%). Those who were economically inactive were more likely to say that equality issues had become less important to them in the last 12 months (7%) than those who were economically active (3%).

⁶⁵ Those who self-identified as having a sexual orientation toward people of the same sex / both sexes.

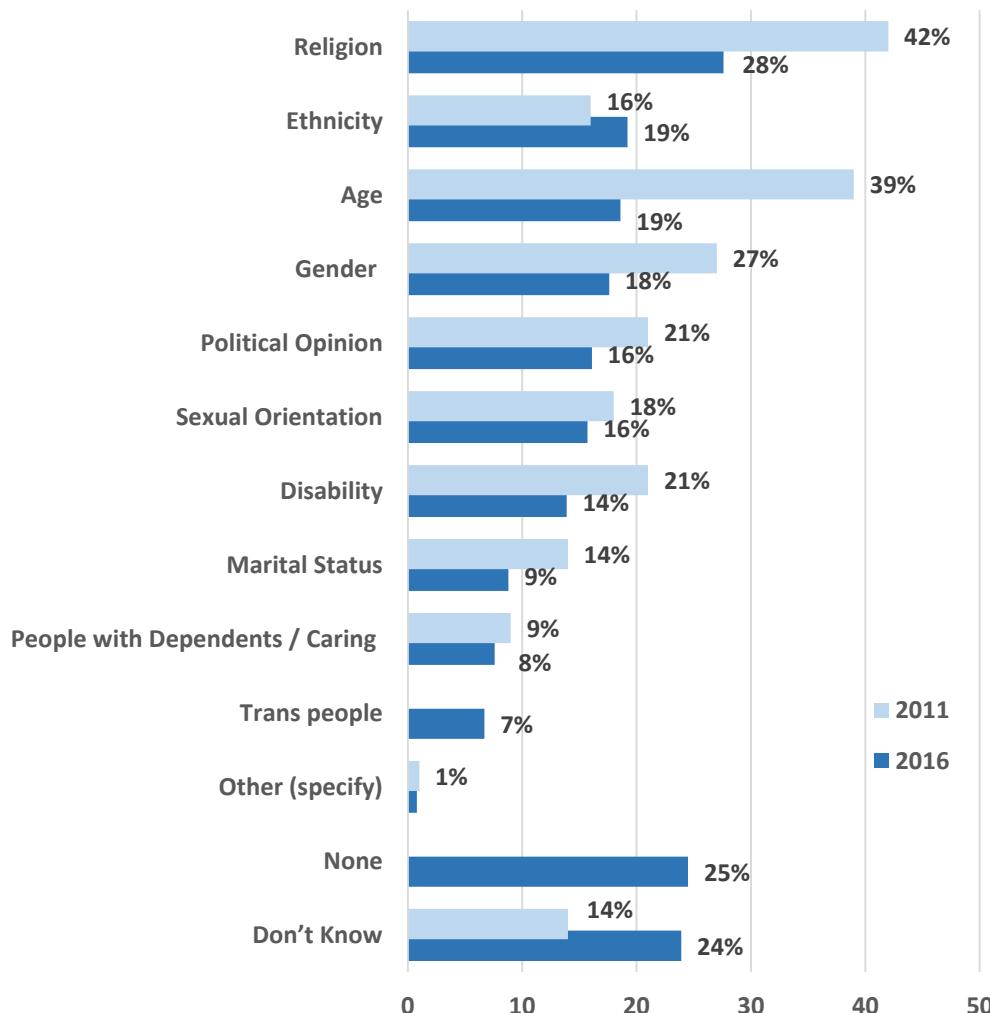
⁶⁶ Those who self-identified as having a sexual orientation toward people of a different sex.

3.2. Importance of specific equality issues

Respondents (n=1,082) were further asked to identify what specific equality issues were important to them⁶⁷ (Chart 3.2).

Chart 3.2:

Proportion (%) of people surveyed who identified which specific equality issues were important to them, 2011 and 2016⁶⁸.



Over a quarter (28%) of people surveyed said that religion was an important equality issue to them (Chart 3.2). The next most common equality issues identified were ethnicity and age (19% each), gender (18%), political opinion, sexual orientation and disability (16% each). A lower proportion of respondents identified marital status (9%), people with dependents / caring (8%) and Trans people (7%) as important equality issues to them.

⁶⁷ Respondents were able to indicate one or more issues. For full details see TableA3.3-A3.4 in Technical Report.

⁶⁸ This question was not asked in the 2005 and 2008 survey.

It should be noted, however, that a quarter (25%) of respondents indicated that no equality issues were important to them (see Chart 3.2). In addition, around a further quarter (24%) of respondents did not know which equality issues were important to them.

3.2.1. Comparisons with previous EQAS surveys

Chart 3.2 illustrates that the equality issues identified as important by respondents in 2016 were relatively similar to those identified in 2011. In 2011, the greatest proportion of respondents identified religion as an important issue to them (42%) followed by age (39%) and gender (27%, see Chart 3.2).

Although equality issues identified are similar between the two surveys, the overall proportion of respondents identifying specific equality issues as most important to them has decreased between 2011 and 2016.

However, the proportion of people identifying ethnicity as important has increased by 3-percentage points from 16% in 2011 to 19% in 2016.

The decrease in proportions for most categories may be partially explained by a 10-percentage point increase in 'don't know' responses between 2011 and 2016 and the inclusion of an extra 'none' category in 2016 to enable people to identify that no equality issues were important to them.

3.2.2. Importance of specific equality issues by characteristics of respondents

The degree to which respondents perceived specific equality issues to be important to them was examined by demographic characteristics. For brevity, this report will concentrate on the four equality issues (religion, age, ethnicity, and gender) identified as important by the highest proportion of people. It will also examine the characteristics of the people who felt that no equality issues were most important to them.

Among survey respondents (N=1143) the following characteristics emerged as the strongest factors influencing the relative importance of equality issues for people in Northern Ireland⁶⁹:

- Age

People who are over 65 years were less likely to identify ethnicity and religion as an important issue to them compared to

⁶⁹ For details of full demographic analysis, see Tables A3.6- 3.16 in the Technical Report.

any other age group⁷⁰. In addition, people over 65 years were less likely to identify gender (11%) as an important issue to them compared to people aged 30-44 years (22%). Similarly, respondents with characteristics including having a **limiting disability, being widowed /divorced / separated and being economically active** which are often, but not exclusively, associated with older age, were also less likely to identify ethnicity, gender and religion as important issues⁷¹.

Conversely, respondents with a **limiting disability** or those who were **widowed /divorced / separated** were more likely to identify age as an important issue to them⁷².

- *Ethnicity and Country of Birth*

People who identified as white were less likely to identify ethnicity as an important issue to them (16%) and more likely to identify that no equality issues were important (24%) compared to people who identified as 'Other' than white (50% and 11% respectively). However, people who **identified as 'Other' than white** were less likely to identify gender (6%) and age (5%) as an important issue to them compared to people who identified as white (17% and 18% respectively). In addition, people **born in Northern Ireland or Great Britain and Ireland** were less likely to identify ethnicity as an important issue to them (15% and 8% respectively) compared to people who were born outside the UK and Ireland (50%). However, people born outside the UK were less likely to identify gender (8%) and age (7%) as an important issue to them compared to people born in Northern Ireland (18% and 19% respectively).

- *Religion and political opinion*

People who were of a Protestant religion or a Catholic religion were less likely to identify ethnicity as an important issue to them (15% and 17% respectively) compared to people of an 'Other' or 'No religion' (27%). However, **people who were of a Protestant religion** were more likely to identify that no equality issues were important to them (29%) compared to

⁷⁰ Equality Issues: Ethnicity (23%, 16-29 years; 24%, 30-44 years; 15%, 45-64 years; 7%, 65+ years); Religion (30%, 16-29 years; 33%, 30-44 years; 22%, 45-64 years; 16%, 65+ years). See Tables A3.13 and 3.10 in the Technical Report.

⁷¹ The economically inactive are those who are not in work and not actively looking for work. For details of full demographic analysis, see Table A3.5-3.16 in the Technical Report.

⁷² Age as Important: Limiting disability (29% limiting disability versus 16% without limiting disability); Marital Status (16%, single and married/cohabiting/civil partnership versus 28% widowed/separated/divorced). See Table A3.6 in the Technical Report.

those of a Catholic religion (21%) or ‘Other / None’ religion (19%). In addition, **people who identified as being Unionist or Nationalist** were less likely to identify ethnicity as an important issue to them (10% both) compared to people who said they were of an ‘Other’ political opinion (35%).

- *Education*

Those with no qualifications were less likely to identify religion, as an important issue to them (17%) compared to those with post-primary (29%) and third level (34%) qualifications. In addition, **people with no qualifications (12%) or post-primary qualifications (14%)** were less likely to identify gender as an important issue to them compared to people with third level qualifications (31%).

- *Geography*

Respondents from East of the Bann were less likely to identify ethnicity as an important issue to them (14%) compared to respondents living West of the Bann or in Belfast (22% both). However, **respondents living East of the Bann** were more likely to identify that no equality issues were important to them (30%) compared to respondents living in Belfast (17%) or West of the Bann (18%). **People living in urban areas** were less likely to identify gender as an important issue to them (13%) compared to people living in rural areas (22%). However, people living in rural areas were less likely to identify age as an important issue to them (15%) compared to people living in urban areas (23%). Moreover, **people who live in a mixed community area** were less likely to identify gender (14%) and age (15%) as important issues to them compared to people who live in an area where most or all people are of a different community background than themselves (26% and 28% respectively).

- *Socioeconomic*

People from lower social grade C2DE were less likely to identify gender (12%), age (14%), religion (22%) and ethnicity (15%) as an important issue to them compared to people from higher social grade ABC1 (22%, 22%, 31% and 22% respectively). However, **people from lower social grade C2DE** were more likely to identify that no equality issues were important to them (26%) compared to people from higher social grade ABC1 (20%).

- *Sexual Orientation*

People who identified as heterosexual⁷³ were less likely to identify religion (27%) and ethnicity (18%) as an important issue to them compared to lesbian, gay or bisexual people⁷⁴ (44% and 31% respectively).

3.3. Support for Equality and Good Relations

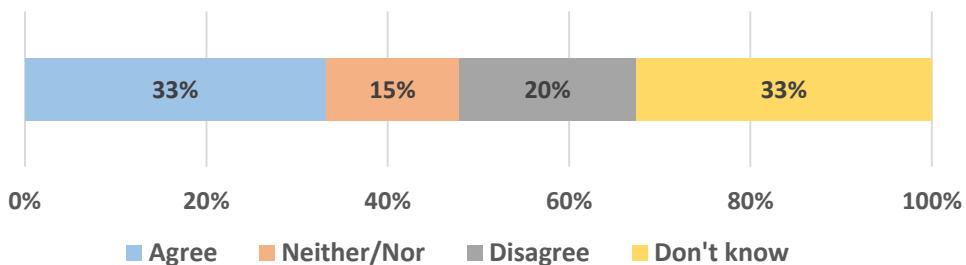
To explore attitudes to equality and good relations in Northern Ireland, respondents were asked for their perceptions of the status of, and support for, equality and good relations within Northern Ireland, including:

- perceptions that there is equality for all in Northern Ireland;
- perceptions that there are benefits of having a more equal society in Northern Ireland; and,
- support for the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations in Northern Ireland.

3.3.1. Perceptions that there is equality for all in Northern Ireland

Respondents (n=1,143) were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement: “*There is equality for all in Northern Ireland*”. A third of respondents (33%) agreed that there is equality for all in Northern Ireland, a fifth (20%) disagreed, while 15% held neither agreed or disagreed. In addition, a third of respondents (33%) said they didn’t know (Chart 3.3.)⁷⁵.

Chart 3.3: Proportion of people who agreed or disagreed that “there is equality for all in Northern Ireland”.



⁷³ Those who self-identified as having a sexual orientation toward people of the same sex / both sexes.

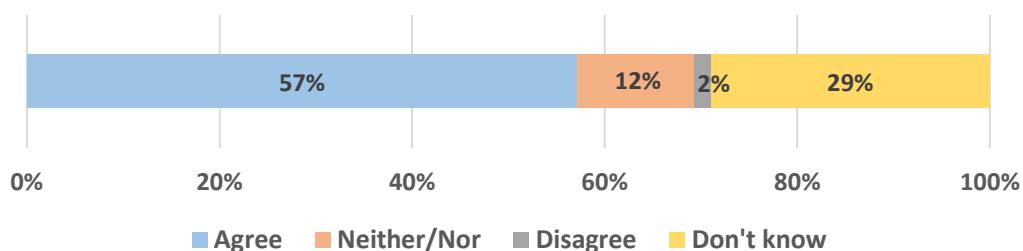
⁷⁴ Those who self-identified as having a sexual orientation toward people of a different sex.

⁷⁵ For full details see Table A3.17 in the Technical Report.

3.3.2. Perceptions that there are benefits of having a more equal society in Northern Ireland

Respondents (n=1,143) were asked if they agreed with the statement “there are benefits of having a more equal society in Northern Ireland”. The majority of respondents (57%) agreed that there were benefits of having a more equal society, with only 2% of respondents disagreeing (see Chart 3.4.). A further 12% of people surveyed were neither agreed or disagreed. In addition, 29% of people said they did not know (see Chart 3.4.)⁷⁶.

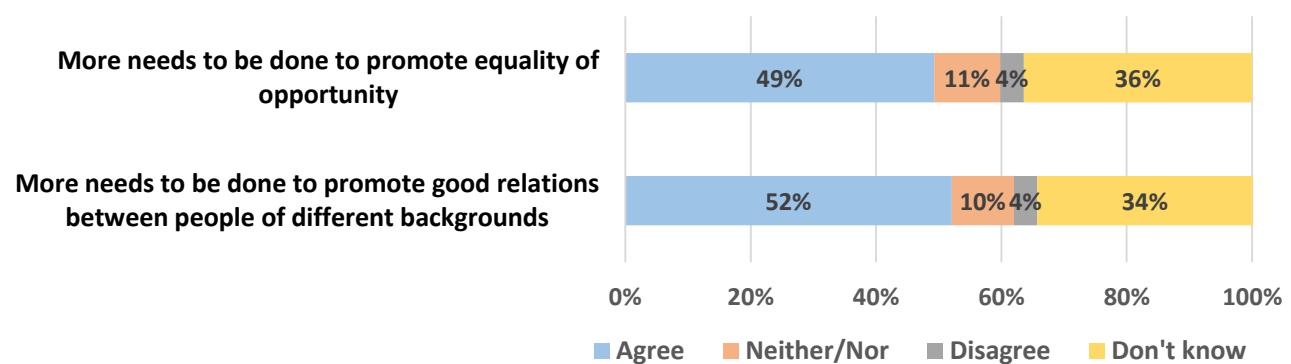
Chart 3.4: Proportion of people who agreed or disagreed that “there are benefits of having a more equal society in Northern Ireland”.



3.3.3. Support for the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations in Northern Ireland.

Respondents (n=1,143) were asked two questions aimed at identifying their support for measures to promote equality of opportunity and good relations in Northern Ireland (see Chart 3.5.)⁷⁷.

Chart 3.5: Proportion of people who agreed or disagreed that more needs to be done to promote equality and good relations.



⁷⁶ For full details see Table A3.17 in the Technical Report

⁷⁷ For full details see Table A3.17 in the Technical Report

Overall, respondents were supportive of the promotion of equality of opportunity. When respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that “*more needs to be done to promote equality of opportunity*”, nearly half (49%) agreed with this statement and only 4% disagreed. A further 11% neither agreed or disagreed with the statement. However, over a third (36%) said they did not know (see Chart 3.5).

In a supplement to this question, respondents were then asked whether they agreed or disagreed that “*more needs to be done to promote good relations between people of different backgrounds*”. The majority of people surveyed⁷⁸ were supportive of measures to promote good relations with over half of people (52%) in agreement with this statement and only 4% not supportive. A further 10% were neutral, while over a third (34%) said they did not know (see Chart 3.5).

3.4. Support for Equality and Anti-discrimination laws

Having explored peoples’ attitudes to and support for the concept of equality, this section examines respondent’s attitudes to and support for equality and anti-discrimination laws in Northern Ireland. Respondents (n=1,143) were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- There is a need for equality and ant-discrimination laws in Northern Ireland; and,
- Equality and anti-discrimination laws should be strengthened.

Chart 3.6 identifies that, overall, respondents were supportive of equality and anti-discrimination laws⁷⁹. The majority of respondents (54%) agreed that there is a need for equality and anti-discrimination laws in Northern Ireland with only 3% disagreeing with this statement. Nine per cent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements. However, just over a third of respondents (34%) said they did not know.

When asked if current equality and anti-discrimination laws should be strengthened⁸⁰ nearly half of respondents (47%) supported this with only 3% not supporting this. Eleven per cent of respondents were neutral, while 39% said they did not know (see Chart 3.6).

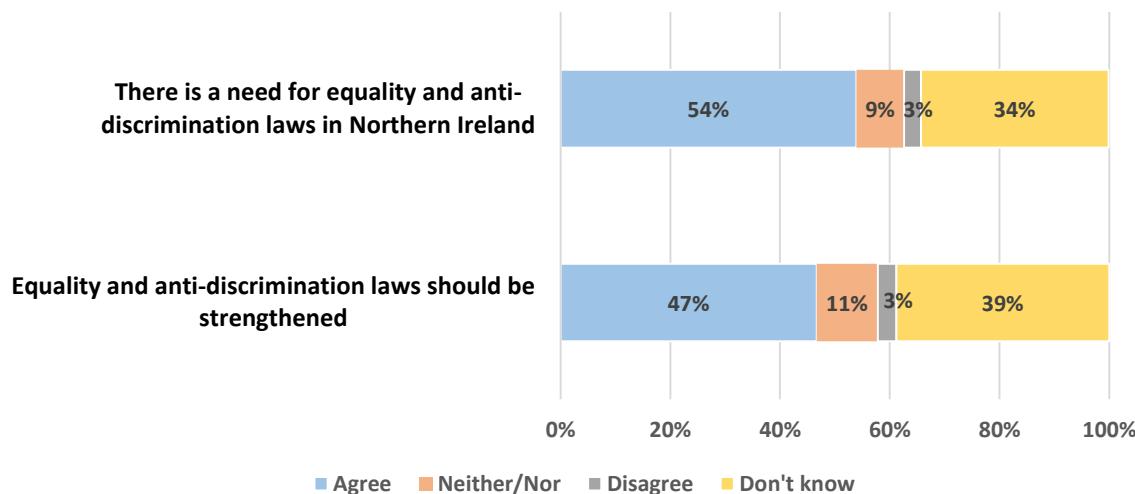
⁷⁸ For full details see Table A3.17 in the Technical Report

⁷⁹ For full details see Table A3.22 in the Technical Report

⁸⁰ Ibid.

Chart 3.6:

Proportion of people who agreed or disagreed with the following statements on attitudes to and/or support for equality and anti-discrimination laws



3.4.1. Comparisons with previous EQAS surveys

Results from EQAS 2016 cannot be robustly compared to the 2011 and 2008 EQAS surveys due to changes in the survey instruments used in 2016⁸¹. The following information from previous surveys is therefore, provided for illustrative rather than comparative purposes.

In, 2011, 2008 and 2005, the vast majority (91%, 92% and 92% respectively) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “there is a need for equality laws in Northern Ireland”⁸², with only a small proportion (3% in 2011 and 4% in 2008) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. In 2011 and 2008, a small proportion (6% and 5% respectively) said they did not know.

In 2011⁸³, there was strong support for equality laws to be strengthened to match those in Great Britain, with 77% of respondents in agreement. Only a small proportion of respondents disagreed (3%), while a fifth (20%) said they didn’t know.

⁸¹ An extra response category “neither agree nor disagree” was added to the 2016 survey.

⁸² The content of this question has changed since 2011, with the addition of anti-discrimination laws. An extra response category “neither agree nor disagree” was added to the 2016 survey.

⁸³ This question was introduced in 2011. The content of this question has changed since 2011 as comparison with laws in Great Britain has been removed in 2016. In addition, an extra response category “neither agree nor disagree” was added to the 2016 survey.

3.5. Support for affirmative action measures

In Northern Ireland, the term “affirmative action” is used to describe measures that employers may take to address an under-representation of members of the Protestant or Roman Catholic communities within the workplace. The 2016 EQAS, contained two items designed to explore attitudes toward and support for affirmative action as follows:

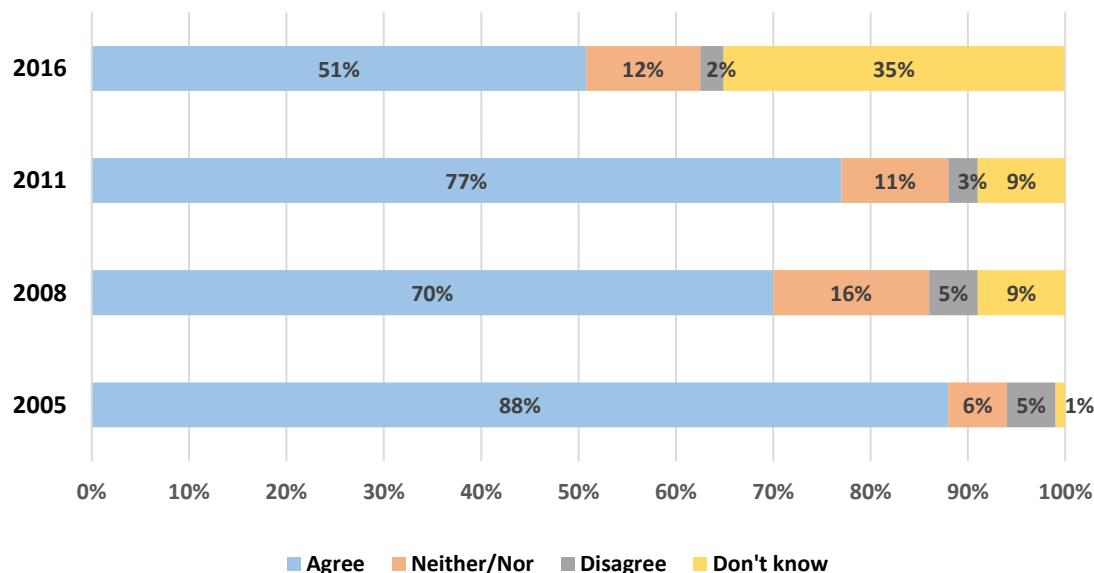
- Support for greater representativeness of the Protestant and Roman Catholic community in public bodies and the police service; and
- Support for affirmative action in the private sector.

3.5.1. Support for greater representativeness of public bodies

Respondents (n=1,143) were asked to consider their attitudes to the representativeness of Protestants and Roman Catholics in public bodies⁸⁴.

The majority (51%) of respondents agreed that “*public bodies in Northern Ireland should be more representative of both the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities*” (see Chart 3.7). Only 2% disagreed while 12% neither agreed nor disagreed. Over a third of respondents (35%) said they did not know (see Chart 3.7).

Chart 3.7:
Proportion (%) of people who agreed or disagreed that public bodies should be more representative of both the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities, 2005-2016⁸⁵.



⁸⁴ For full details please see Table A3.22 in the Technical Report.

⁸⁵ 2016 (n=1,143), 2011 (n=1,089), 2008 (n=1,068), and 2005 (n=991)

3.5.2. Comparisons with previous EQAS surveys.

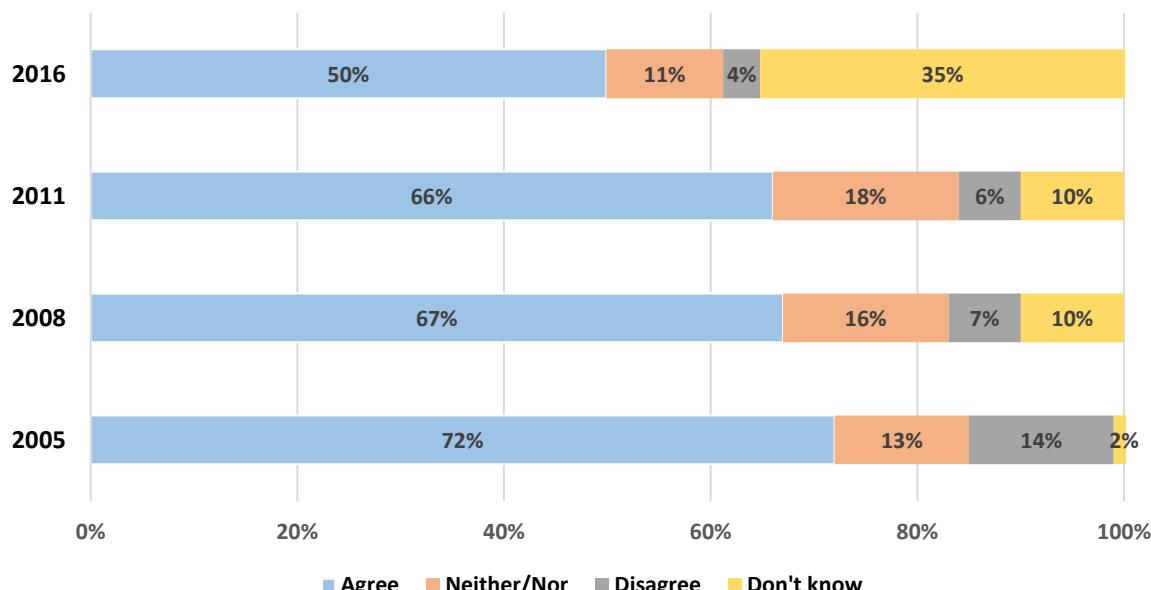
Chart 3.7 illustrates that between 2005 and 2016 there has been a 37 percentage-point decrease in the proportion of people who agree or strongly agree that public bodies should be representative of both the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities. However, the proportion of people who disagree or strongly disagree has slightly decreased by three percentage-points between 2005 and 2016 rather than increased (see Chart 3.7): Instead, the increase has occurred in the proportion of people, who said they did not know; with a 34 percentage-point increase in ‘don’t know’ responses between 2005 and 2016 (see Chart 3.7).

3.5.3. Support for greater representativeness of the police service in Northern Ireland

Respondents (n=1,143) were asked to consider their attitudes to the representativeness of Protestants and Roman Catholics in the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)⁸⁶.

Chart 3.8:

Proportion (%) of people who agreed or disagreed that a police service whose religious composition is more representative of the Protestant and Catholic communities will offer a better service, 2005-2016⁸⁷



The majority (50%) of respondents agreed, “*a police service whose religious composition is more representative of the Protestant and Catholic communities will offer a better service*” (see Chart 3.8). Only 4%

⁸⁶ For full details please see Table A3.22 in the Technical Report.

⁸⁷ 2016 (n=1,143), 2011 (n=1,086), 2008 (n=1,066), and 2005 (n=995)

disagreed while 11% neither agreed nor disagreed. Over a third of respondents (35%) said they did not know (see Chart 3.8)

3.5.4. Comparisons with previous EQAS surveys.

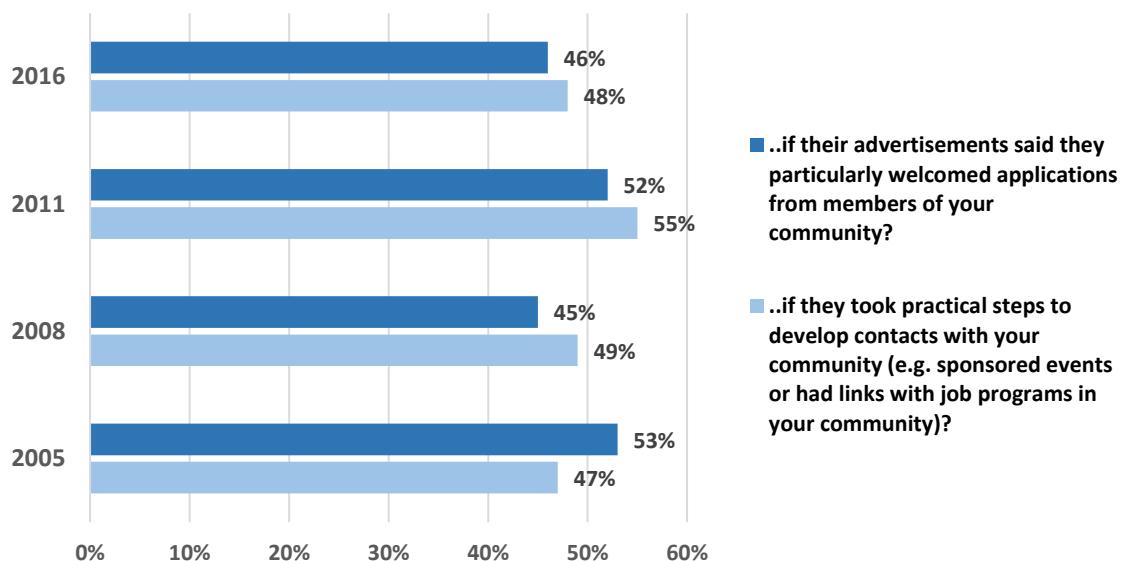
Chart 3.8 illustrates that between 2005 and 2016 there has been a 22 percentage-point decrease in the proportion of people who agree or strongly agree that a police service whose religious composition is more representative of the Protestant and Catholic communities will offer a better service. However, the proportion of people who do not support increased representativeness has decreased by 10 percentage-points between 2005 and 2016 rather than increased (see Chart 3.8). Instead, an increase has occurred in the proportion of people, who said they did not know, with a 33 percentage-point increase in 'don't know' responses between 2005 and 2016 (see Chart 3.8).

3.6. Affirmative action measures in the private sector

Respondents were presented with two examples of affirmative action measures and asked whether they would be more likely to apply for a job within a company that adopted these measures⁸⁸.

Chart 3.9:

Proportion (%) of people who said they would be more likely to apply for a job in a company if they took these affirmative action measures, 2005-2016⁸⁹



⁸⁸ This question asked: "If a particular religion is under-represented in a firm, the firm should take affirmative action to encourage applications from people from that religion when filling posts. Would you be more likely to apply for a job in this company...?"

⁸⁹ 2016 (n=1,136 and 1,135), 2011 (n=1,084 and 1,085), 2008 (n=1,071 each), and 2005 (n=1000 each)

In 2016, 46% of respondents said that they would be more likely to apply for a job in a company if their advertisements said they particularly welcomed applicants from members of their communities (Chart 3.9). Only 12% said they *would not* be more likely to apply. In addition, 42% said they did not know⁹⁰.

In addition, 48% of respondents said that they would be more likely to apply for a job in a company if they took practical steps to develop contacts within their communities. Only 10% said they *would not* be more likely to apply. Moreover, 41% of respondents said they did not know⁹¹.

3.6.1. Comparisons with previous EQAS surveys

The willingness of respondents to apply for a job within a company who adopted affirmative action measures has fluctuated around 45%-55% between 2005 and 2016 (see Chart 3.9). Between 2011 and 2016, there has been a six percentage-point decrease in the proportion of people who would be more likely to apply for a job if a company adopted welcome statements in their advertisements directed at the respondent's community (see Chart 3.9). However, findings from 2016 are similar to that reported in 2008 with 45% reporting they would apply to such a company (see Chart 3.9).

Where affirmative action measures involved the company taking practical steps to develop contacts with the respondents community, the proportion of respondents who would be encouraged to apply has also decreased between 2011 and 2016 (by 7 percentage points). However, findings from 2016 are similar to that reported in 2008 and 2005 with 49% and 47% reporting they would apply to such a company (see Chart 3.9).

⁹⁰ For further details see Table A3.27 in the Technical Report.

⁹¹ For further details see Table A3.29 in the Technical Report.

4

**Awareness
of Equality and
Anti-Discrimination
Laws**

4. Awareness of Equality and Anti-Discrimination Laws

Summary

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions exploring attitudes toward equality and anti-discrimination law, and in particular:

- public awareness of areas and grounds protected by anti-discrimination laws, and;
- awareness of the duties of public authorities under equality laws.

Key Findings

- In 2016, the greatest proportion of respondents had **awareness of their rights in the areas** of employment (62%) and education (40%).
- Religion was the **ground** most commonly identified by respondents (70%) as protected by anti-discrimination laws, followed by race (57%). Gender and political opinion (44% each) were the grounds least likely to be identified as protected under anti-discrimination law.
- Respondents' age, disability status, level of education, geographical location, sexual orientation, economic activity and socioeconomic status were found to be strong predictors of awareness of areas and grounds protected by anti-discrimination laws. For example, people over 65 years, people with a limiting disability, those with no qualifications, those living West of the Bann and respondents with the lowest average household income were less likely to be aware of the areas and grounds covered by anti-discrimination law.

4.1. Awareness of areas protected by anti-discrimination laws in Northern Ireland

Anti-discrimination laws were enacted in Northern Ireland to ensure the equal treatment of particular groups and to offer protection to people in a range of areas and across a range of equality grounds. In 2016, respondents were presented with a list of six areas that are covered under anti-discrimination laws and were asked, in which areas they thought they were protected⁹².

Chart 4.1:

Proportion of respondents aware of areas protected by anti-discrimination laws (n=1,143)

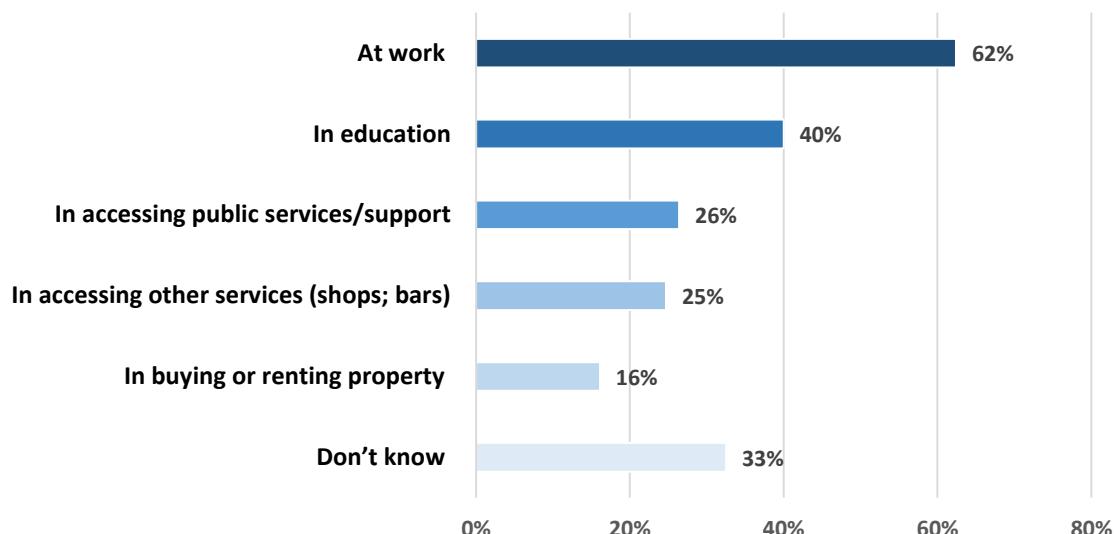


Chart 4.1 illustrates that respondents were most aware of their rights under anti-discrimination law in the area of employment (62%), followed by education (40%). Around a quarter of people were aware that they had rights in relation to accessing public services / support (26%) and accessing other services such as shops, bars etc. (25%). Only 16% of people had awareness of their rights in relation to buying and selling property (16%); while a further 33% said they did not know.

4.1.1. Comparisons with previous EQAS surveys

Results from EQAS 2016 cannot be robustly compared to the 2011 EQAS survey due to changes in the survey instrument used for this

⁹² Respondents were able to indicate multiple areas of protection. For further details see Table A4.1 in the Technical Report.

question⁹³. The following information from previous surveys is therefore, provided for illustrative rather than comparative purposes.

In 2011, respondents were most aware of their rights under anti-discrimination law in the area of employment (69%), followed by education (45%). Nearly two fifths of respondents were aware of their rights in relation to transport (39%), while a third (33%) were aware of their rights in relation to housing. A further 29% were aware of their rights in relation to goods, facilities and services and 17% were aware of their rights in relation to training.

There were no directly comparable questions in 2008 or 2005, as the survey instrument used during this period asked for awareness of specific anti-discrimination laws (e.g. Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998) rather than areas protected by these laws⁹⁴.

4.1.2. Awareness of areas of protection by characteristics of respondents

Among all respondents (n=1,143) the following areas emerged as strong predictors of awareness of the specified areas covered under anti-discrimination laws⁹⁵:

- *Age*
People over 65 years were less likely to be aware of their rights in the areas of work (39%), education (20%) and accessing other services (16%) than all other age groups⁹⁶. In addition, **people over 65 years** were less likely to be aware of their rights in accessing public services / support (19%) and buying or renting property (10%) than 30-44 year olds (33% and 22% respectively)⁹⁷.
- *Limiting disability*
People with a limiting disability were less likely to be aware of their rights in the areas of work (45%) and education (25%), than people without a disability (65% and 42% respectively).

⁹³ Categories used in the 2011 survey were re-worded in the 2016 survey. See ECNI (2012) Do You Mean Me? Equality Awareness Survey 2011. Equality Commission for Northern Ireland: Belfast.

⁹⁴ ECNI (2009) Equality Awareness Survey: 2008. Equality Commission for Northern Ireland: Belfast.

⁹⁵ For details of full demographic analysis see Tables A4.2.- A4.7. in the Technical Report.

⁹⁶ Awareness: Work (61%, 16-29 years; 76%, 30-44 years; 65%, 45-64 years; 39%, 65+years); Education (43%, 16-29 years; 49%, 30-44 years; 41%, 45-64 years; 20%, 65+years); Accessing other services (21%, 16-29 years; 32%, 30-44 years; 26%, 45-64 years; 16%, 65+years). See Tables A4.2, A4.3 and A4.5 in the Technical Report.

⁹⁷ For details of full demographic analysis, see Table A4.4 and A4.6 in the Technical Report.

- *Education*

Respondents with no qualifications were less likely to be aware of their rights in the areas of work (41%) and education (24%) than people with post-primary (67% and 42% respectively) or third-level qualifications (81% and 56% respectively). In addition, **respondents with no qualifications or post-primary qualifications** were less likely to be aware of their rights in the areas of accessing public services / support, accessing other services and buying or renting property than people with third-level qualifications⁹⁸.

- *Geography*

People living in West of the Bann were less likely to be aware of their rights in the areas of accessing public services / support (22%), accessing other services (20%), buying or renting property (13%) than people living East of the Bann (30%, 28% and 21% respectively). Further, **people living in West of the Bann** were less likely to be aware of their rights in the areas of education (35%) than people in Belfast (49%). Moreover, **people in rural areas** were less likely to be aware of their rights in the areas of education (34%), accessing public services / support (23%) and accessing other services (21%) than those from urban areas (42%, 30% and 28% respectively). In addition, **respondents living in mixed community areas** were less likely to be aware of their rights in the areas of accessing public services / support (21%), accessing other services (21%) and buying or renting property (14%) than people living areas with people of the same community background as themselves (34%, 30% and 21% respectively).

- *Economic activity*

People who are economically inactive⁹⁹ were less likely to be aware of their rights in the areas of education (29%), accessing public services / support (21%), accessing other services (19%) and buying or renting property (12%) than people who were economically active¹⁰⁰ (47%, 30%, 28%, and 18% respectively).

⁹⁸ Awareness: Accessing public services/support (21%, no qualifications; 24%, post-primary qualifications; 41%, third-level qualifications): Accessing other services (19%, no qualifications; 23%, post-primary qualifications; 37%, third-level qualifications): Buying or renting property (13%, no qualifications; 15%, post-primary qualifications; 25%, third-level qualifications). For details of full demographic analysis, see Tables A4.4 to A4.6 in the Technical Report.

⁹⁹ Those who are not in work and not actively seeking work.

¹⁰⁰ Those in employment, self-employed or unemployed but actively seeking work.

- *Dependents*

Those without dependent children: were less likely to be aware of their rights in the areas of work (59%), education (37%), accessing other services (22%) and buying or renting property (14%) than people with dependent children (70%, 46%, 30% and 21% respectively).

- *Socioeconomic*

People from lower social grade C2DE were less likely to be aware of their rights in the areas of education (31%), accessing public services / support (20%), accessing other services (18%) and buying or renting property (11%) than people from higher social grade ABC1 (51%, 34%, 33% and 22% respectively). In addition, **people with the lowest household income of less than £15K per annum** were less likely to be aware of their rights in the areas of work (55%), education (30%), accessing public services / support (30%), accessing other services (24%), buying or renting property (16%) than people with a middle household income of £15K-£25,999 (72%, 45%, 39%, 38% and 24% respectively) or with the highest income of £26k or greater (81%, 55%, 46%, 40% and 30% respectively).

- *Sexual Orientation*

People who were heterosexual¹⁰¹ were less likely to be aware of their rights in the areas of work (62%), education (39%), accessing public services / support (26%) and accessing other services (24%) than lesbian, gay and bisexual people¹⁰² (82%, 69%, 37%, and 43% respectively).

4.2. Awareness of grounds protected by anti-discrimination laws in Northern Ireland

Respondents who had previously identified areas of protection¹⁰³ were subsequently presented with a list of seven equality grounds that are protected under anti-discrimination laws. These respondents (n=771) were then asked: “Thinking about the areas you just mentioned, under which of the following grounds do you think people are protected?”.

¹⁰¹ Those who said their sexual orientation was toward people of a different sex.

¹⁰² Those who said their sexual orientation was toward people of the same sex/both sexes.

¹⁰³ Respondents who answered ‘don’t know’ to the previous question on protected areas are excluded. For further details see Table A4.8 in the Technical Report.

Chart 4.2:
Proportion of respondents aware of areas protected by anti-discrimination laws (n=771)

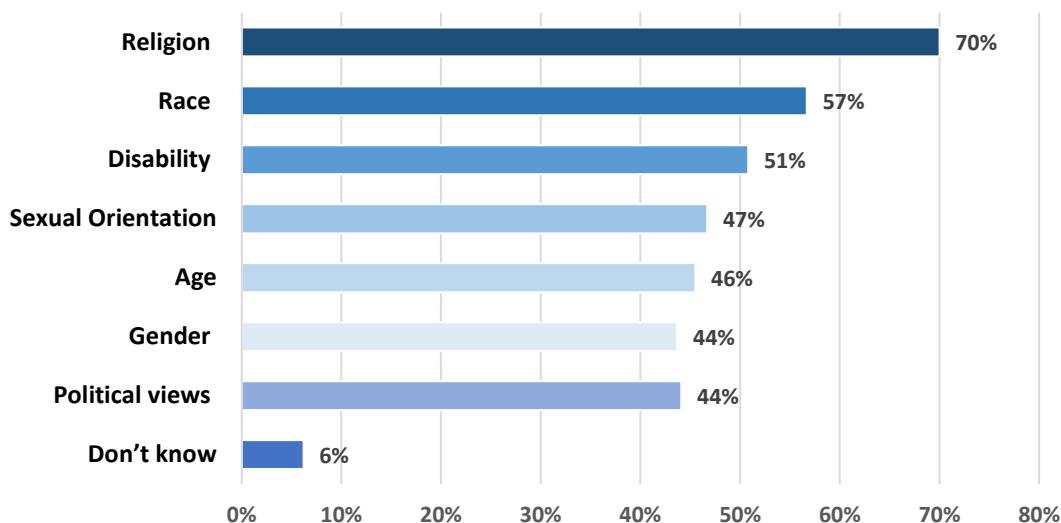


Chart 4.2 illustrates that religion was the ground most commonly identified as being protected under anti-discrimination laws (70%). Race was the second most identified ground (57%) followed by disability (51%), sexual orientation (47%) and age (46%). Gender and political views were the least identified grounds (44% each). A further 6% of respondents said they did not know which grounds were covered.

4.2.1. Comparisons with previous EQAS surveys

Results from EQAS 2016 cannot be robustly compared to the 2011 EQAS survey due to changes in the sample used for this question¹⁰⁴ and there were no directly comparable questions in 2008 or 2005. The following information from EQAS 2011 is therefore, provided for illustrative rather than comparative purposes.

In 2011, the most commonly identified equality ground was religion (52%), followed by age (46%), disability (42%), race (35%), gender (34%) and sexual orientation (22%). The least identified equality ground

¹⁰⁴ Categories used were similar between the two surveys, except for the addition of a “don’t know” category in 2016. However, the sample used in EQAS 2016 survey was drawn from those respondents who had identified areas protected under anti-discrimination laws in the previous question and excluding “don’t know” responses. The sample used in the 2011 survey consisted of all respondents. Given the differences in sample selection in 2011 and 2016, responses cannot be robustly compared between time periods.

was political views with only 12% of respondents identifying this ground¹⁰⁵.

4.2.2. Awareness of areas of protection by characteristics of respondents

Among all respondents (n=771) the following areas emerged as strong predictors of awareness of the grounds covered under anti-discrimination law¹⁰⁶:

- *Age*

Those over 65 years old were less likely to be aware that race (38%), gender (31%), sexual orientation (31%) and political views (30%) were grounds covered by anti-discrimination law than those aged 30-44 years old (64%, 50%, 52% and 49% respectively).

- *Marital Status*

Those who were single or married / co-habiting / in a civil partnership were less likely to be aware that age and disability were grounds covered by anti-discrimination law than those who were widowed / separated / divorced¹⁰⁷ .

- *Limiting disability*

People with a limiting disability: were less likely to be aware that religion (60%), race (32%), gender (34%), sexual orientation (37%) and political views (26%) were grounds covered by anti-discrimination law than those without a limiting disability (72%, 60%, 45%, 48% and 47% respectively).

- *Education*

Respondents with no qualifications were less likely to be aware that disability (45%), race (43%), gender (41%), sexual orientation (30%) and political views (29%) were grounds covered by anti-discrimination law than people with a third level education (65%, 60%, 58%, 59% and 54% respectively).

- *Geography*

Respondents living in Belfast were less likely to be aware that age (36%), disability (36%), gender (29%), sexual

¹⁰⁵ See ECNI (2012) Do You Mean Me? Equality Awareness Survey 2011. Equality Commission for Northern Ireland: Belfast.

¹⁰⁶ For details of full demographic analysis see Tables A4.9-A4.16 in the Technical Report.

¹⁰⁷ Awareness of grounds: Age (47%, single; 40%, married/cohabiting/civil partnership; 64%, widowed/separated/divorced); Disability (52%, single; 47%, married/cohabiting/civil partnership; 64%, widowed/separated/divorced). See Tables A4.9 and A4.16 in the Technical Report.

orientation (29%) and political views (30%), were grounds covered by anti-discrimination law than respondents living East of the Bann (55%, 59%, 53%, 54% and 51% respectively). Further, **respondents living West of the Bann** were less likely to be aware that age (42%), religion (66%) and gender (42%), were grounds covered by anti-discrimination law than respondents living East of the Bann (55%, 76% and 53% respectively). In addition, **respondents living in areas with people of the same community background as themselves** were less likely to be aware that race (51%) was a ground covered by anti-discrimination law than people living in mixed community areas (63%). However, **people living in mixed community areas** were less likely to be aware that age (38%), disability (43%) and gender (35%) were grounds covered by anti-discrimination law than respondents living in areas with people of the same community background as themselves (54%, 61%, and 50% respectively).

- *Ethnicity and Country of Birth*

Respondents who identified as ‘Other’ than white were less likely to be aware that age (27%), disability (27%), gender (24%), sexual orientation (27%) and political views (22%) were grounds covered by anti-discrimination law than people who identified as white (47%, 52%, 45%, 48% and 46% respectively). **However, those who identified as ‘other’ than white** were more likely to be aware that race was a ground covered by anti-discrimination law (87%) than people who identified as white (55%). In addition, **respondents born outside of the UK and Ireland** were more likely to be aware that race (81%) was a ground covered by anti-discrimination law than people born in Northern Ireland (56%) or Great Britain and Ireland (34%).

- *Economic activity*

People who are economically inactive¹⁰⁸ were less likely to be aware that race (49%), gender (35%), sexual orientation (37%), and political views (38%), were grounds covered by anti-discrimination law than people who were economically active (60%, 47%, 51%, and 47% respectively)¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁸ Those who are not in work and not actively seeking work.

¹⁰⁹ Those in employment, self-employed or unemployed but actively seeking work.

- *Socioeconomic*

Respondents from lower social grade C2DE were less likely to be aware that age (41%), disability (46%), race (53%), gender (38%), sexual orientation (37%) and political views (39%) were grounds covered by anti-discrimination law than respondents from higher social grade ABC1 (49%, 55%, 60%, 49%, 55% and 48% respectively). In addition, **people with the lowest household income of less than £15k** were less likely to be aware that age (54%), disability (60%), race (42%), gender (42%), sexual orientation (31%) and political views (28%) were grounds covered by anti-discrimination law than people with the highest household income of £26k or greater (72%, 81%, 59%, 66%, 59% and 55% respectively).

- *Sexual Orientation*

People who were heterosexual¹¹⁰ were less likely to be aware that gender (41%) and sexual orientation (43%) were grounds covered by anti-discrimination law than lesbian, gay and bisexual people (74% and 77%, respectively)¹¹¹.

¹¹⁰ Those who said their sexual orientation was toward people of a different sex.

¹¹¹ Those who said their sexual orientation was toward people of the same sex/both sexes.

5

**Awareness of and
Confidence in the
Equality Commission**

5. Awareness of and Confidence in the Equality Commission

Summary

Respondents were asked a series of questions in relation to their awareness of and confidence in the Equality Commission, which included:

- Public awareness of the Equality Commission;
- Sources of Awareness of the Commission;
- Knowledge of the role and responsibilities of the Commission;
- Interaction with the Commission;
- Confidence in
 - the ability of the Equality Commission to promote equality of opportunity for all;
 - the ability of the Equality Commission to provide leadership in the field of equality;
 - the ability of the Equality Commission to operate independently of government;
 - the Equality Commission as a valued source of expert advice on equality and anti-discrimination;
 - the ability of the Equality Commission to treat everybody the same irrespective of their background; and,
 - the contribution of the Commission in improving people's lives in Northern Ireland.

Key Findings

- In 2016, nearly half (49%) of respondents reported that they had heard of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, when prompted. This represents a small decrease in **awareness of the Commission** from the EQAS 2011 survey.
- A respondent's age and age-related characteristics, education, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and country of birth were strong predictors of awareness of the Commission. For example, people over 65 years, and those with the lowest average household income were less likely to have heard of the Commission. However, lesbian, gay and bisexual people were more likely to have heard of the Commission.

- Among those respondents who were aware of the Commission, the majority had heard of the Commission via the following **sources of awareness**: the media (77%), word of mouth (26%) and/or work or work-related training courses (20%).
- A respondent's marital status, disability status, education, geographical location, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation impacted on where they had heard of the Commission. For example, lesbian, gay and bisexual people and people from urban areas were more likely to have heard of the Commission via the media compared to their counterparts. However, people with a limiting disability were more likely to have heard of the Commission via word-of-mouth compared to their counterparts.
- When asked about their **knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of the Commission**, the majority of respondents who had heard of the Commission, were aware of the Commission's services in relation to assisting individuals with complaints of discrimination (71%); providing equality advice and information to organisations (68%); or individuals (62%); and, undertaking investigations (54%). Respondents were least likely to be aware of the Commission's services in relation to providing equality-focused training, seminars and events (41%).
- When asked about their past **interaction with the Commission**, the vast majority (94%) of respondents said they had never interacted with the Commission before.
- When respondents were asked a series of questions about their **confidence in the Commission**, the greatest proportion of respondents agreed or strongly agreed they had confidence in the ability of the Commission to promote equality of opportunity for all (39%). Further, the greatest proportion of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Commission provides leadership in the field of equality (40%) and that the Equality Commission provides a valued source of expert advice on equality and anti-discrimination (44%). Moreover, the greatest proportion of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Commission treat everyone the same irrespective of background (45%) and that the work of the Commission contributes to improving people's lives in Northern Ireland (46%). However, the greatest proportion of respondents (43%) said they did not know if the Commission operates independently of the government.
- A large minority of over a third of respondents did not know if they had confidence in the Commission in relation to all questions.

5.1. Awareness of the Equality Commission

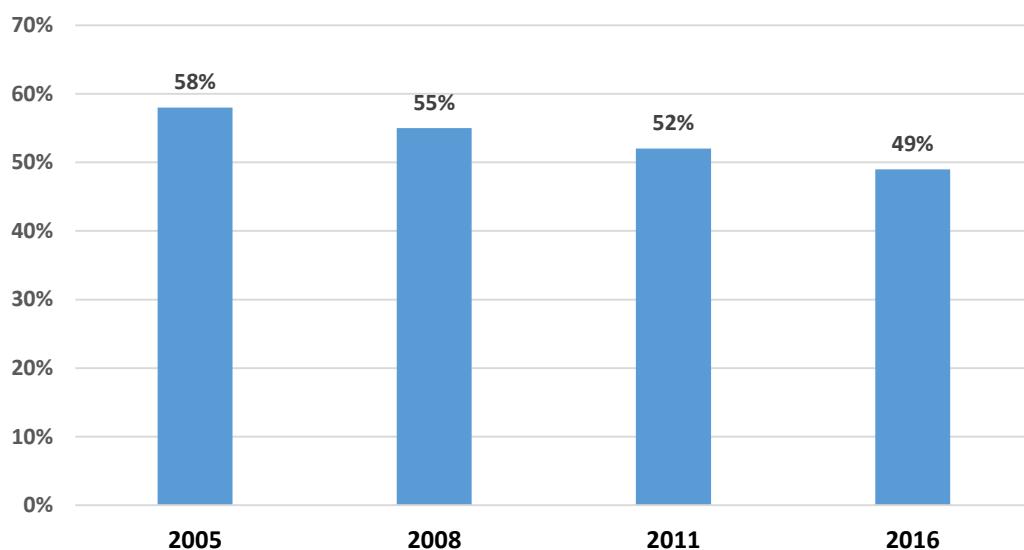
This section examines the level of current public awareness of the Equality Commission. Respondents were advised that the Equality Commission was the public body that deals with discrimination and were asked if they had heard of the Commission before. Nearly half (49%) of respondents said they had heard of the Commission¹¹².

5.1.1. Comparisons with previous EQAS surveys

When advised of the function of the Commission, a broadly similar proportion in 2011 (52%) said they had heard of the Equality Commission (see Chart 5.1). However, awareness of the Commission has decreased slightly by three percentage points, from 52% in 2011 to 49% in 2016 (see Chart 5.1).

Chart 5.1:

Proportion (%) of respondents who have heard of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, 2005-2016



5.1.2. Awareness of the Equality Commission by characteristics of the respondents

Among all respondents (n=1,143) the following characteristics emerged as strong predictors of awareness of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland¹¹³:

¹¹² For full details, see Table A5.1 in the Technical Report.

¹¹³ For full details of analysis please see Table A5.2 in the Technical Report.

- *Age*

People over 65 years were less likely to have heard of the Commission (36%) than all other age groups (42%, 16-29 years; 53%, 45-64 years; 60%, 30-44 years). In addition, respondents with characteristics which are often, but not exclusively, associated with older age, including **having a limiting disability, being widowed /divorced / separated** and being **economically inactive** were also less likely to have heard of the Commission¹¹⁴.

- *Education*

People with no qualifications were less likely to have heard of the Commission (29%) than people with post-primary (50%) and third-level (69%) qualifications.

- *Socioeconomic*

People from lower social grade C2DE were less likely to have heard of the Commission (37%) than people from higher social grade ABC1 (62%). In addition, **people with the lowest household income of less than £15k per annum** were less likely to have heard of the Commission (36%) than people with a middle household income of £15k-£25,999 (54%) or the highest household income of £26k or greater (65%).

- *Sexual Orientation*

People who identified as heterosexual¹¹⁵ were less likely to have heard of the Commission (48%) than lesbian, gay or bisexual people (69%)¹¹⁶.

- *Country of Birth*

People born **outside the UK or Ireland** were less likely to have heard of the Commission (33%) than people born in Northern Ireland (51%).

5.2. Sources of Awareness of the Commission

Those respondents (n=558) who said they had heard of the Commission were asked a further series of questions exploring how they became aware of the Commission and their knowledge of the Commission's duties and responsibilities¹¹⁷.

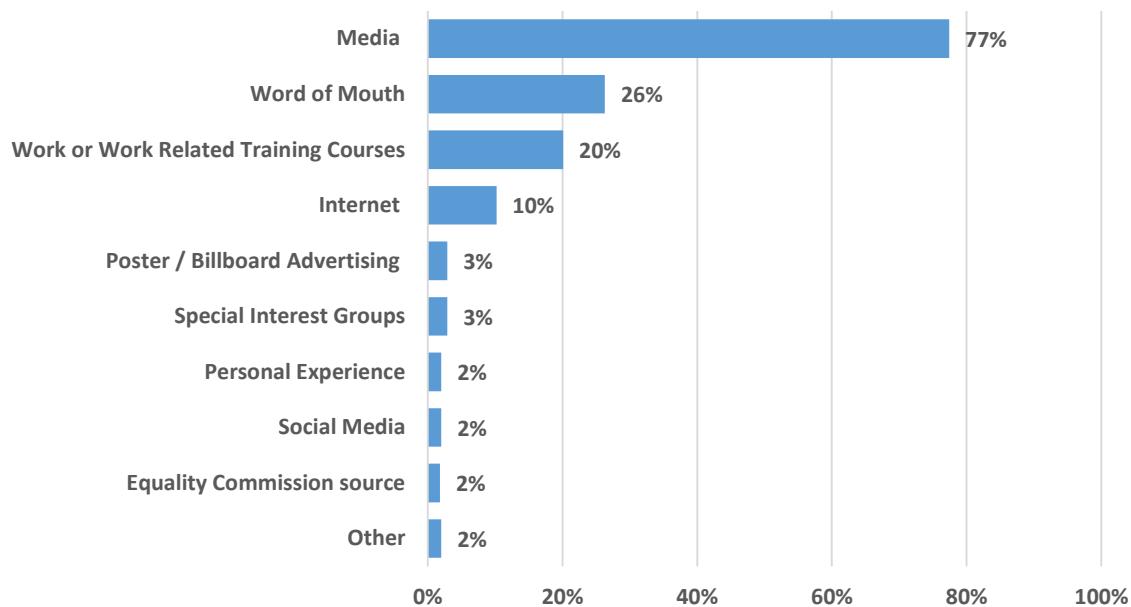
¹¹⁴ The economically inactive are those who are not in work and not actively looking for work. For details of full demographic analysis, see Table A5.2 in the Technical Report.

¹¹⁵ Those with a sexual orientation toward people of a different sex.

¹¹⁶ Those with a sexual orientation toward people of the same sex or both sexes.

¹¹⁷ For full details see Tables A5.3-A5.4 in the Technical Report.

Chart 5.2:
Sources of Awareness of the Equality Commission (n=558)



Respondents were asked where they had heard of the Commission (see Chart 5.2)¹¹⁸. The majority (77%) of respondents had heard of the Commission through the media (radio, television, newspapers, magazines, media articles). Over a quarter (26%) had heard of the Commission through word of mouth while a fifth (20%) had heard of the Commission through work or work-related training courses. One in ten (10%) had heard of the Commission through internet sources¹¹⁹.

A further 3% had heard of the Commission through poster / billboard advertising or special interest groups, while two percent had heard of the Commission via personal experience, social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc.) or from an Equality Commission source (website, E-zine).

5.3. Comparisons with previous EQAS surveys

It should be noted that categories relating to knowledge through the media could not be directly compared to previous EQAS surveys¹²⁰. However, in 2011, 2008 and 2005 the majority of people had also heard of the Commission via media sources including television (65%, 53%

¹¹⁸ Charts do not sum to 100%. This was an unprompted question wherein respondents could make multiple responses.

¹¹⁹ For full details see Tables A5.3-A5.4 in the Technical Report.

¹²⁰ Previous surveys recorded television, radio, newspapers etc. as separate categories and therefore cannot be directly compared to the overall category of 'media' used in the 2016 survey.

and 59% respectively), newspapers / magazines / articles (27%, 27% and 32% respectively) and radio (22%, in 2011; 13%, in 2008).

Other categories can be directly compared with previous EQAS surveys. The proportion of people who heard of the Commission by word of mouth has increased consistently by 17 percentage points from 9% in 2005 to 26% in 2016. Similarly, the proportion of people who have heard of the Commission through work-related training courses has increased by 11 percentage points from 9% in 2005 to 20% in 2016.

However, the proportion of people who have heard of the Commission via the internet, billboard/poster advertising and personal experience has decreased from 2011 by five percentage points, eight percentage points and nine percentage points respectively. Levels of awareness for the internet, billboard/poster advertising and personal experience are currently similar to that reported in 2008 (8%, 3% and 4% respectively in 2008).

The proportion of people who have heard of the Commission via social media and Equality Commission sources are similar to that reported in 2011 (only a 1 percentage point increase).

5.4. *Knowledge of the Role and Responsibilities of the Commission*

The survey sought to determine how much people know about the roles and responsibilities of the Commission. To determine public knowledge of the Commission's main services respondents who had heard of the Commission (n=558) were asked whether they were aware of the main services provided by the Commission¹²¹.

Chart 5.3 illustrates that just under three quarters (71%) of respondents were aware that the Commission provides "*assistance to individuals with complaints of discrimination*". The majority of respondents were also aware the Commission provides "*equality advice and information to organisations*" (68%), "*equality advice and information to individuals*" (62%) and "*undertakes equality based investigations*" (54%; see Chart 5.3).

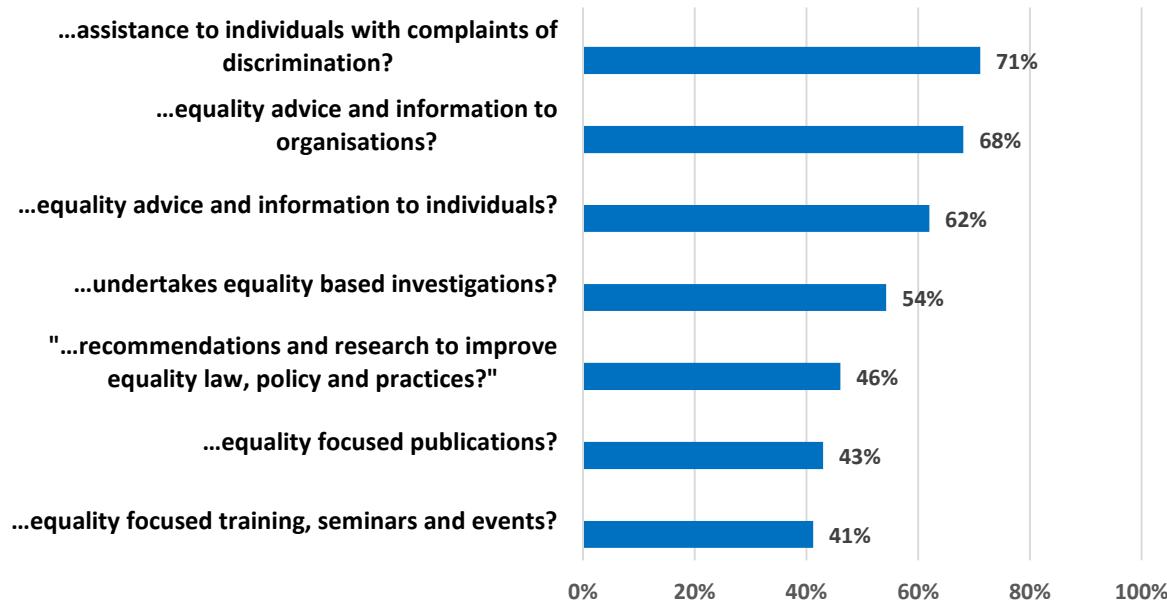
However, Chart 5.3. also demonstrates that less than half of respondents were aware that the Commission provides

¹²¹ See Table A5.9 in the Technical Report.

“recommendations and research to improve equality law, policy and practices” (46%), “equality focused publications” (43%) and “equality focused training, seminars and events” (41%; see Chart 5.3).

Chart 5.3:

Proportion (%) of people (n=558) who were aware that the Commission provides....



5.4.1. Comparisons with previous EQAS surveys

A number of categories cannot be robustly compared, due to changes in the survey instrument since 2011 or because there are no comparable questions from previous surveys¹²². Therefore, the following information is, provided for the interest of the reader.

In 2008¹²³ and 2011, the proportion of respondents aware that the Commission had a role in supporting people who may have experienced discrimination to take their case to tribunal was 20% and 41% respectively. In addition, awareness of the Commissions role in advising people who may have experienced discrimination was 34% in 2011 and 43% in 2008.

Awareness of the Commission’s role in providing “*training for employers*” was 15% in 2011 and 11% in 2008, while awareness of the

¹²² The wording of questions and responses relating to knowledge of the main services provided by the Commission have changed since previous EQAS surveys. In addition, this question was prompted in EQAS 2016 but unprompted in 2011 and 2008 which could impact on the level of awareness. Therefore, caution should be used in interpreting results due to the change in wording of questions, categories and responses.

¹²³ There are no comparable questions in 2005.

Commission's role in “*providing information and publications on the Regulations*” was 39% and 12% respectively.

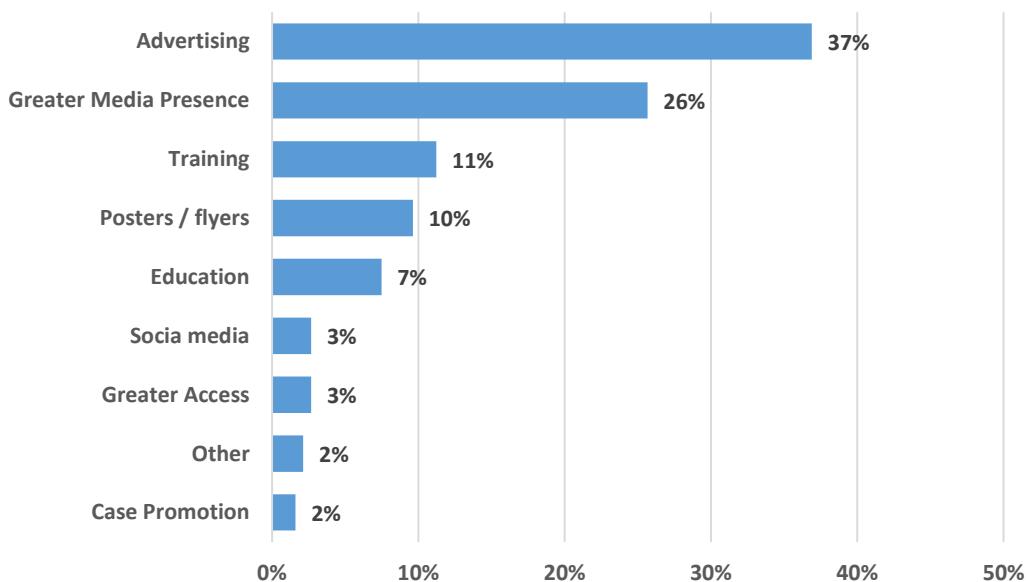
In 2011 and 2008, 24% and 17% of people respectively were aware that the Commission does investigations and research on equality issues and provides information for employers on the Equality Commission website. In addition, 15% and 26% of respondents respectively were aware that Commission has a role in monitoring the workforce, 12% and 11% respectively knew they provided employer-led networks. In 2011 2% of people reported that the Commission provided information for service providers.

5.5. Increasing Awareness of the Commission

Respondents who had heard of the Commission (n=558) were then asked to consider how, in their opinion, the Commission could raise awareness of what it is and what it does¹²⁴. Over two-thirds (69%) of respondents said they did not know. However, just under a third (31%) of respondents had various suggestions for raising awareness of the Commission¹²⁵.

Chart 5.4:

Percentage themed suggestions from respondents (n=187) on how to raise awareness of the Commission



¹²⁴ Multiple response question.

¹²⁵ For full details see Table A5.17-A5.18 in the Technical Report.

Thematic analysis¹²⁶ of unprompted suggestions reveals that of those respondents who had suggestions for raising awareness (n=187), over two thirds (37%) felt that the Commission should do more advertising (Chart 5.4). Over a quarter (26%) of respondents felt that the Commission should have a greater media presence through TV / TV ads, newspapers and radio (see Chart 5.4).

Around one in ten respondents (11%) felt that the Commission should do more training, including workplace seminars, roadshows and information evenings (Chart 5.4). A further one in ten (10%) respondents felt that the Commission should distribute more posters, flyers, letterbox drops, direct mail and leaflets in libraries or printed information on pay slips (Chart 5.4). Other suggestions included education through schools and university establishments (7%), greater use of social media (3%) or greater access to Commission help (3%) by providing local offices, a helpline number or help to those who need it (Chart 5.4). In addition, 2% felt that greater case promotion would be helpful in raising awareness of the Commission and its work (Chart 5.4).

5.6. Interaction with the Commission

Those respondents who had heard of the Commission (n=558) were asked a further series of questions about their past contact with the Commission.

5.6.1. Past interaction with the Commission

When asked, “When was your most interaction with the Commission?” the majority of respondents (94%) said they had never interacted with the Commission before. Only 6% of respondents (n=36) said they had previously interacted with the Commission¹²⁷.

Four percent of respondents had interacted with the Commission more than 3 years ago, two percent had interacted with the Commission between 1-3 years ago and one percent had interacted with the Commission within the last year¹²⁸.

5.6.2. Methods of Interaction with the Commission

Among those respondents that had contact with the Commission (n=36), one or more methods of interaction were used¹²⁹. The greatest proportion of people had interacted with the Commission through the

¹²⁶ For full details see Tables A5.17-A5.18 in the Technical Report.

¹²⁷ For full details, see Table A5.19 in the Technical Report.

¹²⁸ Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding. See Table A5.19 in the Technical Report for full details.

¹²⁹ Multiple response question. For full details see Tables A5.20-A5.21 in the Technical Report.

Commission's website (36%, n=13), while a third (33%, n=12) had one-to-one contact with Commission staff¹³⁰. A further quarter (25%, n=9) of those who had contact had attended training, seminars and/or events. Contact with the Commission had also occurred through social media (8%, n=3)¹³¹, hardcopy publications¹³² (8%, n=3), electronic publications (6%, n=2)¹³³ or an 'other' format (6%, n=2).

5.6.3. Reasons for not interacting with the Commission

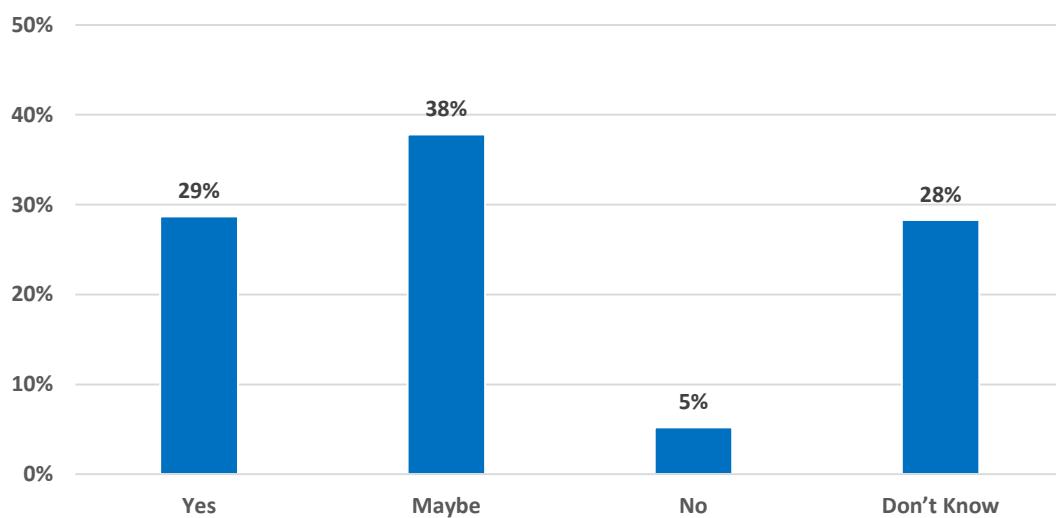
Those respondents who had not interacted (n=522) were asked what their reason was for not interacting with the Commission¹³⁴. The majority (94%) of respondents said that they had no need to contact the Commission for equality / anti-discrimination advice. A further 3% (n=18) said that they did not know the Commission provided advice / services, while 2% (n=10) said they preferred to contact someone else for equality / anti-discrimination advice.

5.6.4. Future interaction with the Commission

Respondents who had heard of the Commission (n=558) were asked whether they would contact the Equality Commission for advice or assistance if they had a problem with, or a question about, equality or discrimination¹³⁵.

Chart 5.5:

Proportion (%) of respondents who would contact the Commission if they had a problem, or question about equality or discrimination (n=558).



¹³⁰ Face-to-face, enquiry/advice line or email/letter.

¹³¹ Twitter, Facebook.

¹³² Including guides, codes, reports etc.

¹³³ Including e-zines or PDF publications (guides, codes, reports etc.).

¹³⁴ For further details see Table A5.23-A5.24 in the Technical Report.

¹³⁵ For further details see Table A5.25 in the Technical Report.

Over two thirds of respondents (67%) said they would or maybe would contact the Equality Commission for advice or assistance if they had a problem with, or a question about, equality or discrimination, with only five percent saying they would not. A further 28% of respondents said they did not know (see Chart 5.5)¹³⁶.

5.6.5. Comparisons with previous surveys

A number of categories cannot be robustly compared with previous surveys¹³⁷, due to changes in the sample population and survey instrument, since 2011¹³⁸. Therefore, the following information is, provided for the interest of the reader.

In 2011, the majority (58%) of respondents (n=1,095) said they would contact the Equality Commission for advice or assistance if they had a problem with equality or discrimination. This represented a 16-percentage point increase from 42% in 2008.

5.7. Public Confidence in the Commission

This section of the survey explored the level of confidence of people surveyed in the Commission and its work. Only those respondents who had heard of the Commission were invited to answer this set of questions (n=558).

In addition, while similar questions have been asked in previous EQAS surveys it was not possible to provide a robust comparison between questions in this section and those asked in previous EQAS surveys due to changes in the survey instrument¹³⁹.

5.7.1. Ability of the Equality Commission to promote equality of opportunity

Respondents who were aware of the Commission (n=558) were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement "*I have confidence in the ability of the equality Commission to promote equality of opportunity for all*".

¹³⁶ For further details see Table A5.25 in the Technical Report.

¹³⁷ 2011 and 2008. There were no comparable questions in 2005.

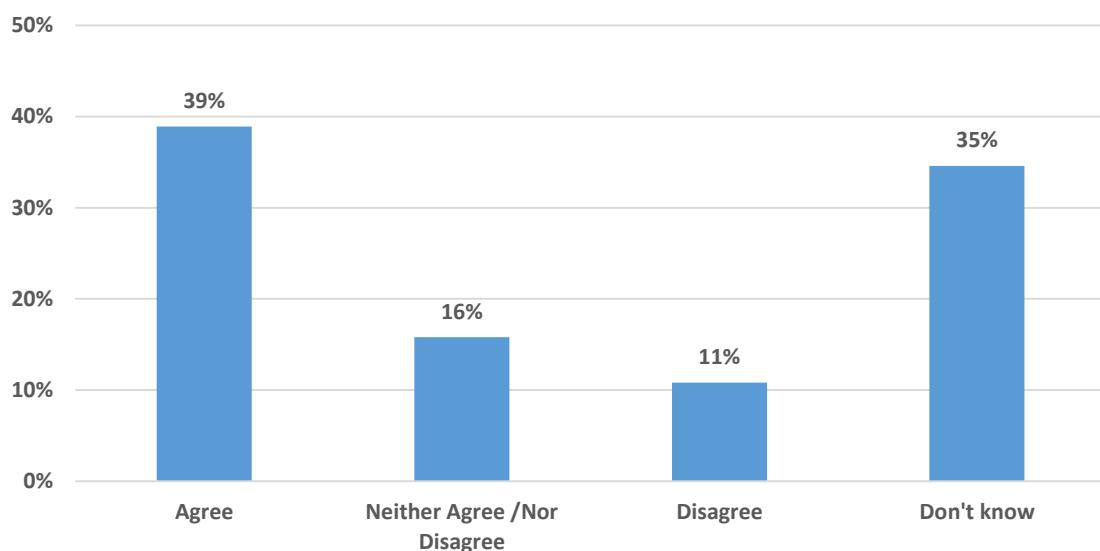
¹³⁸ Prior to 2016, this question was asked of all respondents to the survey (the full sample population), whereas in 2016 this question was asked of all respondents who had heard of the Equality Commission. Changes to the sample population between surveys could influence responses provided. In addition, since 2011 the "maybe" response has been included as an additional category.

¹³⁹ No comparable questions were available for 2005. The 2016 survey added in an additional category of "neither agree nor disagree" which was not available in 2008 and 2011. For some questions, 2016 represented the first year this question appeared in the survey, or had appeared in this format.

Of these respondents, 39% agreed or strongly agreed that they had confidence in the Commission, 11% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had confidence, while 16% could neither agree or disagree. Over a third of respondents (35%) said they did not know (Chart 5.6)¹⁴⁰.

Chart 5.6:

Proportion (%) of people surveyed who agreed or disagreed that they had confidence in the ability of the Commission to promote equality of opportunity for all (n=558)



5.7.2. Ability of the Equality Commission to provide leadership in the field of equality

Respondents (n=558) were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement “*The Commission provides leadership in the field of equality*”.

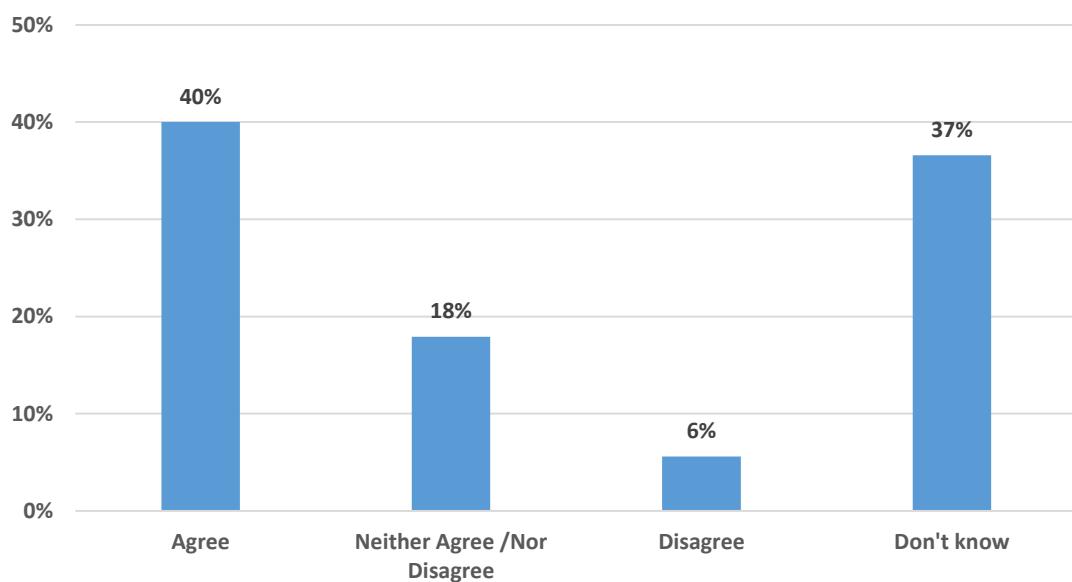
Four in ten (40%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Commission provides leadership in the field of equality, however only six percent disagreed or strongly disagreed (see Chart 5.7). A further 18% neither agreed nor disagreed. However, a large minority (37%) said they did not know (Chart 5.7)¹⁴¹.

¹⁴⁰ For full details see Table A5.29 in the Technical Report.

¹⁴¹ For full details see Table A5.29 in the Technical Report.

Chart 5.7:

Proportion (%) of people surveyed who agreed or disagreed that the Commission provides leadership in the field of equality (n=558).



5.7.3. The Equality Commission operates independently of the government.

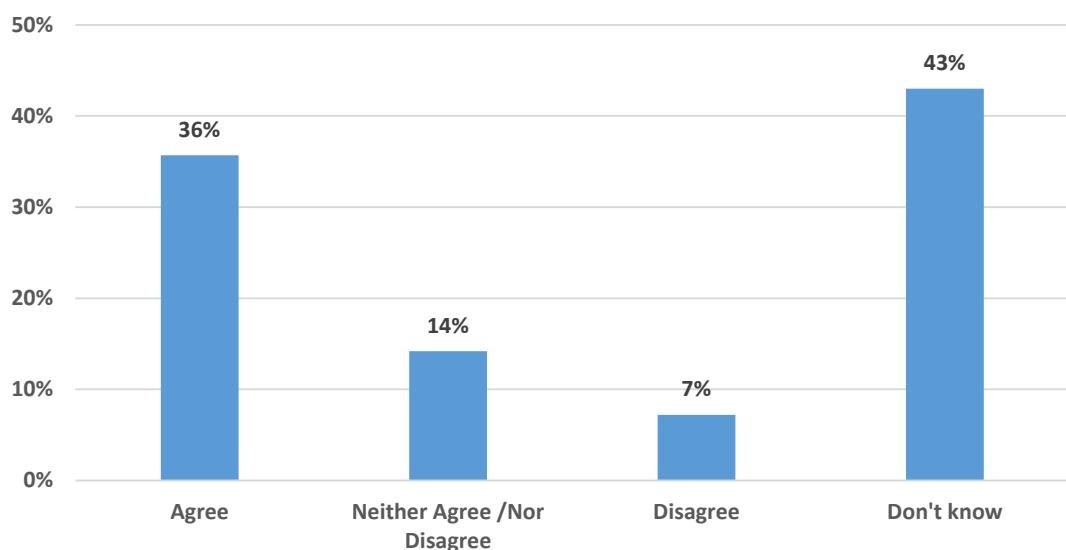
Respondents (n=558) were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement “*The Commission operates independently of the government*”¹⁴².

The majority of people surveyed (43%) said that they did not know (Chart 5.8). However, over a third (36%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Commission operates independently of government, with only seven percent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (see Chart 5.8). A further 14% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement (Chart 5.8).

¹⁴² For full details see Table A5.29 in the Technical Report.

Chart 5.8:

Proportion (%) of people surveyed who agreed or disagreed that the Commission operates independently of the government (n=558).

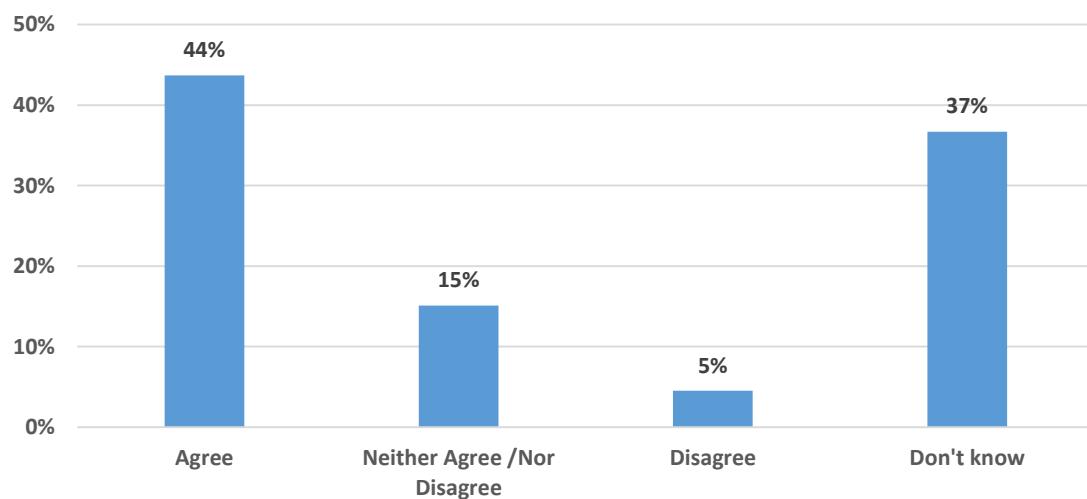


5.7.4. The Equality Commission as a source of expert advice.

Respondents (n=558) were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement "*The Commission provides a valued source of expert advice on equality and anti-discrimination*"¹⁴³.

Chart 5.9:

Proportion (%) of people surveyed who agreed or disagreed that the Commission provides a valued source of expert advice (n=558).



The largest group of respondents (44%) agreed or strongly agreed that the Commission provides a valued source of expert advice on equality and anti-discrimination, with only five percent in disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (see Chart 5.9). A further 15% were neither agreed or

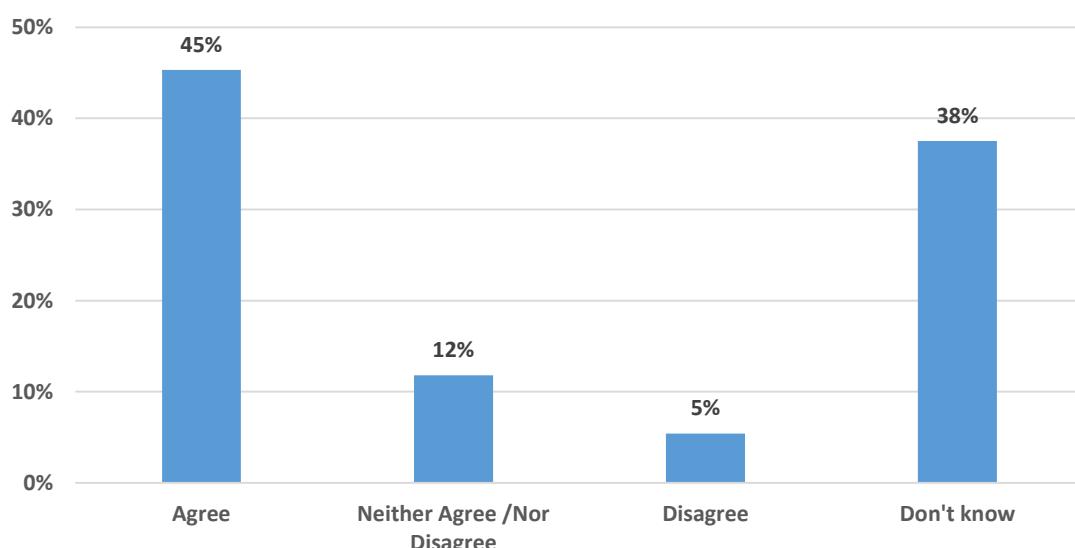
¹⁴³ For full details see Table A5.29 in the Technical Report.

disagreed with this statement (see Chart 5.9). However, over a third (37%) of respondents said they did not know.

5.7.5. The Equality Commission and its treatment of the general public
Respondents (n=558) were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement “*The Commission treats everyone the same irrespective of their background*”¹⁴⁴.

Chart 5.10:

Proportion (%) of people surveyed who agreed or disagreed that the Commission treats everyone the same irrespective of their background (n=558).



The greatest proportion of respondents (45%) agreed or strongly agreed that the Commission treats everyone the same irrespective of background, with only 5% of respondents in disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (Chart 5.10). A further 12% were neutral¹⁴⁵ in their response to this statement. However, a large minority (38%) of respondents said they did not know.

5.7.6. The contribution of the Commission to improving people's lives
Respondents (n=558) were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement “*The work of the Commission contributes to improving people's lives in Northern Ireland*”¹⁴⁶.

Chart 5.11 illustrates that the greatest proportion of respondents (46%) agreed or strongly agreed that the work of the Commission contributes

¹⁴⁴ For further details, see Table A5.29 in the Technical Report.

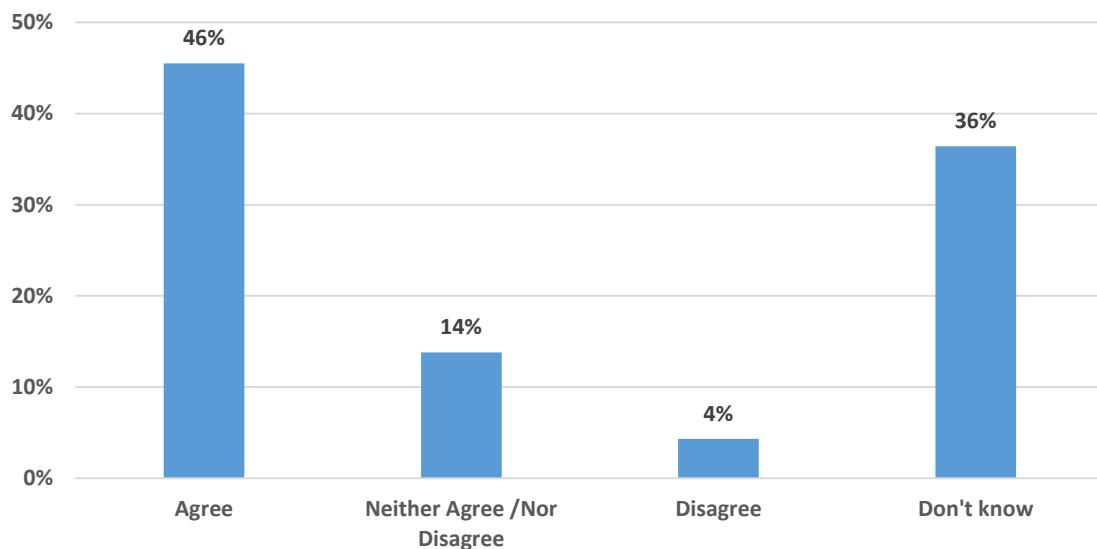
¹⁴⁵ Neither agreed nor disagreed.

¹⁴⁶ For further details, see Table A5.29 in the Technical Report.

to improving people's lives in Northern Ireland, with only four percent of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. A further 14% said neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. However, over a third (36%) of respondents said they did not know.

Chart 5.11:

Proportion (%) of people surveyed who agreed or disagreed that the Commission contributes to improving people's lives (n=558).



6

Personal Experiences of Discrimination and Unfair Treatment

6. Personal Experiences of Discrimination and Unfair Treatment

Summary

Respondents were asked about their personal experiences of discrimination and unfair treatment in Northern Ireland using specific questions examining:

- experiences of unfair treatment / discrimination;
- types of unfair treatment; and
- making a complaint.

Key Findings

- In 2016, 7% of respondents indicated that they had experienced one of more **types of unfair treatment / discrimination** in the last year.
- The two most common **types of unfair treatment** experienced by respondents in the last year were unfair treatment / discrimination “*in your daily life*” and “*at work*” (3% each).
- Among those respondents who had experienced unfair treatment, only just over a quarter (27%) of those who answered the question said they had **made a complaint**.

6.1. Experiences of unfair treatment / discrimination

Respondents were asked whether, in the last year, they had been treated unfairly / discriminated against as a result of being a member of a specific equality group (for example, being disabled, lesbian or gay, male or female or being Catholic or Protestant).

6.2. Overall experience of unfair treatment

Overall, 7% of respondents (N=79) indicated that they had been subject to one or more types of unfair treatment / discrimination in the last year (see Chart 6.1)¹⁴⁷.

6.2.1. Comparisons with previous EQAS surveys

Results from EQAS 2016 cannot be compared to the 2011, 2008 and 2005 EQAS survey due to changes in the survey instrument¹⁴⁸. The following information from EQAS 2011 is therefore, provided for illustrative rather than comparative purposes.

In 2011, 33% of respondents said they had been subject to one or more types of unfair treatment in the last three years, a 17 percentage-point increase from 2008.

6.3. Types of Unfair Treatment / Discrimination

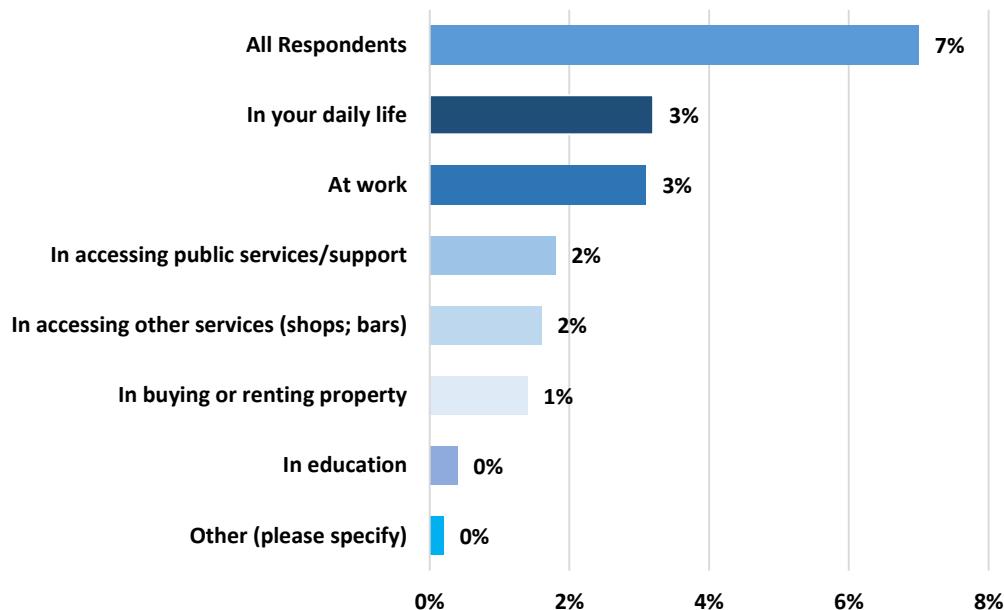
Respondents were presented with a list of seven types of unfair treatment. They were asked, whether, in the last year, they had experienced unfair treatment / discrimination in any of these situations because they belonged to a specific equality group (for example, being disabled, lesbian or gay, male or female or being Catholic or Protestant).

¹⁴⁷ For full details see Table A6.1-A6.3 in the Technical Report.

¹⁴⁸ In previous years, respondents were asked about their experiences of unfair treatment / discrimination in the *last three years*. In 2016, respondents were asked for their experiences *in the last year*. Given the change in time period under analysis no comparison can be made.

Chart 6.1:

Proportion (%) of people experiencing unfair treatment / discrimination in the following areas, in the last year due to membership of a specific equality group (n=1139)



The two most common forms of perceived unfair treatment / discrimination experienced by respondents were unfair treatment / discrimination in your daily life and at work (3% each; see Chart 6.1). Two percent of respondents reported unfair treatment / discrimination in accessing public services / support and in accessing other services (shops; bars). Only one percent of respondents reported unfair treatment / discrimination in buying or renting property; while less than one percent (0.4%) reported unfair treatment / discrimination in education (see Chart 6.1)¹⁴⁹.

6.3.1. Comparisons with previous EQAS surveys

Results from EQAS 2016 cannot be compared to the 2011, 2008 and 2005 EQAS survey due to changes in the survey instrument¹⁵⁰. The following information from EQAS 2011 is therefore, provided for illustrative rather than comparative purposes.

In 2011, the two most common forms of perceived unfair treatment / experienced by respondents *in the last three years* were harassment and not being able to express your culture (14% each). The next most

¹⁴⁹ For full details see Table A6.1-6.3 in the Technical Report.

¹⁵⁰ In previous years, respondents were asked about their experiences of unfair treatment / discrimination in the *last three years*. In 2016, respondents were asked for their experiences *in the last year*. Given the change in time period under analysis no comparison can be made.

common types of unfair treatment was unfair treatment at work and when trying to buy / rent a house premises or land (10% each). Finally, eight percent of respondents experienced unfair treatment *in the last three years* in relation to educational opportunities, when trying to access public services and/or when they tried to use shops, bars or restaurants.

6.4. Making a Complaint

Respondents who reported that they had experienced unfair treatment because they were a member of specific equality group (n=79) were asked if they had made a complaint.

Of those respondents who answered the question¹⁵¹, nearly a third (32%, n=13) said they had made a complaint, while over two thirds (68%, n=28) had not¹⁵². Nearly a quarter (24%, n=10) complained to the individual or organisation concerned, 4% (n=1) complained to the Equality Commission, while 7% (n=3) complained to another body (for example, the police or a Union)¹⁵³

6.4.1. Comparisons with previous EQAS surveys

Caution is required when interpreting trend information due to changes in the 2016 survey instrument and low sample size. Although the question has not changed, feeder questions relating to this item have changed both in content and the time period concerned¹⁵⁴.

For the information of the reader, Chart 6.2. illustrates the proportion of people who made a complaint having experienced unfair treatment / discrimination between 2005 and 2016.

¹⁵¹ A sample size of n=41 respondents answered the question. See Table A6.14 in the Technical Report for further details. It should be noted that this is a multiple response question, therefore, responses may not sum to 100%.

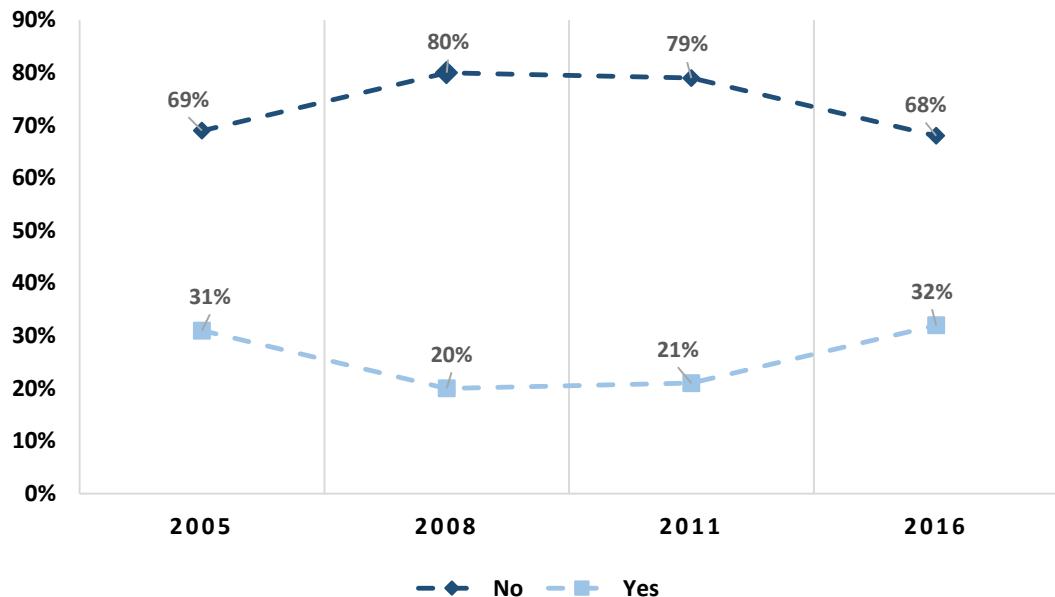
¹⁵² For full details, see Table A6.14-A6.15 in the Technical Report.

¹⁵³ For full details, see Table A6.14-A6.15 in the Technical Report.

¹⁵⁴ In previous years, respondents were asked about their experiences of unfair treatment / discrimination in the *last three years*, with ‘being unable to reasonably express your culture’ a single response within the question on unfair treatment / discrimination. In addition, questions on experiences of being unable to express your culture were a subcategory of unfair treatment in previous surveys rather than a survey item.

Chart 6.2:

Proportion (%) of people who made a complaint having experienced unfair treatment / discrimination, 2005-2016¹⁵⁵



¹⁵⁵ Caution is required when interpreting trend information due to changes in the 2016 survey instrument. Although the question has not changed, feeder questions relating to this item have changed significantly both in content and time period concerned. In previous years, respondents were asked about their experiences of unfair treatment / discrimination in the *last three years*.

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