

# Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey

**March 2018**

**Department for the Economy - EU Exit Analysis Branch**

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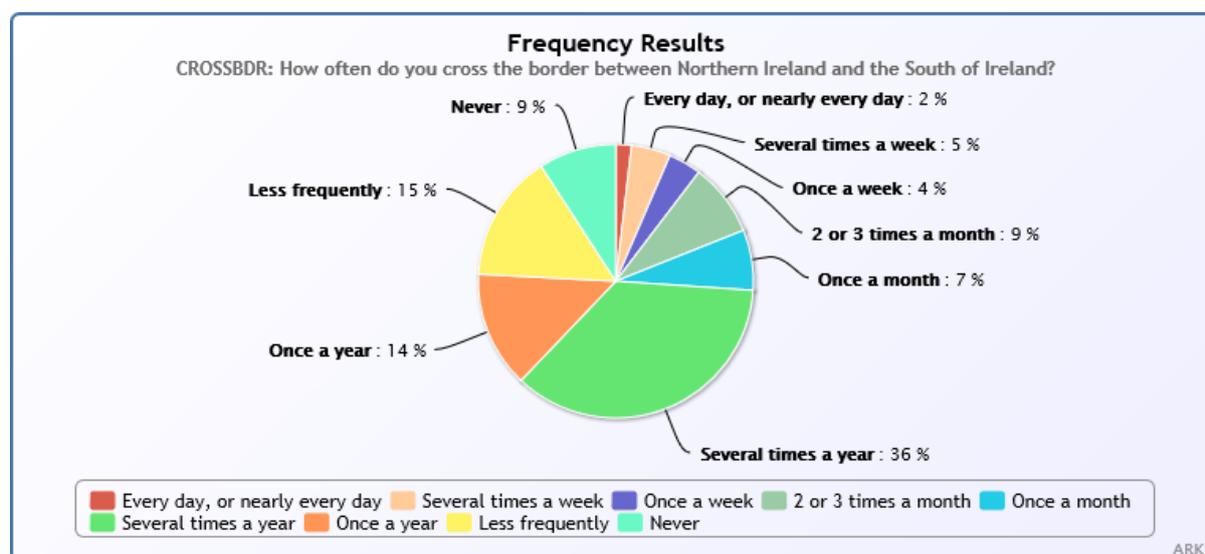
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## Cross Border Travel

The Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) survey,<sup>1</sup> a joint collaboration between Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University, collects information on the attitudes, values and beliefs of the people of Northern Ireland on a wide range of social and economic issues. Run annually, a survey was completed between September and December 2016 with a representative sample of 1,208 adults aged 18 and over.

The 2016 survey included the question "How often do you yourself cross the border between Northern Ireland and the South of Ireland?" The headline results are presented in the chart below<sup>2</sup> and show that 63% of adults crossed the border at least several times a year whilst 20% crossed the border at least 2 or 3 times a month.

**Figure 1: Frequency of Cross Border Travel**



## Cross border trips by Age, Gender and Religion

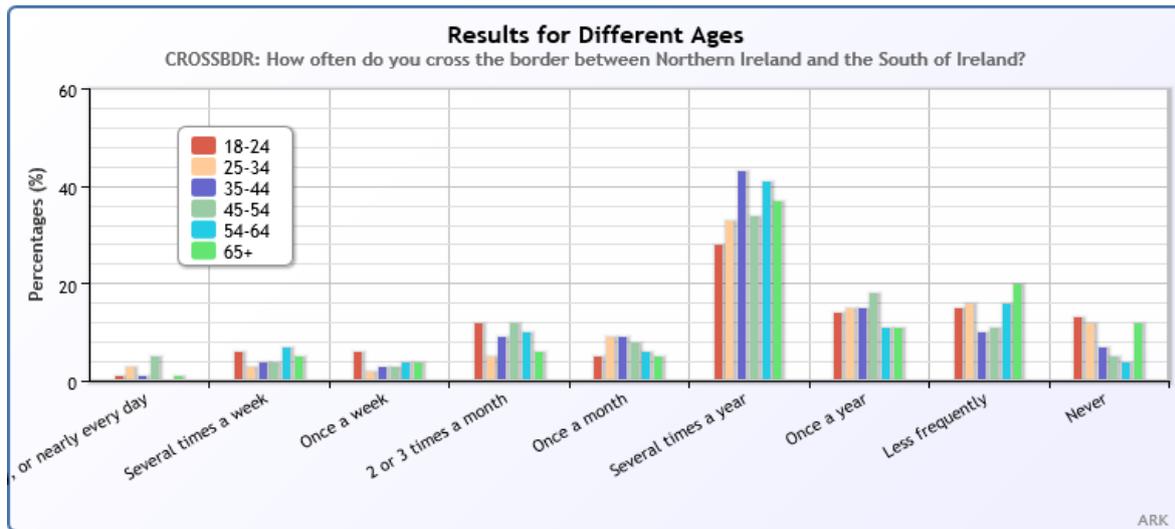
The survey results are also available by age, gender and religion. With these results illustrated in the charts below, findings of note are that:

- People aged 18-24 and 45-54 reported the highest rates for crossing the border at least 2-3 times a month with 25% and 24% respectively of the population in those age groups crossing the border at least 2-3 times per month;
- Males reported slightly higher rates of frequent border crossing and females reported slightly higher rates of less frequent border crossing or no border crossing. 22% of males crossed the border at least 2-3 times per month compared to 16% of females; and
- Catholic respondents reported higher rates of frequent border crossing compared to Protestants or to those respondents with no religion. 31% of Catholic respondents crossed the border at least 2-3 times per week compared to 8% of Protestant respondents and 15% of respondents with no religion.

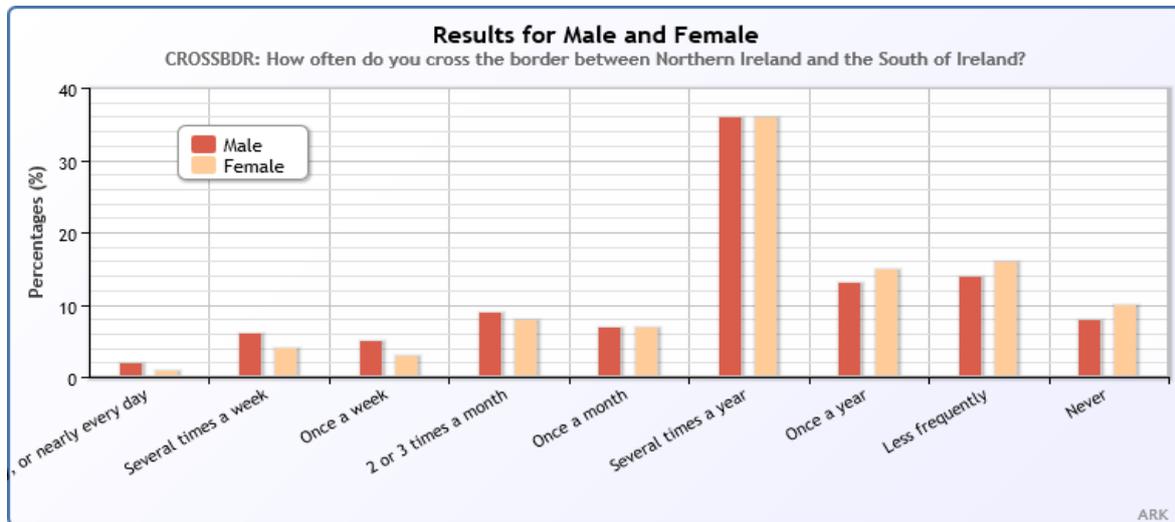
<sup>1</sup> See: <http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/>

<sup>2</sup> The data can be sourced from: [http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2016/Political\\_Attitudes/CROSSBDR.html](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2016/Political_Attitudes/CROSSBDR.html)

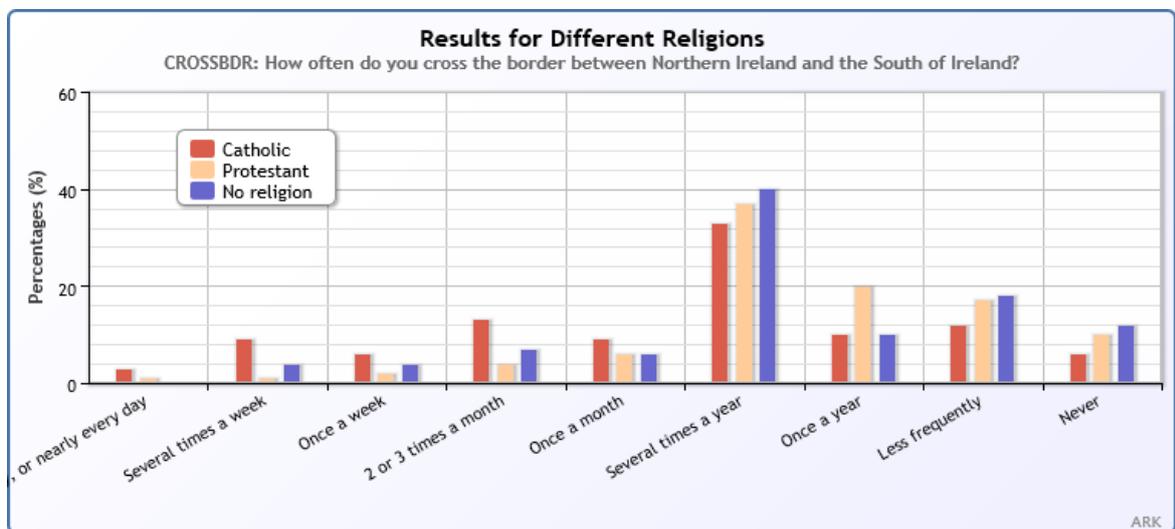
**Figure 2: Cross Border Trips by Age**



**Figure 3: Cross Border Trips by Gender**



**Figure 4: Cross Border Trips by Religion**



## Cross border trips and Geography

The NILT survey data was subsequently analysed on a geographic basis with the 11 District Councils of Northern Ireland re-classified to comprise three groups: District Councils in Northern Ireland along the border with the South of Ireland; Belfast District Council; and all other District Councils to the east of Northern Ireland.

The results of this analysis were extrapolated further to provide a broad estimate for the total number of cross border journeys for Northern Ireland residents aged 18 and over by applying day estimates to frequency of travel answer types and then grossing to aggregated District Council population levels using the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency District Council mid-year population estimates for 2016<sup>3</sup>.

The results indicated that, on the basis of the grossing procedure applied, each year there were around 24 million adult cross border trips (equating to almost 50 million trips crossing the border outbound and return assuming each journey was a return journey).

**Table 1: Frequency of Cross Border Travel**

How often do you yourself cross the border between Northern Ireland and the South of Ireland?									
	Border Councils	Belfast	Councils to the East		Days per year		Border Councils	Belfast	Councils to the East
<b>Every day, or nearly every day</b>	3.8%	0.0%	0.2%		260		5,922,200	0	292,534
<b>Several times a week</b>	9.0%	0.9%	0.9%		156		8,415,759	371,487	789,841
<b>Once a week</b>	6.5%	1.8%	1.4%		52		2,026,016	247,658	409,547
<b>2 or 3 times a month</b>	12.5%	6.1%	4.9%		24		1,798,239	387,363	661,576
<b>Once a month</b>	8.3%	5.3%	6.6%		12		597,015	168,281	445,551
<b>Several times a year</b>	31.1%	34.2%	43.4%		3		559,252	271,471	732,460
<b>Once a year</b>	11.4%	15.4%	16.0%		1		68,333	40,747	90,010
<b>Less frequently</b>	8.9%	24.6%	18.1%		0.25		13,337	16,272	25,456
<b>Never</b>	8.5%	11.8%	8.5%		0		0	0	0
<b>2016 population estimate for ages 18+</b>	599,413	264,592	562,565				19,400,152	1,503,279	3,446,976

<sup>3</sup> See: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/population/mid-year-population-estimates>

Of these cross border trips:

- 80% were accounted for by adults living in the border District Councils of: Derry and Strabane, Fermanagh and Omagh, Mid Ulster, Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon, and Newry Mourne and Down;
- 6% were accounted for by adults living in Belfast District Council; and
- 14% accounted for by adults living in the remaining District Council areas in the east of Northern Ireland comprising: Causeway Coast and Glens, Mid and East Antrim, Antrim and Newtownabbey, Lisburn and Castlereagh and North Down and Ards.

The estimates for total cross border travel presented here are likely to underestimate the actual quantum of cross border travel given that: the NILT survey is only asked of adults aged 18 and over and does not include children under 18; the estimation reported here assumes only one cross border (outbound and return) event per day; and that relatively conservative translations of question answer types into number of days have been used for grossing purposes.

These results however do align significantly with cross border transport estimates published by the Department for Infrastructure<sup>4</sup> which indicated that, when including the number of trips undertaken by people in ROI to Northern Ireland, the total number of cross border journeys could easily be in excess of 100 million journeys.

The results of the above analyses of the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey clearly indicated that the majority of adult cross border journeys from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland is accounted for by adults living in border District Councils.

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<sup>4</sup> See: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/movement-people-northern-ireland-ireland-border.pdf>