

Six Dimensions of the Nation Brands IndexSM 2021

International Perceptions of Northern Ireland: Immigration and Investment

16 February 2022

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

Key findings

- In 2021, Northern Ireland ranked 22nd of 60 for the Immigration and Investment dimension (down one place since 2020). This was Northern Ireland's 2nd highest ranked dimension, as was also the case in the previous four years.
- Northern Ireland's score for Immigration and Investment increased to 59.04 in 2021 (+2.32 since 2020), making this Northern Ireland's highest ever score on this dimension.
- Compared with 2020, 17 of 19 panel countries scored Northern Ireland higher for Immigration and Investment.¹
- Two of the four lowest scoring attributes were in the Immigration and Investment dimension ("invest in business" at 4.22 and "work and live" at 4.31).
- Immigration and Investment received significantly higher scores from those who had visited Northern Ireland than those who had not.

Introduction

In order to assess and monitor its international reputation, Northern Ireland has been included on the Nation Brands IndexSM (NBISM) since 2016. The NBI measures and ranks the reputations of 60 nations across Six Dimensions: Exports; Governance; Culture; People; Tourism; and Immigration and Investment.

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

Attribute	Statement
Work & Live*	'Please rank your willingness to live and work for a substantial period in Northern Ireland.'
Quality of Life	'This country is a place with a high quality of life.'
Educational Qualifications	'This country is a good place to study for educational qualifications.'
Invest in Business	'This country has businesses I'd like to invest in.'
Equality in Society	'This country cares about equality in society.'

The score for the Immigration and Investment dimension is out of 100, while the score for each of the attributes is based on a scale from one to seven (with seven being the highest and best, and one being the lowest and worst). As of 2021, there are 60 countries included in the NBI; rankings presented in the report show Northern Ireland's position among these 60 countries. Between 2016 and 2020, there were 50 countries included in the NBI.

Northern Ireland's score on the Immigration and Investment dimension (59.04) was higher in 2021 than in 2020. Its rank (22nd) dropped one place since 2020.

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



¹ In 2021, Saudi Arabia replaced Egypt as a panel nation, meaning comparisons were only possible for 19 nations.

Immigration and Investment was Northern Ireland's 2nd highest ranking dimension, as was also the case in the previous four years. Overall, Immigration and Investment was Northern Ireland's 2nd lowest scoring dimension in 2021.

Figure 2: Northern Ireland's score and rank on the Immigration & Investment dimension (2016-2021)



Figure 2 shows Northern Ireland's score and rank change over time for the Immigration & Investment dimension.

The time series highlights that although Northern Ireland received their lowest rank in 2021, this year also saw the highest ever score on this dimension. This reflects the importance of considering both score and rank.

Note: A lower rank and a higher score is better.

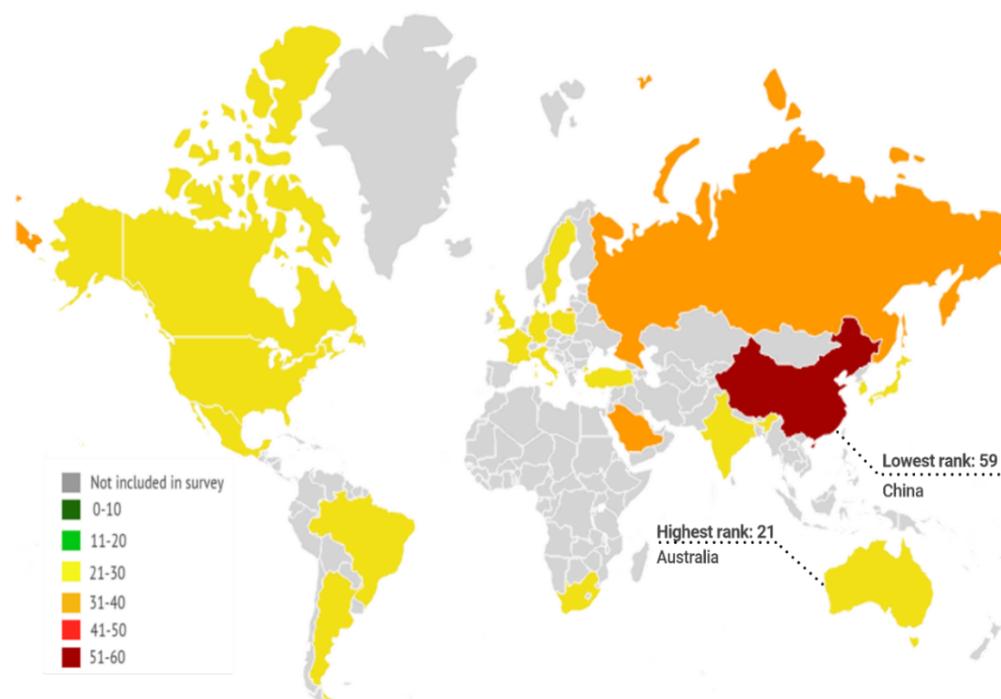
Rankings and scores on Immigration and Investment from around the world

Northern Ireland was ranked relatively highly on the Immigration and Investment dimension globally, with all but three panel nations providing a top half ranking (30th or above), (Figure 3). This dimension has also received top half rankings from at least 16 of 20 panel countries in all previous survey years.

The highest ranking was received from Australia (21st) and 11 other countries gave Northern Ireland's Immigration and Investment dimension a ranking of 22nd. Northern Ireland's lowest rankings were received from China (59th), Saudi Arabia (37th) and Russia (31st). Along with the Tourism dimension, the ranking from China (59th) was the lowest ranking ever received from any panel country for any dimension.

The largest change in rank for this dimension was from China, who ranked Northern Ireland 46 places lower. Out of the 19 panel nations, 15 countries ranked Northern Ireland's Immigration and Investment dimension lower than 2020, one countries rank (Poland) remained the same and four countries, (Argentina, Australia, Brazil and Mexico) ranked it one place higher.

Figure 3: Northern Ireland's rankings on Immigration and Investment from around the world



While rankings provide an insight into how Northern Ireland is viewed by panel countries relative to the other participating nations, they can be impacted year on year due to the inclusion of new countries in the survey. There were 10 new countries were added in 2021, meaning Northern Ireland was being ranked out of 60 countries instead of 50. The dimension score provides a more absolute understanding of how Northern Ireland is viewed, both overall and by each of the individual panel countries. In this sense, it is useful to

consider both rankings and scores.

Northern Ireland’s highest scores were received from India (75.85) and Mexico (67.69). Northern Ireland’s lowest scores were received from Japan (47.24) and Sweden (51.42).

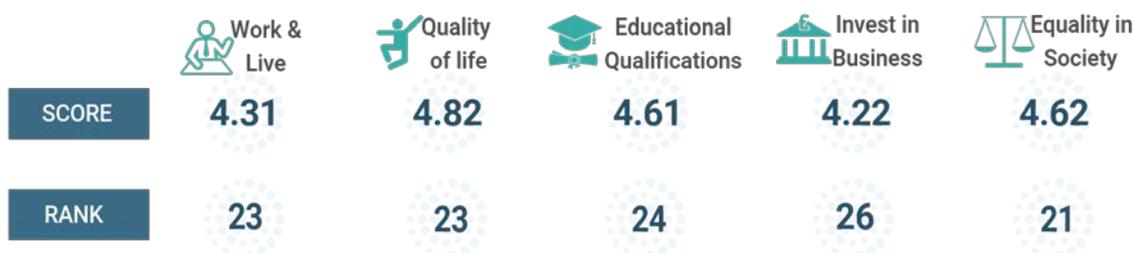
Northern Ireland’s relatively high rank (22nd) and low score (51.42) from Sweden, contrasts with the low rank (59th) and high score (60.60) from China. This suggests that scores from different panel countries are not necessarily comparable, again, highlighting the importance of considering both score and rank when evaluating responses from other countries.

Attribute scores and rankings

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

Northern Ireland’s attribute scores on this dimension have been positive (i.e. above the neutral value of 4) each year since Northern Ireland was included in 2016. The highest scoring Immigration and Investment attribute in 2021, as in previous years, was “quality of life” (4.82). “Invest in business” scored lowest in this dimension (4.22) and was among the lowest scoring across all dimensions, again following the same trend as in each year previous.

Figure 4: Rankings and scores for Northern Ireland’s Immigration and Investment attributes



Note: Attribute scores range from 1 to 7 and all rankings are out of 60.

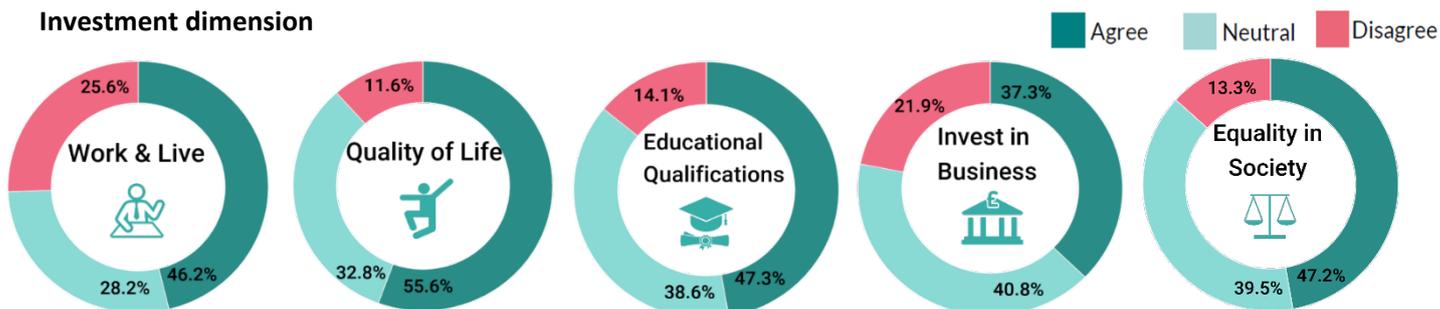
Proportion of participants who agreed or disagreed with each Immigration and Investment attribute statement

It is also useful to consider the proportion of participants who either agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement² (see Figure 5). Generally, the proportions reported in 2021 are similar to those in other years. However, agreement rates have increased for all attributes from 2020.

More than half of participants (56 per cent) agreed that Northern Ireland is a place with a high quality of life, and just under half of participants agreed with the “educational qualifications” (47 per cent), “equality in society” (47 per cent) and “work and live” (46 per cent) attributes.

A large proportion gave a neutral response to each of the five attributes, with percentages ranging from 28 per cent (“work and live”) to 41 per cent (“invest in business”) which could suggest a lack of awareness or strong views on Northern Ireland’s Immigration and Investment reputation. However, the proportion of neutral responses decreased since 2020 in all five attributes. The two highest disagreement rates across all 23 attributes were found in this dimension for “work and live” (26 per cent) and “invest in business” (22 per cent).

Figure 5: Proportion of participants who agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement in the Immigration and Investment dimension



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

² For each attribute statement, survey participants reported to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a seven point Likert scale. These are converted to scores, where one to three were categorised as ‘disagree’, four as ‘neutral’, and five to seven as ‘agree’.

Words associated with Northern Ireland's economic and business conditions

Participants were asked to select, from a predetermined list, the adjectives they thought most accurately described the current economic and business conditions in Northern Ireland (participants could choose more than one response). The most common response in 2021 was 'Developing' (24 per cent of participants), the first year 'none of these' (23 per cent of participants) was not the most common response. Figure 6 presents adjectives chosen by remaining participants. After 'Developing' the words most commonly associated with Northern Ireland's economic and business conditions were 'Modern' (23 per cent), 'Forward-thinking' (20 per cent) and 'Ambitious' (17 per cent).

Figure 6: Words associated with Northern Ireland's economic and business conditions

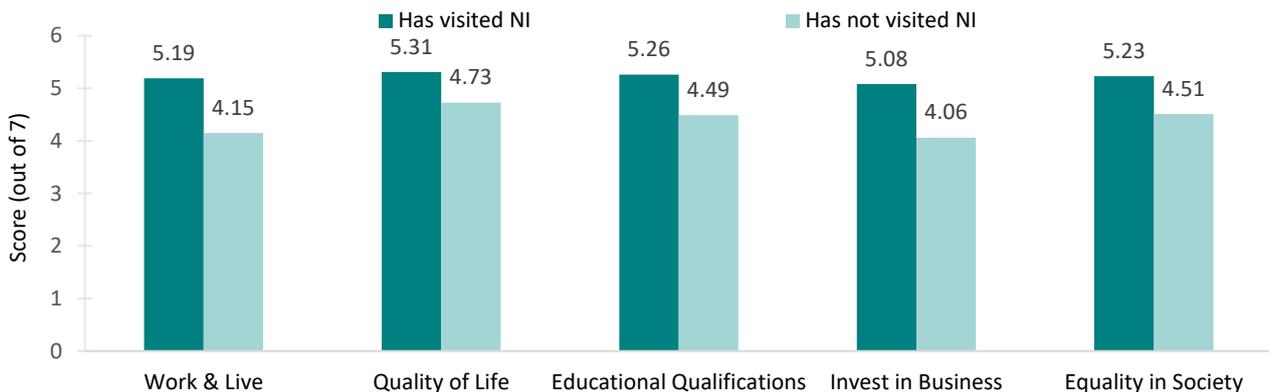


Visitors to Northern Ireland

In 2021, 16 per cent of NBI participants reported that they had previously visited Northern Ireland.

Participants who had previously visited Northern Ireland, awarded a score statistically significantly³ higher on the Immigration and Investment dimension (70.52) than those who had not visited (56.90). This was also the case for each of the composite attributes (Figure 7). This pattern was also evident in previous survey years.

Figure 7: Attribute scores (those who have visited Northern Ireland and those who have not)



Further Information and Feedback

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

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

³ Statistically significant differences are at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% confident that the differences between groups are actual differences and have not just arisen by chance.