

**Public Appointments:
Annual Report for Northern Ireland, 2016/17**

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Public Appointments in Northern Ireland: 2016/17



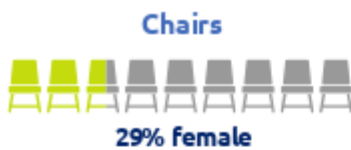
Gender

Females continue to be under-represented within public appointments in 2016/17 with regards to applications received, appointments made and appointments held.



1,014

Applications received, 1st April 2016 - 31st March 2017



131

Appointments made, 1st April 2016 - 31st March 2017

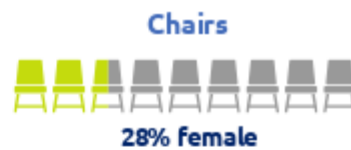
Gender is known for 105 of the 131 appointments made in 2016/17.

40% of all appointments, where gender is known, were to females.



1,298

Appointments held, as of 31st March 2017



Female representation in Public Appointments, 2009/10 to 2016/17

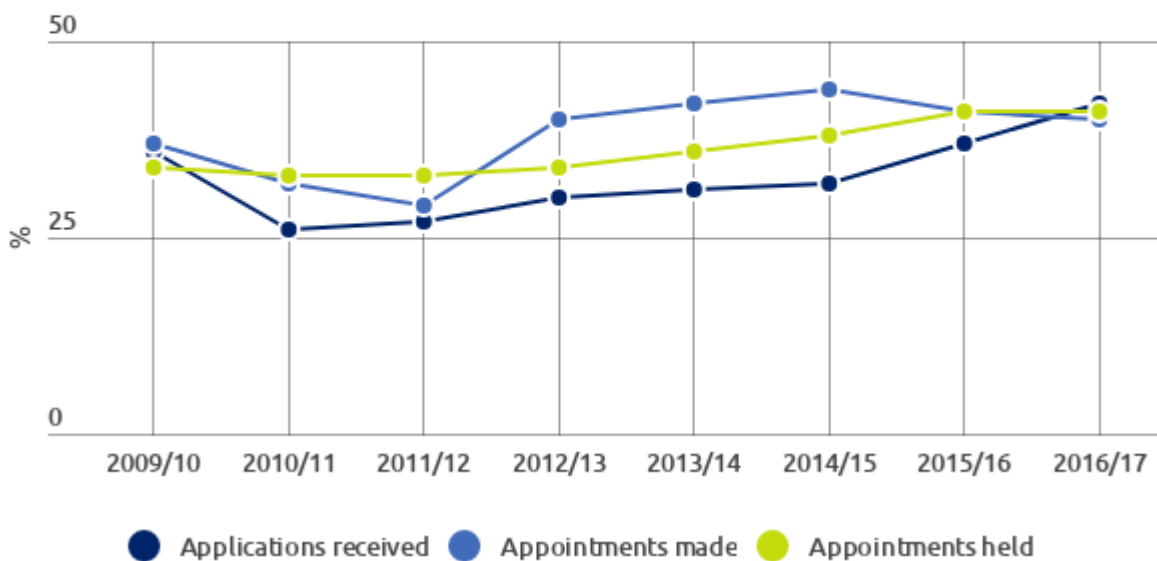


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Introduction

Background

This report presents data on Public Appointments between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017. The report has been prepared using information provided by the nine Government Departments and the Food Standards Agency. Data on multiple appointments have been derived from the Public Appointments Database.

This report includes information on:

- **Applications received** between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 for public appointment competitions;
- **Public appointments made** between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017, including first appointments and reappointments; and
- **Public appointments held** (including multiple appointments) as of 31 March 2017.

As this report corresponds to the financial year, applications received in response to vacancies advertised with a closing date within 2016/17 will appear in this report. If the subsequent appointments were not made within the 2016/17 year, the data for these appointments will appear in the Public Appointments report for 2017/18. Similarly, for any public appointments made in 2016/17, where the applications were received prior to 1 April 2016, the application data will have been included in the 2015/16 report.

Therefore, care should be taken when comparing the numbers of applications received and appointments made within a given financial year, as these figures are not directly comparable.

On 8 May 2016 the number of Northern Ireland Executive Departments reduced from twelve to nine. It is therefore not possible to directly compare the Departmental breakdown in this year's report with the breakdown detailed in previous reports.

Copies of this report and the underlying data tables are available online at The Executive Office website.

This publication was revised on 23rd November 2018. Please see notice on Page 18 for further details.

What is a public appointment?

A public appointment is generally an appointment, made by a government Minister, to the Board of a public body. Public Bodies are not part of Government Departments, but carry out their functions, to differing extents, at arm's length from their sponsoring Department.

Ministers of the Northern Ireland Executive are ultimately accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly for the activities of the Public Bodies which their Department sponsors. In most cases – unless, for instance, there is separate statutory provision – Ministers make the appointments to the boards of Public Bodies.

In the absence of Executive Ministers, Departments must give consideration to the public body's founding legislation to determine what action can be taken in relation to appointments, and also seek advice from the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI).

The CPANI regulates the public appointment process to ensure that appointments are made in accordance with the principles set out in the Commissioner's Code of Practice.¹ Public appointments falling within the Commissioner's remit are shown in this Report as "CPANI Regulated", and all other public appointments are shown as "Unregulated." When Departments make public appointments to unregulated bodies, they still apply the Commissioner's Code of Practice.

The overarching principle for public appointments is that selection should be made on merit, using fair, open and transparent procedures that ensure that the best available candidate is selected and appointed to each post.

Ministerial targets relating to public appointments

In March 2016, the Northern Ireland Executive introduced official targets relating to public appointments.² The two official targets are to achieve gender equality, at the aggregate level, in public appointments:

1. By 2017/18 for all appointments in-year;
2. By 2020/21 for all appointees in post, with gender equality reflected at both membership and Chairperson level.

It should be noted that this report presents data from 2016/17, which is prior to the timeframes for either of these targets.

¹ Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland, '[Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments: Version JL2, December 2016](#)', accessed June 2018

² Northern Ireland Executive, '[Foster and McGuinness: Gender Equality Targets to Improve Diversity in Public Appointments](#)' 8 March 2016

Technical notes

Data quality & assurance

Staff of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), out posted to The Executive Office, have produced this report and the underlying data tables.

The statistics in this report have been compiled from data provided by the nine Northern Ireland Executive Departments and the Food Standards Agency (Northern Ireland), both in the form of direct Departmental submissions to NISRA staff and, in the case of multiple appointments, to The Executive Office's Central Appointments Unit database.

Due to a change in the data collection process for the 2016/17 statistics, some data relating to several characteristics – such as gender, age, and ethnicity – are unknown. Where there are unknown data, proportions such as male-female are calculated with reference to those individuals for whom the information is known.

The underlying data tables which inform these statistics are available and note where data are unknown.

Percentages

Percentages in this report and the underlying data tables may not always sum to 100, due to the effect of rounding.

Disclosure prevention

Statistical disclosure control has been applied to this report: in order to minimise the likelihood of individuals being identified, counts of less than five have been suppressed. Other figures in the report have also been suppressed in order to prevent values of less than five from being calculated.

Contextual figures

Throughout the report, contextual figures are provided for the population aged 16 and over. Figures for community background, disability and ethnicity have been sourced from the 2011 Census³, while figures for age have been sourced from the 2016 Mid-Year Population Estimates.⁴

³ See Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency, '[2011 Census](#)', accessed June 2018

⁴ See Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency, '[Northern Ireland – population by sex and five year age bands \(1961-2016\)](#)', accessed June 2018

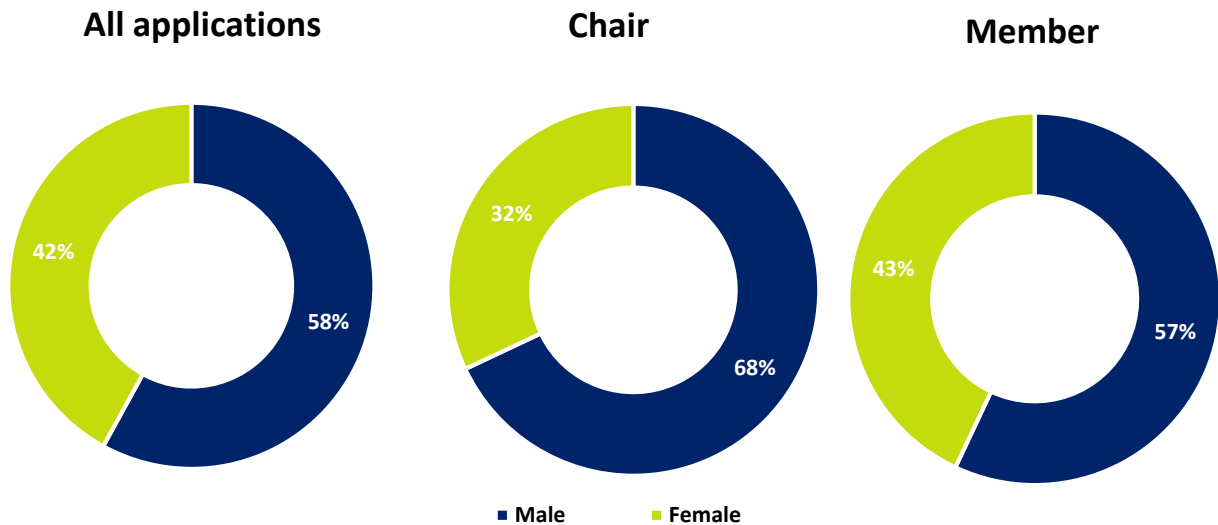
Applications, 1st April 2016 – 31st March 2017

1.1 Gender

There were 1,014 applications for public appointments in 2016/17. 42% of all applications, for which gender is known, were from females.

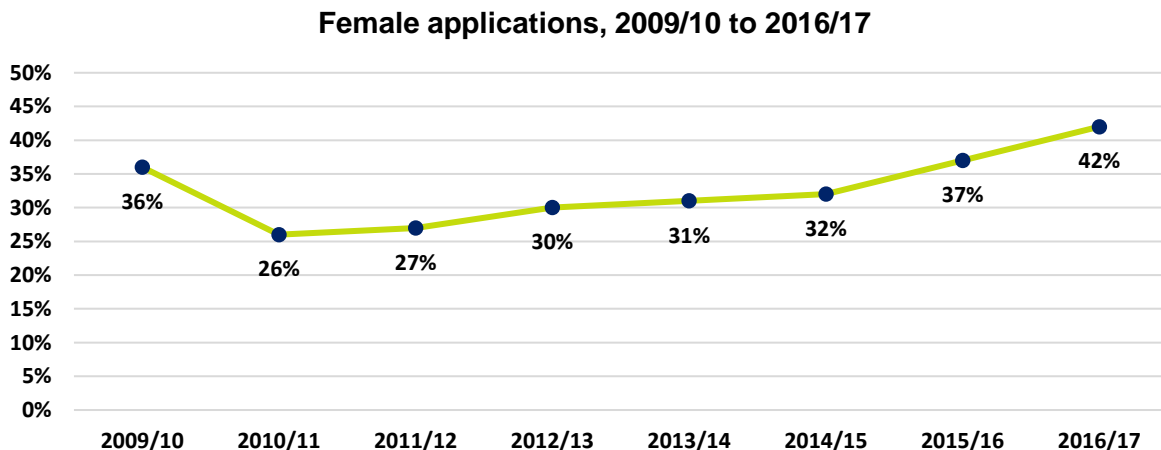
1.1a Board position

There was a smaller proportion of female applications for Chair than for Member positions: 32% and 43%, respectively.⁵



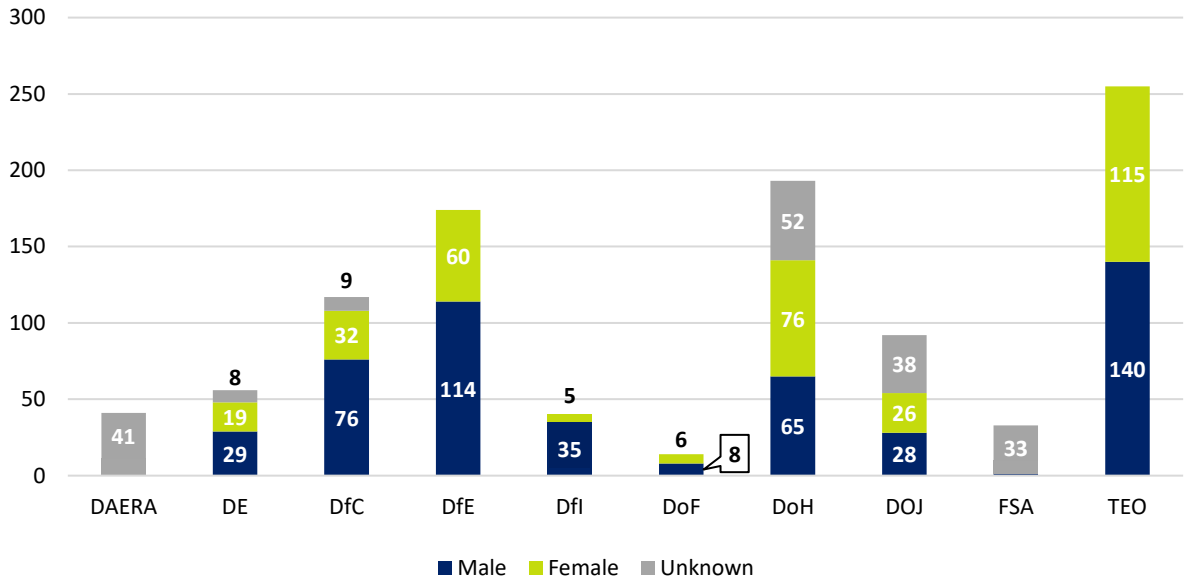
1.1b Trends over time

The overall proportion of applications from females has risen five percentage points since last year. The proportion of applications from females has been increasing steadily from the 26% level in 2010/11.



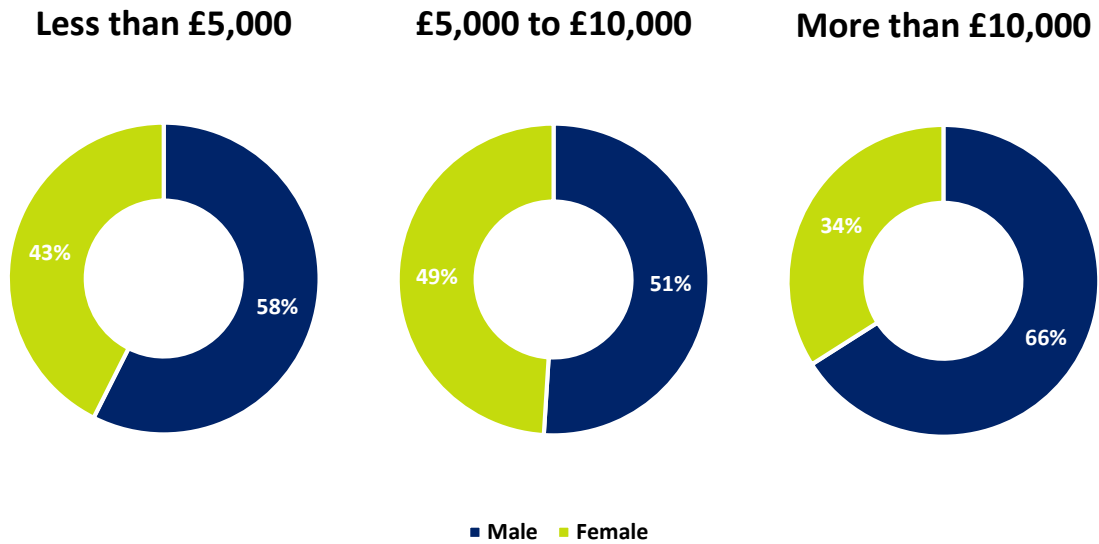
⁵ 91 applications in 2016/17 were for “Chair & member” – that is to say, the applicant applied for both positions. These applications are therefore included in the proportions for both the Chair and Member charts in 1.1a.

1.1c Individual Departments (applications)



1.1d Payment

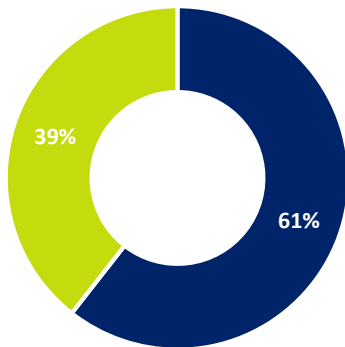
Females made 42% of applications overall (where gender is known). At 34%, females are proportionally under-represented in applications where payment would be more than £10,000 per year (where payment is known).



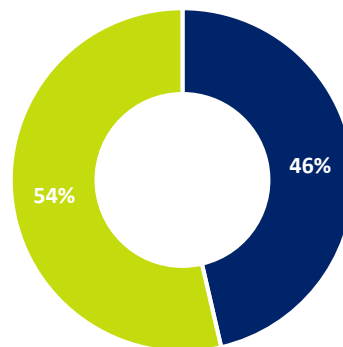
1.1e CPANI Regulated and Unregulated Appointments

Females made 42% of applications overall (where gender is known). Proportionally, females are under-represented in applications for CPANI-regulated appointments, and over-represented in applications for unregulated appointments.

CPANI Regulated

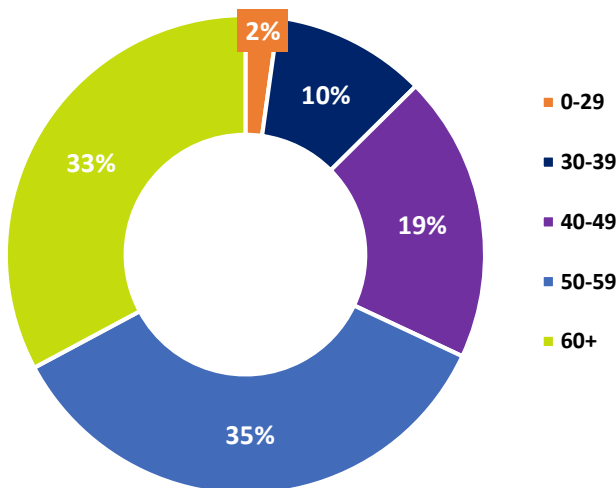


Unregulated



1.2 Age

Applications received by age group



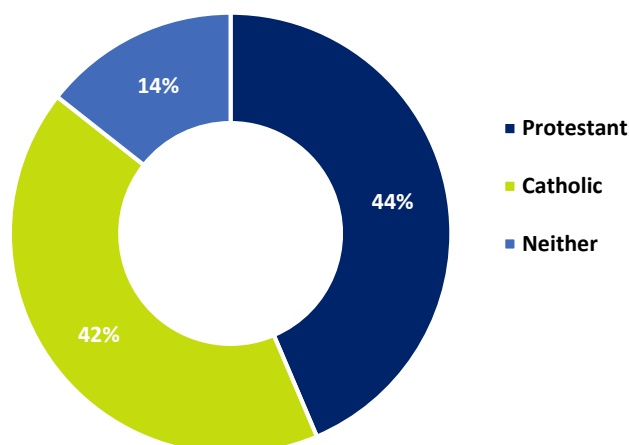
Age data was not provided for 42% of all applications in 2016/17. The proportions detailed in the chart exclude these applications.

2% of applications were from people under 30 in 2016/17; this is substantially lower than the 20% of the population aged between 15 and 29. 30-39 year olds are also slightly under-represented, constituting 10% of applications but 13% of the general population.

All other age groups are over-represented. 40-49 year olds represent 14% of the population, but made 19% of applications for which age is known, while 50-59 year olds represent 13% of the population but made 35% of all applications where age is known. Finally, those aged 60 and over represent 21% of the population but made a third of applications.

1.3 Community Background

Applications received by community background



Of those applications where community background was stated, 44% of applicants in 2016/17 were from a Protestant background and 42% of applicants were from a Catholic background. This compares to 48% of the population who belong to or were brought up in Protestant, other Christian or Christian-related denominations, and 45% of the population who were Catholic or brought up as Catholic.

Readers should note that 19% of applications gave no response on community background, and can refer to the underlying data tables for the full data.

1.4 Ethnicity

3% of applications received in 2016/17, where ethnicity is known, were from individuals from a minority ethnic group. 1.6% of the population of Northern Ireland aged 16+ belong to a minority ethnic group.

1.5 Disability

10% of applications received in 2016/17, where disability is known, were from applicants who considered themselves to have a disability. This compares to 25% of the population aged 16 and over who have a long-term health problem or disability, which limits their day-to-day activities.

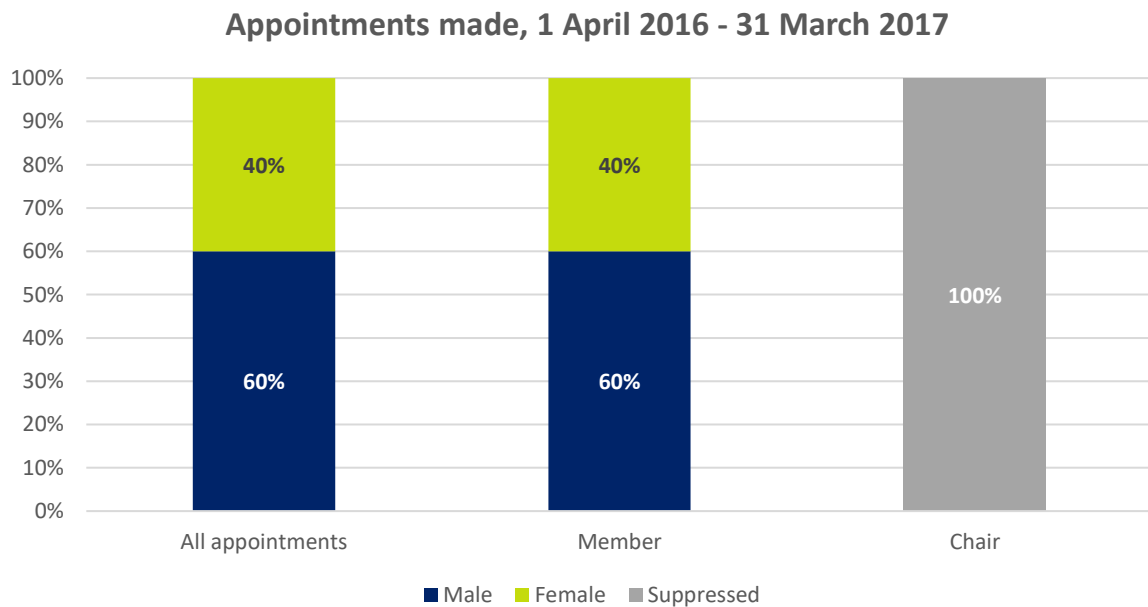
Appointments Made, 1st April 2016 – 31st March 2017

2.1 Gender

Between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2017, Departments made a total of 131 appointments. This is reduced from 471 appointments made in 2015/16; some of the reduced number of appointments is potentially attributable to the absence of Ministers towards the end of 2016/17. Of the 105 appointments made in 2016/17, for which gender is known, 40% (42 appointments) were to females.

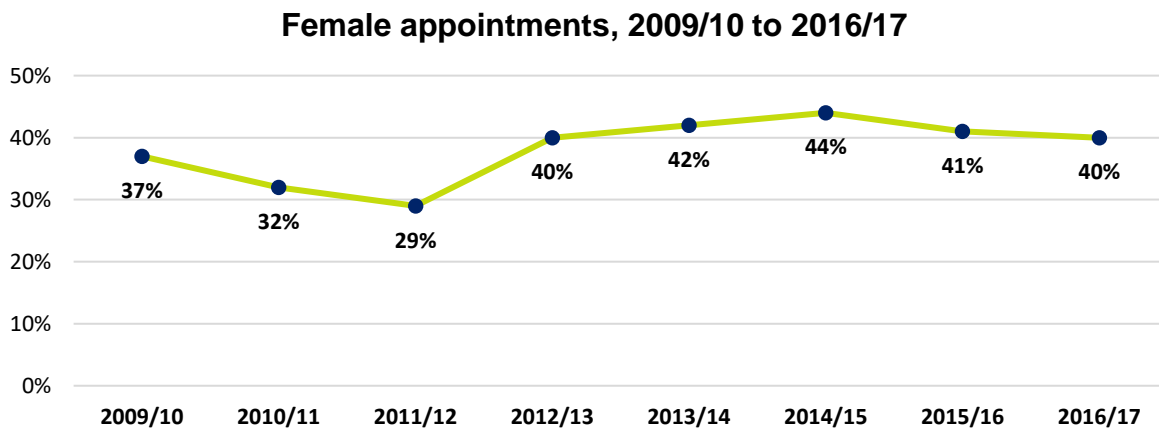
2.1a Board position

Males constituted 60% of Member appointments made in 2016/17.



2.1b Trends over time

Females were appointed to 40% of posts, for which gender is known, in 2016/17.



2.1c Disclosure control

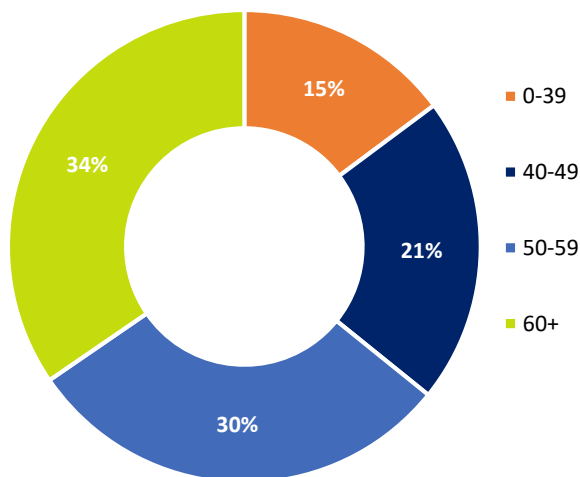
Due to disclosure control, appointments by gender can only be provided at Departmental level for three Departments: Education, Communities and Health. The proportion of female appointments made in 2016/17, where gender is known, was 38% for DE, 32% for DfC and 48% for DoH.

2.1d Payment

Payment data are unknown for 26 of the 131 appointments made. Females constitute 40% of appointments made overall (where gender is known). At 34%, females are proportionally under-represented in appointments made where payment is less than £10,000 per year (where payment is known).

2.2 Age

Appointments made by age group

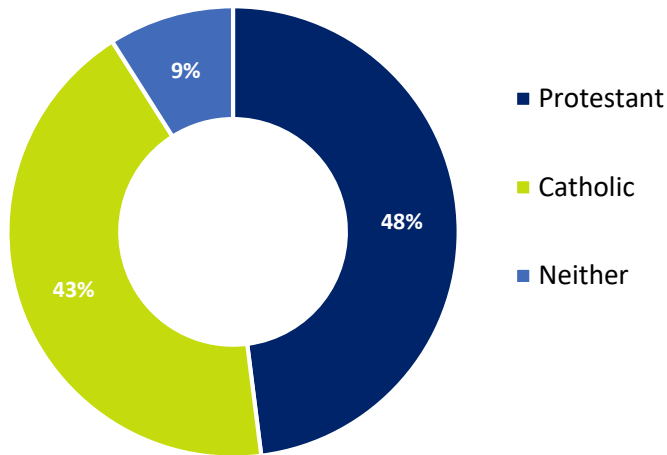


85% of those appointed in 2016/17 were aged 40 years or older; this compares to 46% of the general population. 15% of appointments were made to individuals aged under 40; this compares to 33% of the general population aged 15-39.

Readers should be aware that the proportions calculated here exclude the 50 appointments (38%) where age is unknown, and should refer to the underlying data tables for the full data.

2.3 Community Background

Appointments made by community background



Where community background is known, 48% of appointments made in 2016/17 were made to applicants of a Protestant background. This compares with 48% of the population who belong to or were raised in Protestant, other Christian or Christian related denominations.

Where community background is known, 43% of appointments were made to applicants of a Catholic background. This compares with 45% of the population who are Catholic or brought up with a Catholic background.

Readers should note that 31 people who were appointed (24%) provided no data on community background. See the underlying data tables for the full data.

2.4 Ethnicity and disability

Of those whose ethnicity is known, five or less appointments in 2016/17 were to individuals from a minority ethnic group. (The precise figure and percentage cannot be released due to disclosure control.)

Of those who provided data on disability, five or less appointees considered themselves to have a disability in 2016/17. (The precise figure and percentage cannot be released due to disclosure control.)

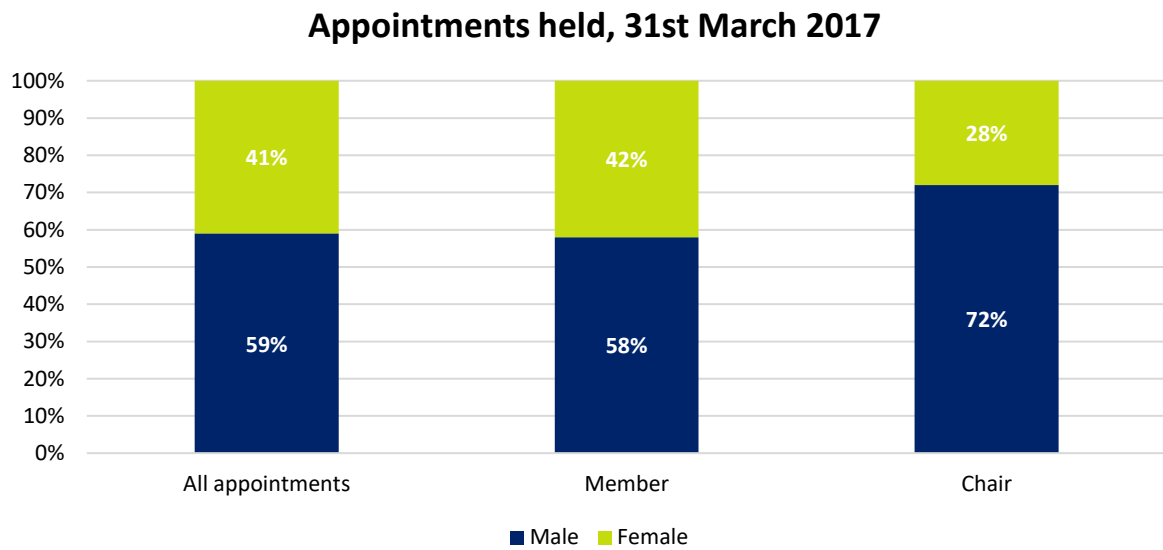
Appointments held, 31st March 2017

3.1 Gender

1,298 public appointments were held at 31st March 2017. Of those appointments for which gender is known, 41% were female and 59% were male.

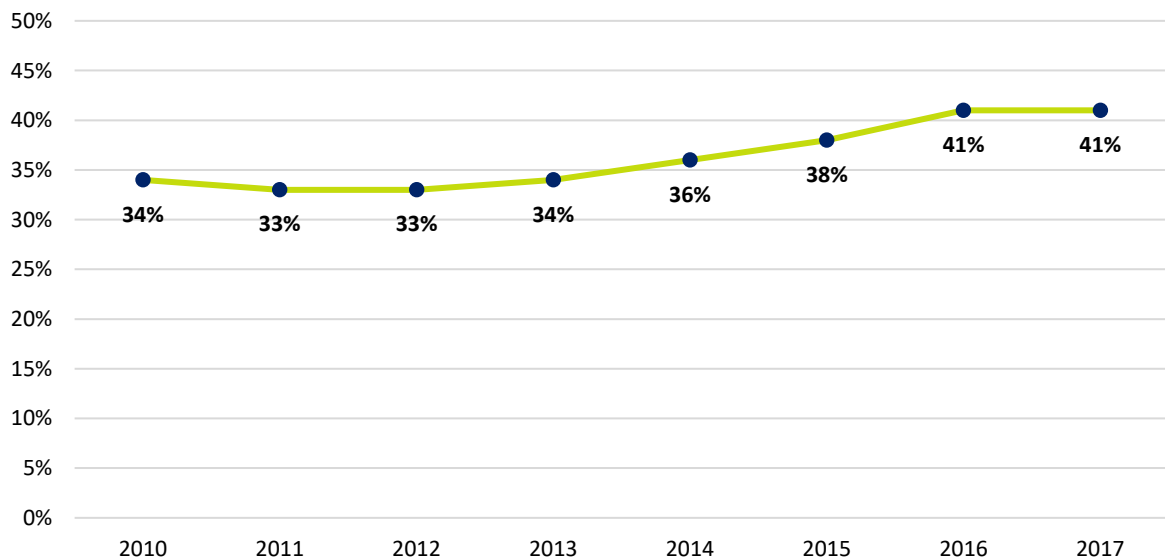
3.1a Board position

Males constitute a large majority, almost three quarters of chairpersons.

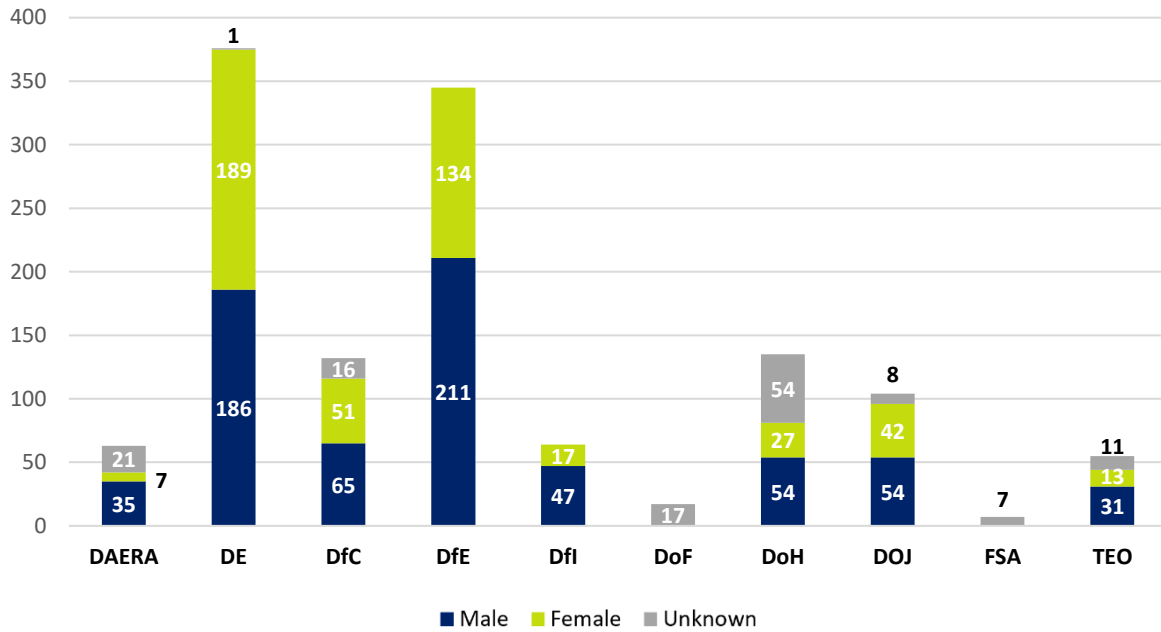


3.1b Trends over time

The proportion of public appointments held by females (where gender is known) has remained at the previous year's level of 41%; this is a 7 percentage point increase since 2010.

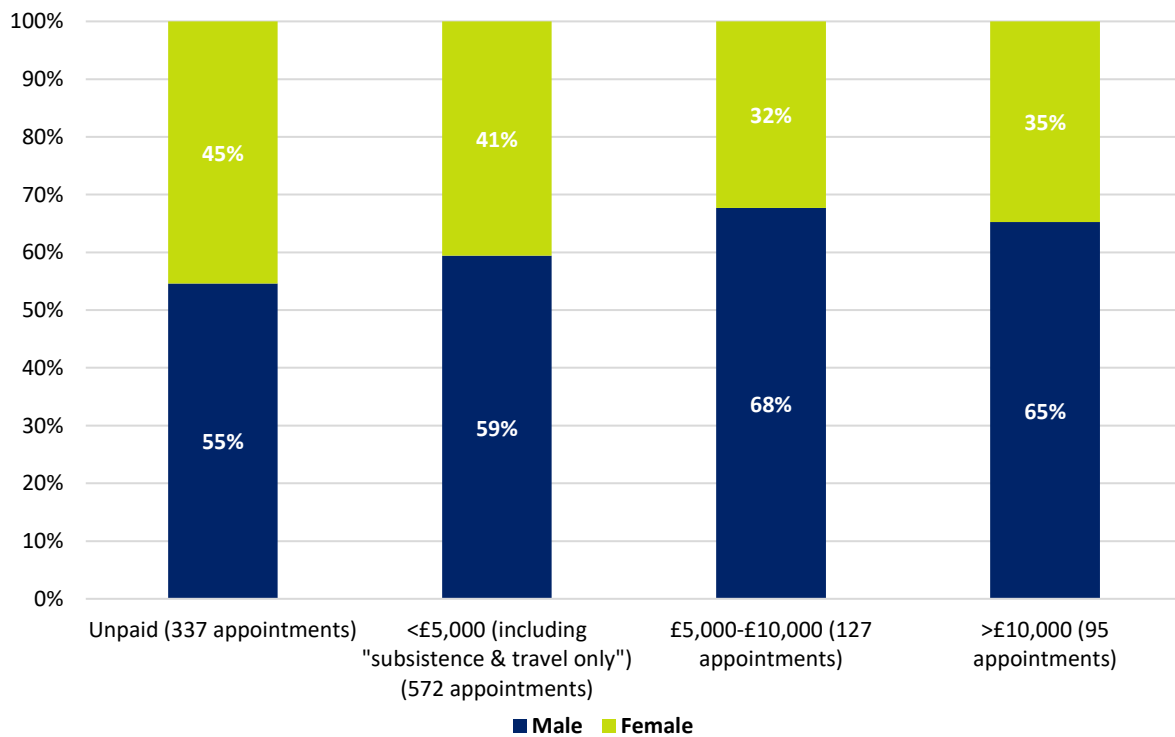


3.1c Individual Departments (appointments held)



3.1d Payment

Females are proportionally over-represented in unpaid public appointments, and under-represented in public appointments which pay £5,000 or more per year.



3.2 Multiple Appointments

There is currently no limit on the number of public appointments an individual can hold at one time. A judgement is made by an appointing Department on a candidate's availability for a new appointment, in light of the time commitment involved in his/her existing appointments.⁶

Number of appointments held	Number of people
1	884
2	167
3 or more	31

3.3 Disability

4% of appointees at 31st March 2017, where data was provided, stated that they had a disability. This compares to 21% of the Northern Ireland population with a long-term health problem or disability which limits their day-to-day activities in the 2011 Census. (52% of appointees provided no data on their disability status.)

⁶ There is a small divergence in the total number of appointments held at 31st March 2017 detailed in section 3.1, and the total number of appointments implied by section 3.2 as two different data sources are used (a) departmental returns and (b) the Public Appointments Database.

Glossary & definitions

1. Government Departments and agencies:
 - **DAERA** – Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs
 - **DE** – Department of Education
 - **DfC** – Department for Communities
 - **DfE** – Department for the Economy
 - **DfI** – Department for Infrastructure
 - **DoF** – Department of Finance
 - **DoH** – Department of Health
 - **DoJ** – Department of Justice
 - **TEO** – The Executive Office
 - **FSA (NI)** – Food Standards Agency (Northern Ireland)
2. **“CAU”**: The Central Appointments Unit.
A unit of the Executive Office with policy responsibilities including encouraging best practice across Departments in public appointments, and advertisement of vacancies.
3. **“CPANI”**: The Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland.
The Commissioner was created in 1995 and regulates, monitors and reports on the process for making public appointments. Not all public appointments fall within the Commissioner’s remit – see page 5 above.
4. **“Disability”**: Data from Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forms were used to determine the proportion of individuals who considered themselves to have a disability. The definition of disability used on the Form is derived from the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which defines disability as “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities.”
5. **“Minority ethnic”**: Data from Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forms were used to determine the proportion of individuals from a minority ethnic background. Individuals were classified as being from an ethnic minority if they selected any ethnic group other than “white” on the Form.
6. **“NISRA”**: The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.
This statistical report and underlying data tables are produced by NISRA staff out-posted to The Executive Office.

REVISION NOTICE

This publication was revised on 23rd November to take into account the accidental omission of some equal opportunity monitoring data which related to 2016/17.

The correction results in less '*unknown*' data in the '*Applications*' and '*Appointments made*' sections (parts 1 and 2 respectively) of the report and the corresponding data tables. The proportion of applications received for public appointments for which gender is unknown has dropped from 35% to 16%; the proportion of appointments made for which gender is unknown has dropped from 37% to 20%. There is also a decrease in the information which is unknown for the other Equal Opportunity groups.

The total numbers of applications and appointments made remain unchanged.

There is no effect on the '*Appointments held*' data (part 3 of the report) or the corresponding tables; both have a different data source to the one resulting in the error above.

In the data collection process, departments were instructed to record some of the 2016/17 equal opportunity monitoring data in a section labelled 2017/18, which led to the error. Provision of Equal Opportunity information is not compulsory for Public Appointments; and the data has to be collected separately from names and other personally identifiable information and matched later using Unique Reference Numbers. Therefore the process is vulnerable to data input error which results in data gaps where Equal Opportunities information is unknown.