

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



Equality
Matters

Equality Awareness Survey

Everyone living in Northern Ireland is protected by equality and anti-discrimination legislation. How aware are people of these rights and protections? Do they think equality is important? Do they think there is equality of opportunity? Are there benefits to equality and is there still work to be done? Our survey findings presented some interesting results.

The field work for the survey was conducted in July/August 2016 on a face-to-face basis by Social Market Research with an achieved sample of 1143 adults aged 16 years and over.

Interviews were conducted in respondents' homes using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing.

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).



68%

said equality issues were as important or more important than previously

Is equality important?

To understand how people perceive equality in Northern Ireland, we asked respondents to tell us how important they considered equality issues to be to them in 2016 compared to 12 months before.

We found that overall **68%** of people said that equality issues were as important or more important to them than previously.

When we explored the answers given we discovered that the importance placed on equality was different among the various groups of people whom we asked.

We found, of those respondents who provided an opinion, 16% said that equality issues were more important to them compared to 12 months before. Those most likely to say that equality issues had become more important to them included:

- **28%** of Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual people compared to 16% of Heterosexual people
- **27%** of people who have a household income of £15-25,999k compared to 11% of people who have a household income of less than £15k
- **23%** of people who have third level qualifications compared to 14% or 16% of people who have post primary or no qualifications respectively
- **22%** of people aged between 30-44 years old compared to 12% of people who were either 16-29 or over 65 years old

There was no significant difference in responses between those people who identified as Catholic, Protestant, or Other/No Religion.

68%

More important or same level of importance

3%

Less important

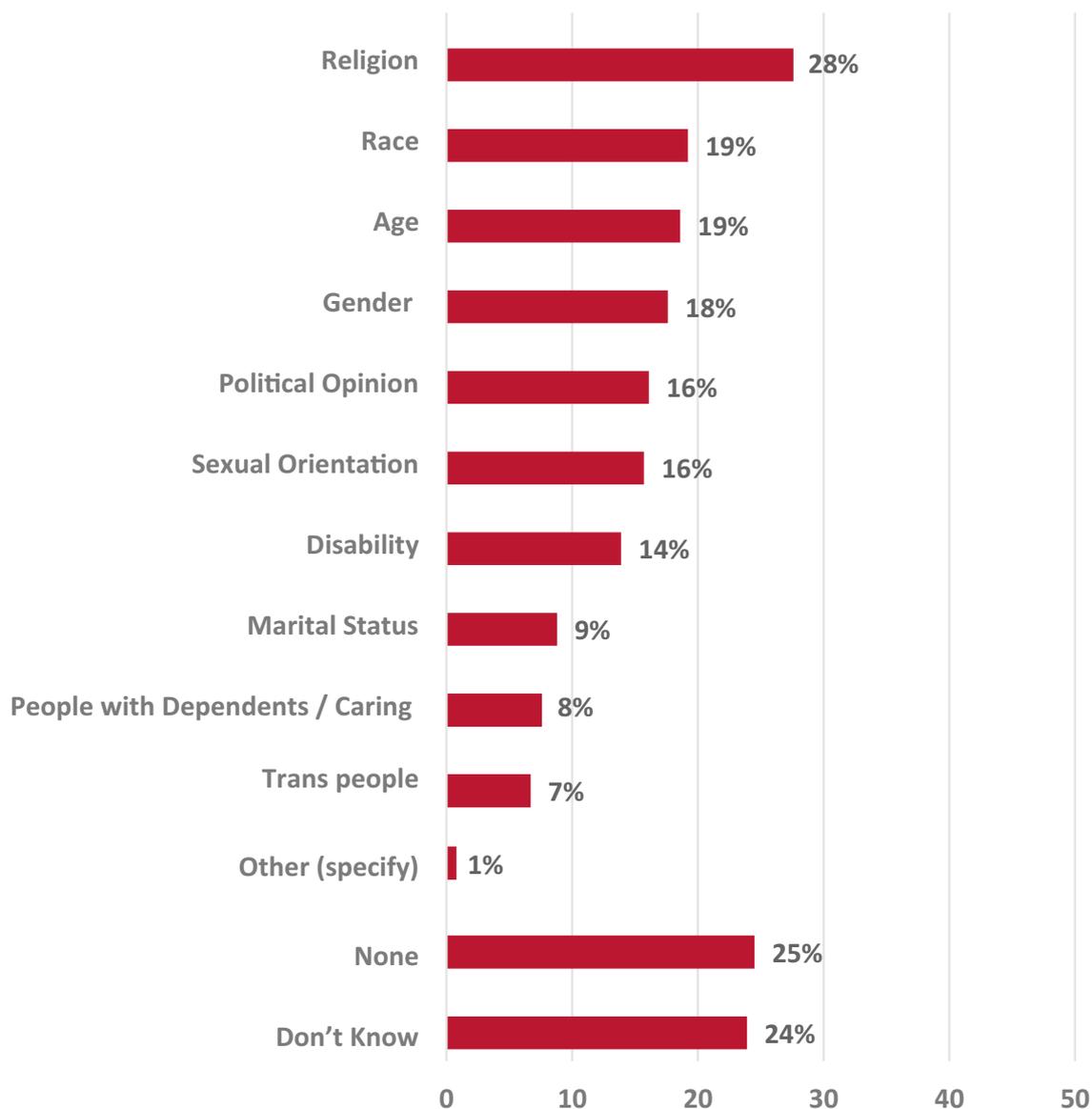
29%

Don't know



What's important to you?

Equality covers a breadth of areas and grounds in Northern Ireland and is often a topic of discussion and debate. We wanted to investigate what people really thought were the equality issues that were particularly important to them. From the answers they gave us, it is clear that religion is the most important issue.

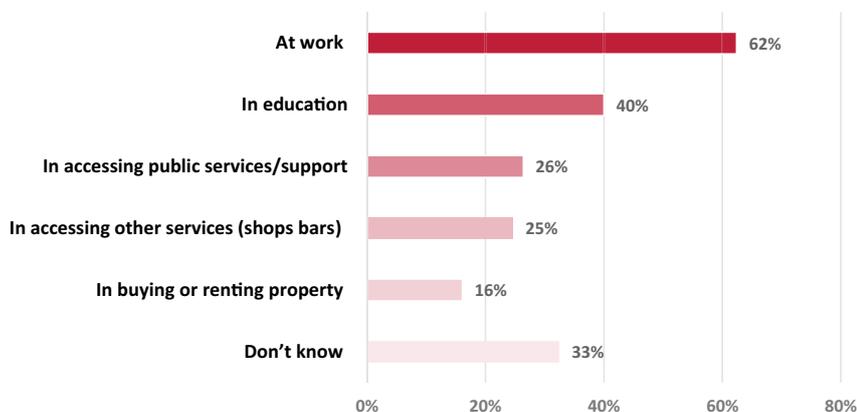


94%

of respondents recognised they are protected under at least one equality ground.

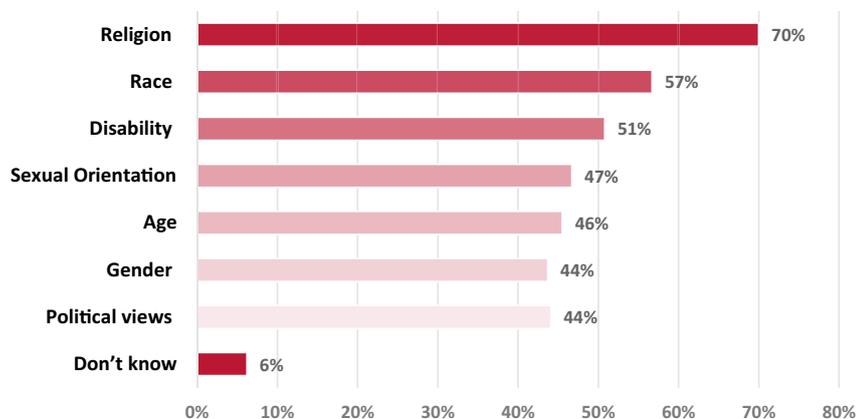
Did you know...?

In order to get a sense of the level of awareness of the areas protected by anti-discrimination laws in Northern Ireland, we presented respondents with a list of six areas that are currently covered by law. We asked them to choose the areas under which they thought they were protected. This is what they told us:



Generally, for all areas, people who were over 65 years old, people with no qualifications, and those from a lower social class (C2DE) were least likely to know an area covered by anti-discrimination law.

We then presented the seven equality grounds which are protected by various laws to those respondents who had been aware of the areas covered by anti-discrimination law. We asked them if they knew under which of those seven grounds the law protects people in Northern Ireland.



While religion was again the most commonly identified ground, our analysis showed that those over 65 years old, people with a disability, those with no qualifications and those who are economically inactive were less likely to be aware of some grounds covered by anti-discrimination legislation. These included race, gender, sexual orientation and political views.



Do you agree...?

To understand what people in Northern Ireland really think about equality and good relations here, we asked them if they agreed or disagreed with these statements. This is what we discovered:

“There are benefits of having a more equal society in Northern Ireland”

- 57% agree
- 12% neither agree nor disagree
- 2% disagree
- 29% don't know

“There is equality for all in Northern Ireland”

- 33% agree
- 15% neither agree nor disagree
- 20% disagree
- 33% don't know

“More needs to be done to promote equality of opportunity”

- 49% agree
- 11% neither agree nor disagree
- 4% disagree
- 36% don't know

“More needs to be done to promote good relations between people of different backgrounds”

- 52% agree
- 10% neither agree nor disagree
- 4% disagree
- 34% don't know



Do you agree...?

We also wanted to find out people's attitudes to and support for equality and anti-discrimination laws in Northern Ireland. They told us:

"There is a need for equality and anti-discrimination laws in Northern Ireland."

- 54% agree
- 9% neither agree nor disagree
- 3% disagree
- 34% don't know

"Equality and anti-discrimination law should be strengthened?"

- 47% agree
- 11% neither agree nor disagree
- 3% disagree
- 39% don't know

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