

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



Measuring Equality in Northern Ireland

Participation in Public Life

Full Report

3 of 6
Areas of Life

May 2024

Introduction

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (the Commission) has developed a formal monitoring framework (the Framework) for Measuring Equality in Northern Ireland (MENI). This Framework will enable the Commission to identify differences in equality outcomes and to track those differences over time. This report supports a Commission Statement on Equality in Northern Ireland developed from the Framework.

The Framework identifies six Broad Areas of Life in Northern Ireland, with nine equality Outcome Areas. Each Outcome Area has associated specific Priority Areas with population indicators and sources of evidence. These Sources of Evidence will be used to track and measure change over time.

The six Broad Areas of Life are:



Education



Employment



Participation
in Public life



Health and
Social Care



Standards of
Living and
Housing



Communities that
are Welcoming
and Inclusive

The Outcome Area for **Participation in Public Life** is: *'There is equality of opportunity in access and participation in decision making'*.

The Priority Areas for this broad Area of Life and Outcome Area are:

- **Representativeness in Political Life:** Greater representativeness in the political life for Northern Ireland
- **Representativeness in Public Life:** Greater representativeness in government public appointments.
- **Access to Participation in Public Life:** People are supported and empowered to influence decision-making processes that affect them through participation in public life.

The Population Indicators and the Sources of Evidence are outlined in our Framework.

This report highlights the findings from analyses from of the Sources of Evidence used for this broad Area of Life and is presented as the Commission's Statement on Equality in the Participation in Public Life area of life, for people in Northern Ireland.

Where possible, the findings presented in this report highlight the observable differences across equality groups from the overall values recorded for entire samples of population from surveys and administrative datasets. Furthermore, and where possible, the report also highlights the key differences between equality groups within their respective equality grounds.

The reader is advised to refer to the originating surveys and administrative datasets in respect to each instruments design and methodology.



Priority Area:

Representativeness in Political Life

Greater representativeness in the political life for
Northern Ireland

Population Indicator: Composition of electoral representatives by equality ground

Data Source: Unknown

Data Provider: Unknown

Data Status: No data available for this population indicator.



Priority Area:

Representativeness in Public Life

Greater representativeness in government public appointments

Data Source: Public Appointments Report for Northern Ireland – March 2023

Data Provider: Statistics and Research Branch, The Executive Office (TEO)

The data analysis covers the monitoring of public appointments for last three years 2019-20/2020-21/2021-22. This was published on 28th of March 2023. The statistics of this report include the data provided by the nine Northern Ireland Executive departments and the Food Standards Agency (NI). The Department of Education data on Board of Governors has not been included in the report due to the data is not statistically robust given the small number reported and the different recruitment process of school governors.

[Public Appointments Report for Northern Ireland: 2019/20; 2020/21; 2021/22](#)

The Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form that accompanies Public Appointment Applications is not mandatory to complete but asks all S75 questions except from Political Opinion.

Due to statistical disclosure¹, not all categories are included in the report. The section ‘Applications received’ usually have the most section 75 categories covered as it usually has the largest sample. The categories included in each section of the most recent report were:

- **Applications received:** gender, age, community background, ethnicity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation and dependants.
- **Appointments made:** gender, age, community background, and disability.
- **Appointments held:** gender, age, community background, and disability.

Definition:

“A public appointment is generally an appointment, made by government Minister, to the Board of a public body. Public Bodies are not part of Government Departments, but carry out their functions, to different extents, at arm’s length from their sponsoring Department”
(Public Appointments Report for Northern Ireland, p6)

1 A note of Statistical disclosure control has been included in the report indicating this has been applied in order to minimize the likelihood of individuals being identified, counts of less than five have been suppressed in order to prevent values of less than five from being calculated (p.29)

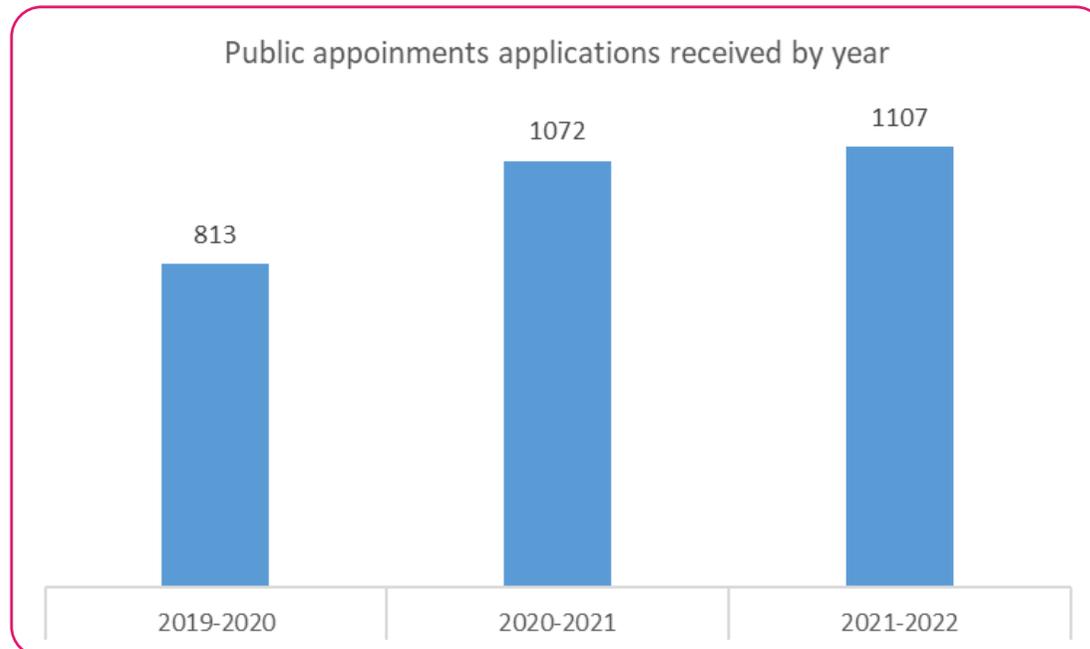
Population Indicator: Composition of government public applications/appointments by equality ground - Percentage of applications received.

Data Source: Public Appointments Report for Northern Ireland – March 2023

Data Provider: Statistics and Research Branch, The Executive Office (TEO)

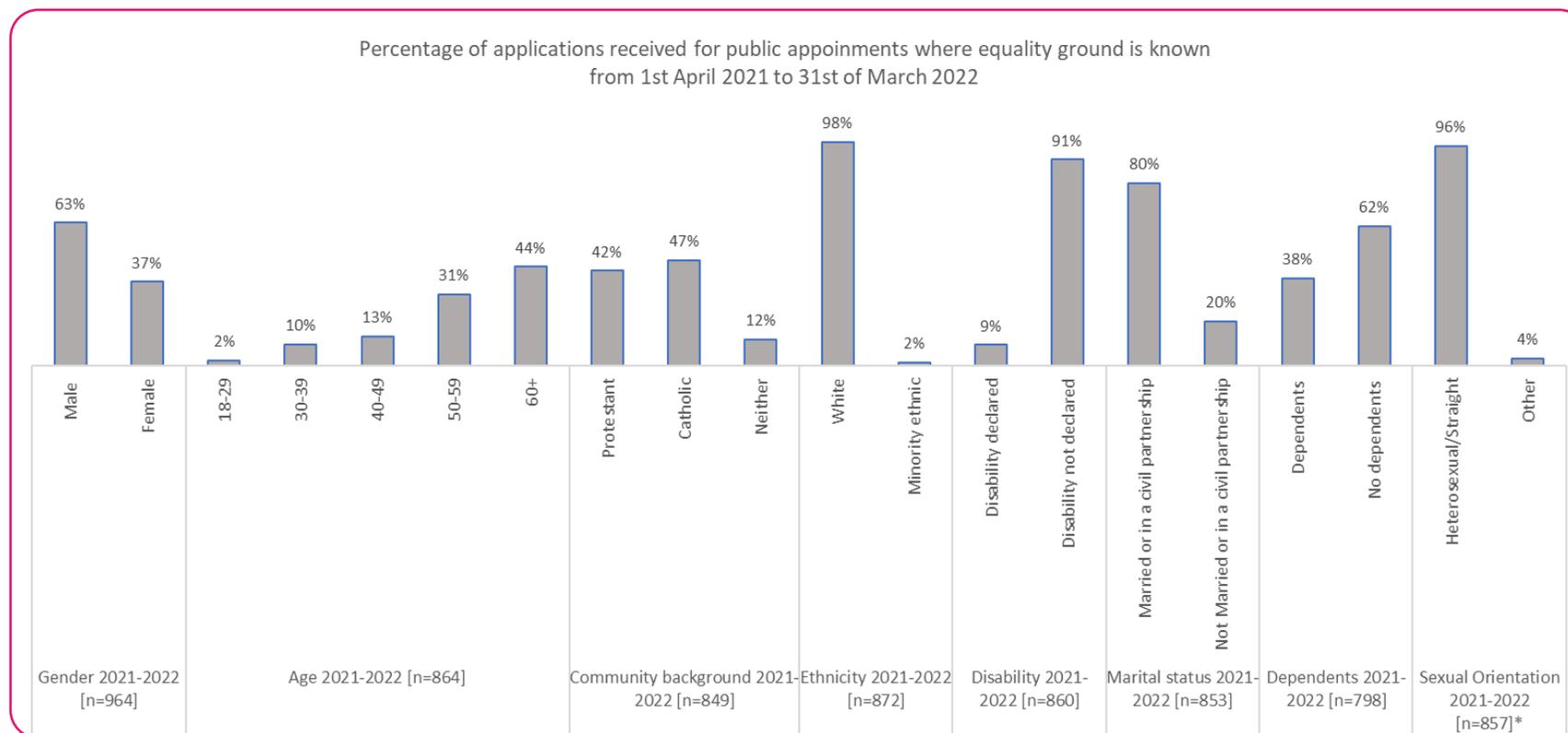
Overall

The number of applications for public appointments (received from 1st April to 31st of March 2020) increased from 813 to 1,072 in March 2021 (received from 1st April to 31st of March 2021) reaching the highest number of applications in the last three years under review in 2022 with 1,107 applications received (from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022).



Summary Across Equality Groups

Where data was available and known by equality ground, the equality groups with the highest percentage shares of those applying for public appointments public appointments in 2021-2022 were white applicants (98%), followed by heterosexual applicants (96%), applicants with no disability declared (91%), married or in a civil partnership applicants (80%), male applicants (63%) and applicants with no dependents (62%). The equality groups with the lowest percentage shares of those applying for public appointments were those from a minority ethnic group (2%), people in the age group of 18-29 (2%), those declaring an Other sexual orientation than heterosexual (4%), and people with disabilities (9%).

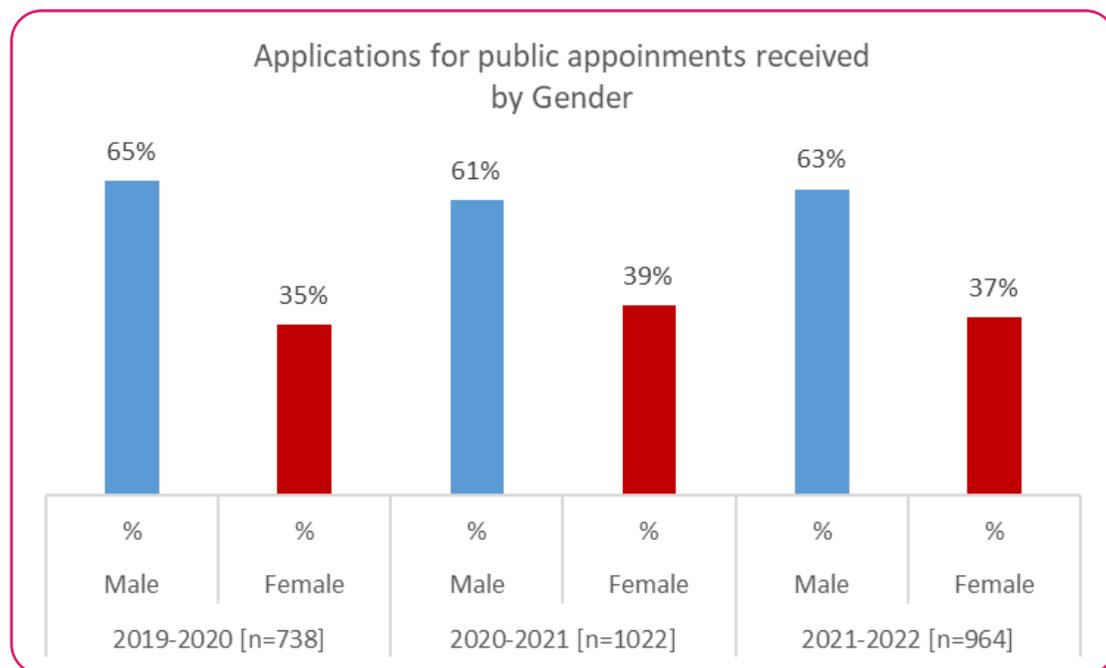


* Note: The “Gay/Lesbian”, “Bisexual” and “Other” categories have been combined into “Other” due to disclosure control.

Gender

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

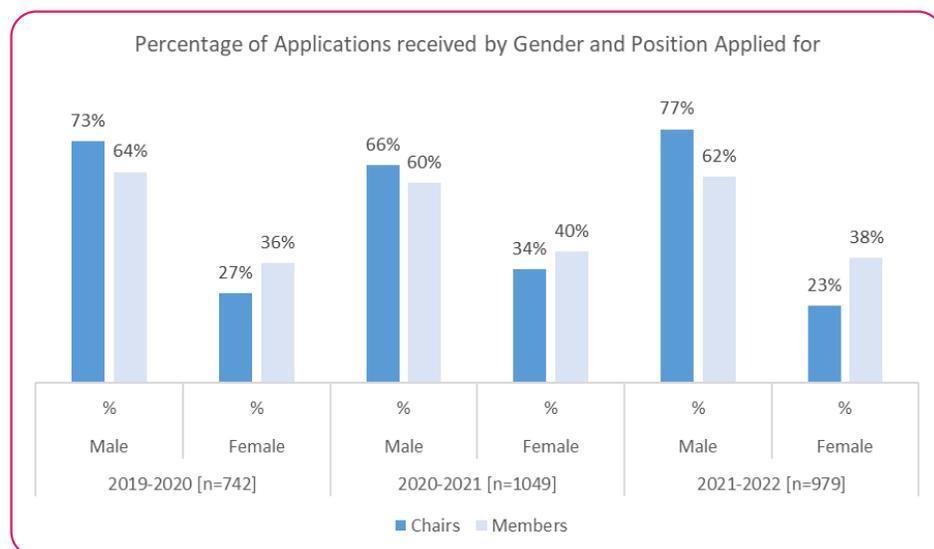
When gender was known (91% of all applications in 2019/20, 95% in 2020/21 and 87% in 2021/22), over the three years of analysis, the percentage shares of applications to public appointments from male applicants consistently exceeded the percentage shares made by female applicants. This difference was more prominent in 2019/2020, where the shares of applications from males (65%) and females (35%) differed by 30 percentage points. However, the share of applications from females slightly increased in the last two years, where the highest percentage share of applications from females for this period of analysis was 39% in 2020/21, bringing down the female-male gap to 22 percentage points in 2020/21 but then the gap increased again to 26 percentage points in 2021/22.



Applications received by Gender and Position Applied for²

Over the three years of analysis, the percentage shares for male applicants to chair positions within public appointments exceeded the percentage shares for female applicants. In 2019/20, the difference between the percentage shares for applications made by males (73%) and females (27%) for these posts was 46 percentage points. The following year the percentage share for male applicants dropped to 66% while the percentage share for female applicants (34%) increased slightly, reducing the difference to 32 percentage points. However, in 2021/22, the percentage share for applications by males to chair positions (77%) increased by ten percentage points. Therefore, the percentage share for applications by females for the same positions (23%) dropped; widening the difference to fifty-four percentage points.

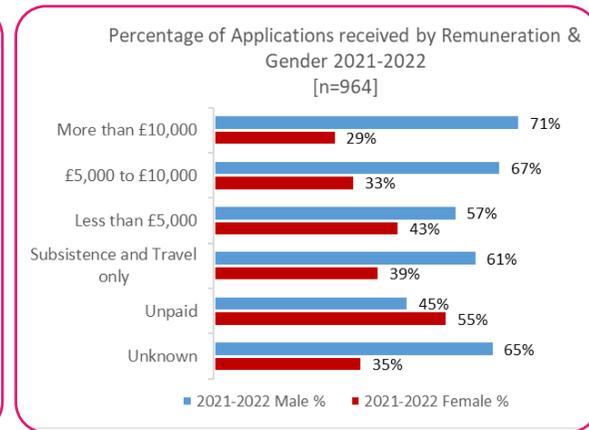
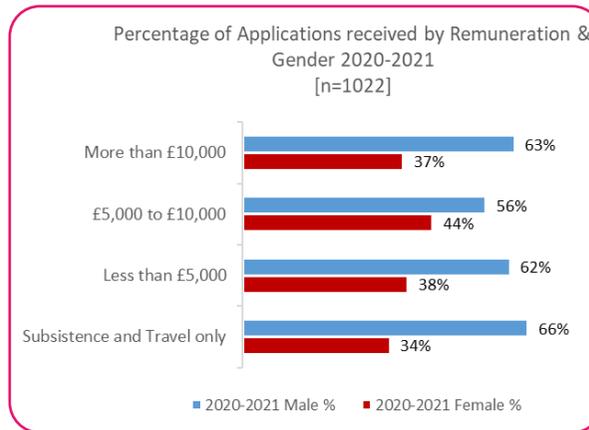
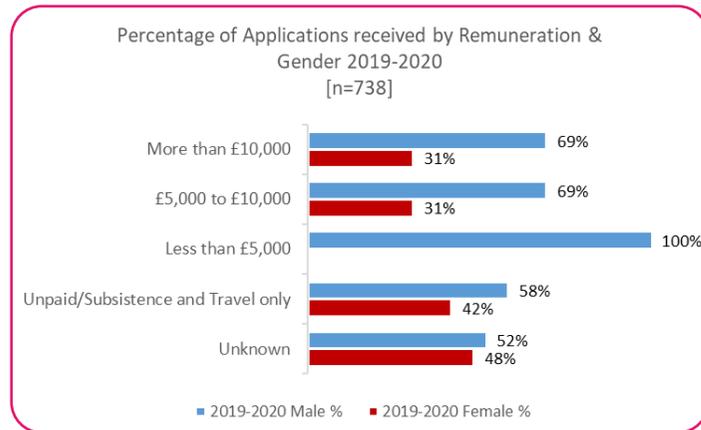
In terms of applications for members positions to public appointments across the three years of analysis, the percentage shares for all applications made by male applicants consistently exceeded those made by female applicants. The shares for applications made by females for member posts remained stable, at around 20 to 25 percentage points below the percentage shares recorded for applications made by males.



² Those who applied for both members and chair positions are included in both the “members” and “chair” categories in the data charts and those in Director and Vice-Chair positions are included in the “Member” category only as stated by the data provider (TEO).

Applications received by Remuneration & Gender³

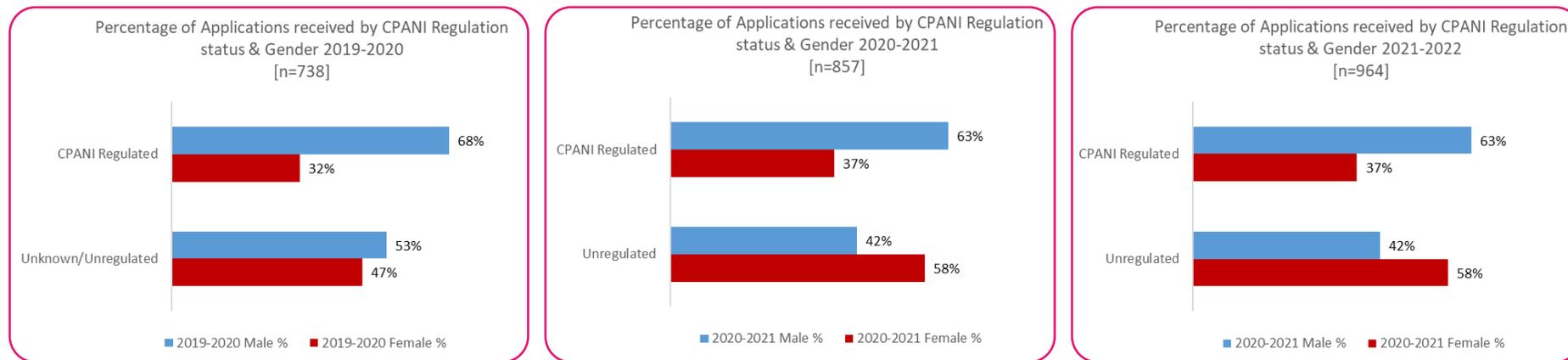
When the gender was known, the data indicated that the percentage shares for those applying for public appointments where there was a remuneration were primarily made by male applicants. This was particularly evident in 2021/22 where 71% of applications for the highest remunerations (greater than £10,000) came from male applicants while 29% were from female applicants. This trend was also prevalent for the two previous years under analysis.



³ Unpaid and Subsistence/Travel only have been combined due to statistical disclosure as stated by the data provider (TEO).

Applications received by CPANI Regulation status & Gender⁴

When the regulation status of public appointments and the gender of applicants were known, the data over the three years of analysis indicated that male applicants represented the greater shares of those applying to regulated appointments, with a difference of around thirty percentage points across the period observed. The proportions of applications made by female and male applicants to unregulated public appointments were more balanced. In 2020/21 and 2021/22, the percentage shares for female applicants (58%) to unregulated appointments exceeded the percentage shares for male applicants (42%).

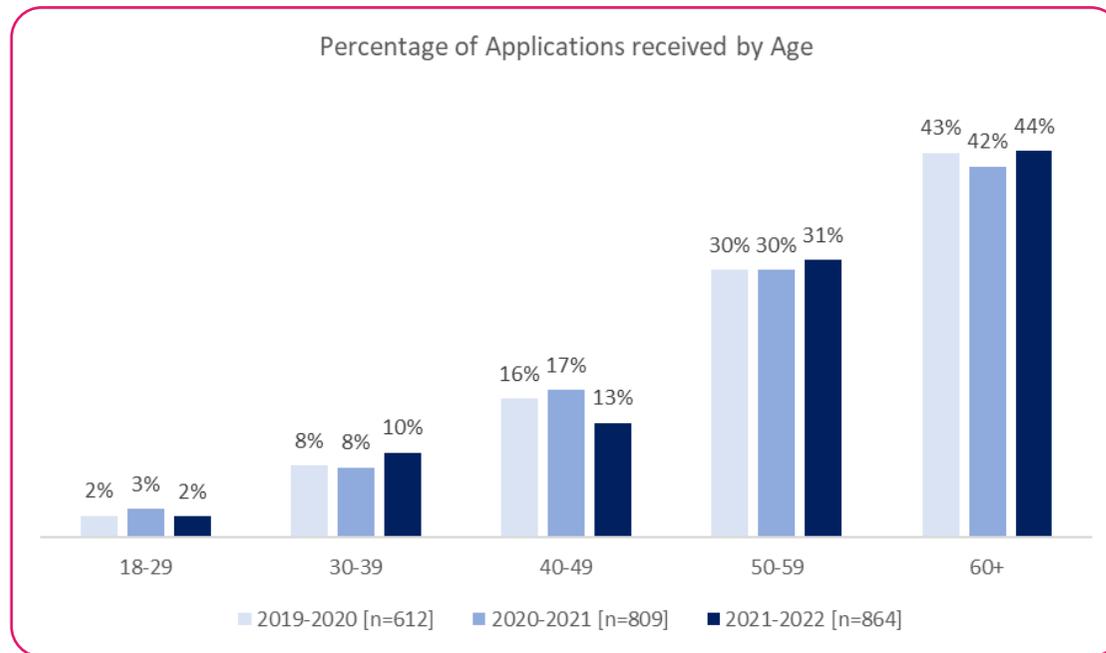


⁴ Unregulated appointment and Unknown have been combined due to statistical disclosure as stated by data provided (TEO)

Age

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

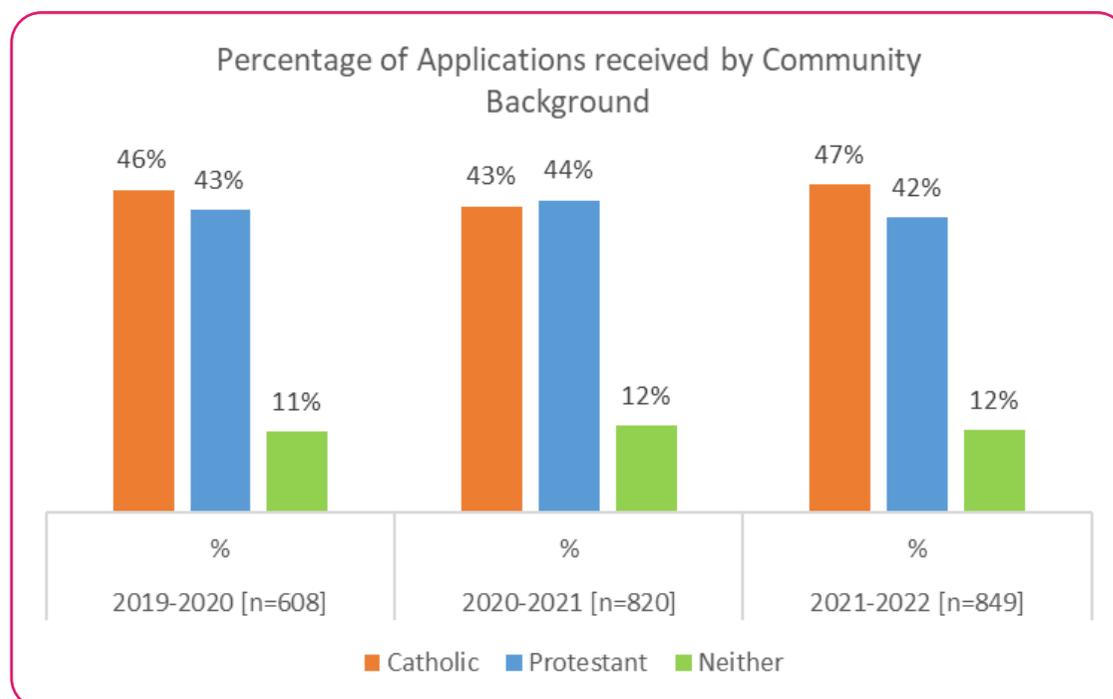
The shares of applications for public appointments received by age, when the age was known (75% of all applicants in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and 78% in 2021/22) indicated that the shares for applicants from the age group 18-29 were the smallest, followed by applicants from the age groups 30-39 and 40-49. Applicants from the age group of 60+ represented the largest shares for those applying, followed by the age group 50-59. These trends remained persistent over the period of analysis, with no variations between the age groups by year.



Community Background

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

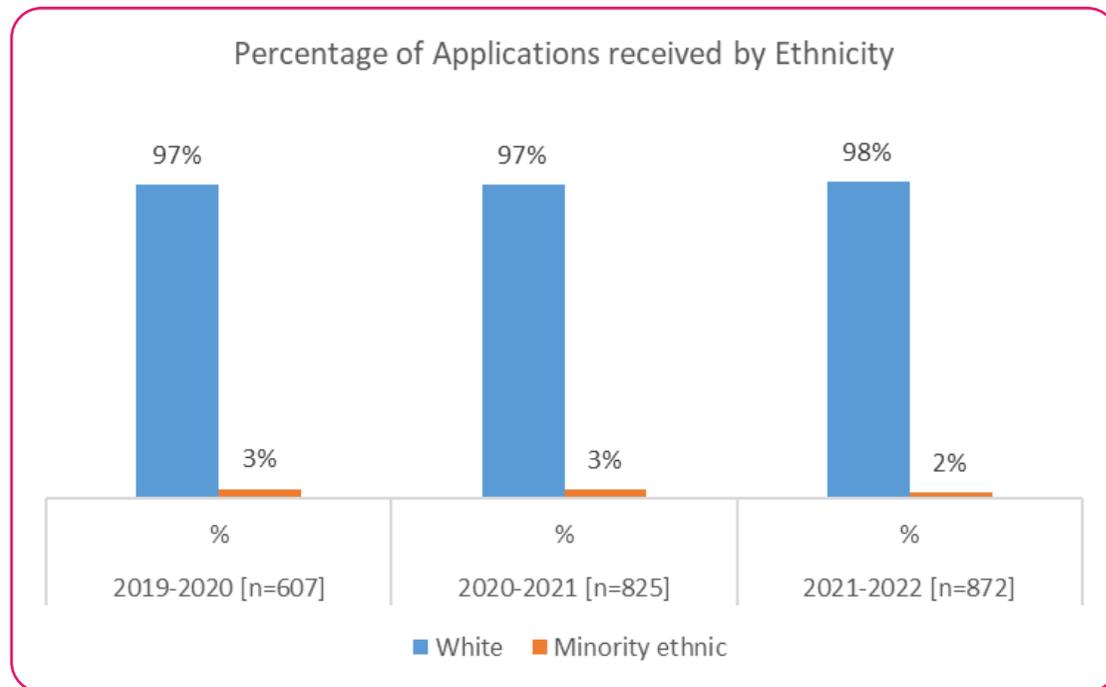
The proportions of applications for public appointments received, when the community background of the applicants was known (75% of all applications in 2019/20, 76% in 2020/21, and 77% in 2021/22), were slightly higher for Catholic applicants in 2019/20 (46%) and 2021/22 (47%) than for Protestant applicants (43% and 42% respectively). In 2020/21, there were marginally more Protestant (44%) than Catholic (43%) applicants. However, the percentage shares for applicants who were Neither religion remained low (around 12%) over the three years of analysis.



Ethnicity

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

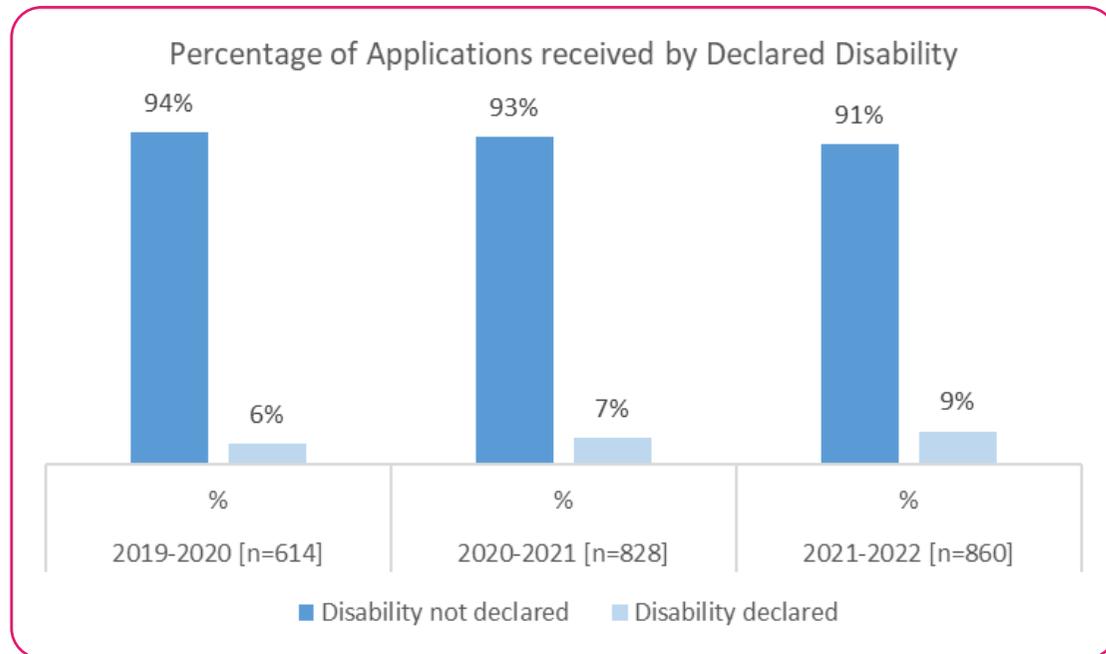
When the ethnicity of those applying for public appointments was known (75% of total applicants in 2019/20, 77% in 2020/21 and 79% in 2021/22), the data indicated that people from ethnic minorities (2-3%) represented a small proportion of those applying, with little variation over the period of analysis.



Disability

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

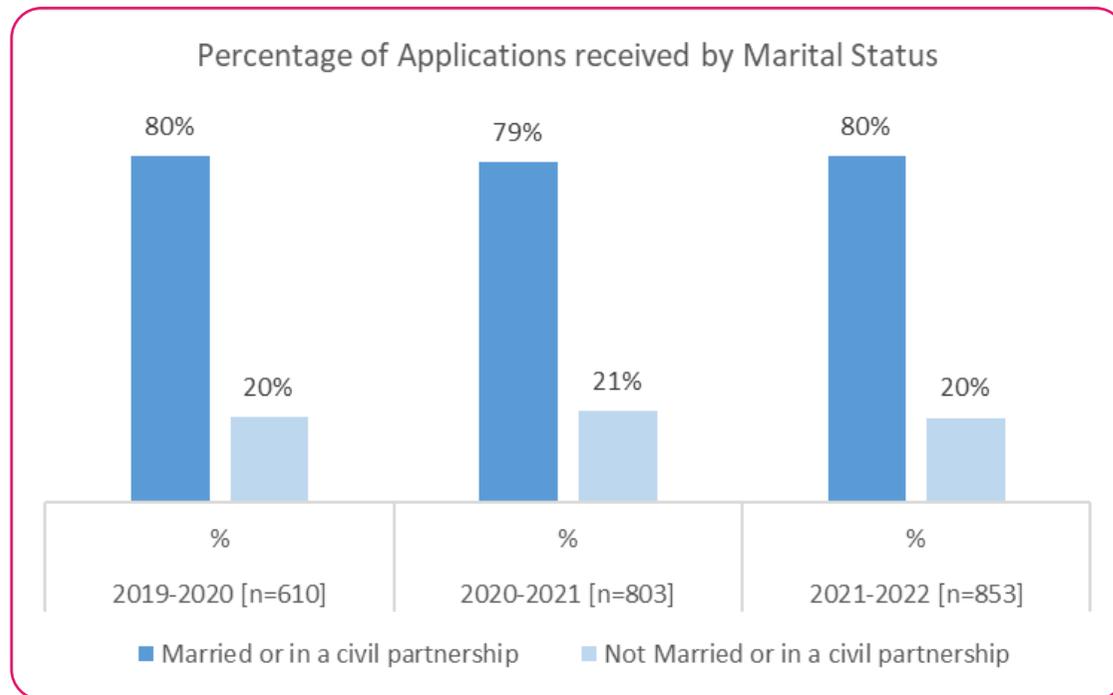
When the disability status of the applicants was known (76% of all applicants in 2019/20, 77% in 2020/21, and 78% in 2021/22) the percentage shares for those applicants who declared a disability represented a minority when compared to the percentage shares for applications received from those who had not declared a disability. There was very little variation across all the years; applicants who declared a disability represented between six to nine percent of those applying for public appointments.



Marital Status

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

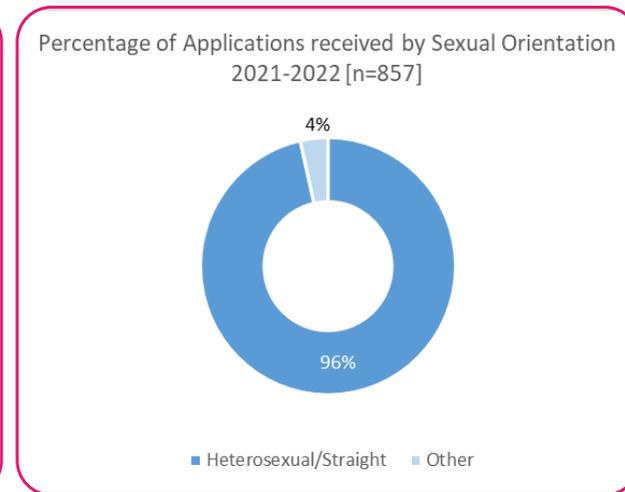
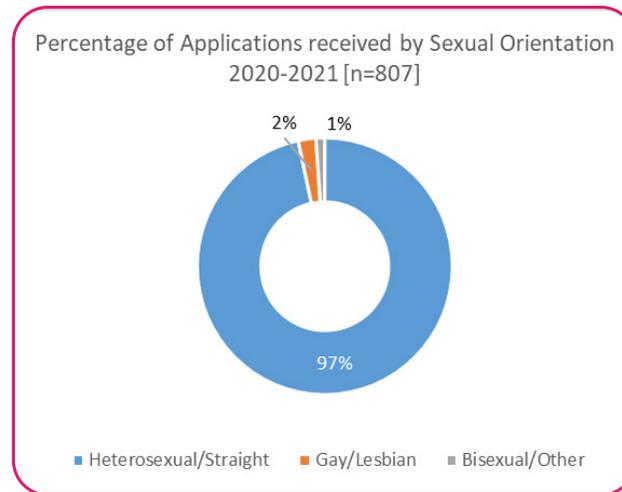
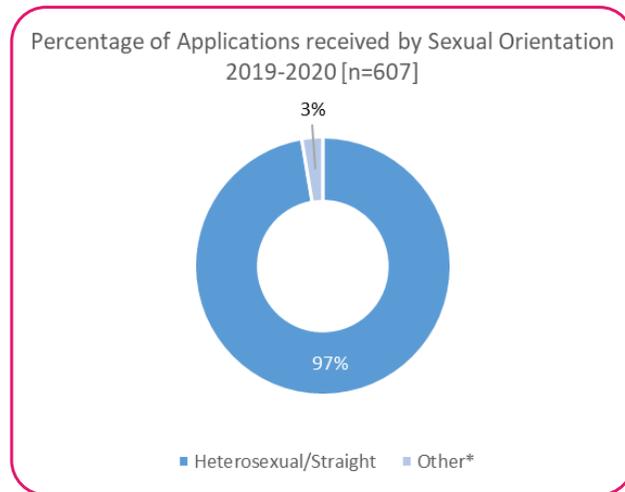
When marital status of the applicants to public appointments was known (75% of all applications in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and 77% in 2021/22), those who declared to be married or in a civil partnership represented four times more of those applying (around 80%) than those who declared not to be married or in a civil partnership (around 20%), with no variations over the three years of analysis.



Sexual Orientation

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

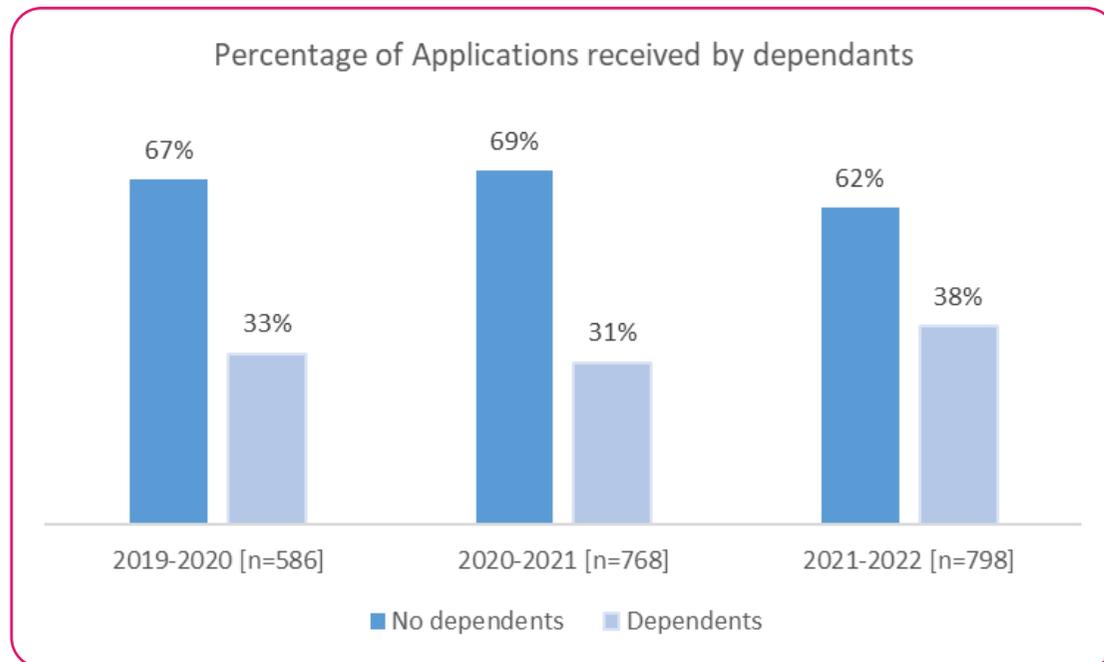
When considering the proportional shares for applications when the applicants' sexual orientation was known (75% of all applicants in 2019/20 and 2020/21, and 77% in 2021/22), the percentage of applications received by those who identified as gay/lesbian, bisexual or other was 3% in 2019/20, 3% in 2020/21 and 4% in 2021/22.



Dependants

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

Among those applications to public appointments, where the applicants' dependents status was known (72% of all applications), those with no dependents represented twice as many of those applying than those with dependents. This trend was persistent over the three-year period of analysis with minor variations year by year.



Carers

Data Status: Data is not collected.

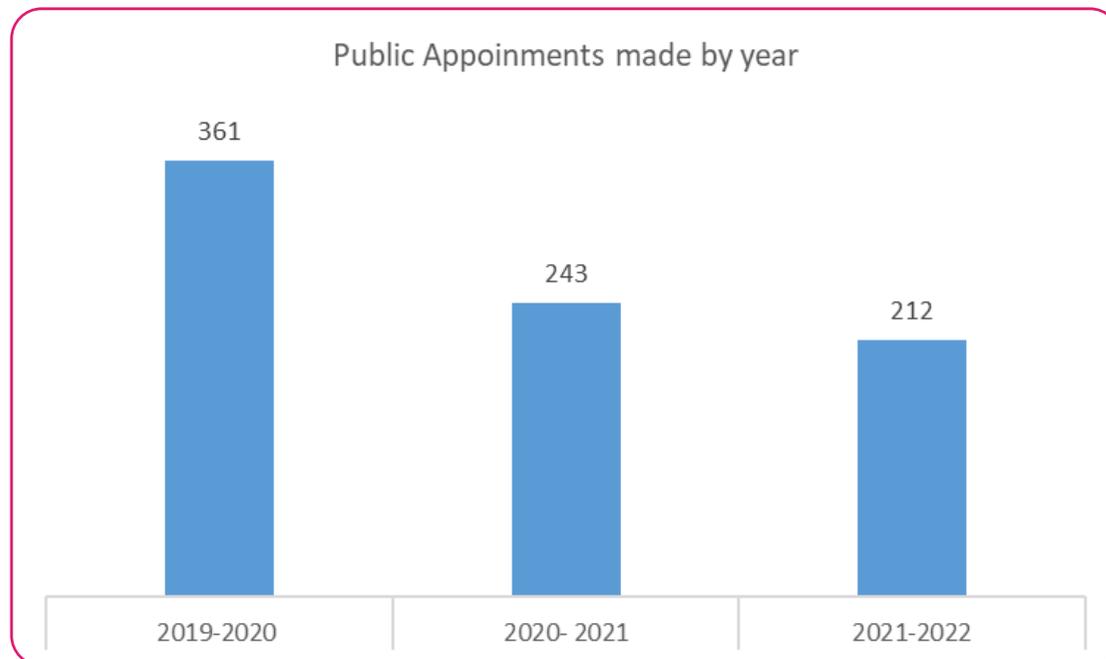
Population Indicator: Composition of government public applications/appointments by equality ground - *Appointments made*

Data Source: Public Appointments Report for Northern Ireland – March 2023

Data Provider: Statistics and Research Branch, The Executive Office (TEO)

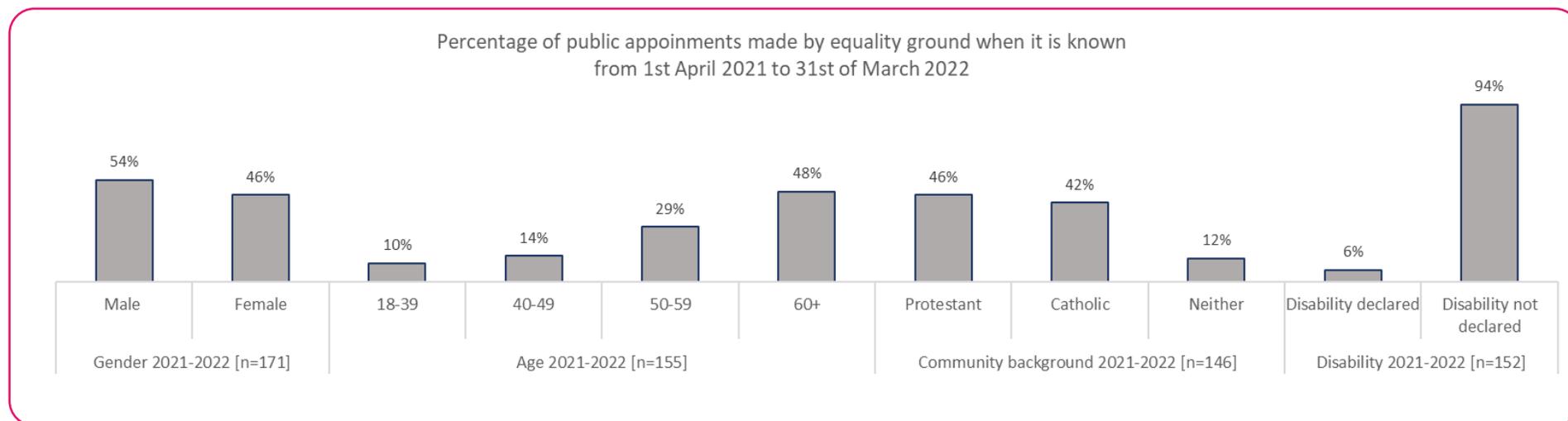
Overall

The number of appointments made to public appointment posts decreased from 361 in 2019/2020 to 243 in 2020/2021, with the number dropping again to 212 in 2021/2022.



Summary Across Equality Groups

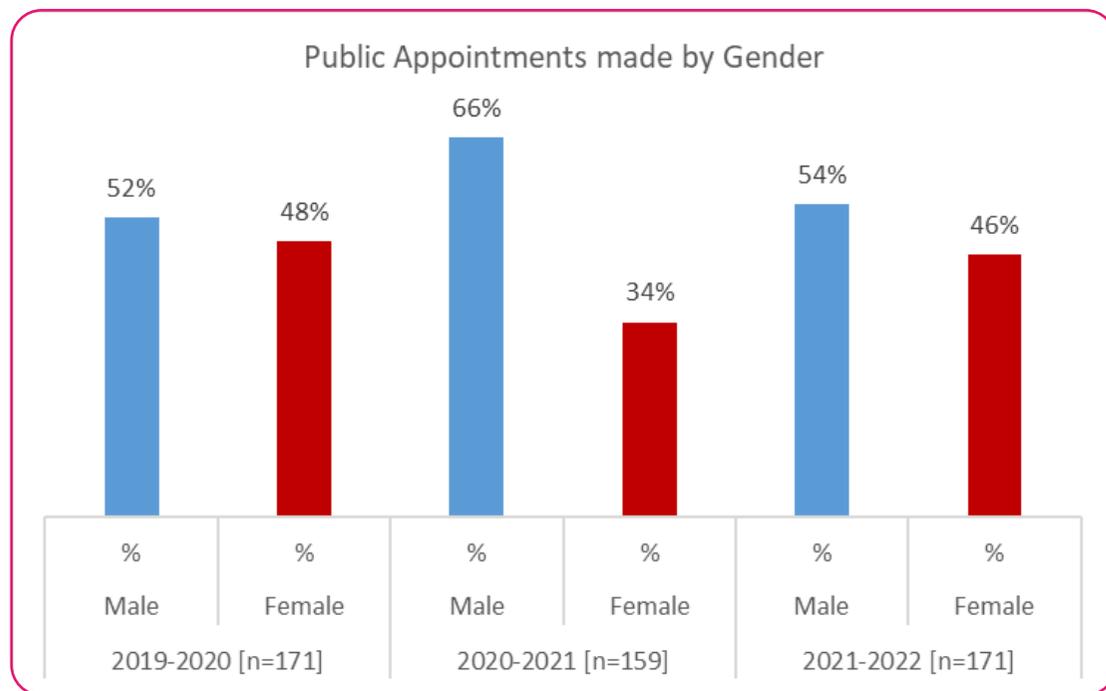
Across the equality groups where data is available and known by equality ground, those with the greatest shares of appointments to public appointment posts during the period of analysis 2021/2022 were applicants with disability not declared (94%), male (54%), Protestant (46%), and applicants in the age group of over 60+ (48%). Those equality groups with the lowest percentage shares of those appointed were those in the age group of 18-29 (2%), applicants with a disability declared (9%), and applicants with Neither community background (12%).



Gender⁵

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

When the gender was known (47% of all appointments made to public appointment positions in 2019/20; 65% in 2020/21 and 81% in 2021/22) for appointments made, males and females had roughly equal shares in 2019/20. The following year, 2020/21, the percentage share of female appointees (34%) decreased by fourteen percentage points. In 2021/22, the proportion of males and females appointed rebalanced slightly with 52% of appointees being male and 46% being female.

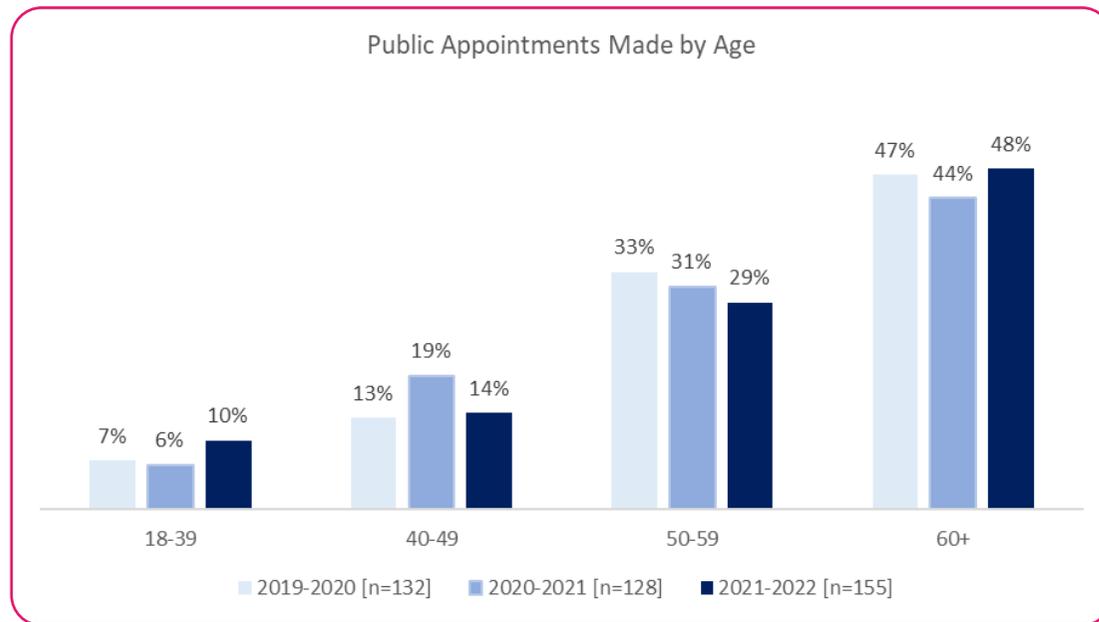


⁵ Data on appointments made by gender and remunerations is excluded here due to figures and categories have been suppressed due to disclose control over the period of analysis.

Age

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented. Disclosure control applied merging the 18-29 and 30-39 age groups.

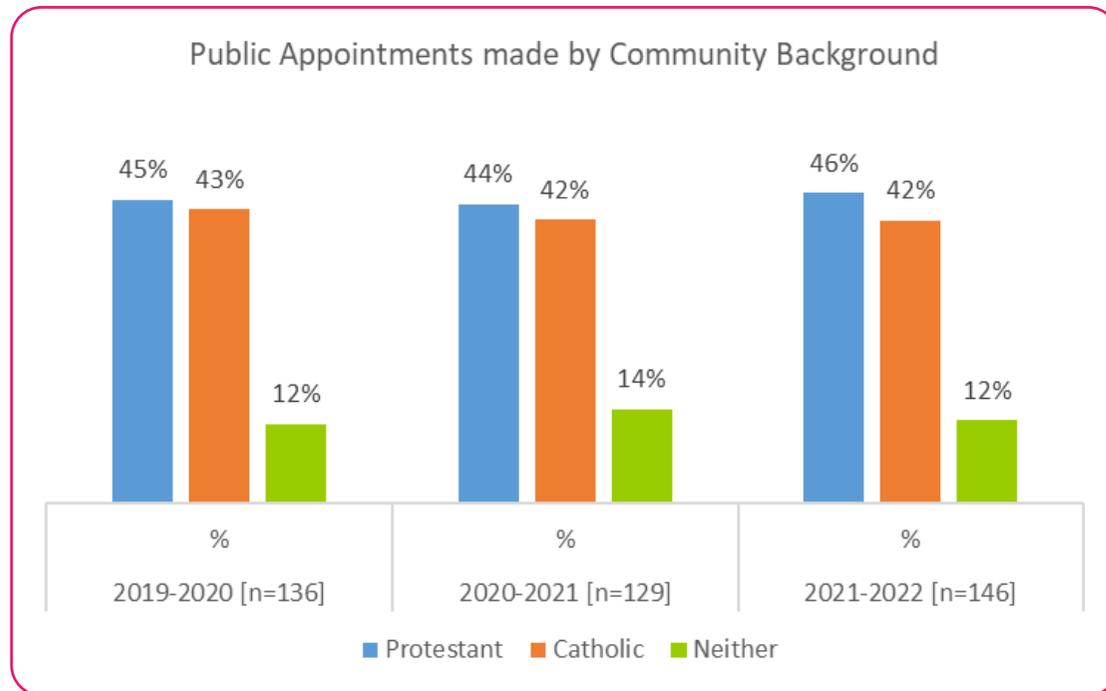
When age was known for those appointed (37% in 2019/20, 53% in 2020/21 and 73% in 2021/22), the data showed that over the three-year period of analysis, the majority of those appointed were in the age group 60+ (44% to 48%) in the years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22. The percentage of those aged 50-59 appointed was 33% in 2019/20, with a small decrease to 31% in 2020/21 and again to 29% in 2021/22. The smallest percentage shares were for the those in the age range of 40-49 (13% to 19%) and 18-39 (6% to 10%).



Religion

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

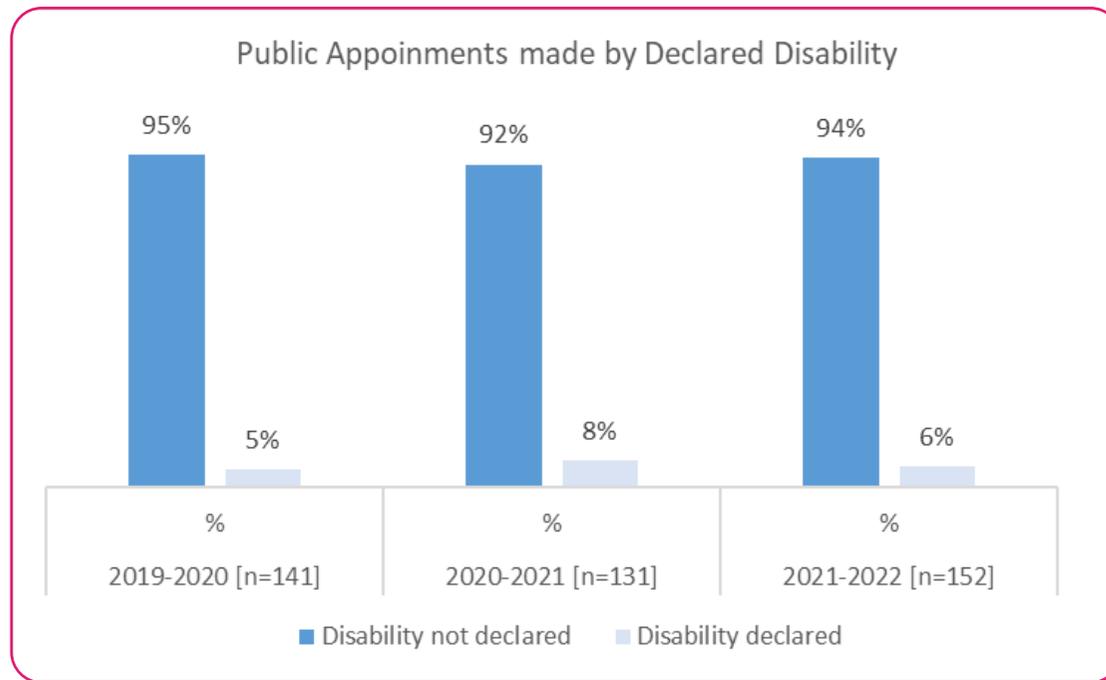
The community background information known for those appointed in 2019/20 was 38% (136), in 2020/21 was 53% (129), and 60% (146) in 2021/22. The proportion of appointments made was slightly higher for those with a Protestant community background than for those with a Catholic background; this trend was consistent over the three years analysed. The proportion of those appointed with Neither community background was between 12% and 14% for the same period.



Disability

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

When disability was known (39% in 2019/20, 54% in 2020/21 and 72% in 2020/21) the proportion of those appointed who declared having a disability was between 5% and 8%. Those who did not declare a disability exhibited shares of between 92% and 95% of appointments made during the period of analysis.



Ethnicity.

Data Status: Due to disclosure control, data for this equality ground to assist this performance measure was removed by the data provider from the dataset submitted to the Commission.

Marital Status

Data Status: Due to disclosure control, data for this equality ground to assist this performance measure was removed by the data provider from the dataset submitted to the Commission.

Sexual Orientation

Data Status: Due to disclosure control, data for this equality ground to assist this performance measure was removed by the data provider from the dataset submitted to the Commission.

Dependents

Data Status: Due to disclosure control, data for this equality ground to assist this performance measure was removed by the data provider from the dataset submitted to the Commission.

Carers

Data Status: Data was not collected.

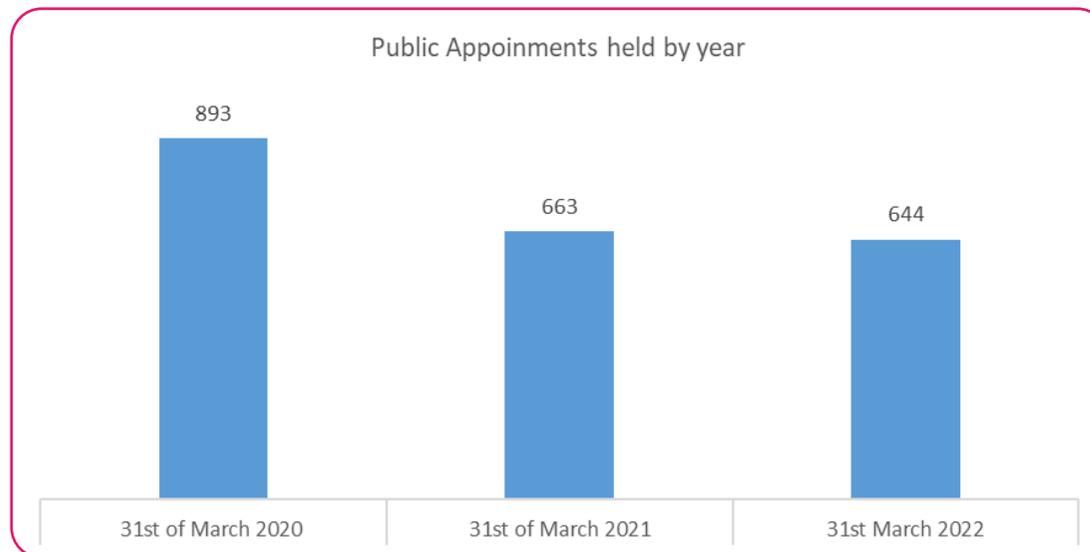
Population Indicator: Composition of government public applications/appointments by equality ground - *Appointments held*

Data Source: Public Appointments Report for Northern Ireland – March 2023

Data provider: Statistics and Research Branch, The Executive Office (TEO)

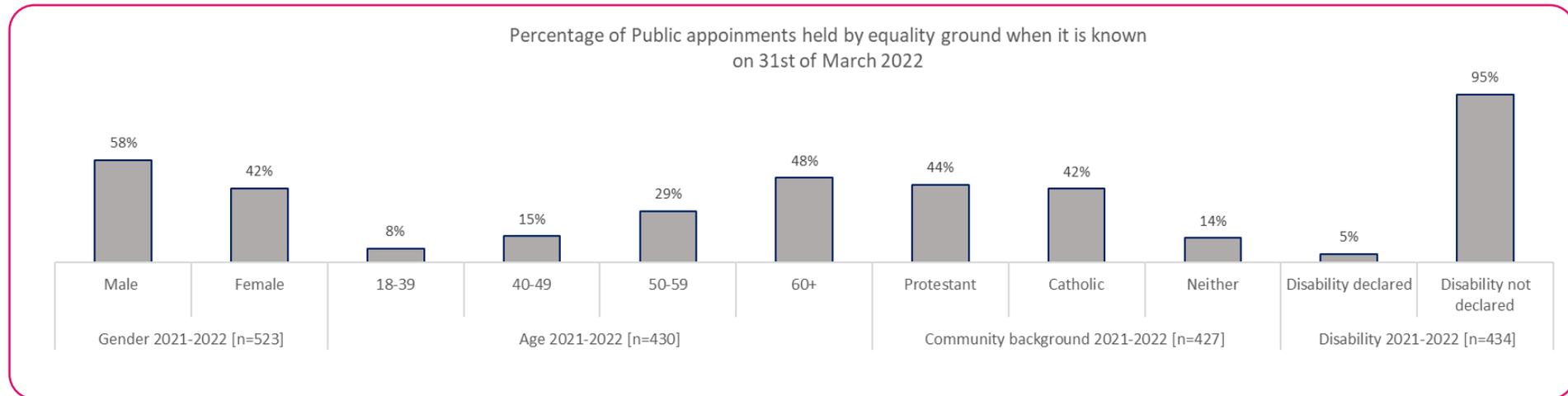
Overall

The number of appointments held significantly decreased from 893 by March 2020 to 663 by March 2021 and again to 644 by March 2022.



Summary Across Equality Groups

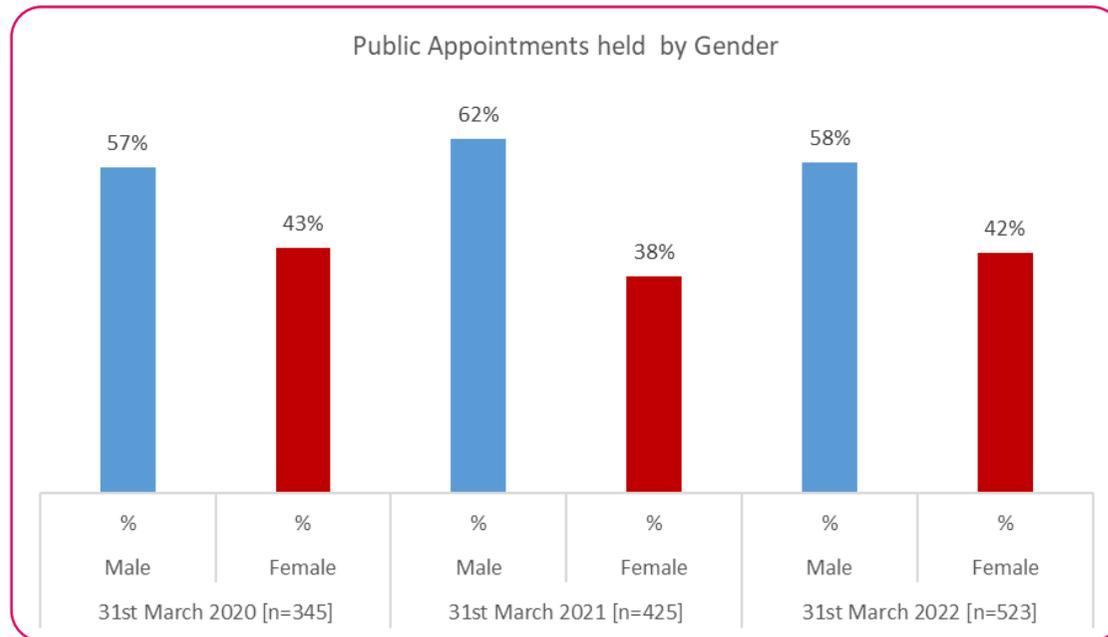
Across the equality groups where data is available and known by equality ground, those with the highest proportions of appointments held in 31st of March 2022 were individuals with a no disability declared (95%), males (58%), individuals over 65+, and Protestants (48%). Those with lower percentage shares of appointments held that year were individuals with a disability (5%), individuals from the age group of 18-39 (8%), individuals with Neither religion (14%) and females (42%).



Gender

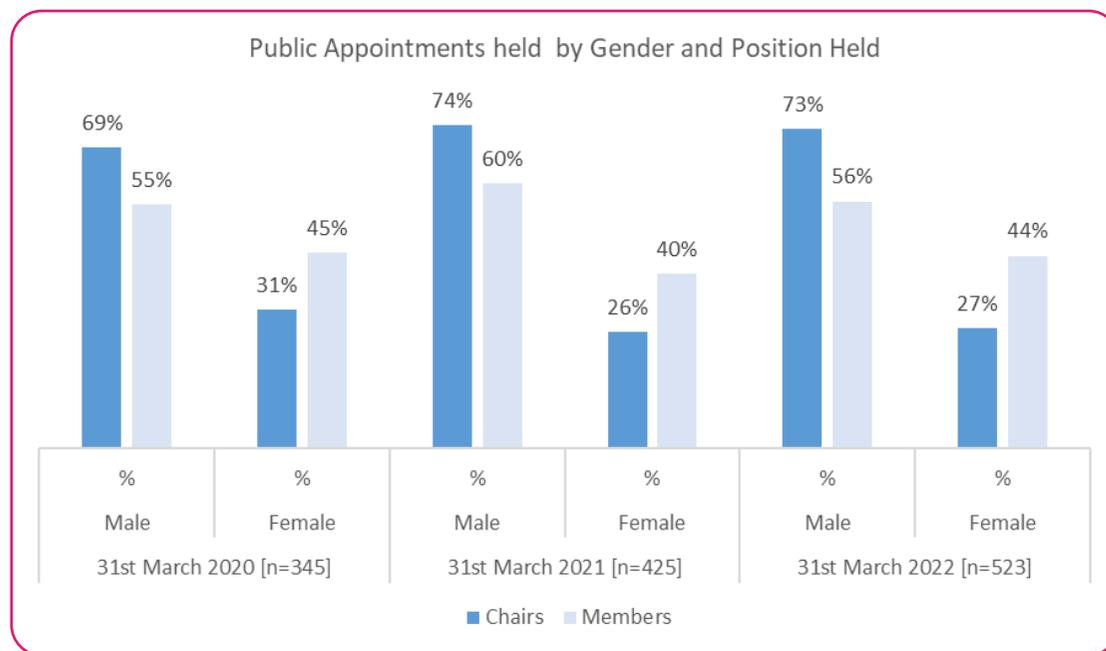
Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

When gender was known (39% of appointments held by March 2020, 64% by March 2021 and 81% by March 2022), female shares (38% to 43%) remained consistently lower than those for appointments held by males (57% to 62%) during the period of analysis.



Appointments held by gender and position held.

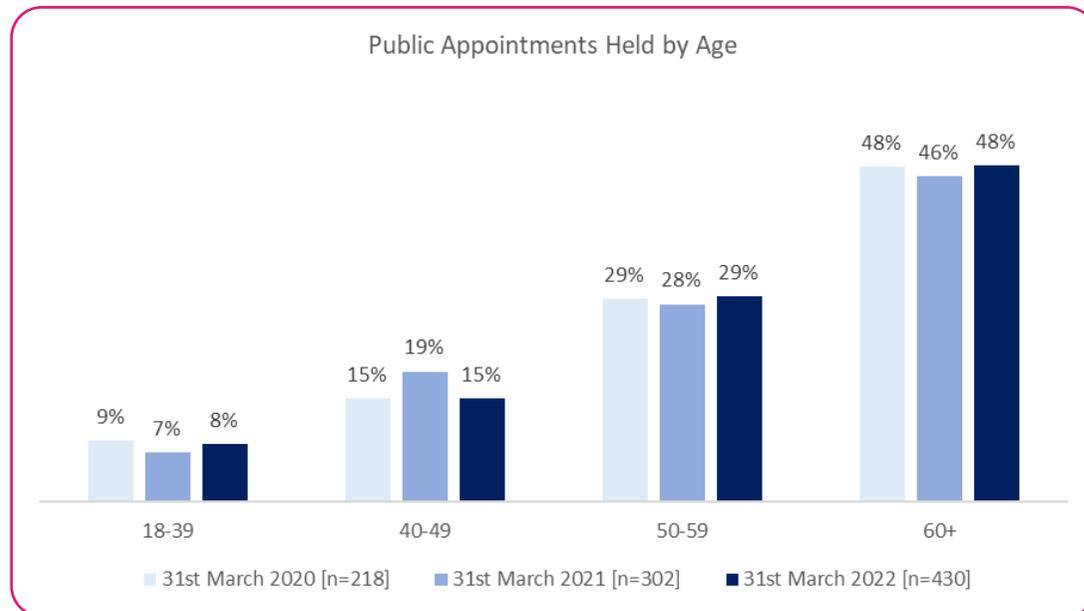
For those appointments held where the gender was known, there were noticeable differences between the percentage shares of appointments held by males and females for the positions of chairs and members. Over the three years of analysis, the percentage shares for male appointments held for the positions of chairs were approximately three times greater than those for females. In 2020, the difference between male and female was 38 percentage points, which increased up to 48 percentage points in 2021 and decreased slightly in to 46 percentage points in 2022. A similar trend also occurred in respect to the percentage shares for member positions, where the difference between males and females was 10 percentage points in 2020, 20 percentage points in 2021 and 12 percentage points in 2022.



Age

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

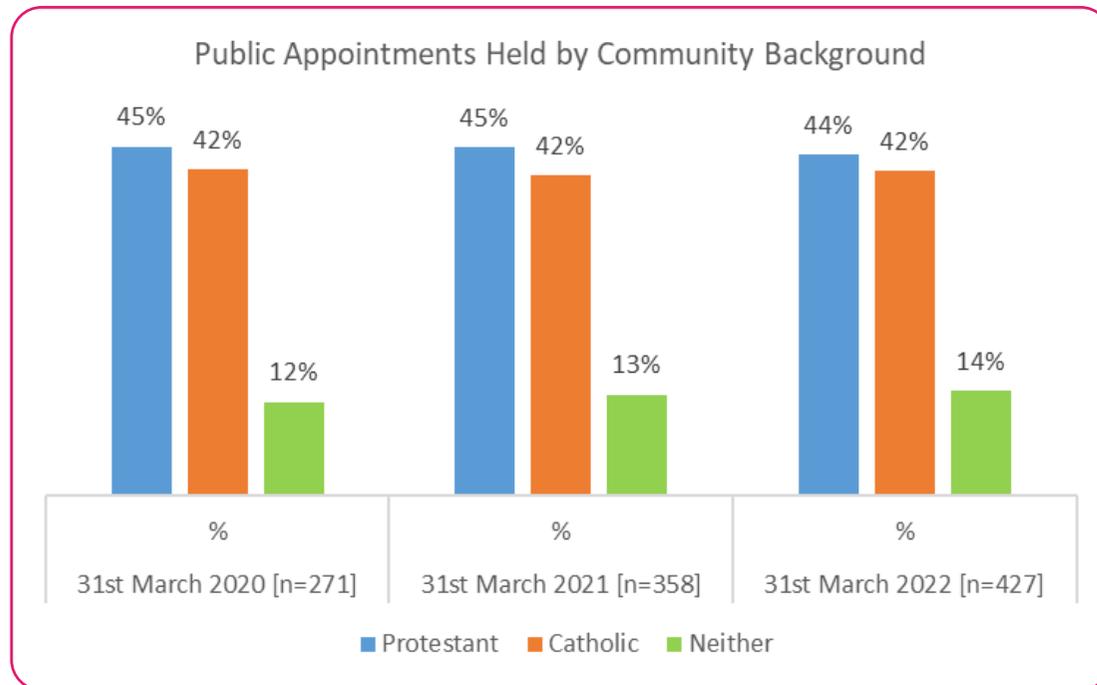
When the age of appointments held was known (24% by March 2020, 46% by March 2021 and 67% by March 2022), the data of the last three years indicated that individuals of the age group of 60+ represented almost half of the appointments held (46 to 48%). Those aged 50-59 represented 28% to 29% appointments held over the same period of analysis. Those between 18-39 represented 7% to 9% of appointments held, where 15% to 19% were held by the age group of 40-49.



Community Background

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

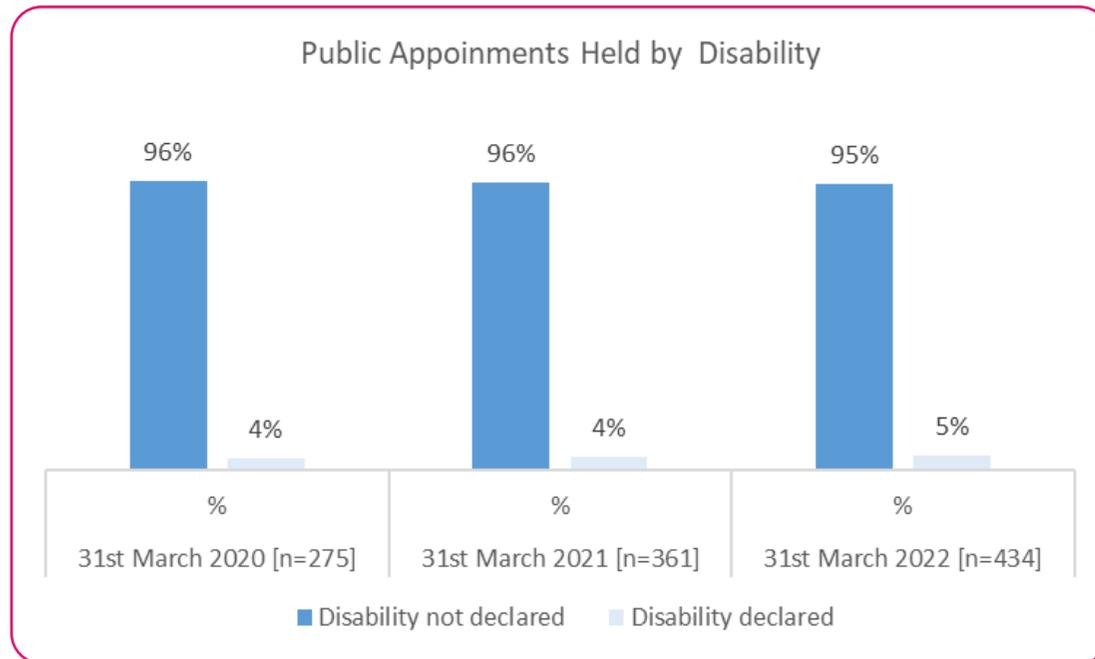
When the community background was known (30% for appointments held by March 2020, 54% by 2021, and 66% by 2022), the data for the last three years showed small differences of two to three percentage points between the percentage shares of those with Protestant and Catholic background. Those who declared Neither community background had the lowest percentage shares of appointments held over the three years of analysis.



Disability

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

When disability was known (31% in 2020, 54% in 2021 and 67% in 2022), the data for the last three years indicated that the those with a declared disability represented on 4% to 5% of appointments held.



Ethnicity.

Data Status: Due to disclosure control, data for this equality ground to assist this performance measure was removed by the data provider from the dataset submitted to the Commission.

Marital Status

Data Status: Due to disclosure control, data for this equality ground to assist this performance measure was removed by the data provider from the dataset submitted to the Commission.

Sexual Orientation

Data Status: Due to disclosure control, data for this equality ground to assist this performance measure was removed by the data provider from the dataset submitted to the Commission.

Dependents

Data Status: Due to disclosure control, data for this equality ground to assist this performance measure was removed by the data provider from the dataset submitted to the Commission.

Carers

Data Status: Data was not collected.



Priority Area:

Access and Participation in Public Life

People are supported and empowered to influence decision-making processes that affect them through participation in public life.

Data Source: Public Opinion Survey of Equality in Northern Ireland - 2023

Date Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

The data considered for the analysis of this section is gathered from the first year of MENI questions included in the Equality Commission's Public Opinion Survey of Equality in Northern Ireland – 2023, with a sample of 1023 individuals over 16+ covering:

- a. Percentage of people who would consider participating in voluntary or community work;
- b. Percentage of people who would consider applying to sit on a public board and
- c. Percentage of people who feels they are confident, have the knowledge and understanding of how to apply for public appointments and other boards.

Charts are made by taking 2023 as the baseline.

 [ECNI - Public opinion survey - Equality in Northern Ireland \(equalityni.org\)](https://equalityni.org)

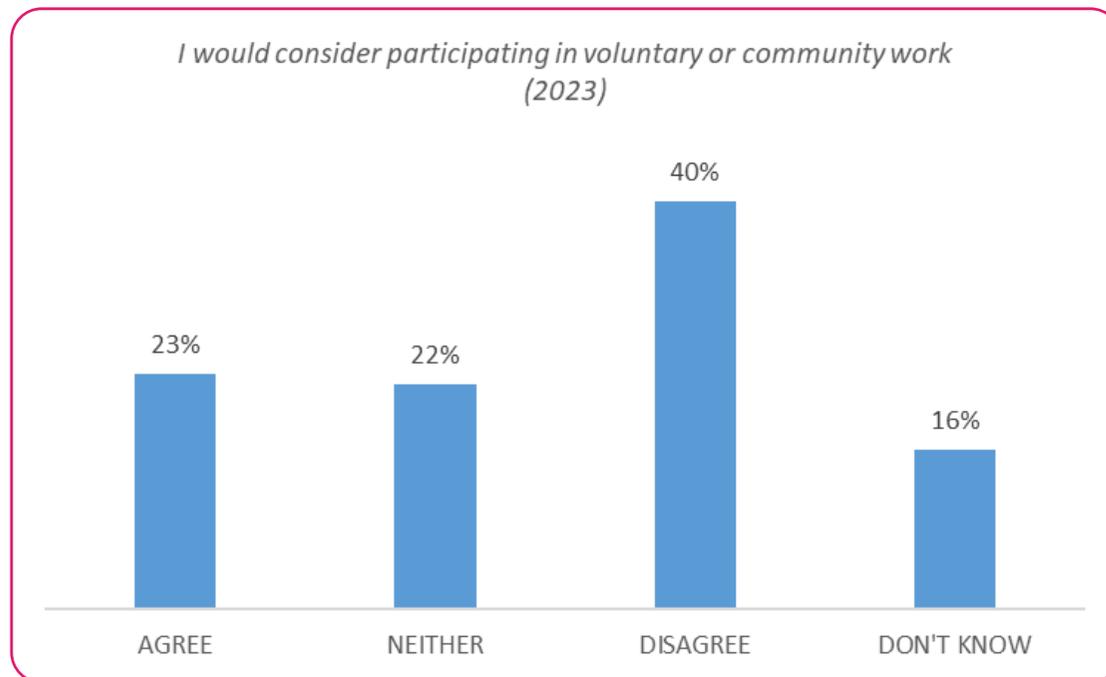
Population Indicator: Percentage of people who would consider participating in voluntary or community work.

Data Source: Public Opinion Survey of Equality in Northern Ireland - 2023

Data Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

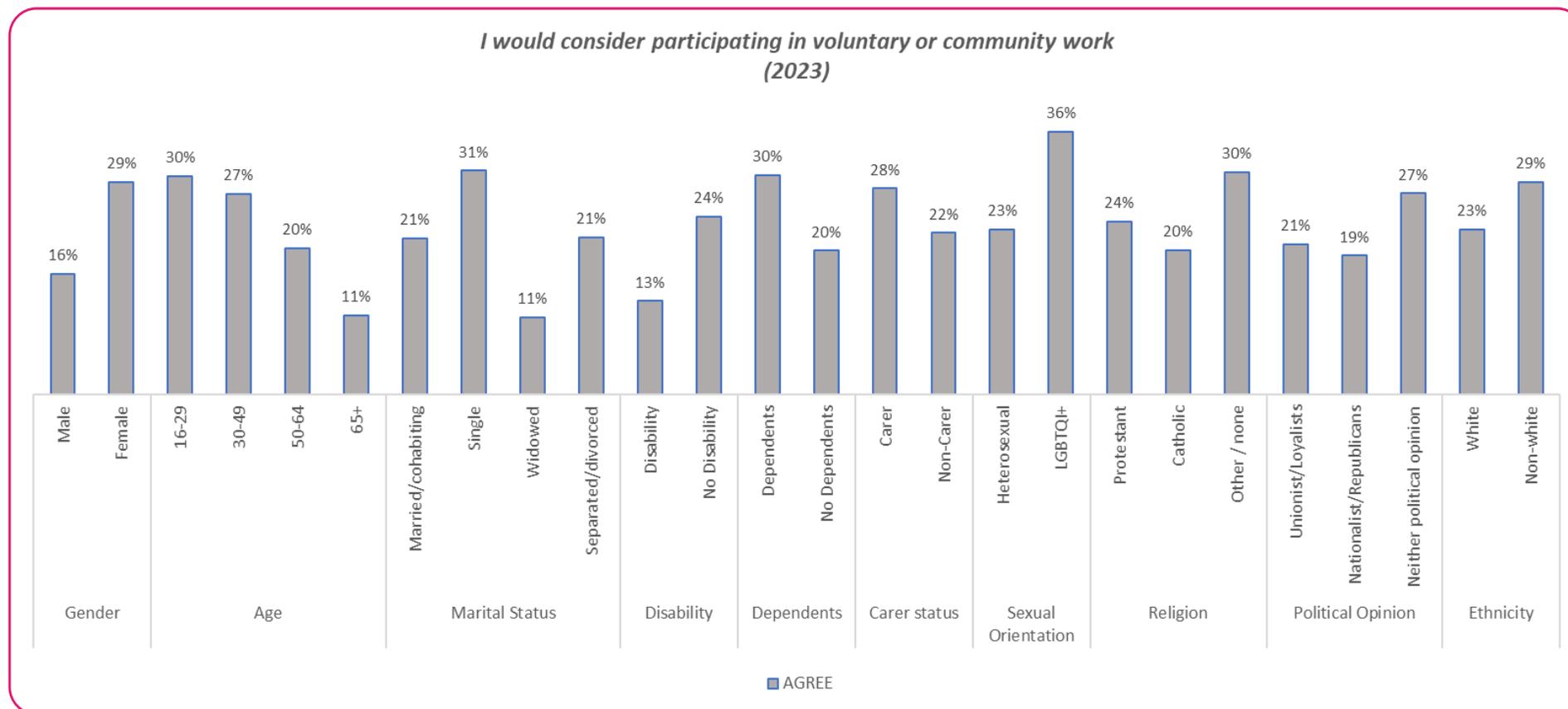
Overall

In general, four out of ten respondents disagreed with the statement “I would consider participating in voluntary and community work” while around the same proportion of respondents agreed (23%) or neither agreed nor disagreed (22%) with the statement. The percentage of those who don’t know if they agree or disagree was 16%.



Summary Across Equality Groups⁶

Across all equality groups, respondents more likely to agree with the statement “I would consider participating in voluntary and community work” were LGBTQI+ respondents (36%), single respondents (31%), respondents with dependents (30%), respondents with Other or No religion (30%), those in age group 16-29 (30%), female (29%), non-white (29%) and carer respondents (28%).

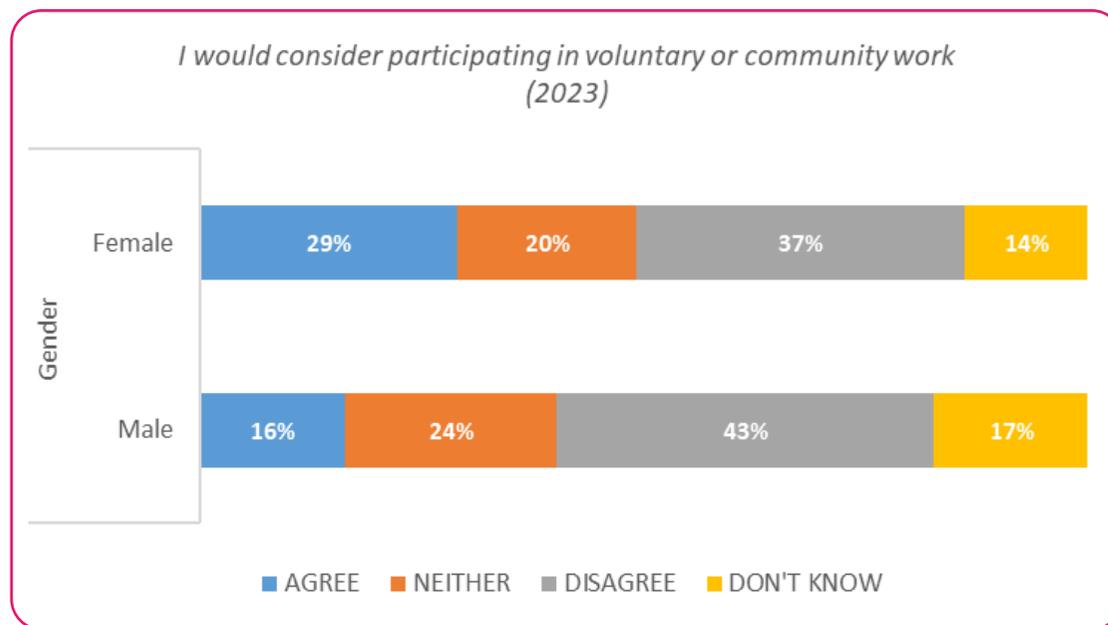


6 There were a number of statistically significant differences: Those less likely to agree with the statement “I would consider participating in voluntary and community work” were men (16%) compared with women (29%), those aged 65+ (11%) compared to other age groups (16-29, 30%; 30-49, 27%; 50-64, 20%), respondents with a disability (13%) compared to those with no disability (24%), Unionist/Loyalist (21%) or Nationalist/Republican (19%) respondents compared to those with Neither political opinion (27%), those with no dependent children (20%) compared to those with dependent children (30%), non-carers (22%) compared to carers (28%), and widowed (11%) respondents compared to married/cohab. (21%), single (31%), separated/divorced (21%)

Gender

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

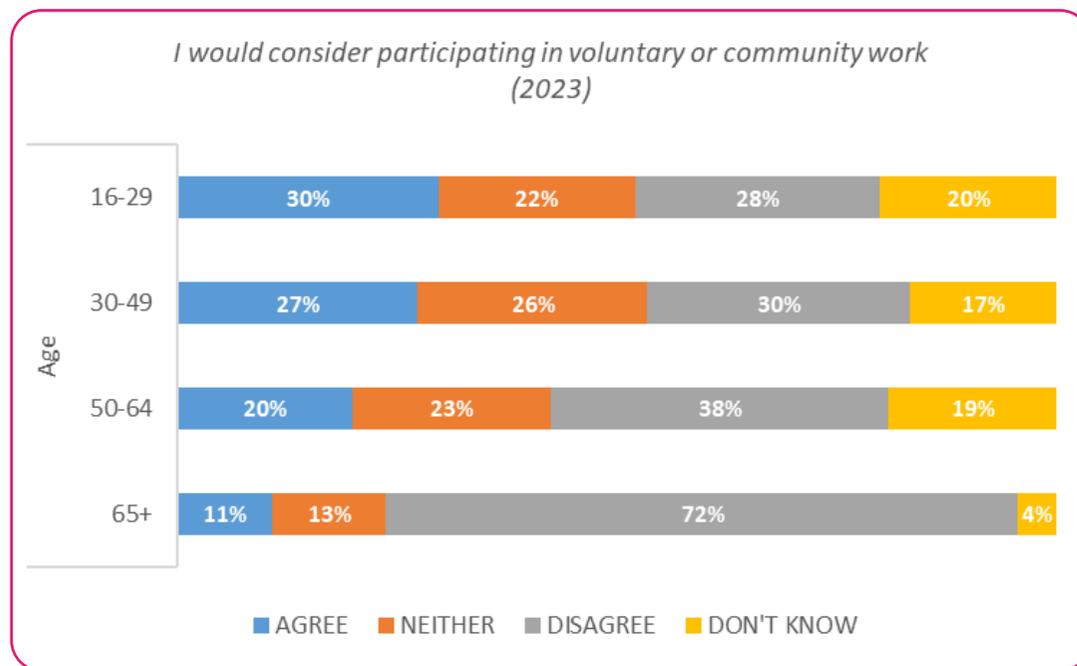
Female respondents (29%) were more likely to consider participating in volunteering or community work than male respondents (16%) with a difference of thirteen percentage points. Around a quarter of male respondents (24%) said they neither agree nor disagree with the statement in comparison with a fifth of female respondents (20%). Male respondents (43%) were more likely to disagree with the statement, with a difference of six percentage points from female respondents (37%). There was a marginal difference between male (17%) and female (14%) respondents who stated they don't know if they agree or disagree with the statement.



Age

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

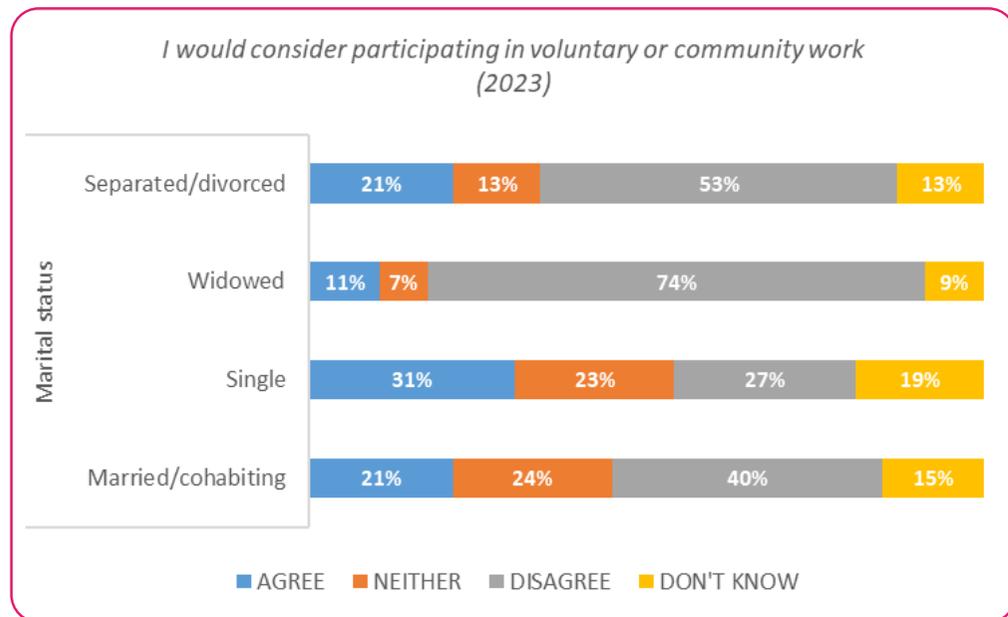
Participants of the age groups 16-29 (30%) and 30-49 (27%) were more likely to agree with the statement “I would consider participating in voluntary and community work” than respondents of the age group of 50-64 (20%) followed by the age group of 65+(11%). Respondents more inclined to say they neither agreed nor disagree with the statement were respondents of the age groups of 30-49 (26%), 50-64 (23%) and 16-29 (22%) while respondents of the age group 65+ were less likely to express this view. Substantial differences were evident among the age groups when looking at the percentage of those disagreeing with the statement, where more than seven out of ten of respondents of the 65+ age group (72%) disagreed with the statement followed by the respondents of the age group of 50-64 (38%), while the youngest group of respondents was the least likely to disagree with the statement (28%). A similar proportion of respondents of the age groups 16-29 (20%), 50-64 (19%) and 30-49 (17%) stated they don’t know if they agree or disagree with the statement while only 4% of 65+ respondents stated that they don’t know.



Marital Status

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

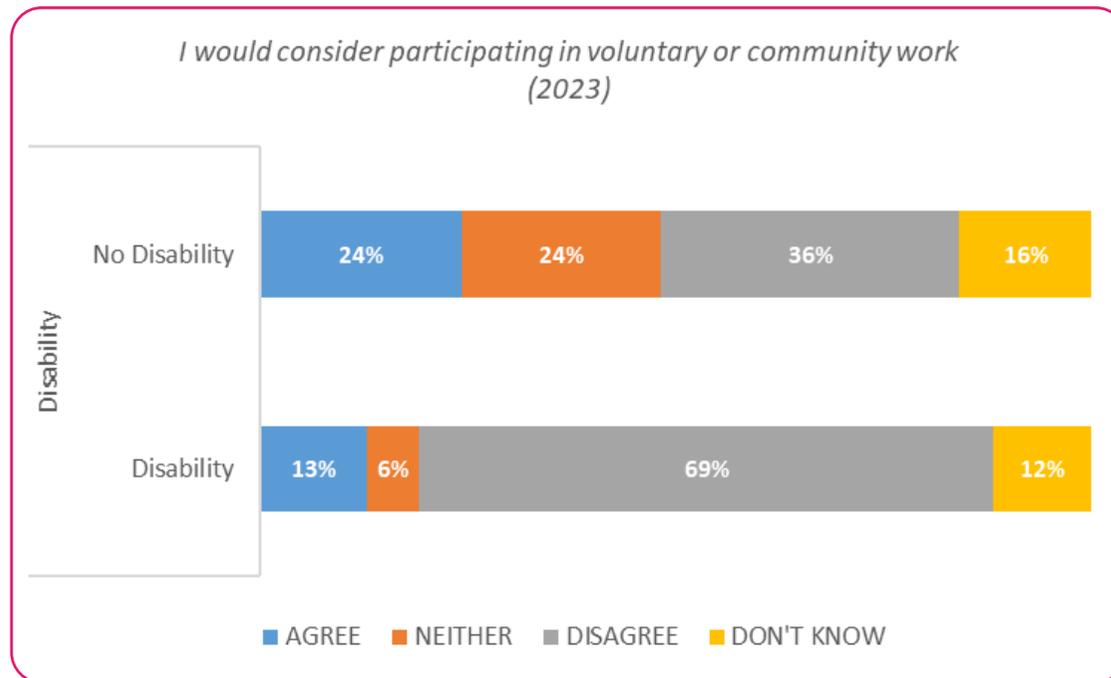
Respondents who were single (31%) were the most likely to agree with the statement “I would consider participating in voluntary or community work” followed by separated/divorced and married/cohabiting respondents (both 21%), while widowed respondents (11%) were the least likely to agree with the statement. Around a quarter of married/cohabitant (24%) and single respondents (23%) indicated they neither agree nor disagree with the statement, with only 13% of separated/divorced respondents of the same opinion. Widowed respondents (7%) were the least likely to neither agree nor disagree with the statement. Widowed (74%) respondents were most likely to disagree with the statement; with a difference of nineteen percentage points from separated/divorced respondents (53%), thirty-four percentage points difference from married/cohabiting respondents (40%) and forty-seven percentage points differences from single respondents (27%). Single respondents (19%) were more inclined to state that they don’t know if they agree or disagree the statement, followed by married/cohabiting (15%) and separated/divorced (13%) respondents, while only less than one out of ten of widowed (9%) respondents said they don’t know.



Disability

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

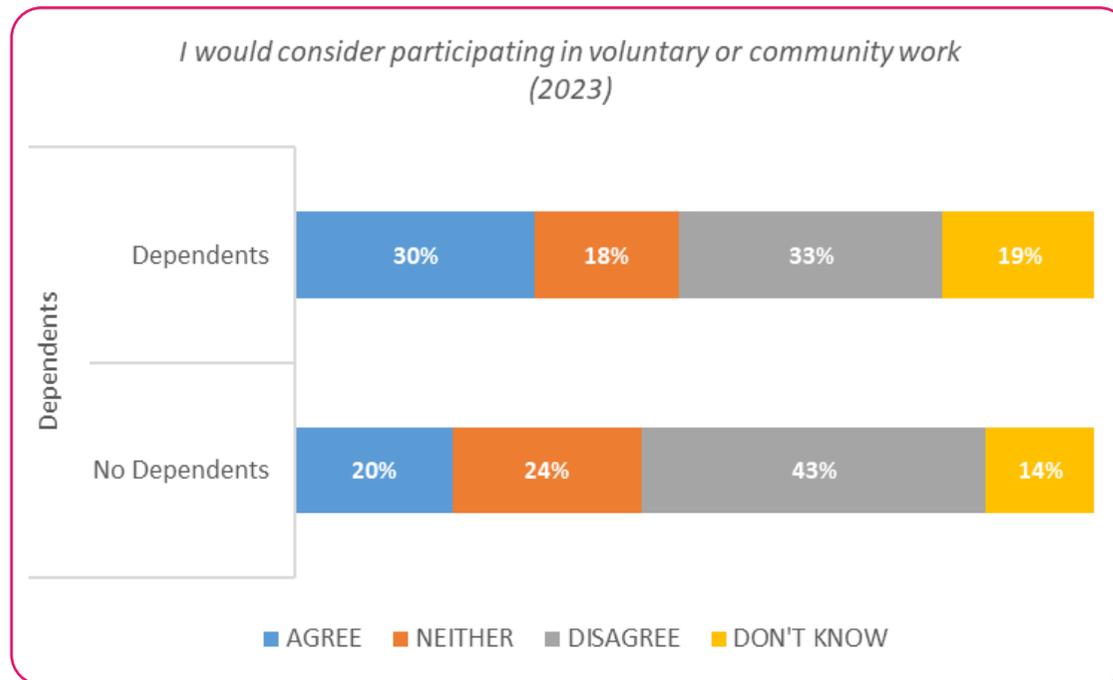
Almost a quarter of those with no disability (24%) agreed that they would consider participating in voluntary or community work compared with those with a disability (13%). Those with a disability were also almost twice more likely to disagree with the statement (69%) compared to those with no disability (36%). Respondents without a disability (24%) were four times more likely to state that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement than respondents with disability (6%). There were marginal differences between respondents without a disability (16%) and respondents with a disability (12%) who said they don't know if they agree or disagree with the statement.



Dependants

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

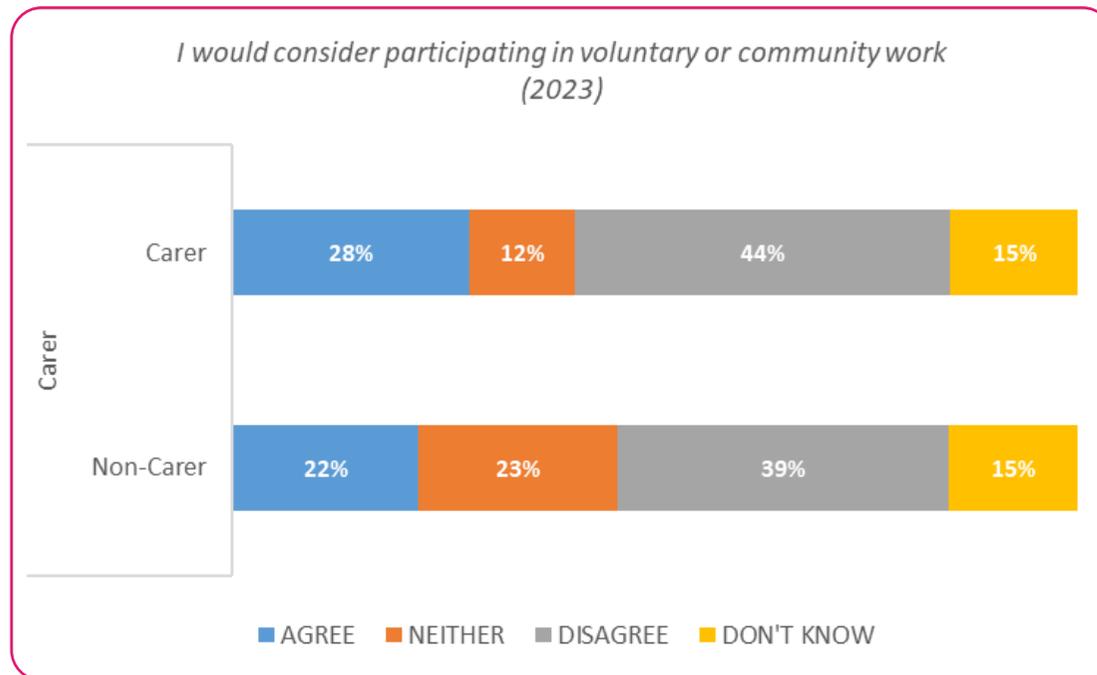
Respondents with dependents (30%) were more likely to agree with the statement “I would consider volunteering or doing community work” than those without dependents (20%). Those without dependents also had the highest percentage of disagreement with this statement (43%) compared to respondents with dependents (33%). A quarter of respondents with no dependents (24%) stated that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement, while less than a fifth of respondents with dependents (18%) were of the same opinion. There were small differences between respondents with (19%) and without (14%) dependents who said they don’t know if they agree or disagree.



Carers

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

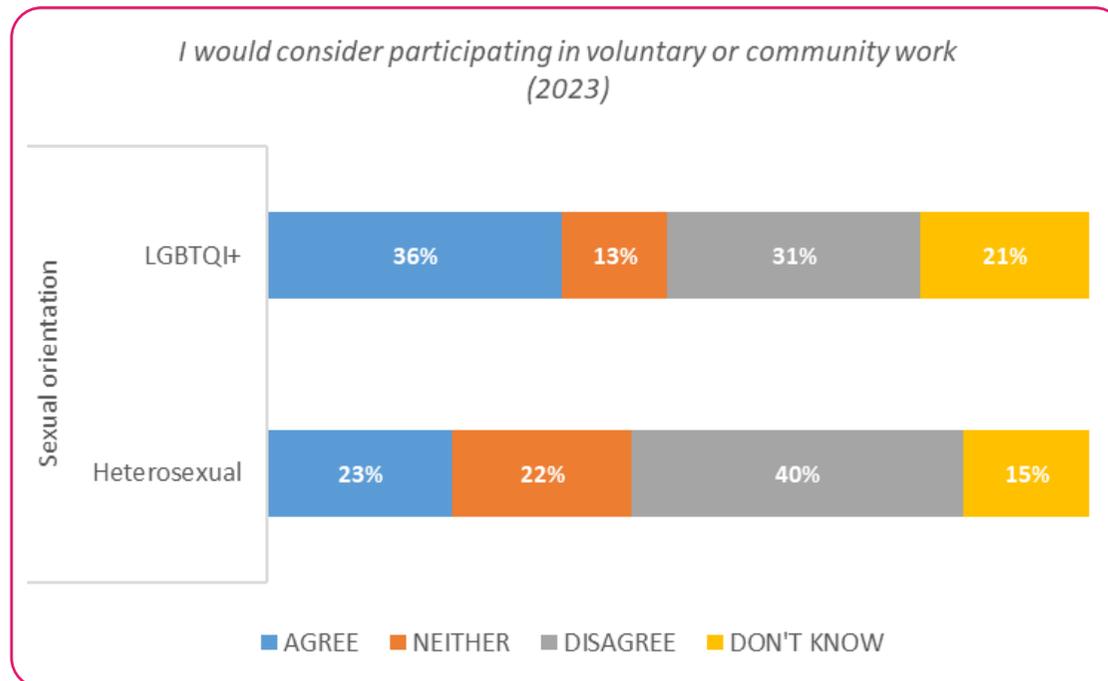
The percentage of respondents with caring responsibilities (28%) who said they agree with the statement “I would consider volunteering or doing community work” was six percentage points higher than the percentage of respondents without caring responsibilities (22%). However, respondents without caring responsibilities were more likely to declare disagreement (44%) with the statement in comparison with those with no caring responsibilities (39%). Non-carers (23%) were twice as likely to say that they neither agreed nor disagree with the statement compared to carer respondents (12%). There was no differences between carer and non-carer respondents who said they don’t know if they agree or disagree with the statement (both 15%).



Sexual Orientation

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

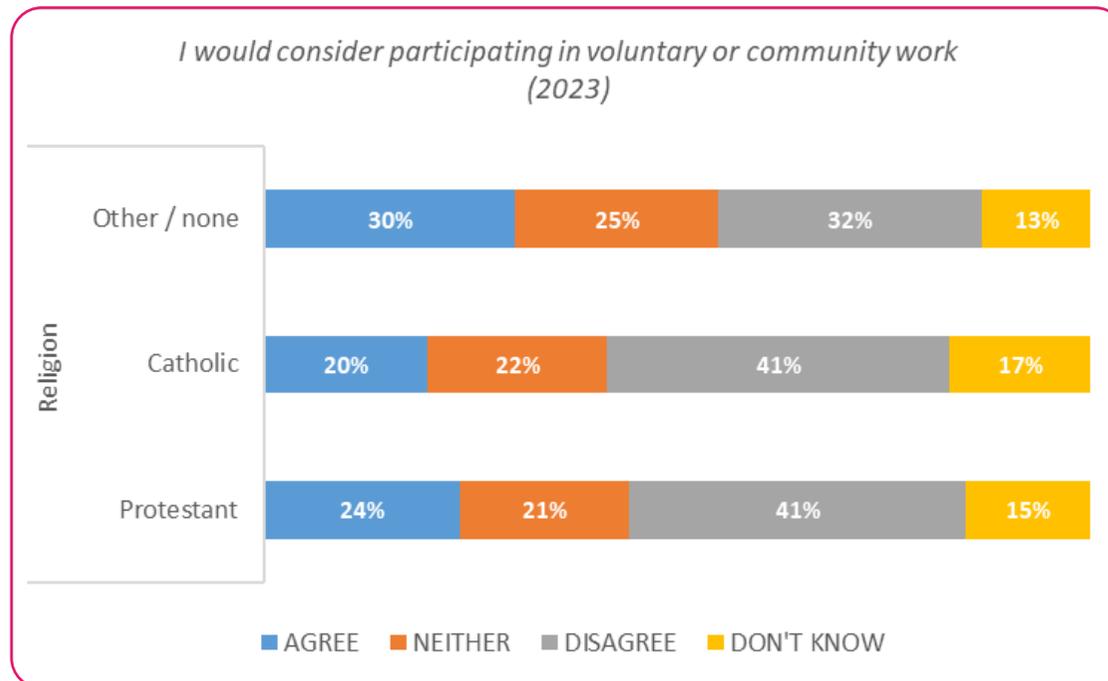
Slightly over a third of LGBTQI+ respondents (36%) agreed with the statement “I would consider volunteering or doing community work”; this was thirteen percentage points higher than for heterosexual respondents (23%). Conversely, around two out of ten heterosexual respondents (22%) said neither agree nor disagree with the statement, while 13% of LGBTQI+ respondents were of the same opinion. Heterosexual respondents were more likely to disagree with the statement (40%); eleven percentage points more than LGBTQI+ respondents (31%). LGBTQI+ respondents (21%) were more likely to indicate they don’t know than heterosexual respondents (15%).



Religion

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

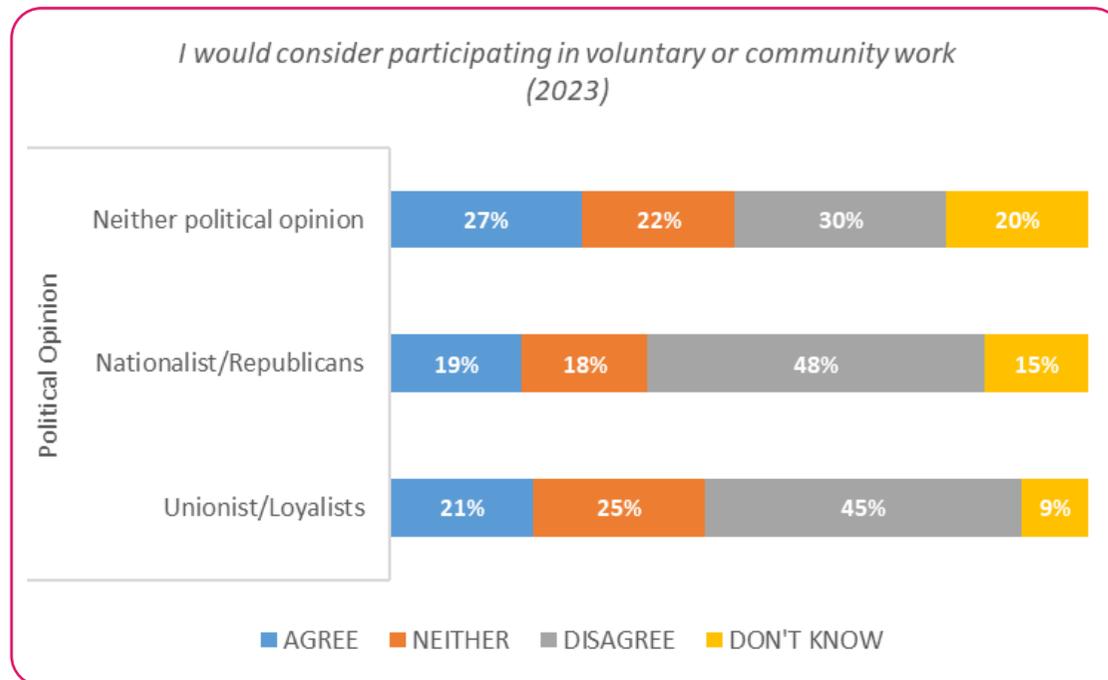
Respondents with “Other or none” (30%) religion were more likely to agree with the statement “I would consider volunteering or doing community work” than Protestant (24%) and Catholic (20%) respondents. Around the same proportions of Other or No religion (25%), Catholic (22%) and Protestant (21%) respondents declared that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. In the same proportion, four out of ten Catholic and Protestant respondents (41%) disagreed with the statement, however slightly less than a third of respondents with Other or No religion (32%) disagreed. Small differences were evident among Catholic (17%), Protestant (15%) and Other or No religion (13%) respondents indicating that they don’t know if they agree or disagree with the statement.



Political Opinion

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

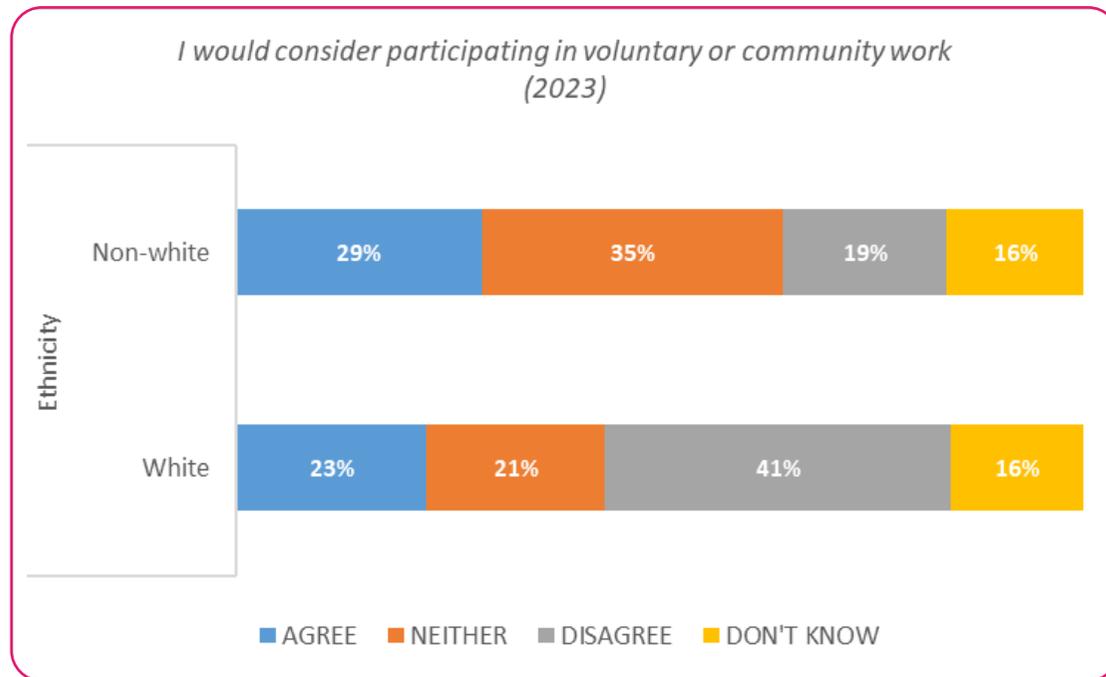
More than a quarter of respondents with Neither political opinion (27%) agreed with the statement “I would consider participation in volunteering or community work”, with slightly smaller proportions of Unionist/Loyalist (21%) and Nationalist/Republican (19%) agreeing with the statement. The highest percentage of respondents disagreeing with the statement is found amongst Nationalist/Republican (48%) followed by Unionist/Loyalist (45%) respondents. A quarter of Unionist/Loyalist (25%) stated that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement while approximately two out of ten respondents of those with Neither (22%) or Nationalist/Republicans (18%) political opinion provided the same response. Respondents with Neither political opinion (20%) followed by Nationalist/Republican (15%) respondents were more likely to say they don’t know if they agree or disagree with the statement than Unionist/Loyalist (9%) respondents.



Ethnicity

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

Non-white (29%) respondents were more likely to agree with the statement “I would consider participation in volunteering or community work” than White (23%) respondents. Non-white (35%) respondents were also more inclined to indicate they neither agree nor disagree with the statement than White respondents (21%). The percentage of White respondents who disagreed with the statement (41%) was more than the double the percentage for Non-white respondents (19%). The same proportions of White and Non-white respondents (both 16%) indicated they don’t know if they agree or disagree with the statement.



Population Indicator: Percentage of people who would consider applying to sit on a public board (such as a school's board of governors or a board for a publicly funded body)

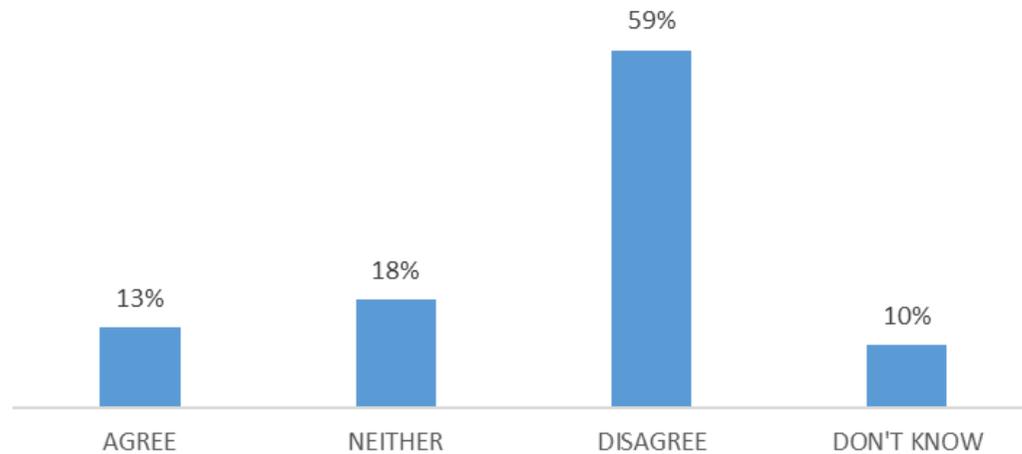
Data Source: Public Opinion Survey of Equality in Northern Ireland - 2023

Date Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Overall

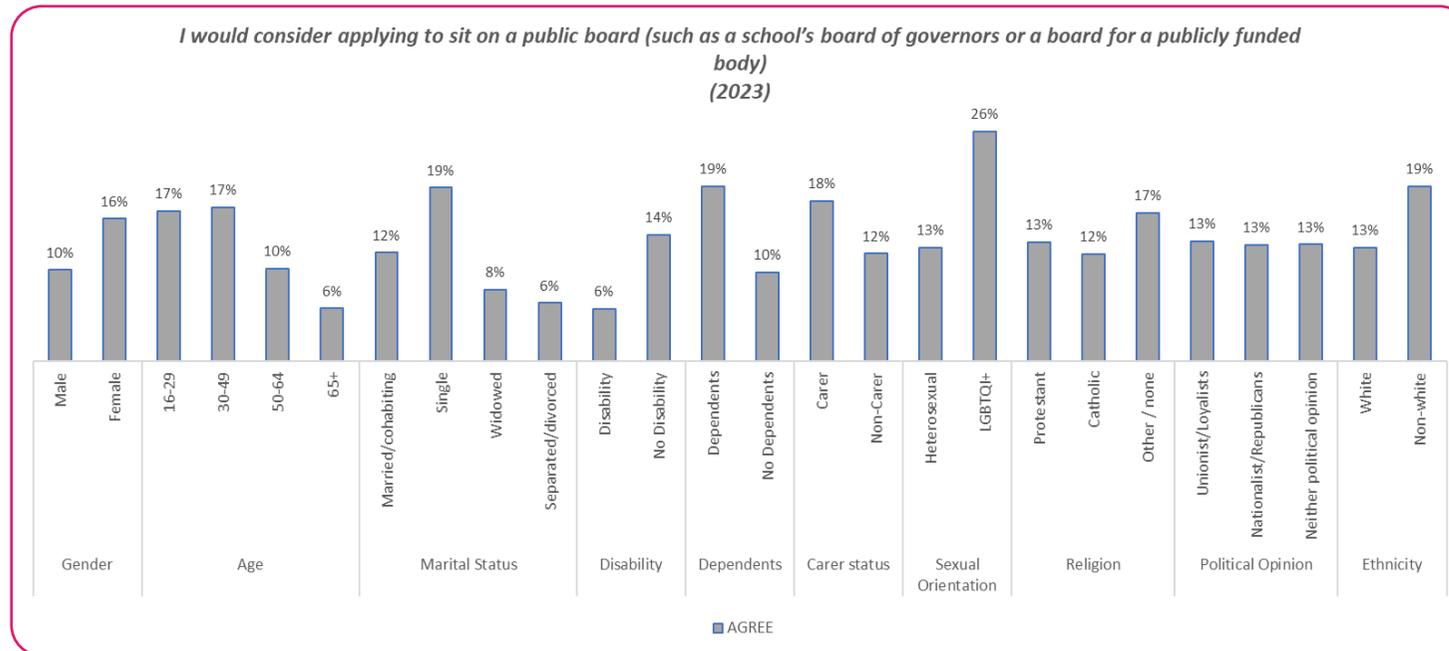
Among all respondents slightly less than six out of ten (59%) disagreed with the statement "I would consider applying to sit on a public board (such as a school's board of governors or a board of a public funded body)". Less than a fifth (18%) said they neither agree nor disagree with the statement, while 13% agreed with the statement and 10% stated that they don't know if they agree or disagree.

*I would consider applying to sit on a public board (such as a school's board of governors or a board for a publicly funded body)
(2023)*



Summary Across Equality Groups⁷

Across all equality groups, respondents more likely to agree with the statement “I would consider applying to sit on a public board (such as a school’s board of governors or a board of a public funded body)” were LGBTQI+ respondents (26%), single (19%), those with dependents (19%), non-white respondents (19%), those who were carers (18%), respondents in the age groups 16-29 and 30-49 (17%), respondents with Other or No religion (17%), and female respondents (16%).

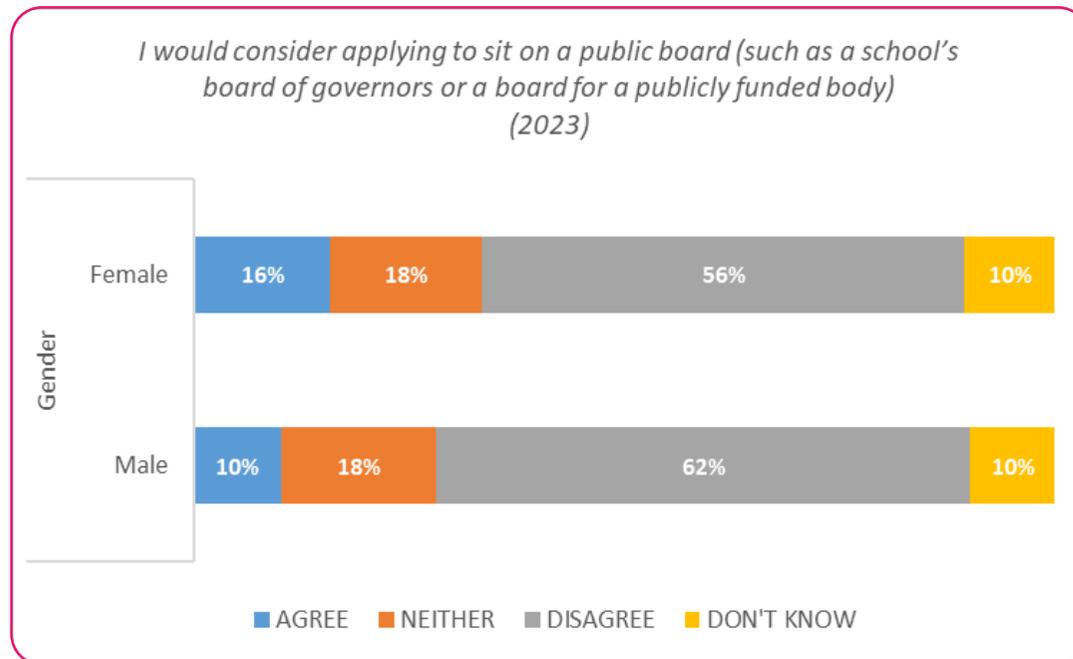


7 There were a number of statistically significant differences: Those less likely to agree with the statement “I would consider applying to sit on a public board” were men (10%) compared with women (16%), those aged 65+ (6%) compared to other age groups (16-29, 17%; 30-49, 17%; 50-64, 10%), respondents with a disability (6%) compared to those with no disability (14%), those with no dependents (10%) compared to those with dependents (19%) non carers (12%) compared with carers (18%), heterosexual respondents (13%) compared with LGBTQI+ (26%) respondents, separated/divorced (7%) or widowed (8%) respondents compared to respondents who are married/cohabiting (12%) or single (19%).

Gender

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

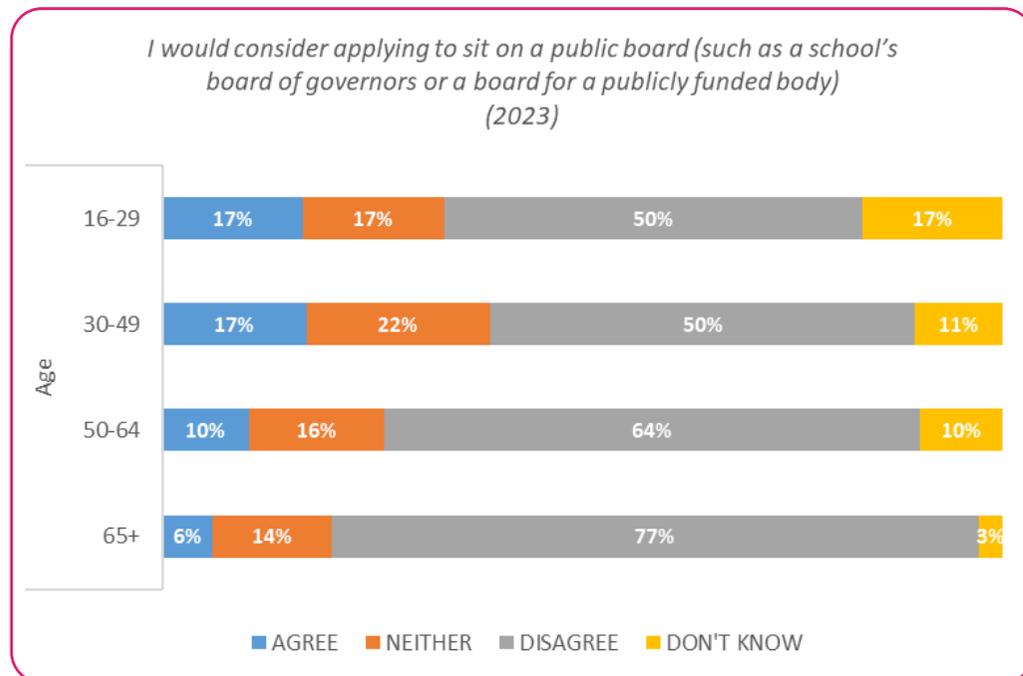
Female respondents (16%) were more likely to agree with the statement “I would consider applying to sit on a public board” than male respondents (10%). The same proportions of female and male respondents (both 18%) said they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. The percentage of respondents who disagree with the statement was higher among male respondents (62%) than for female respondents (56%). In the same proportions, one out of ten female and male respondents (10%) indicated they don’t know if they agree or disagree with the statement.



Age

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

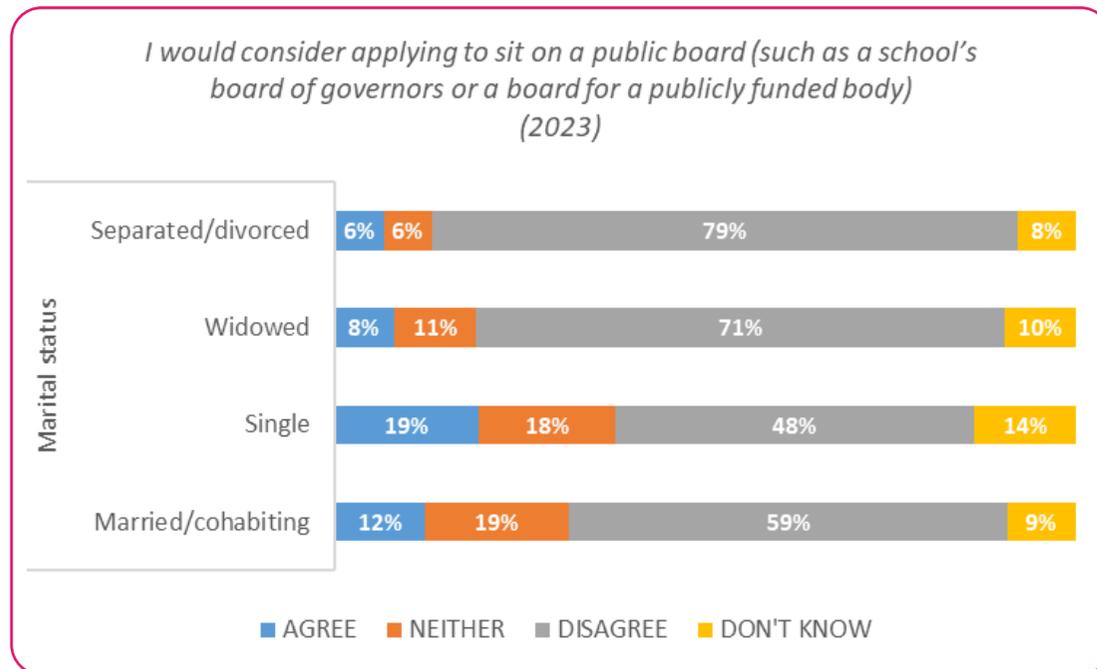
Respondents of the younger age groups, 16-29 and 30-49 were, in the same proportion, (both 17%) more inclined to agree with the statement “I would consider applying to sit on a public board” than respondents of the age groups 50-64 (10%) and 65+ (6%). Conversely, respondents most likely to disagree with the statement were of the age group of 65+ (77%); there was a substantial difference of twenty-seven percentage points between proportions for those in the oldest age group and the younger age groups, 16-29 and 30-49 (50%) and thirteen percentage point difference with respondents of the age group 50-64 (64%). Respondents in the age group of 30-49 (22%) were slightly more likely to express that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement than respondents of the other ages groups, 16-29 (17%), 50-64 (16%) and 65+ (14%). Respondents more uncertain about their level of agreement with the statements were mainly of the younger age group (17%), followed by around one in ten of respondents of the age group 30-49 (11%) and 50-64 (10%). The least likely group of respondents to state that they don’t know if agree or disagree with the statement were those of 65+ respondents (3%).



Marital status

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

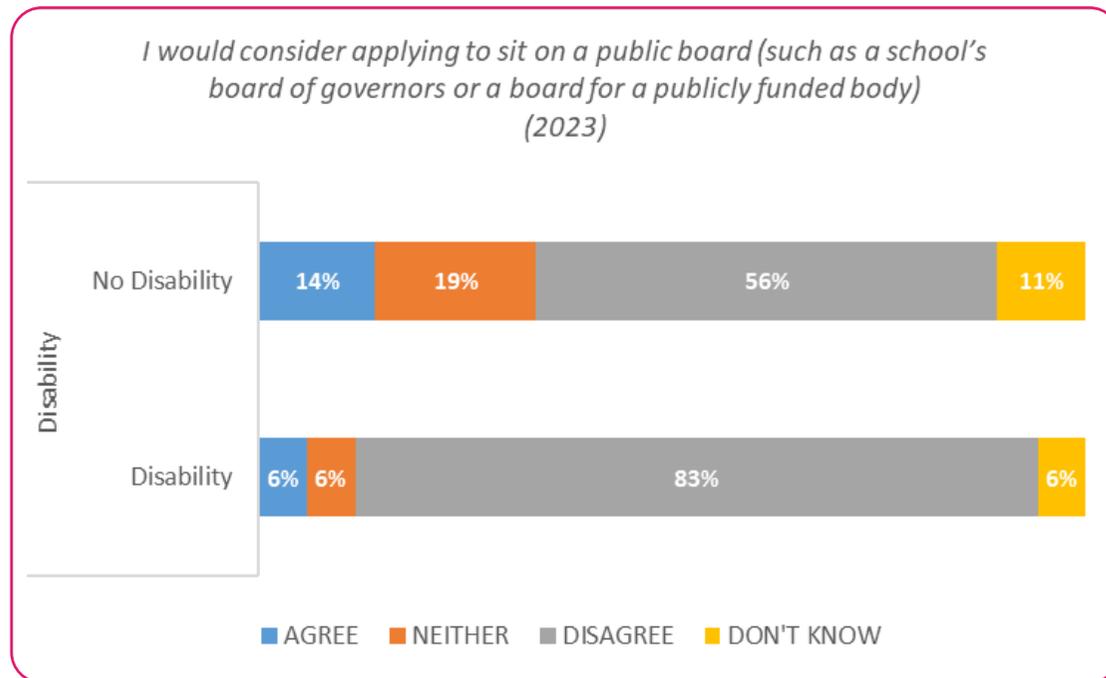
Around eight out of ten separated/divorced respondents (79%) disagreed with the statement “I would consider applying to sit on a public board” followed by seven out of ten widowed respondents (71%) and then six out of ten married/cohabiting respondents (59%) and around half of single respondents (48%). Around two out of ten single respondents (19%) agreed with the statement, whereas twelve percent (12%) of married/cohabiting, eight percent (8%) of widowed and six percent (6%) of separated/divorced respondents agreed with the statement. There were no substantial differences among single (14%), widowed (10%), married/cohabiting (9%) and separated/divorced (8%) respondents who said that they don’t know if agree or disagree with the statement.



Disability

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

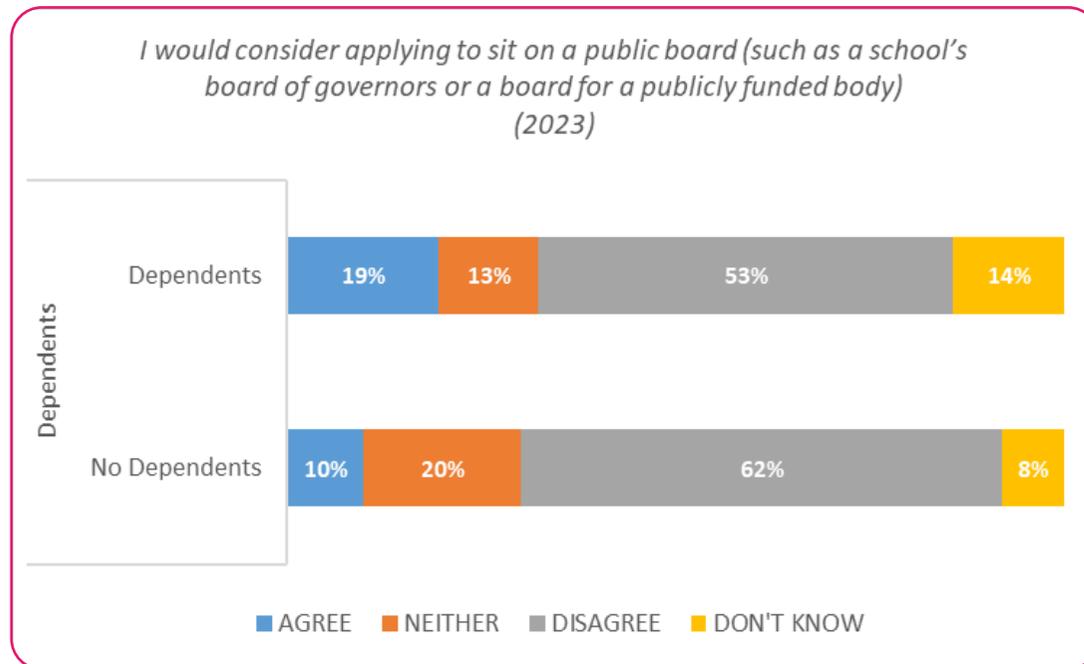
Respondents with no disability (14%) were more likely to agree with the statement “I would consider applying to sit on a public board” than those with disability (6%). Those with disability were more likely to disagree with the statement (83%); with a difference of twenty-seven percentage points from those with no disability (56%). Respondents without a disability (19%) were three times more likely to say they neither agree nor disagree with the statement than respondents with a disability (6%). Similarly, respondents without a disability were almost twice as likely to say they don’t know if they agree or disagree in compared with respondents with a disability (6%).



Dependents

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

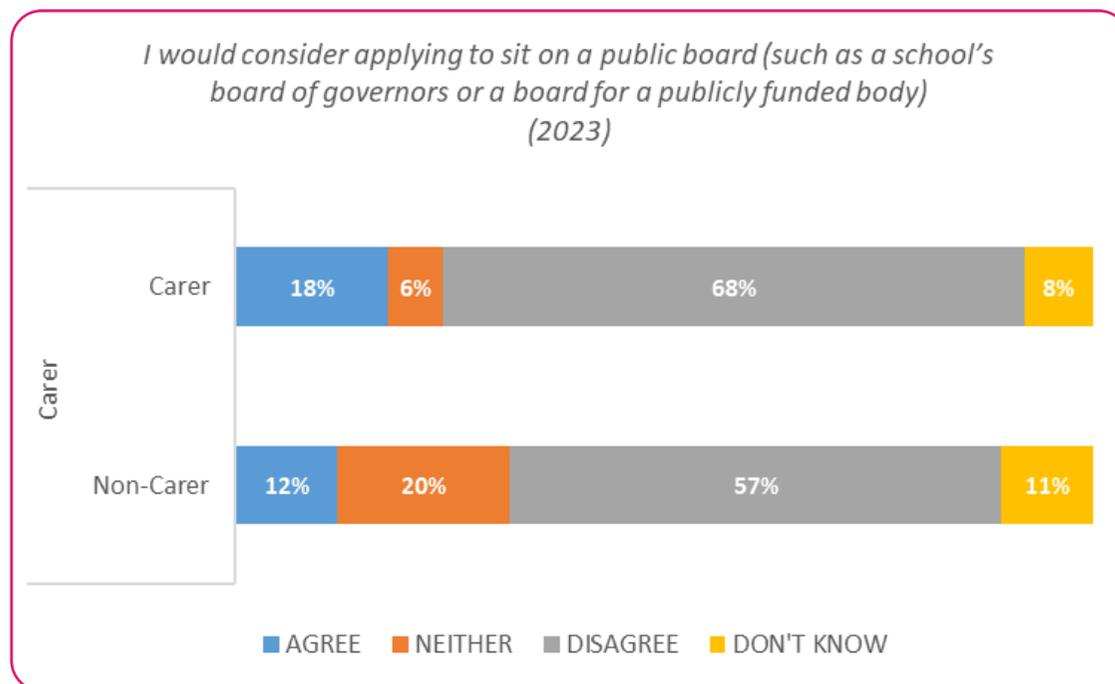
The percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement “I would consider applying to sit on a public board” was higher amongst respondents with dependents (19%) than for those without dependents (10%). Conversely, respondents with no dependents were more likely to disagree with the statement (62%) than those with dependents (53%). A fifth (20%) of respondents with no dependents indicated they neither agree nor disagree with the statement while 13% of respondents with dependents neither agreed or disagreed.



Career

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

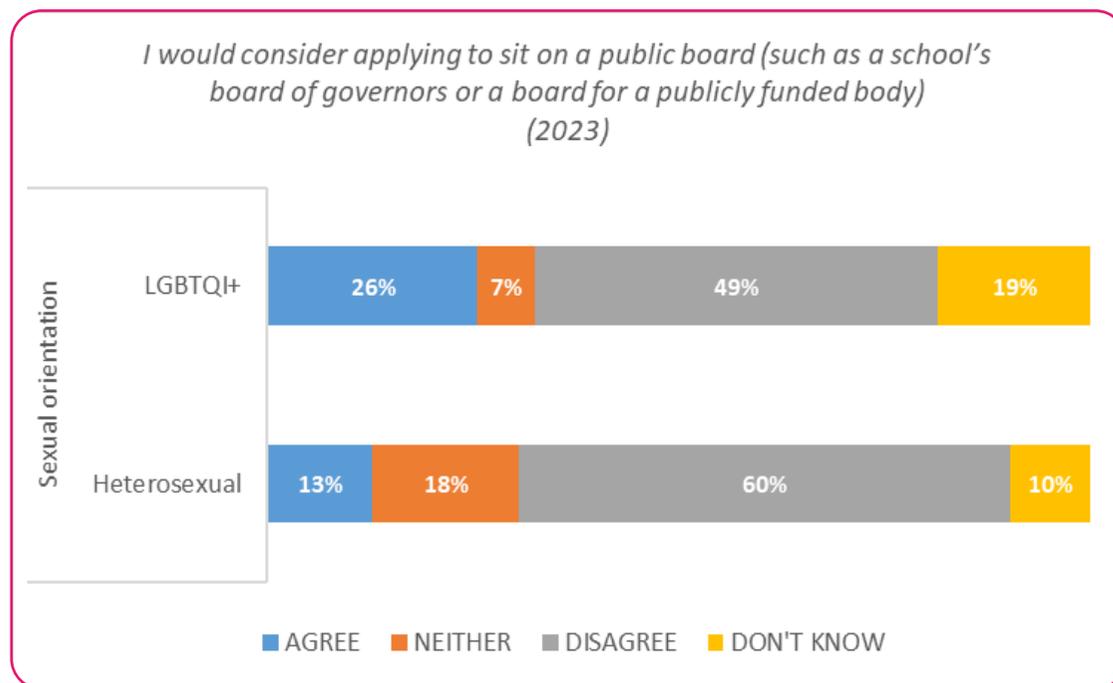
Respondents with caring responsibilities (18%), were more likely to agree with the statement “I would consider applying to sit on a public board” than those without caring responsibilities (12%). However, the highest percentage of those disagreeing with the statement was also those respondents with caring responsibilities (68%) with a difference of eleven percentage points from respondents without caring responsibilities (57%). Non-carer respondents (20%) were three times more likely to say they neither agree nor disagreed with the statement than carers (6%). There were marginal differences between carer (8%) and non-carers (11%) respondents who said they don’t know if they agree or disagree with the statement.



Sexual Orientation

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

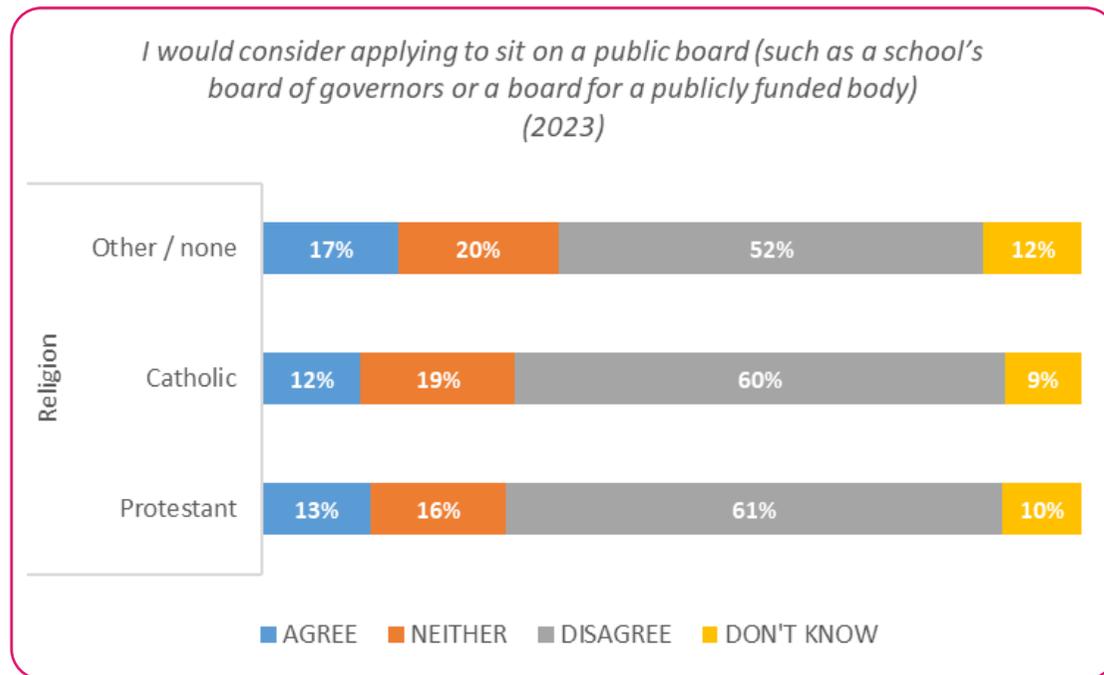
Around a quarter of LGBTQI+ respondents (26%) agreed with the statement “I would consider applying to sit on a public board” while 13% of heterosexual respondent were of the same opinion. Conversely, heterosexual respondents (18%) were twice more likely to state they neither agree nor disagreed with the statement than LGBTQI+ respondents (7%). Similarly, heterosexual respondents (60%) were more inclined to disagree with the statement than LGBTQI+ respondents (49%). Around two out of ten LGBTQI+ respondents (19%) stated they don’t know if they agree or disagree with the statement in comparison with one out of ten heterosexual respondents (10%).



Religion

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

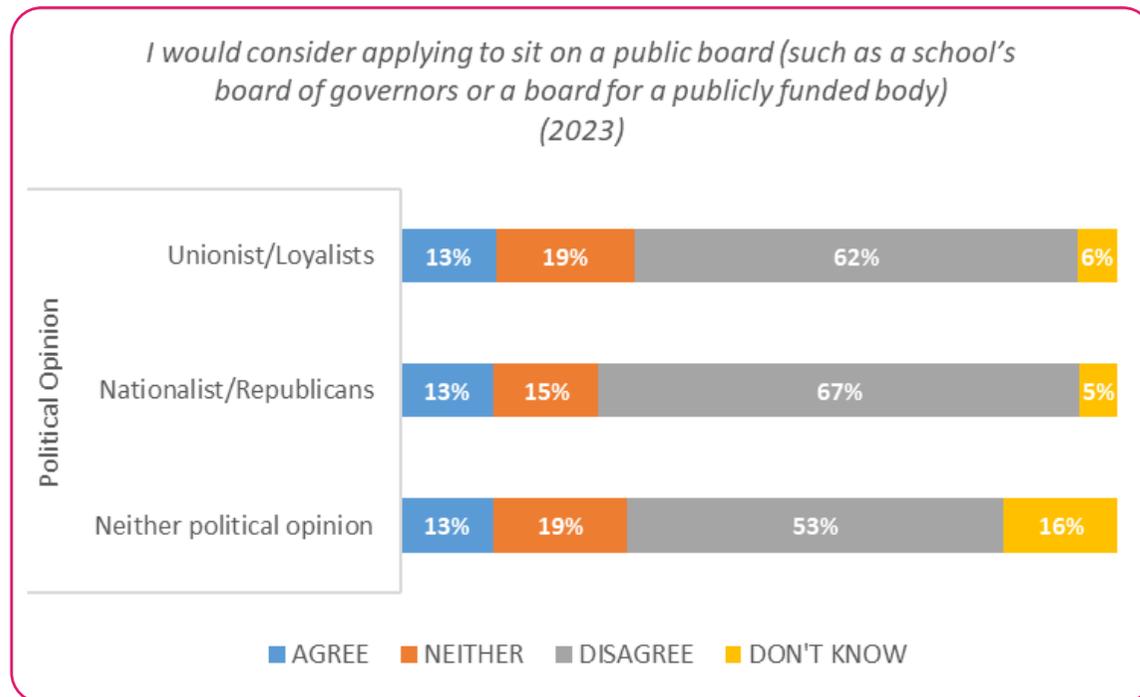
Six out of ten Protestant (61%) and Catholic (60%) respondents disagreed with the statement “I would consider applying to sit on a public board”; with a difference of eight percentage points with respondents with of Other or No religion (52%). Conversely, respondents with of Other or No religion (17%) were more likely to agree with the statement than Protestants (13%) and Catholics (12%). Similar proportions of respondents with Other or No religion (20%) and Catholics (19%) said they neither agree nor disagree with the statement; with a small difference of around four percentage points from Protestant respondents (16%). There were marginal differences among respondents who, at around one out of ten of each religion group, indicated they don’t know if they agree or disagree with the statement.



Political opinion

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

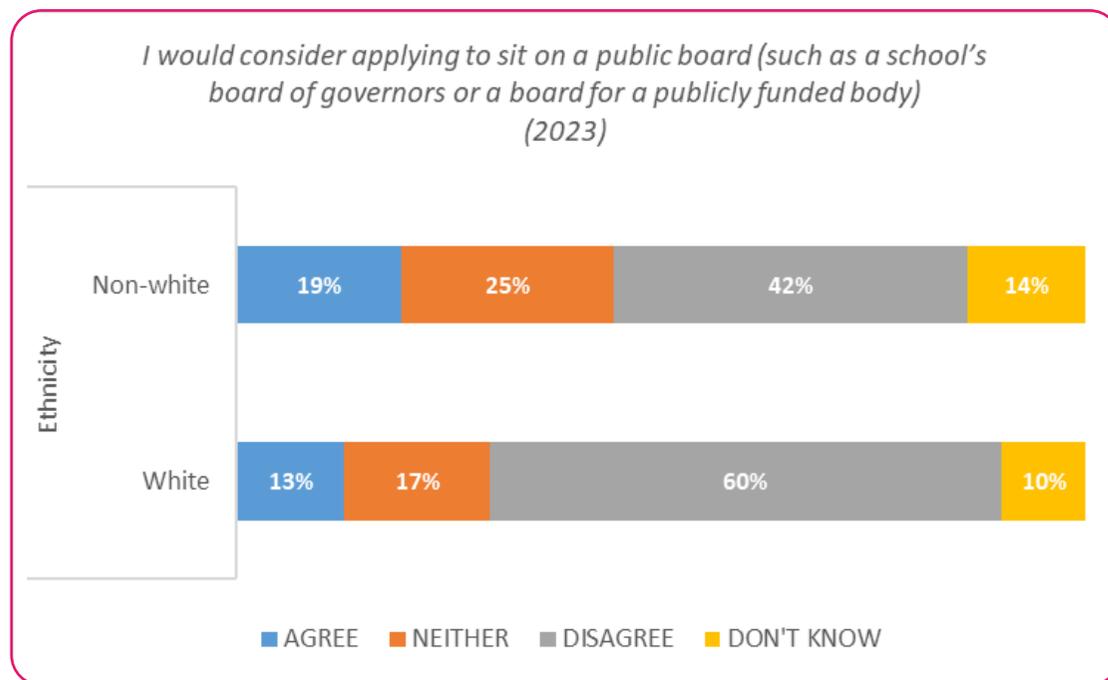
There were no differences (all at 13%) among respondents of different political opinions who agreed with the statement “I would consider applying to sit on a public board”. Similarly, around a fifth (19%) of Unionist/Loyalists and those of Neither political opinion said they neither agree nor disagree with the statement, with a small difference of six percentage points from Nationalist/Republicans (15%). Conversely, Nationalist/Republicans (67%) and Unionist/Loyalists (62%) were more likely to disagree than respondents with Neither political opinion (53%), but they were almost three times more likely to state that they don’t know if they agree or disagree with the statement (16%) than Unionist/Loyalists (6%) and Nationalist/Republicans (5%).



Ethnicity

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

Around a fifth of Non-white respondents (19%) agreed with the statement “I would consider applying to sit on a public board”, with a small difference of six percentage points from White respondents (13%). A quarter of Non-white respondents (25%) said they neither agree nor disagree with the statement in comparison with less than a fifth of White respondents (17%). Conversely, White respondents (60%) were more likely to disagree with the statement, by an eighteen percentage points difference with Non-white respondents (42%).



Population Indicator: Percentage of people who feel they are confident, have the knowledge and understanding of how to apply for public appointments and other boards.

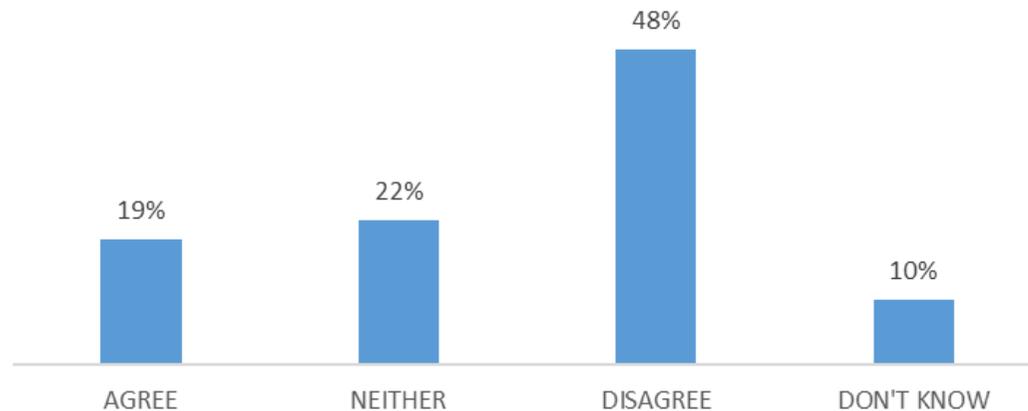
Data Source: Public Opinion Survey of Equality in Northern Ireland - 2023

Date Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Overall

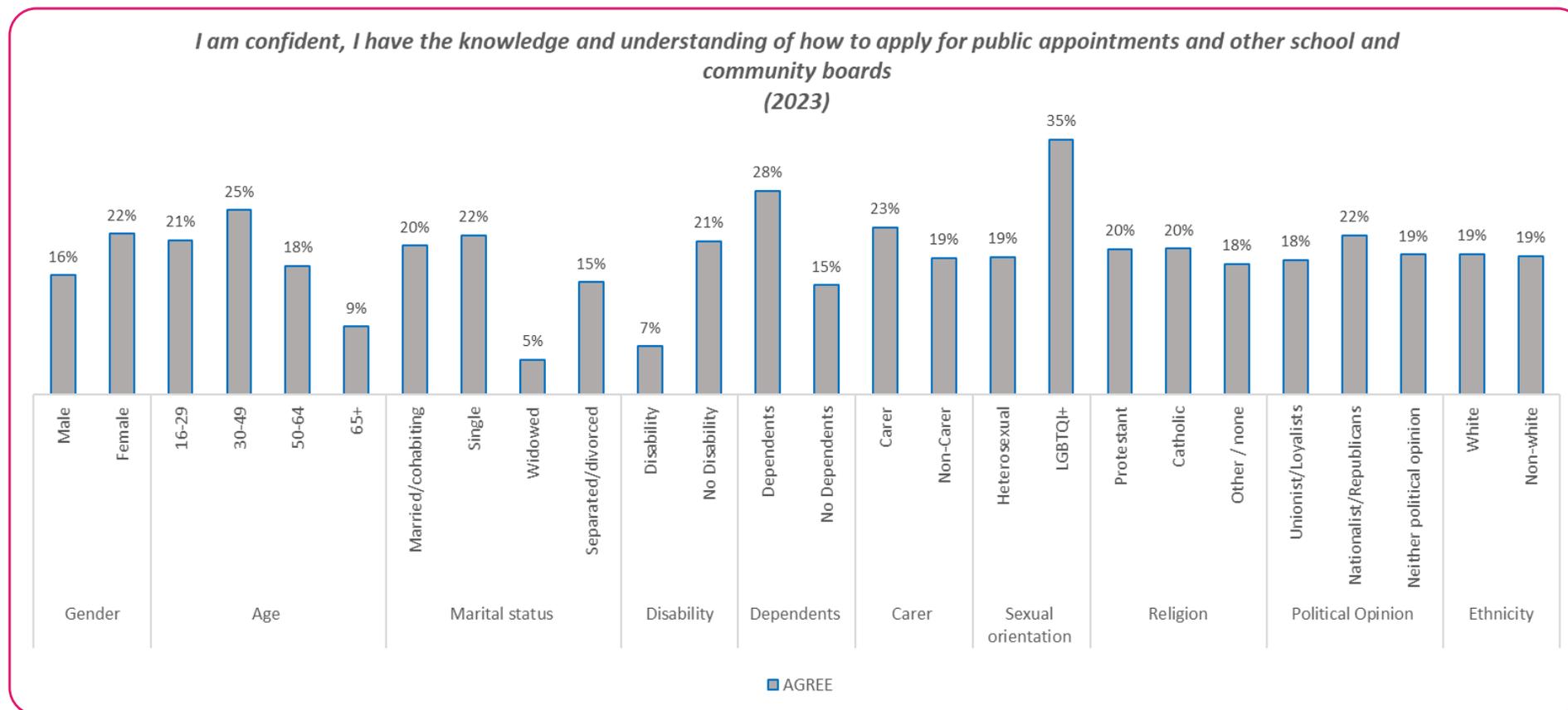
Slightly less than half of respondents disagree (48%) with the statement “I am confident I have the knowledge and understanding of how to apply for public appointments and other school and community boards”. Over a fifth of respondents (22%) said they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. Nineteen percent of respondents agreed with the statement (19%). One in ten respondents (10%) indicated they don’t know if they agree or disagree with the statement.

I am confident, I have the knowledge and understanding of how to apply for public appointments and other school and community boards (2023)



Summary Across Equality Groups⁸

Across all equality groups, respondents more likely to agree with the statement “I am confident I have the knowledge and understanding of how to apply for public appointments and other school and community boards” were LGBTQI+ respondents (35%), respondents with dependents (28%), respondents in the age group of 30-49 (25%), and carers (23%).

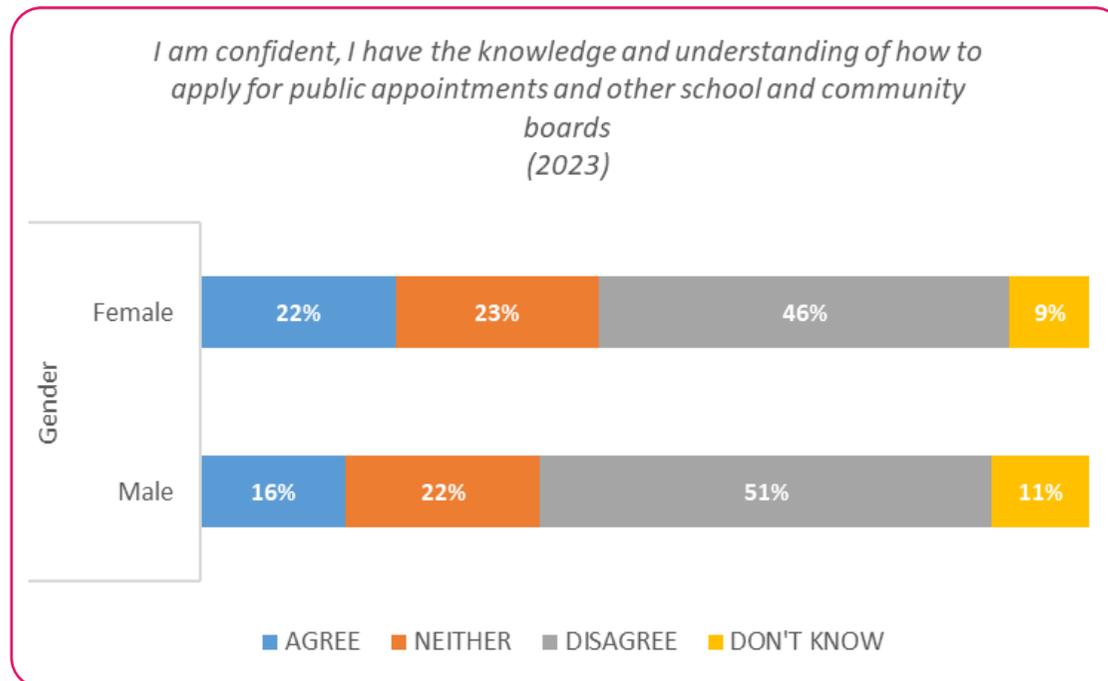


⁸ There were a number of statistically significant differences: Respondents less likely to agree with the statement “I am confident I have the knowledge and understanding of how to apply for public appointments and other school and community boards” were those aged 65+ (9%) compared to other age groups (16-29, 21%; 30-49, 25%; 50-64, 18%), respondents with a disability (7%) compared to those with no disability (21%), heterosexual (19%) compared with LGBTQI+ (35%) respondents, those with no dependents (15%) compared to those with dependents (28%), non-carers (19%) compared with carers (23%), and widowed respondents compared to married/cohab. (20%); single (22%) separated/divorced (15%).

Gender

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

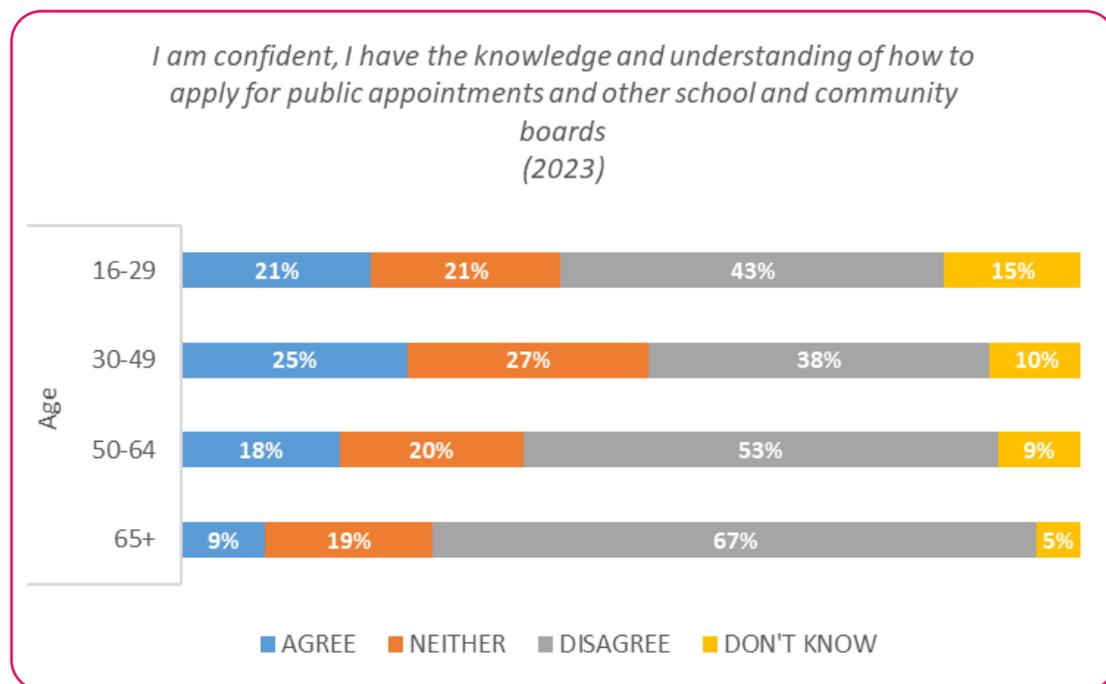
The level of agreement with the statement “I am confident I have the knowledge and understanding of how to apply for public appointments and other school and community boards” was higher amongst females (22%) than males (16%) respondents. Slightly more than half of male respondents (51%) disagreed with the statement while less than half of female respondents (46%) were of the same opinion. Around the same proportions of female (23%) and male (22%) respondents said they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. Similarly, with a marginal difference, around one out of ten male (11%) and female (9%) respondents stated they don’t know if they agree or disagree with the statement.



Age

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

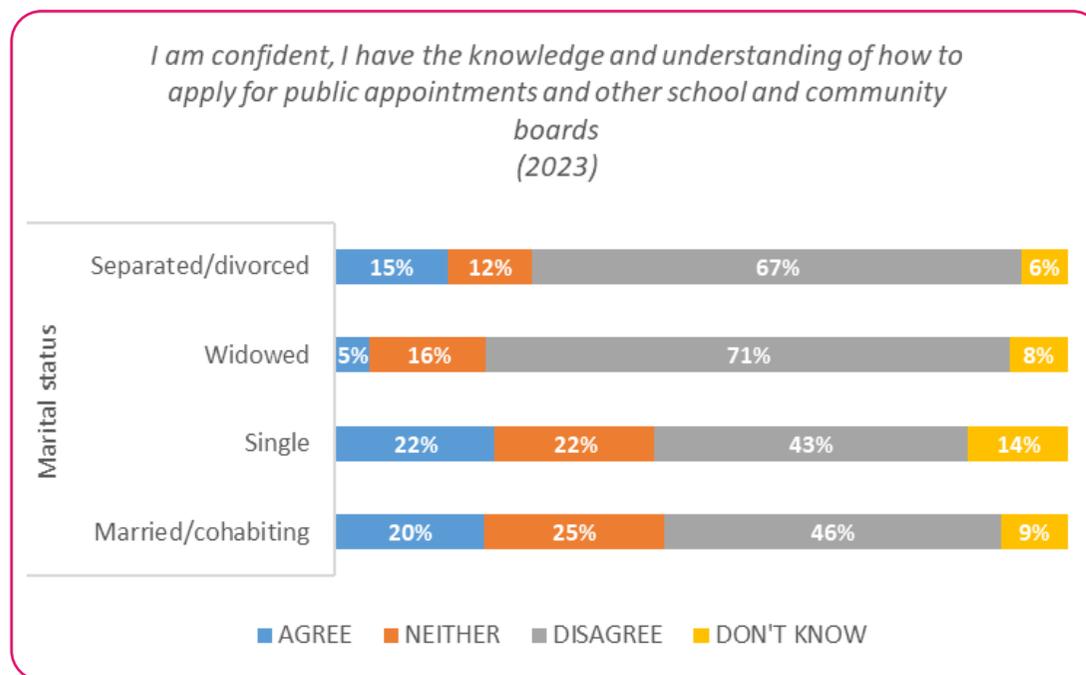
A quarter of respondents of the age group 30-49 (25%) agreed with statement “I am confident I have the knowledge and understanding of how to apply for public appointments and other school and community boards” followed by the age group of 16-29 (21%) and those respondent between 50 and 64 (18%). Respondents from the age group of 65+ were the least likely to agree (9%) with the statement. Respondents of the age group 30-49 (27%) were the most likely to say they neither agree nor disagree with the statement, while small differences were observed among respondents of the age groups 16-29 (21%), 50-64 (20%) and 65+ (19%). Almost seven out of ten respondents of the age group 65+ (67%) disagreed with the statement, followed by respondents of the age group 50-64 (53%) and 16-29 (43%). Less likely to disagree with the statement were respondents of the age group of 30-49, where less than four out of ten respondents (38%) stated this view.



Marital Status

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

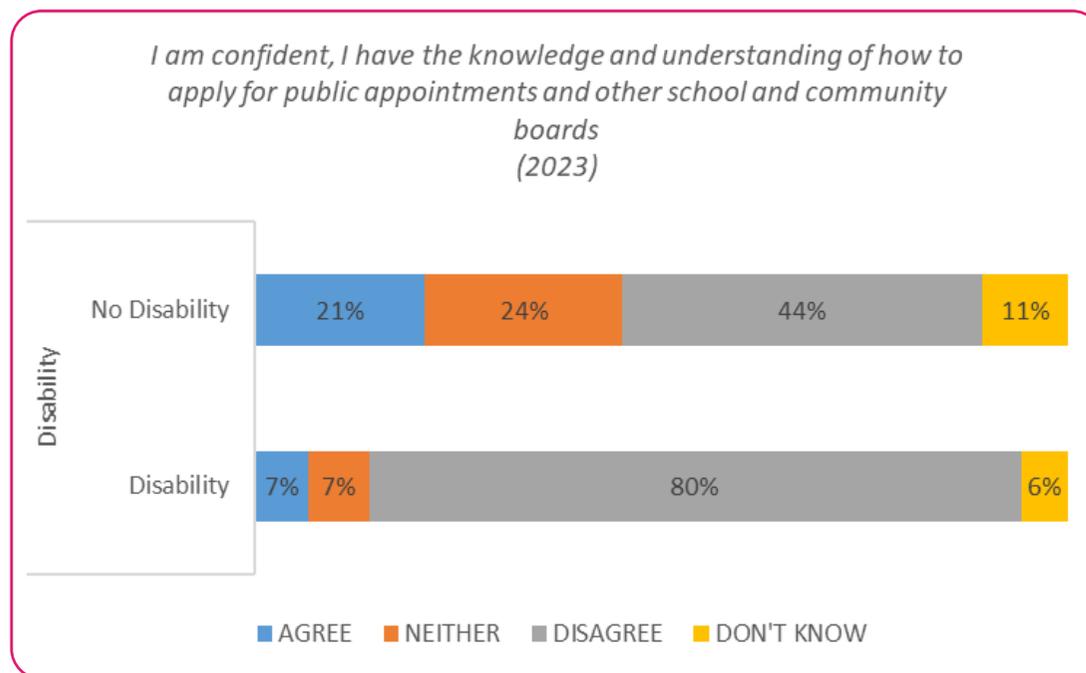
Single (22%) and married/cohabiting (20%) respondents were more likely to agree with statement “I am confident I have the knowledge and understanding of how to apply for public appointments and other school and community boards” than respondents who were separate/divorced (15%). Widowed (5%) respondents are substantially less likely to agree with the statement. A quarter of married/cohabiting respondents (25%) and slightly over a fifth of single respondents (22%) stated they neither agree nor disagree with the statement, while less likely to neither agree nor disagree were widowed (16%) and separated/divorced (12%). More inclined to disagree with the statement were widowed respondents (71%), followed by separated/divorced (67%); while around four out of ten single (43%) and married/cohabiting (46%) respondents were less likely to disagree. Minor differences were observed across all respondents who said they don’t know if they agree or disagree with the statement.



Disability

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

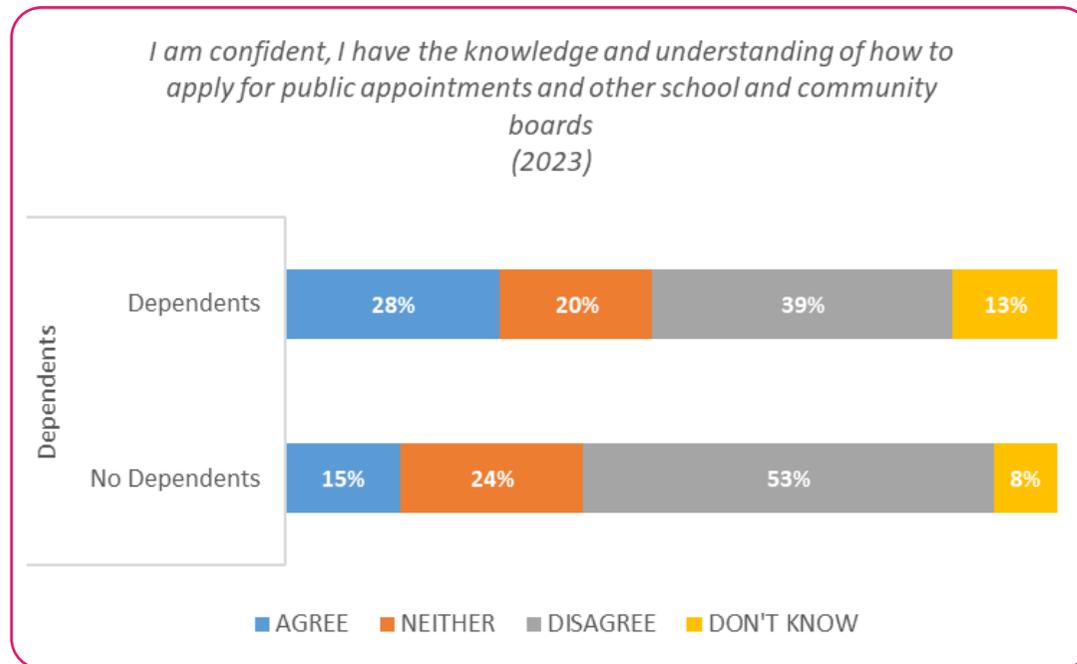
Respondents with no disability (21%) were three times more like to agree with the statement “I am confident I have the knowledge and understanding of how to apply for public appointments and other school and community boards” than respondents with a disability (7%). Similarly, the percentage of respondents without a disability (24%) who said they neither agree nor disagree with the statement was three times higher than the percentage of respondents with a disability (7%) who were of the same opinion. Almost the double of respondents with a disability (80%) disagreed with the statement in comparison with respondents without a disability (44%). Differences were also evident in the percentage of respondents without a disability (11%) and those with a disability (6%) who indicated they don’t know if they agree or disagree with the statement.



Dependents

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

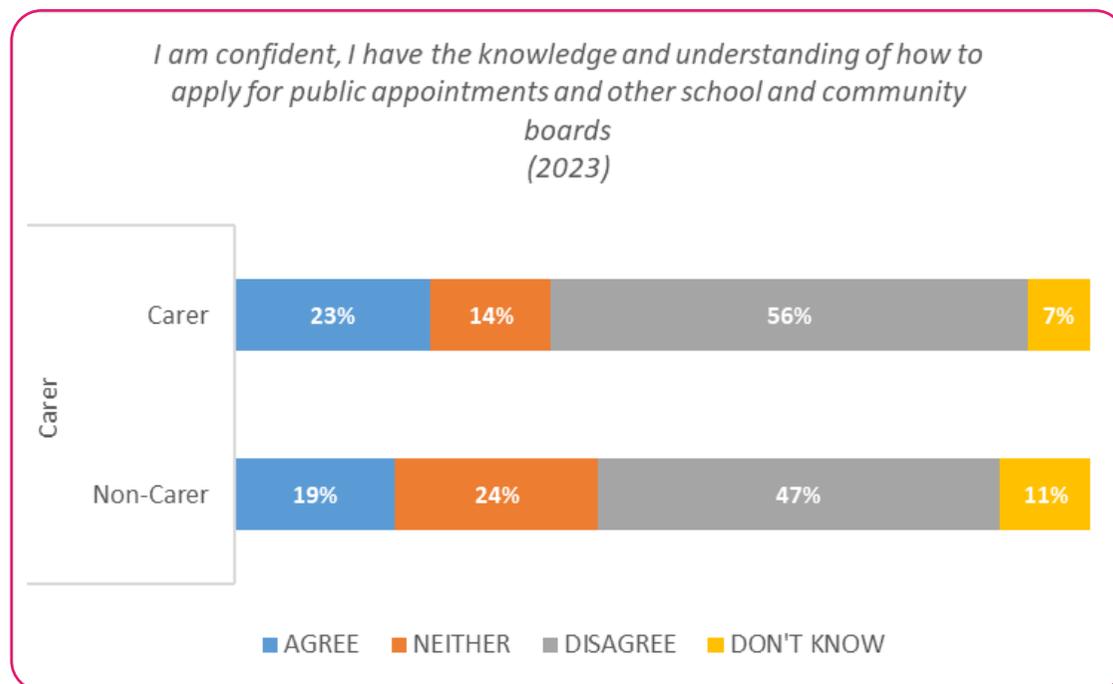
The percentages of respondents who agreed with the statement “I am confident I have the knowledge and understanding of how to apply for public appointments and other school and community boards” was higher among respondents with dependents (28%) than those without (15%). A quarter of respondents without dependents (24%) stated they neither agree nor disagree with the statement while a fifth of respondents with dependents were of the same opinion (20%). More than half of respondents without dependents (53%) disagreed with the statement while less than one out of ten respondents with dependents (39%) disagreed.



Carer

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

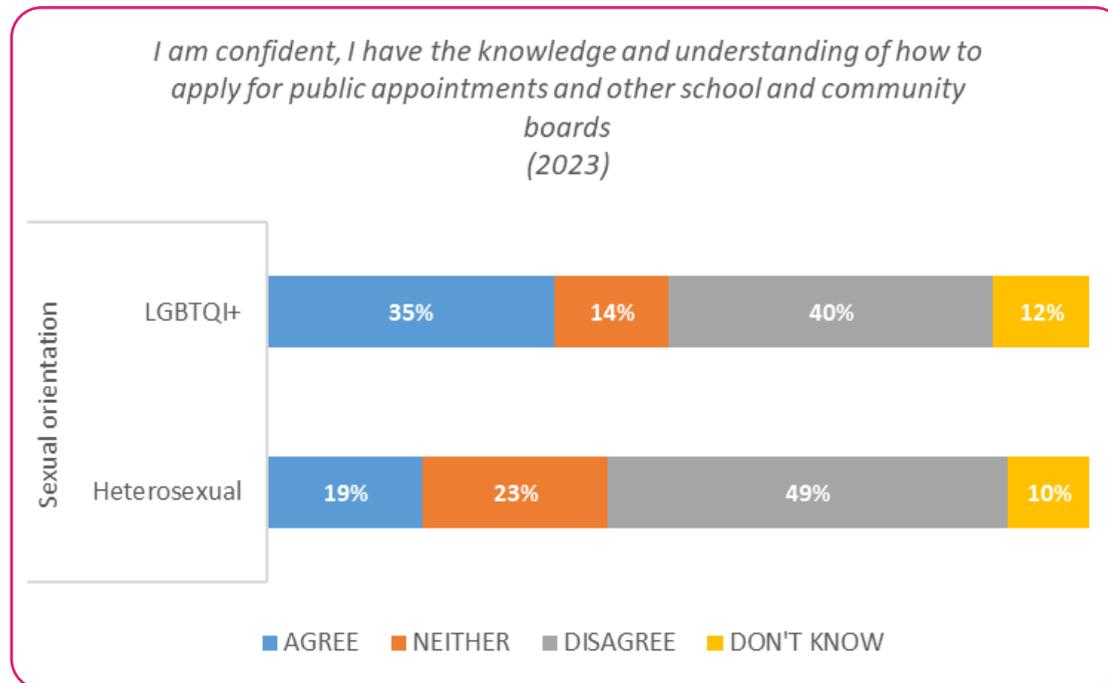
Respondents with caring responsibilities (23%), were more likely to agree with the statement “I am confident I have the knowledge and understanding of how to apply for public appointments and other school and community boards” than respondents without caring responsibilities (19%). Around a quarter of non-carers (24%) said they neither agree nor disagree with the statement in comparison with 14% of carers. However, the percentage of respondents with caring responsibilities (56%) who disagreed with the statement was nine percentage points higher than those without a caring role (47%).



Sexual Orientation

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

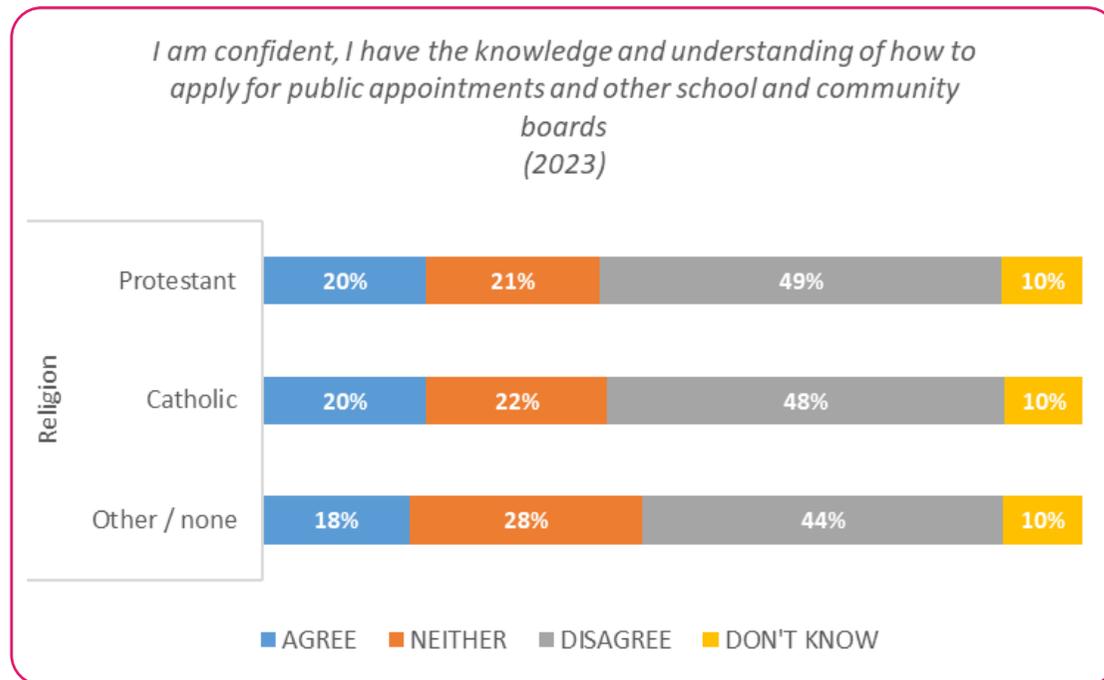
LGBTQI+ respondents (35%) were more likely to agree with the statement “I am confident I have the knowledge and understanding of how to apply for public appointments and other school and community boards” than heterosexual respondents (19%). Conversely, a higher proportion of heterosexual respondents (23%) declared that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement in comparison with 14% of LGBTQI+ respondents. However, there was a nine-percentage point difference between heterosexual respondents (49%) and LGBTQI+ (40%) who disagreed with the statement.



Religion

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

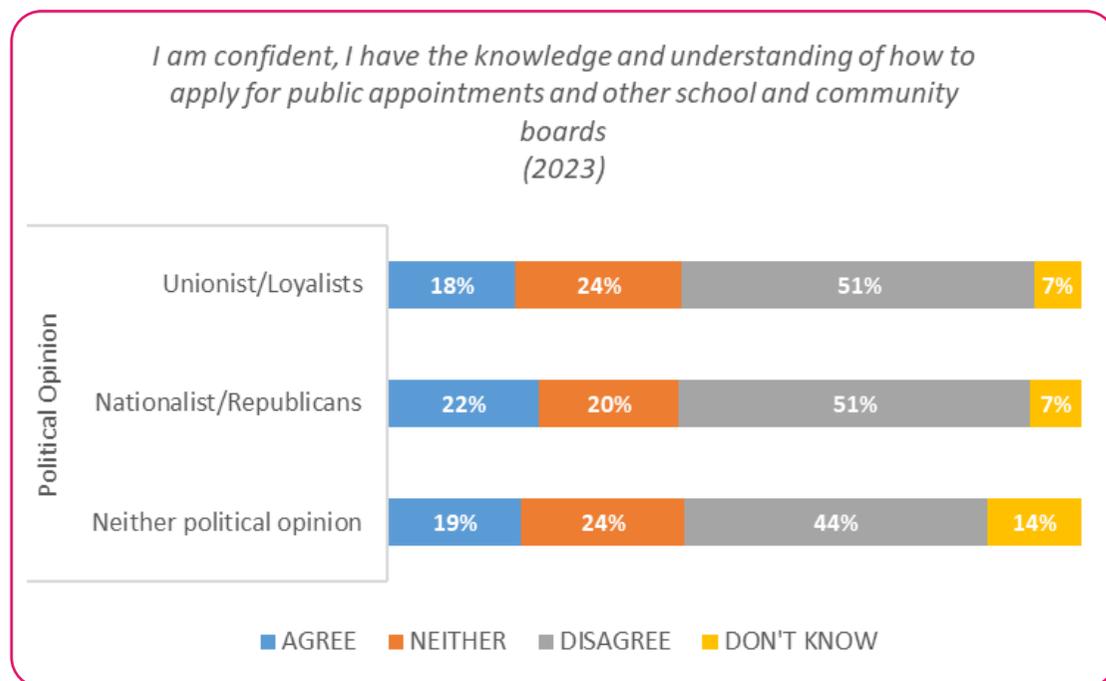
When considering the religion of participants who agreed with the statement “I am confident I have the knowledge and understanding of how to apply for public appointments and other school and community boards” there was no difference between Catholics and Protestant respondents (20%), and a marginal difference with respondents with Other or No religion (18%). Slightly less than a third of respondents with Other or No religion (28%) declared they neither agree nor disagree with the statement compared with similar proportions for Catholic (22%) and Protestant (21%) respondents. Slightly less than half of respondents of all religion groups disagreed with the statement with marginal differences among them (between 44% and 49%).



Political Opinion

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

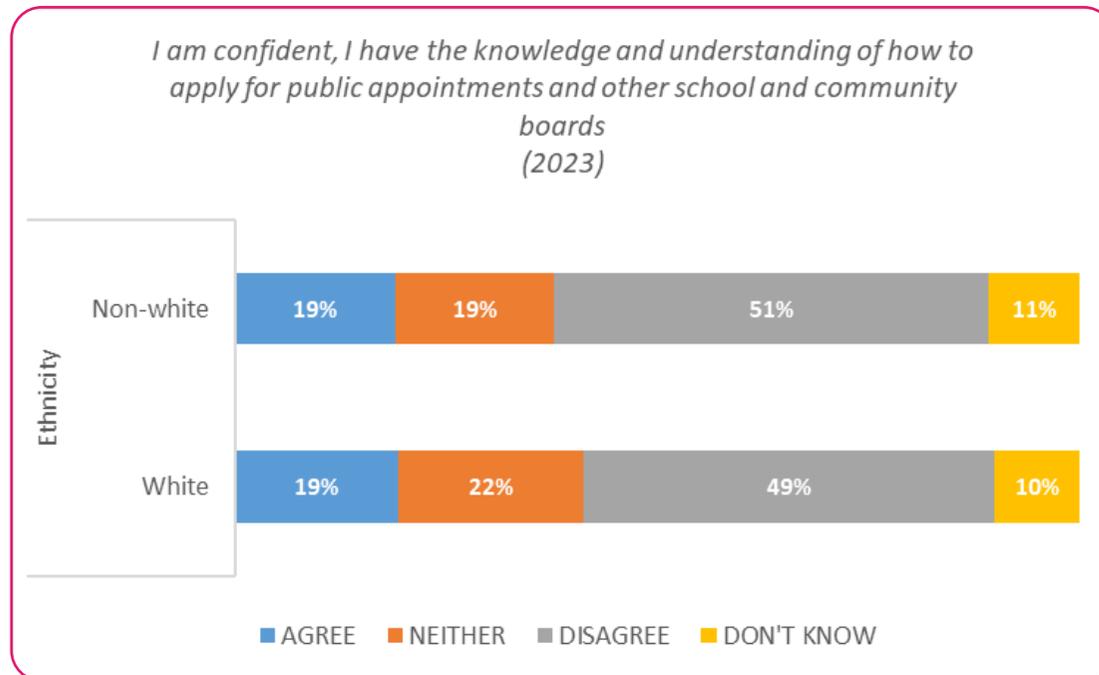
The percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement “I am confident I have the knowledge and understanding of how to apply for public appointments and other school and community boards” was slightly higher among Nationalist/Republican (22%) respondents than the percentage of those who declared their political opinion as Neither (19%) and Unionist/Loyalists (18%). The same proportions of Unionist/Loyalist and Neither political opinion (24%) respondents indicated that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement, with a small difference from the proportion for Nationalist/Republicans (20%). In the same proportions, half of Unionist/Loyalists and Nationalist/Republicans (51%) disagreed with the statement, with a small difference with respondents of Neither political opinion (44%). Respondents who declared Neither political opinion (14%) were twice as likely than Unionist/Loyalists and Nationalist/Republicans (7%) to say they don’t know if they agree or disagree with the statement.



Ethnicity

Data Status: Data is collected, it can be analysed and presented.

There was no difference between Non-white and White respondents (both 19%) who agreed with the statement “I am confident I have the knowledge and understanding of how to apply for public appointments and other school and community boards”. Around the same proportions of White (22%) and Non-white (19%) respondents said they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. Similarly, marginal differences were evident between Non-white (51%) and White (49%) respondents who disagreed with the statement.





**Equality Commission
for Northern Ireland**
Equality House
7-9 Shaftesbury Square
Belfast BT2 7DP

Telephone: + 44 (0)28 9050 0600

Email: information@equalityni.org

Web: www.equalityni.org