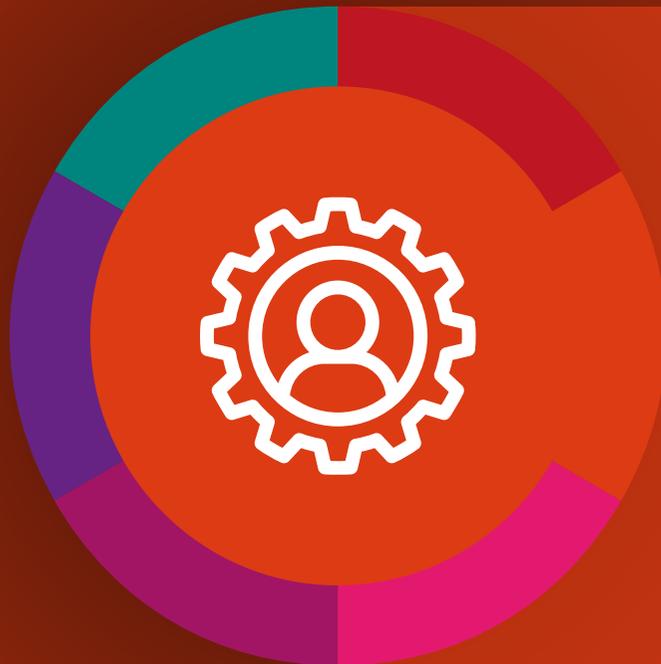


Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



Commission Statement on
Equality in Northern Ireland

Employment

Summary Report

2 of 6
Areas of Life

May 2024

This is the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's Statement on Equality in Northern Ireland. This document is a summary of data analysed for the area of life: **Employment**. It is one of six documents to highlight the findings from analyses of data, to identify differences in equality outcomes, for a range of population indicators in six areas of life in Northern Ireland. For more details, please refer to our main report on Employment.

All six documents, which constitutes parts of the Statement, are drawn from the Commission's Framework for Measuring Equality in Northern Ireland. The Framework was developed through extensive consultation with those interested and representing equality groups in Northern Ireland, and through ongoing engagement for the development of population indicators and sources of evidence. The Framework will enable the Commission to identify differences in equality outcomes and to track those differences over time.

The Statement covers six broad areas of life in Northern Ireland:



Education



Employment



**Participation
in Public life**



**Health and
Social Care**



**Standards of
Living and
Housing**



**Communities that
are Welcoming
and Inclusive**

The outcome areas identified for **Employment** are as follows, with the **associated priority areas**:

There is equality of opportunity in employment:

- **Access to Employment and More Jobs:** People have equality of opportunity to fulfil their full potential in employment through access to lifelong learning, training, and career development. No one is underemployed, and no one is prevented from working in a particular occupation without good reason due to their equality characteristics.
- **Better Jobs:** More people have better jobs that enable them to achieve financial independence and security in good quality, sustainable employment with fair pay, job security and flexibility.
- **Access to Support to be Able to Work:** There is equality of opportunity in the support people obtain, sustain and progress in employment, and to maintain a good work/life balance irrespective of their equality characteristics. For example, this includes supporting people through the removal of barriers to employment including access to good quality, affordable childcare, access to reasonable adjustments and flexible working.

There is equality of opportunity in employment:

- **Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces:** Workplaces are welcoming and inclusive respecting worker's rights, promoting diversity and inclusion and giving employees a voice.
- **Discrimination:** People are free from prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, bullying harassment and victimisation in employment on any equality ground.

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

The Indicator and Data Status for the Priority Areas

Access to Employment and More Jobs

Data Status: 7 Grounds Analysed - Sexual orientation - Disaggregated data was not available for due to low participant numbers, Political opinion – Data was not collected; Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (NILFS) - 2019, 2020 and 2021, Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency (NISRA)

This priority area contained **five population indicators** on 1) employment rates, 2) unemployment rates, 3) economic inactivity rates, 4) self-employment rates, and 5) full-time part-time rates. The first indicator highlighted the **lowest employment rate** in 2021 (age 16 to 64) was for persons with a disability, it was half the overall rate of employment. The second indicator showed that the **highest unemployment rate** was for those from Other ethnicities, persons with disabilities, and for those who were single and divorced. The third population indicator showed that the **highest economic inactivity rate** was for persons with disabilities, over twice that recorded for the overall rate of economic inactivity. Other equality groups with high rates of economic inactivity were for those who were single, divorced, widowed, those aged 50-64 and Other ethnicities. The fourth population indicator highlighted that those over the age of 65 and those widowed were most likely to be **self-employed**, and that men were twice as likely than women to engage in self-employment. The final population indicator showed that the **full-time employment rate** (as a share of all those in employment) (aged 16 and over) was highest for males, those aged 25-34, and those with dependents, whereas the **part-time employment rate** was highest for those over 65, followed by persons with disabilities, widowed persons and women. It is important to note, that those aged 16-24, who are typically students, had some of the lowest employment, highest unemployment and highest economic inactivity rates.

Better Jobs:

Data Status: 1) 2 Grounds Analysed – Gender and Age only; Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). 2) 7 Grounds Analysed - Sexual orientation - Disaggregated data was not available for due to low participant numbers, Political opinion – Data was not collected; Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (NILFS) - 2019, 2020 and 2021, Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency (NISRA).

There are two population indicators for this priority area. The **first population indicator** was median gross hourly earnings (excluding overtime) for full-time, part-time and all workers. In 2021, when looking at the median gross hourly pay (£), excluding overtime, for all employees in Northern Ireland, by age and gender (£12.79), male employees (£13.08) earned more than female employees (£12.47).

Younger female employees earned slightly more than younger male employees. However, older male employees earned more than older female employees. For the majority of age groups, for those working full-time or part-time, female employees earned a higher hourly gross pay than did male employees. The **second population indicator** looked at the percentages of people in high paid occupations (SOC 1 and 2) or low paid occupations (SOC 6,8,9). At present, the data for this measure is currently not available due to a recent issue at ONS with the coding of SOC codes (“*standard occupational classifications*”) across a number of surveys. The problem was caused by the implementation of the updated SOC 2020 codes, whereby responses to surveys were being miscoded to the wrong occupations. ONS are aiming to recode the occupations for January 2021 onwards over the coming months, which will be available during 2023. ONS has now completed the recoding and NISRA are preparing the data for publication. A data request by the Commission is still on file to be completed once NISRA work through the data request backlog for this area.

Access to Support to be Able to Work:

Data Status: 6 Grounds Analysed - Sexual orientation - Disaggregated data was not available for due to low participant numbers, Political opinion – Data was not collected; Those with dependents - Due to methodological reasons this equality groups was not included within the analyses. Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (NILFS) - 2019, 2020 and 2021, Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency (NISRA).

There was only **one population indicator** for this priority area; the proportion of people aged 16+ years in employment who feel their employer is flexible and supportive. The analyses found that flexible agreed working arrangements (aged 16 and over) were highest for males, those with No religious background and Other religious backgrounds and for persons without disabilities. There were more men in a flexible agreed working arrangement in comparison with women. Those with the lowest proportions flexible agreed working arrangements were found in those over 65, females and persons with a disability.

Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces:

Data Status: All 9 Grounds Analysed; Public Opinion Survey of Equality in Northern Ireland - 2023; Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Two population indicators were used to assess this priority area, which related to the percentages of people: 1) who agree/disagree that in general, workplaces in Northern Ireland are welcoming and inclusive, and 2) who agree/disagree “workers are generally treated with dignity and respect.

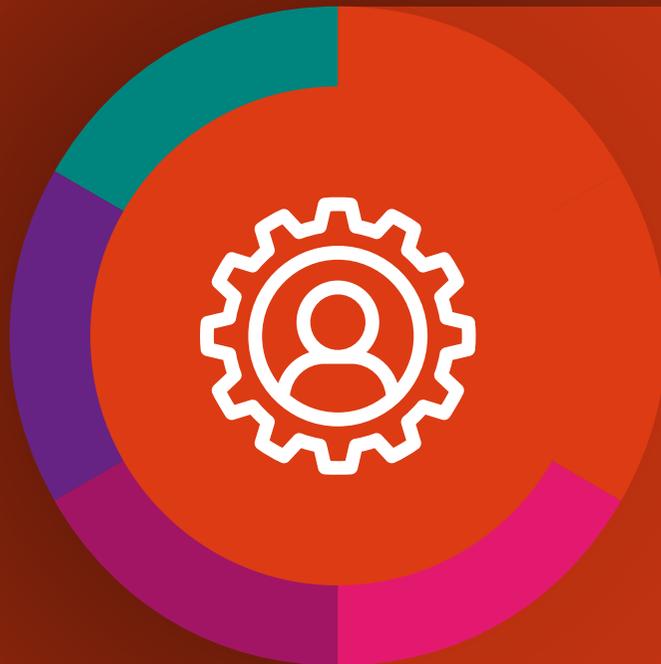
The findings from the **first population indicator** found that respondents more likely to disagree with the statement “workplaces are welcoming and inclusive” were LGBTQI+ respondents, Nationalist/Republicans respondents, separated/divorced and single respondents, respondents in the age group 50-64, Catholic respondents, female respondents and carers compared to an overall level of disagreement of 10%. Within equality grounds, respondents more likely to disagree with the statement were women compared with men, those aged 50-64 compared to other age groups, separated/divorced and single respondents compared to widowed and married/cohabiting respondents, respondents with a disability compared to those with no disability, and those without dependents compared to those with dependents.

The findings from the **second population indicator** found that respondents more likely to disagree with the statement “workers are generally treated with dignity and respect” were LGBTQI+ respondents, separated/divorced respondents, respondents with a disability, respondents in the age group of 50-64, Catholic respondents, Nationalist/Republican respondents, carers, and single respondents compared to the overall level of disagreement of 13%. Within equality grounds, respondents more likely to disagree with the statement were respondents in the age group of 50-64 compared to other age groups, respondents with a disability compared to those with no disability, those with no dependents compared to those with dependents, separated/divorced respondents compared with single, widowed, and married/cohabiting respondents.

Discrimination:

Data Status: All 9 Grounds Analysed; Public Opinion Survey of Equality in Northern Ireland - 2023; Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Two population indicators were used for this priority area. The **first population indicator** highlighted that four percent of respondents declared that they had personally experienced a situation where they were not treated with dignity and respect in the workplace. Respondents more likely to state they had personally experienced such a situation were: non-white respondents, LGBTQI+ respondents, single respondents, respondents with a disability, respondents in the age group of 50-64, and respondents with Other or No religion. The **second population indicator** highlighted that six percent of respondents declared that they had witnessed a situation where others were not treated with dignity and respect in the workplace based upon their personal characteristics. Those respondents who were more likely to state that they had witnessed a situation where others were not treated with dignity and respect in the workplace based on their personal characteristics were aged 16-29, single and were separated/divorced.



Priority Area:

Access to Employment and More Jobs

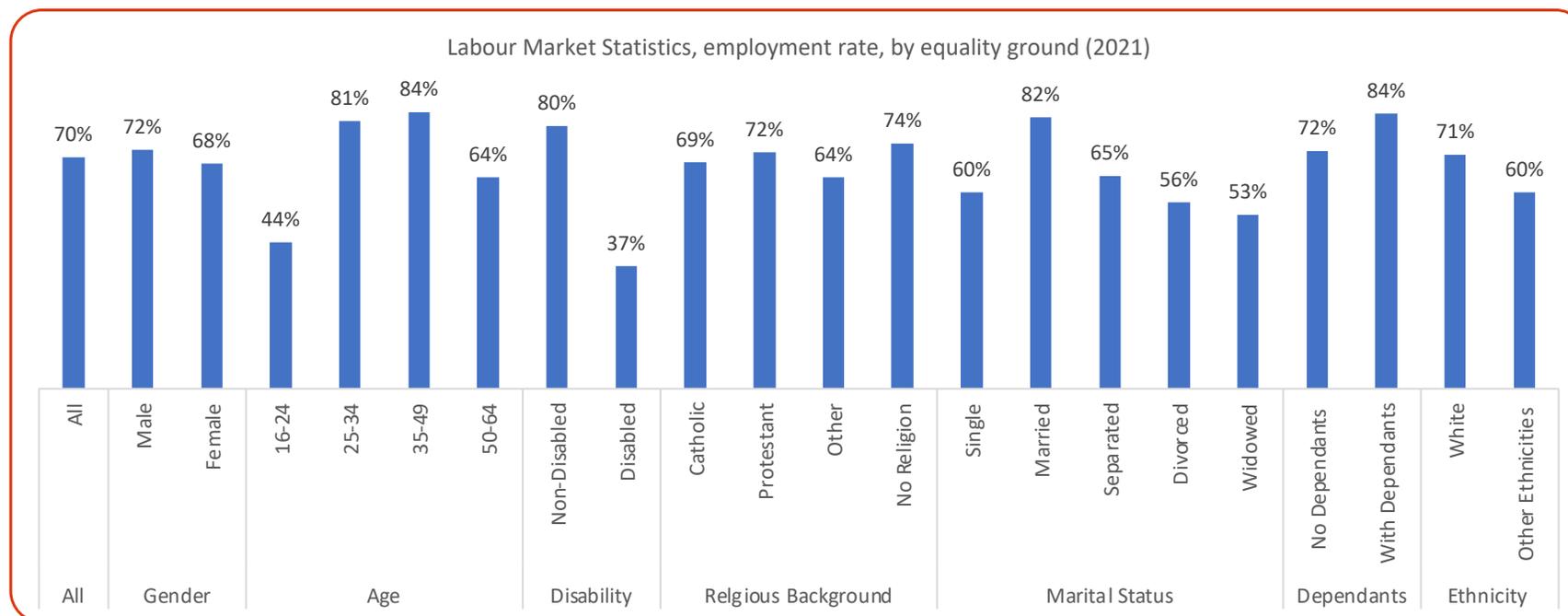
People have equality of opportunity to fulfil their full potential in employment through access to lifelong learning, training, and career development. No one is underemployed, and no one is prevented from working in a particular occupation without good reason due to their equality characteristics.

Population Indicator: Percentage of people aged 16+ years (16-64) who are employed, unemployed, self-employed or economically inactive – Employment Rates

Data Source: Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (NILFS) - 2019, 2020 and 2021

Data Provider: Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency (NISRA)

In 2021, the overall employment rate (aged 16 – 64) was 70%. The employment rate (aged 16 – 64) was highest for those with dependents (84%), those aged 35-49 (84%) and 25-34 (81%), married couples (82%), and persons without disabilities (80%). The second lowest employment rate was found among those aged 16 – 24 although it is important to note that this is the typical age of students in Northern Ireland. However, the lowest employment (aged 16 – 64) was found in persons with a disability (37%), making a substantial difference (33pps) between those with disabilities in employment and the overall employment rate (70%).

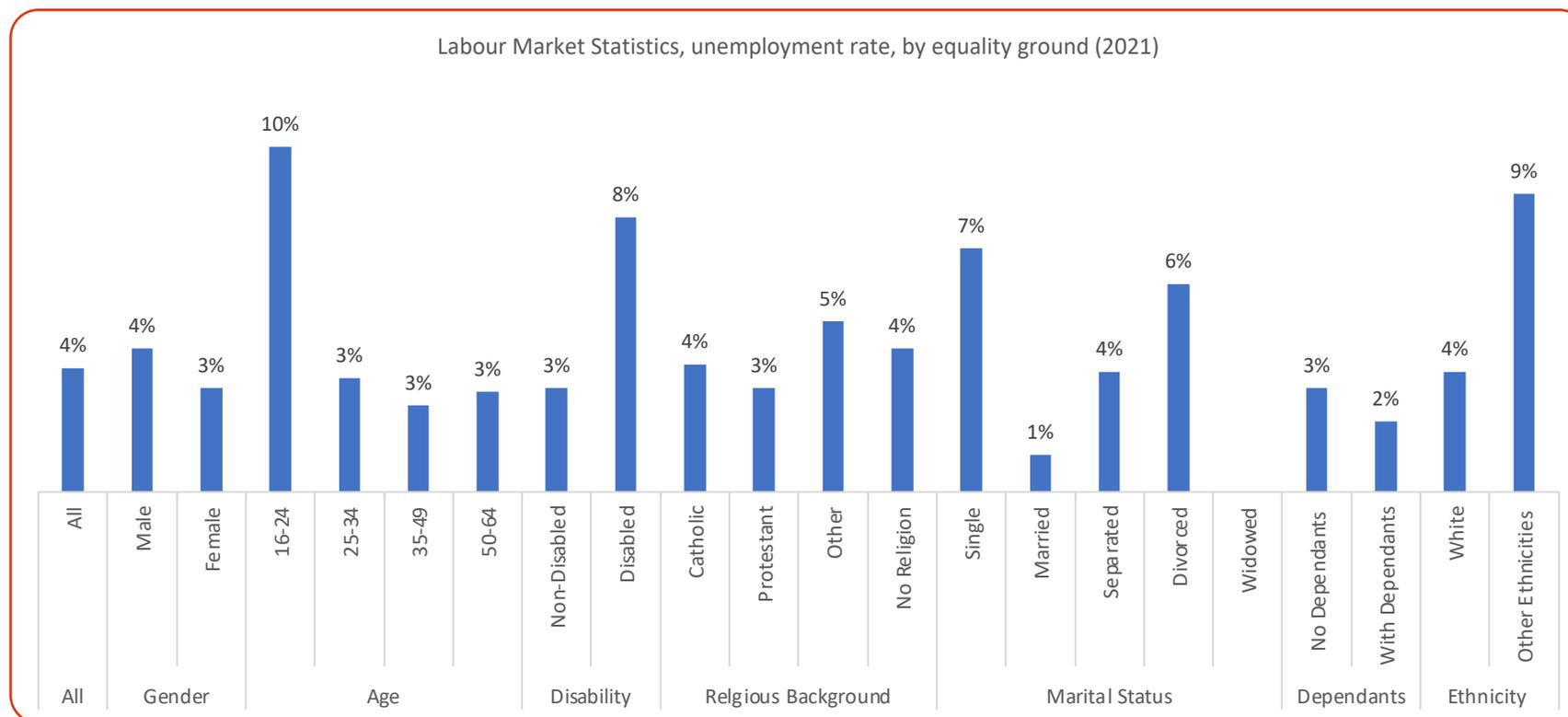


Population Indicator: Percentage of people aged 16+ years (16-64) who are employed, unemployed, self-employed or economically inactive – Unemployment Rates

Data Source: Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (NILFS) - 2019, 2020 and 2021

Data Provider: Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency (NISRA)

In 2021, the overall unemployment rate (aged 16 and over) was 4%. The unemployment rate was highest for those aged 16-24 (10%), those from other ethnicities (9%), persons with disabilities (8%), and for those who were single and divorced (7% and 6% respectively). It is important to note that the highest unemployment rate (aged 16-24) is the typical student age in Northern Ireland. The lowest unemployment rate was found among those who were married (1%), followed by those with dependents (2%). Please note, the figures for the marital status of 'widowed' unemployment could not be reported due to low numbers in the survey.

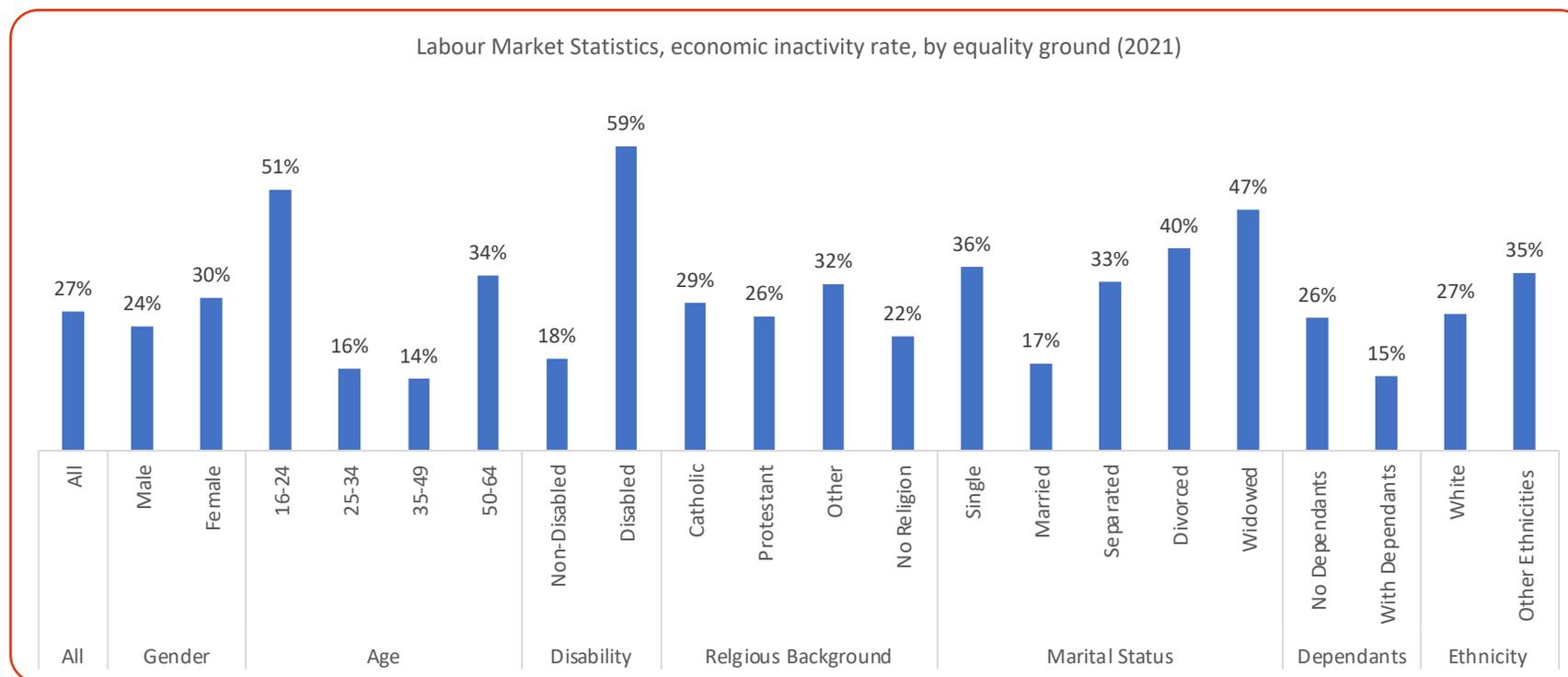


Population Indicator: Percentage of people aged 16+ years (16-64) who are employed, unemployed, self-employed or economically inactive – Economic Inactivity Rates

Data Source: Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (NILFS) - 2019, 2020 and 2021

Data Provider: Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency (NISRA)

In 2021, the overall economic inactivity rate (aged 16 - 64) was 27%. The economic inactivity rate (aged 16 – 64) was highest for persons with disabilities (59%), making a substantial difference of 32pps between that group and the overall economic inactivity rate (27%). Their rate was 8pps higher than those with the second highest economic inactivity which was found in those aged 16-24 (51%), and widowed persons (47%). It is important to note that those aged 16-24 is the typical student age in Northern Ireland. The lowest economic inactivity rates were found amongst those aged 35-49 (14%) and 25-34 (16%), those with dependents (15%), and for those who were married (17%).



Population Indicator: Percentage of people aged 16+ years (16-64) who are employed, unemployed, self-employed or economically inactive – Self Employment

Data Source: Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (NILFS) - 2019, 2020 and 2021

Data Provider: Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency (NISRA)

In 2021, the self-employed rate (aged 16 and over) was highest for those over the age of 65 (35%) and those widowed (29%). Men (17%) were twice as likely than women (8%) to engage in self-employment. Outside of the age group 16-24 (typical student age in NI), those groups with the lowest self-employment rates were females (8%), those who were single (8%) and those aged 25-34 (8%).

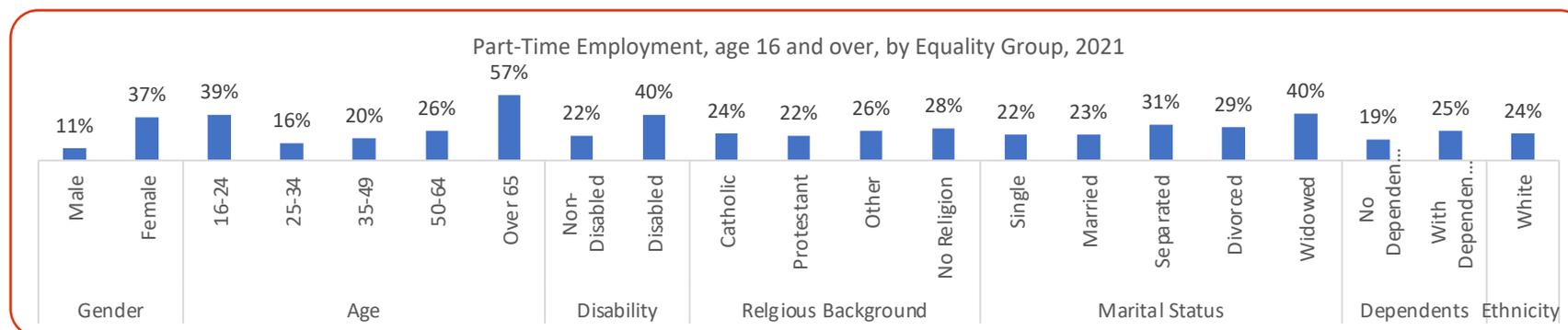
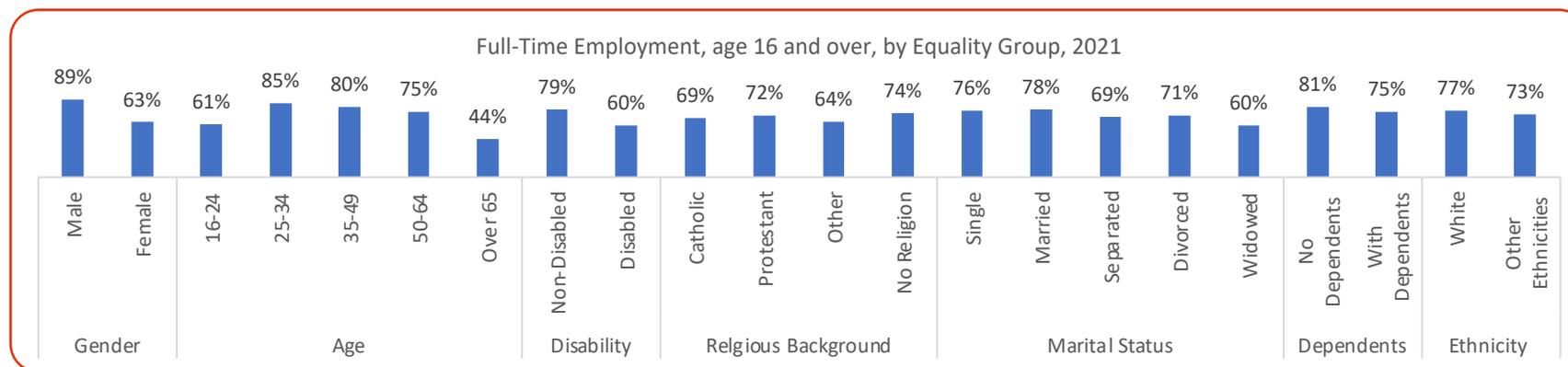


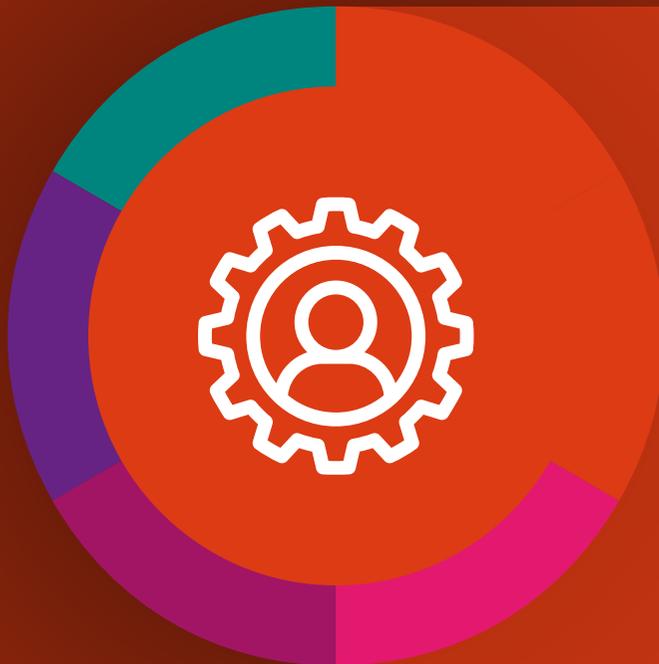
Population Indicator: Percentage of people aged 16+ years (16 and over) who are employed (full-time and part-time).

Data Source: Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (NILFS) - 2019, 2020 and 2021

Data Provider: Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency (NISRA)

In 2021, the full-time employment rates (as a share of all those in employment)(aged 16 and over) were highest for males (89%), those aged 25-34 (85%) and those with no dependents (81%), whereas the part-time employment rate were highest for those over 65 (57%), followed by persons with disabilities (40%), widowed (40%) and females (37%). As a share of those in employment, there were more men (89%) in full-time employment in comparison with women (63%), as females had a higher part-time employment rate (37%). Likewise, as a share of those in employment, there were more non-disabled people (79%) in full-time employment in comparison for those with disabilities (60%), as persons with disabilities had a higher part-time employment rate (40%).





Priority Area:

Better Jobs

More people have better jobs that enable them to achieve financial independence and security in good quality, sustainable employment with fair pay, job security and flexibility.

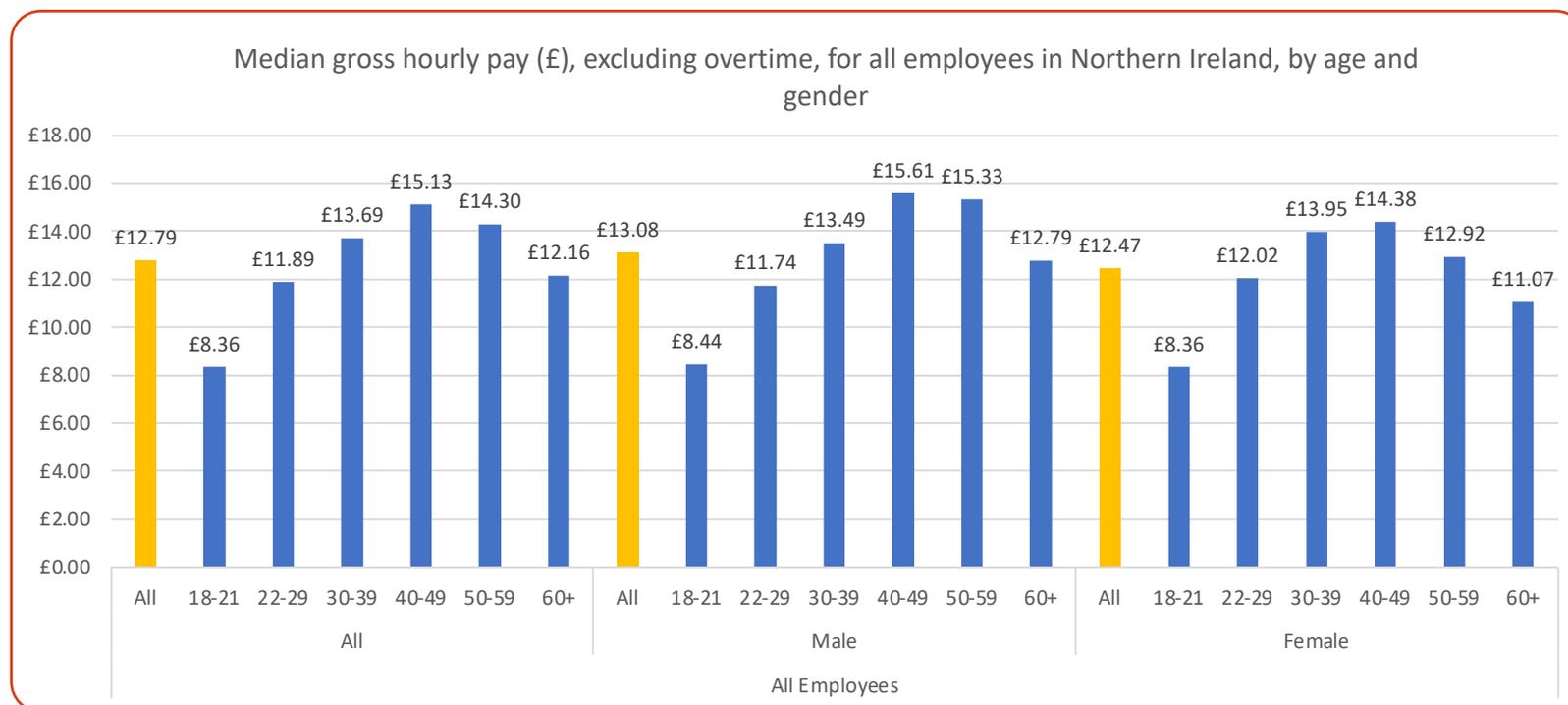
Population Indicator: Median gross hourly earnings (excluding overtime) for full-time, part-time and all workers – All Employees

Data Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Data Provider: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)

Data Status: Very limited data disaggregation by equality ground and group. Limited to age and gender only. Data obtained, but pending input into statistical and summary reports

In 2021, when looking at the median gross hourly pay (£), excluding overtime, for all employees in Northern Ireland, by age and gender (£12.79), male employees (£13.08) earned more than female employees (£12.47). Younger female employees (22-29 - £12.02; 30-39 - £13.95) earned slightly more than younger male employees (22-29 - £11.74; 30-39 - £13.49). However, older male employees (40-49 - £15.61; 50-59 - £15.33; 60+ - £12.79) earned more than older female employees (40-49 - £14.38; 50-59 - £12.92; 60+ - £11.07).

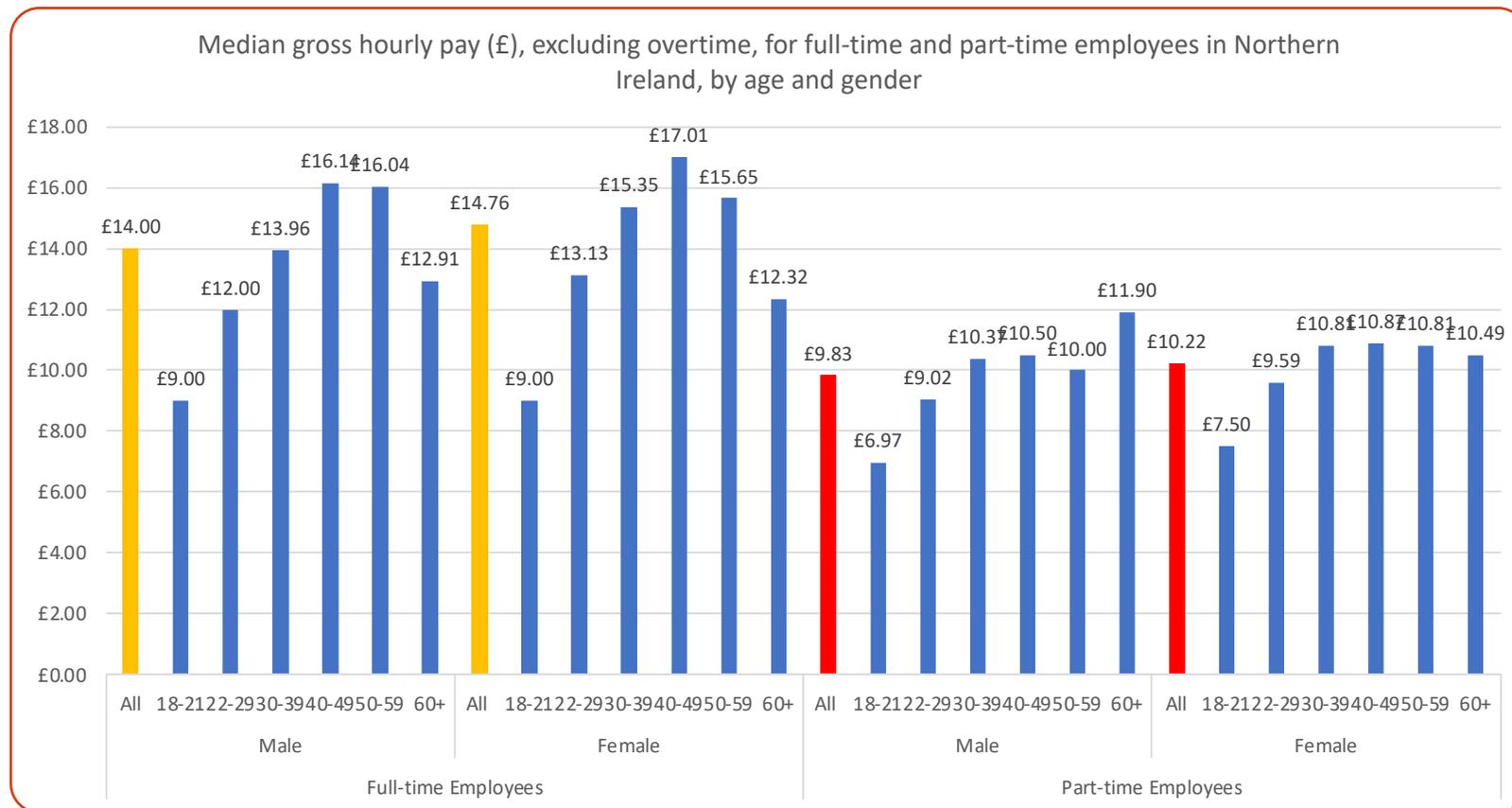


Population Indicator: Median gross hourly earnings (excluding overtime) for full-time, part-time and all workers – Full-time and Part-time Employees

Data Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Data Provider: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)

In 2021, full-time employees earned more than part-time employees; with female full-time employees (£14.76) earning more than male full-time employees (£14.00). Similarly, the median gross hourly pay, excluding overtime, for female part-time employees (£10.22) was higher than that for male part-time employees (£9.83). For the majority of age groups, for those working full-time or part-time, female employees earned a higher hourly gross pay than did male employees.

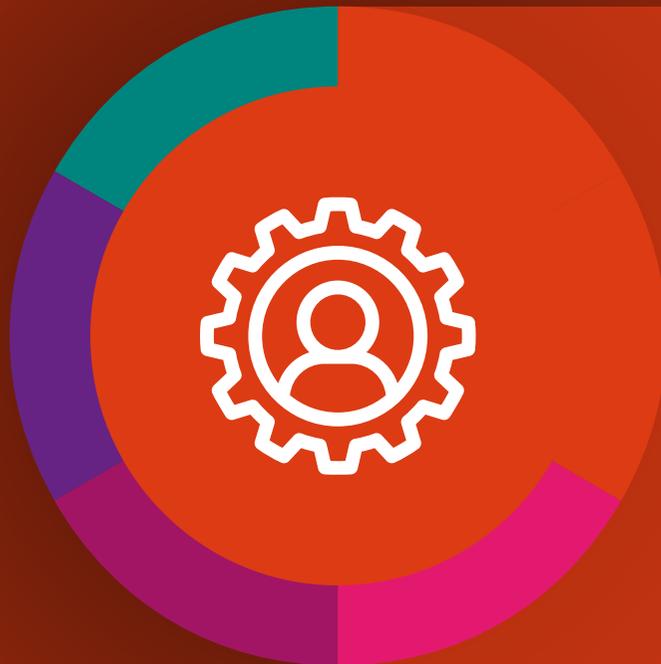


Population Indicator: Percentage of people in high paid occupations (SOC 1 and 2) or low paid occupations (SOC 6,8,9).

Data Source: Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (NILFS) - 2019, 2020 and 2021

Data Provider: Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency (NISRA)

Data Status: Data is currently not available for this measure due to a recent issue at ONS with the coding of SOC codes (“*standard occupational classifications*”) across a number of surveys. The problem was caused by the implementation of the updated SOC 2020 codes, whereby responses to surveys were being miscoded to the wrong occupations. ONS are aiming to recode the occupations for January 2021 onwards over the coming months, which will be available during 2023.



Priority Area:

Access to Support to be Able to Work

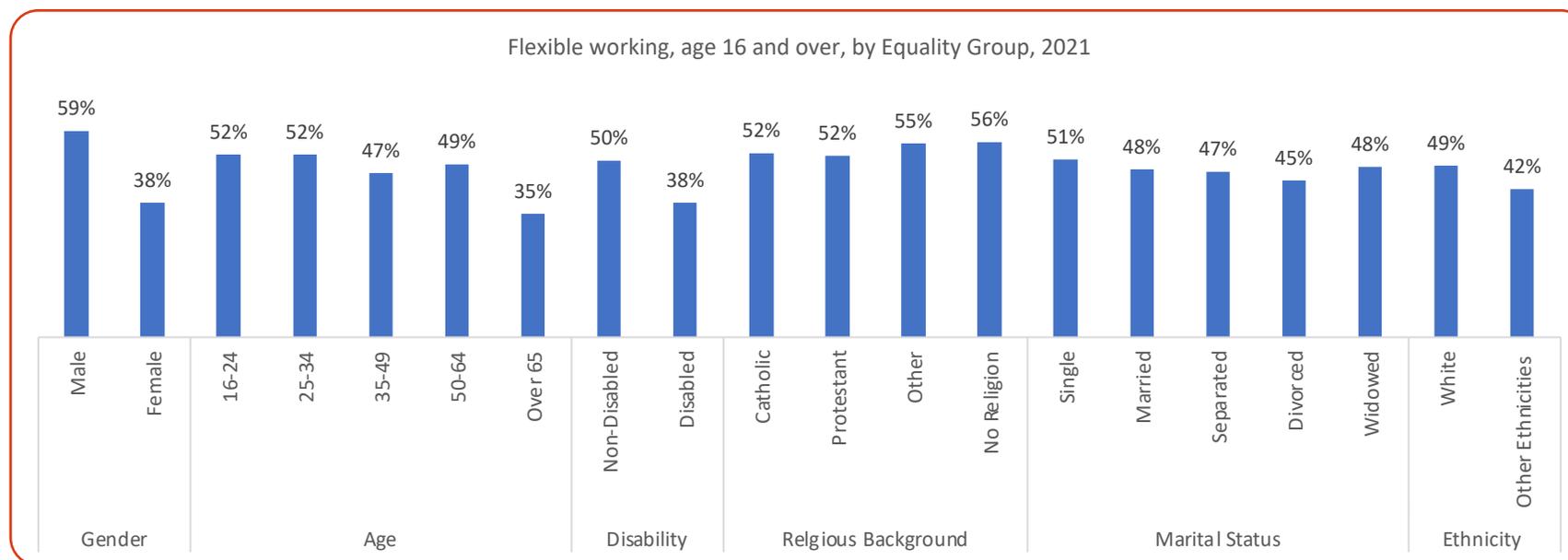
There is equality of opportunity in the support people obtain, sustain and progress in employment, and to maintain a good work/life balance irrespective of their equality characteristics. For example, this includes supporting people through the removal of barriers to employment including access to good quality, affordable childcare, access to reasonable adjustments and flexible working.

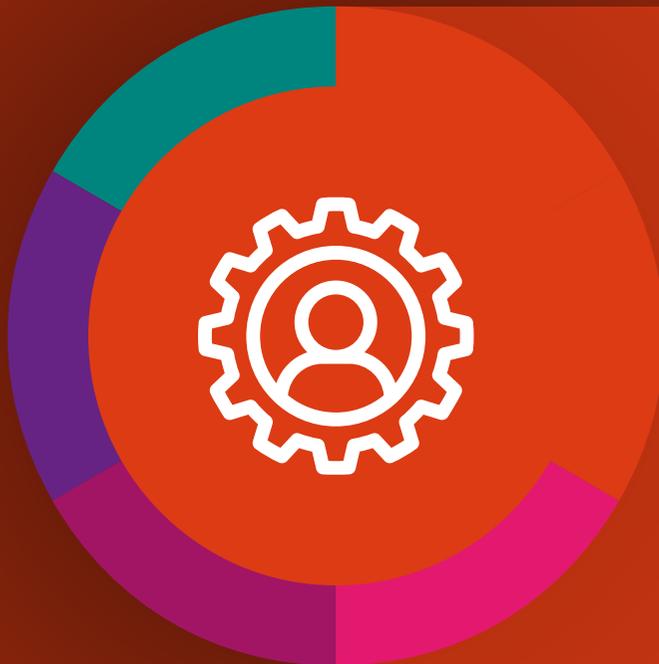
Population Indicator: Proportion of people aged 16+ years in employment who feel their employer is flexible and supportive

Data Source: Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (NILFS) - 2019, 2020 and 2021

Data Provider: Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency

In 2021, the flexible agreed working arrangements (aged 16 and over) were highest for males (59%), those with No religious background (56%) and Other religious backgrounds (55%) and persons without disabilities (50%). There were more men (59%) in a flexible agreed working arrangements in comparison with women (38%). Those with the lowest proportions flexible agreed working arrangements were found in those over 65 (35%), females (38%) and persons with a disability (38%).





Priority Area:

Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces

Workplaces are welcoming and inclusive respecting worker's rights, promoting diversity and inclusion and giving employees a voice.

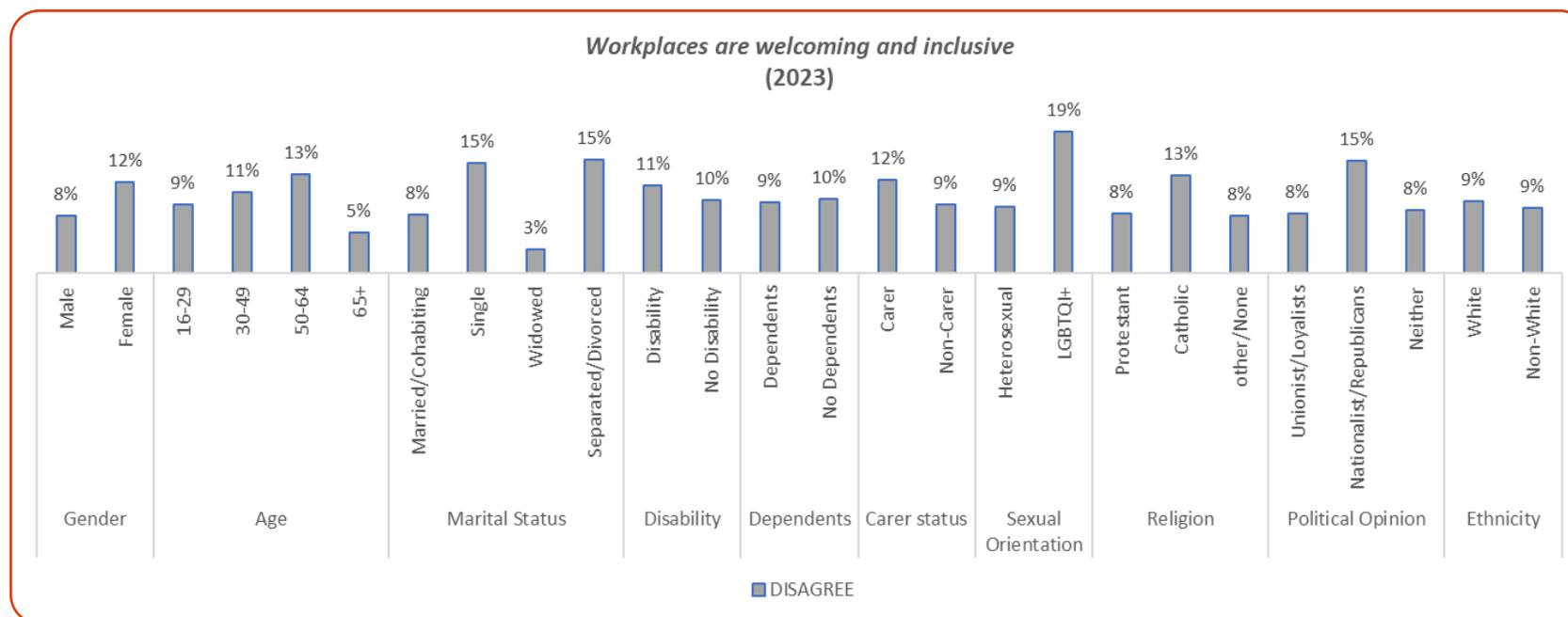
Population Indicator: Percentage of people who agree/disagree that in general, workplaces in Northern Ireland are welcoming and inclusive.

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

Data Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Across the equality groups, respondents more likely to disagree with the statement “workplaces are welcoming and inclusive” were LGBTQI+ repondents (19%), Nationalist/Republicans respondents (15%), separaret/divorced respondents (15%) and single (15%), respondents in the age group of 50-64 (13%), Catholic repondents (13%), female respondents (12%) and carers (12%) compared to an overall level of disagreement of 10%.

Within equality grounds, respondents more likely to disagree with the statement were women (12%) compared with men (8%), those aged 50-64 (13%) compared to other age groups (16-29, 9%: 30-49, 11%: 65+, 5%), separated/divorced (15%) and single (15%) respondents compared to widowed (3%) and married/cohabiting (8%) respondents, respondents with a disability (11%) compared to those with no disability (10%), and those without dependents (10%) compared to those with dependents (9%).



Population Indicator: Percentage of people who agree/disagree “workers are generally treated with dignity and respect”.

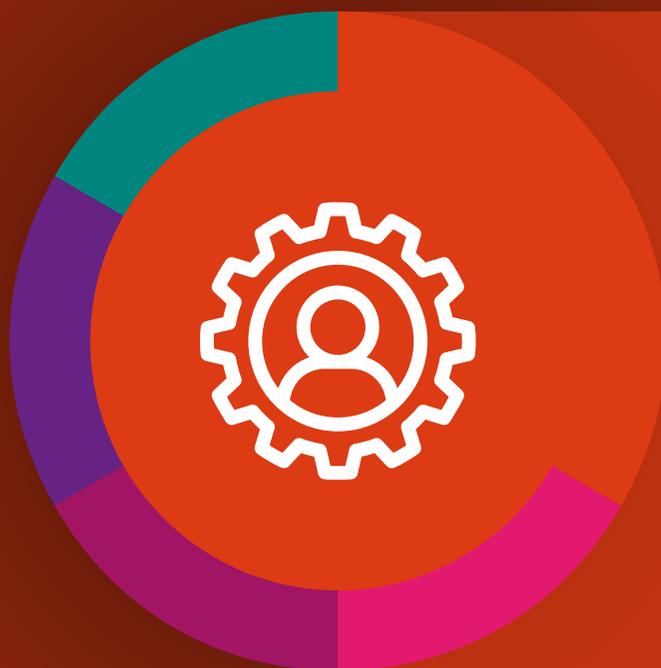
Data Source: Public Opinion Survey on Equality in Northern Ireland - 2023

Data Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Across the equality groups, respondents more likely to disagree with the statement “workers are generally treated with dignity and respect” were LGBTQI+ respondents (23%), separated/divorced respondents (21%), respondents with a disability (21%), respondents in the age group of 50-64 (16%), Catholic respondents (16%), Nationalist/Republican respondents (16%), carers (16%), and single (16%) respondents compared to the overall level of disagreement of 13%.

Within equality grounds, respondents more likely to disagree with the statement were respondents in the age group of 50-64 (16%) compared to other age groups (16-29, 11%: 30-49, 12%: 65+, 14%), respondents with a disability (21%) compared to those with no disability (12%), those with no dependents (14%) compared to those with dependents (11%), separated/divorced respondents (21%) compared with single (16%), widowed (13%), and married/cohabiting (10%) respondents.





Priority Area:

Discrimination

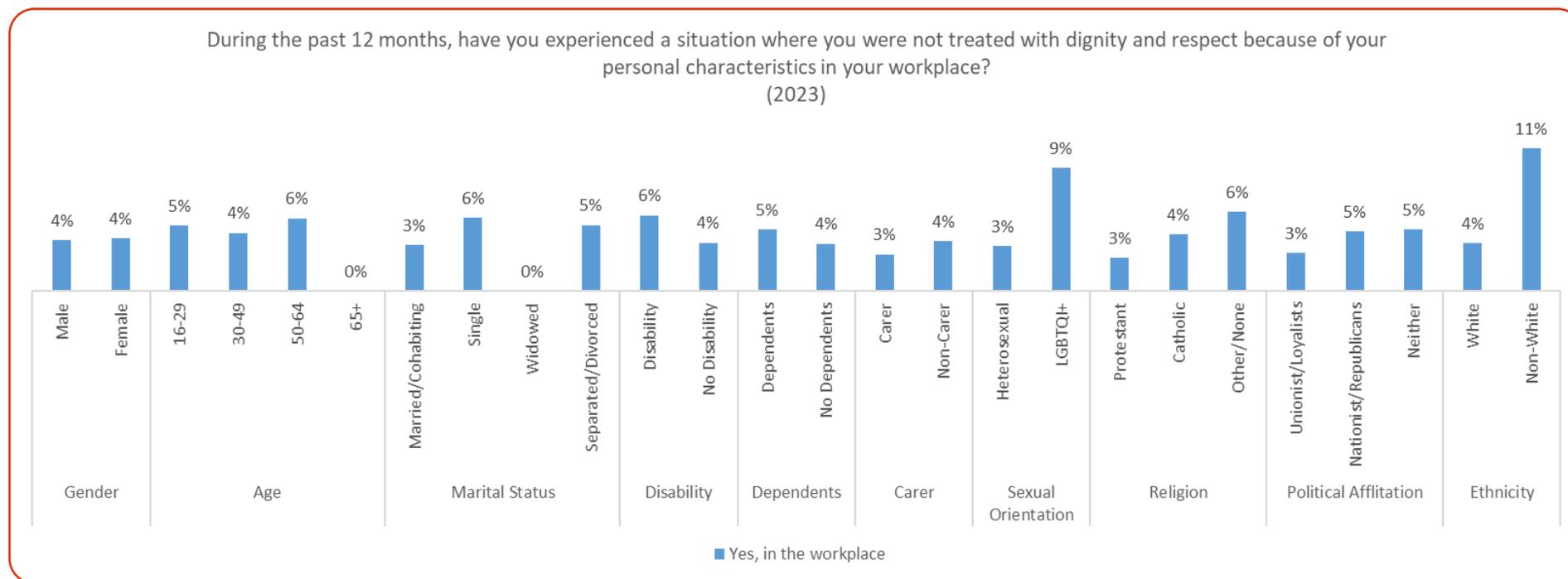
People are free from prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, bullying harassment and victimisation in employment on any equality ground.

Population Indicator: Percentage of people who during the past 12 months, have personally experienced a situation where were not treated with dignity and respect the workplace based on personal characteristics.

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

Data Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Four percent of respondents declared that they had personally experienced a situation where they were not treated with dignity and respect in the workplace. Across the equality groups, respondents more likely to state they had personally experienced a situation where they were not treated with dignity and respect because of their personal characteristics in their workplace were: non-white respondents (11%), LGBTQI+ respondents (9%), single respondents (6%), respondents with a disability (6%), respondents in the age group of 50-64 (6%) and respondents with Other or No religion (6%).

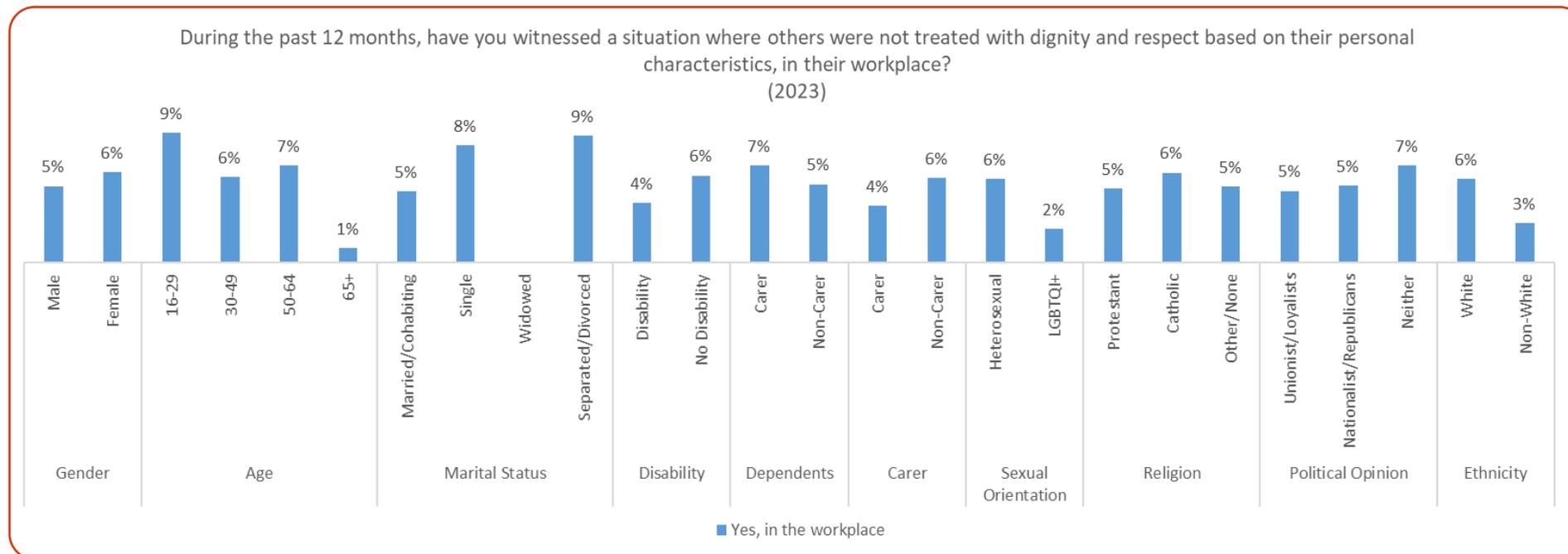


Population Indicator: Percentage of people who during the past 12 months, have witnessed a situation where others in the workplace were not treated with dignity and respect based on their personal characteristics

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

Data Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Six percent of respondents declared that they had witnessed a situation where others were not treated with dignity and respect in the workplace based upon their personal characteristics (6%). Those respondents who were more likely to state that they had witnessed a situation where others were not treated with dignity and respect in the workplace based on their personal characteristics were aged 16-29 (9%), single (8%) and were separated/divorced (9%).





**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