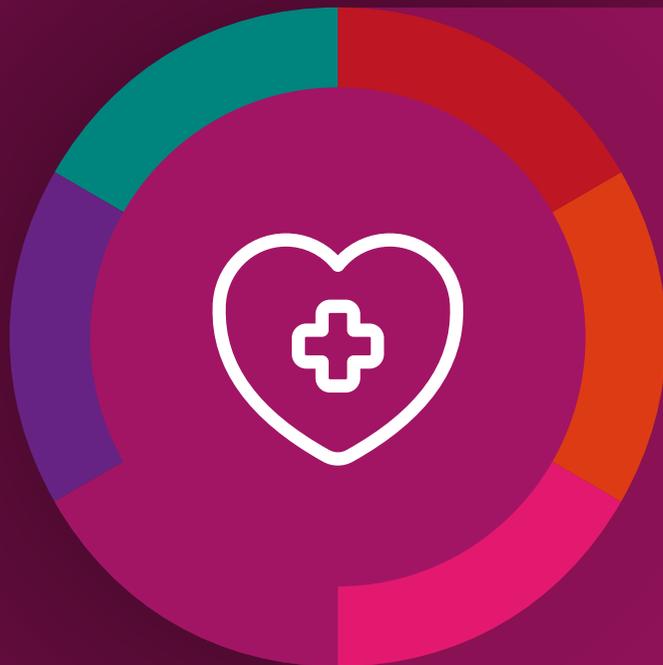


Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



Commission Statement on
Equality in Northern Ireland

Health & Social Care

Summary Report

4 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: **Health and Social Care**. 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.

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 **Health and Social Care** is as follows, with the **associated priority areas**:

There is equality of opportunity in access to health care, social care, and well-being:

- **Standard of Health:** All people can attain the highest standard of physical and mental health.
- **Access to Health Care & Social Care:** Everyone can access timely and good quality health and social care.
- **Access to Information:** Timely and impartial information about health and healthcare options is available and accessible to all.

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

Standard of Health:

Data Status: 4 Grounds Analysed; Health Survey for Northern Ireland – 2020/21 & 2021/22; Northern Ireland Department of Health

The findings on general health and mental health were obtained from the Health Survey for Northern Ireland. The reporting found that general health as being very bad and bad was more likely among divorced, separated, and widowed respondents, and amongst the age groups of 55-64, followed by age groups of 65-74 and 75+. Intuitively, it is likely that there is an association with age and marital status, in that respondents are more likely to be either divorced, separated or widowed as they age; this needs further investigation. Therefore, the Commission does not observe any noticeable differences in equality outcomes between the equality groups surveyed.

Please note that this does not mean that there are no differences in equality outcomes in respect to general health as further disaggregation, for example by gender, could provide more nuanced results. Unfortunately, the Health Survey only collected/report findings for four (4) equality grounds.

The results obtained on poor mental health (ghq12 score ≥ 4) and wellbeing were also obtained from the Health Survey for Northern Ireland. Over the two years of analysis, the percentages of people scoring a high GHQ12 score (4+) was more evident for separated and divorced respondents, those with Other or No religion, those in age group of 25-34, and females. Unlike the findings for general health, there is no intuitive association with age.

Access to Health and Social Care:

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

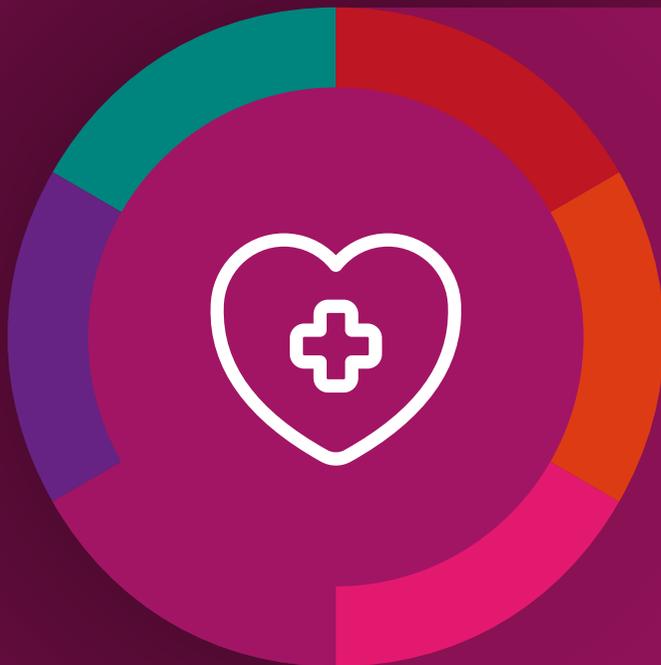
In respect to access to health and social care services, twelve measures were used to identify differences in equality outcomes for the equality groups within the nine equality grounds. These were obtained from the Equality Commission's Public Opinion Survey of Equality in Northern Ireland. This survey included questions related to health as there were no regular and consistent datasets recording data regarding access to health and social care.

The analyses of the data indicates that those with a disability, those with caring responsibilities and those with neither political opinion typically found it difficult accessing services across the six areas of health and social care, during and outside of normal working hours. Furthermore, those respondents who identified as LGBTQI+ often stated that it was difficult accessing services; further research or survey work would be required to determine the extent of these difficulties due to low numbers recorded for this equality group(ing) in the Equality Commission's Public Opinion Survey.

Further disaggregation of data regarding access to health and social care is required. Although the Commission's Public Opinion Survey has a sample size of 1023 respondents, limited disaggregation is difficult due to the recording of small numbers of certain equality groups.

Access to Information:

Data Status: No data available for this priority area; consultation on the Framework identified two population indicators; the survey question to obtain the data was not available in all the editions of the Health Survey; it was not included in the last three years.



Priority Area:

Standard of Health

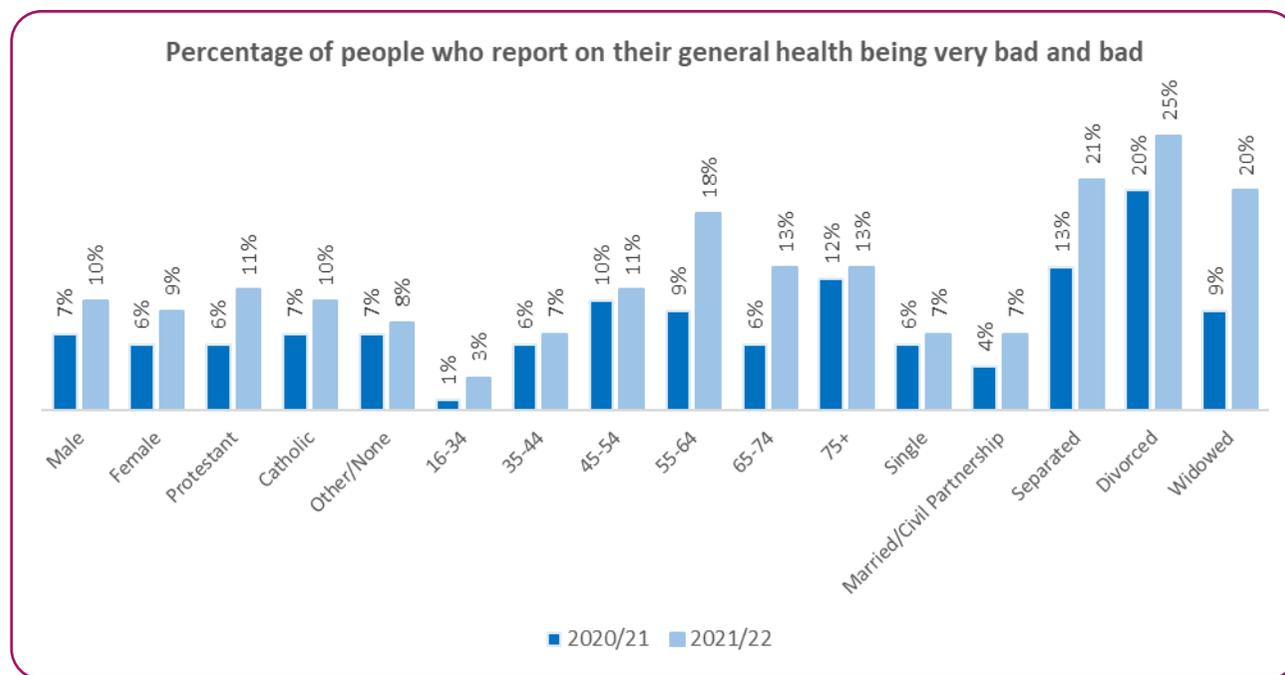
All people can attain the highest standard of physical and mental health

Population Indicator: Percentage of people who report on their health (being in very good; good; fair; bad; very bad)

Data Source: Heath Survey - 2020/21 and 2021/22

Data Provider: Northern Ireland Department of Health

Across the equality groups available for the analysis, there was an increase in the percentage of people who reported on their general health as being very bad and bad from 2020/21 to 2021/22. In 2021/22, reporting on general health as being very bad and bad was more likely among divorced (25%), separated (21%), widowed (20%), respondents of the age group of 55-64 (18%), and in the same proportion respondents of the age groups of 65-74 and 75+ (13%) compared to an overall proportion of 10%.

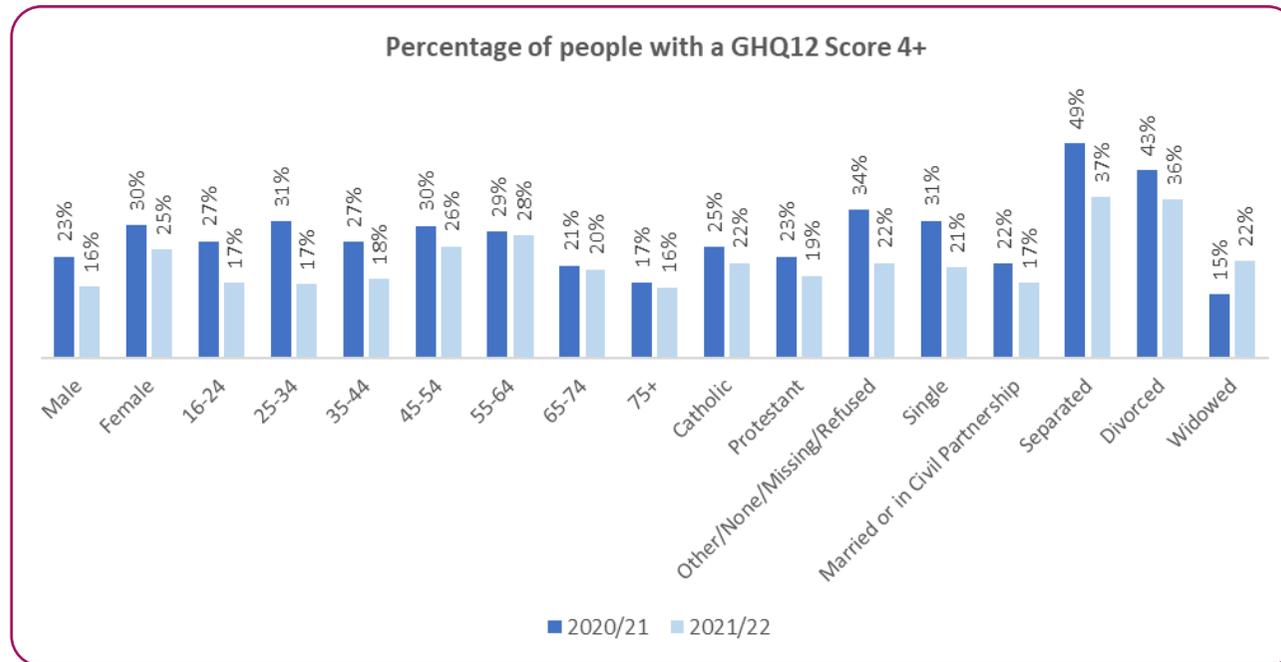


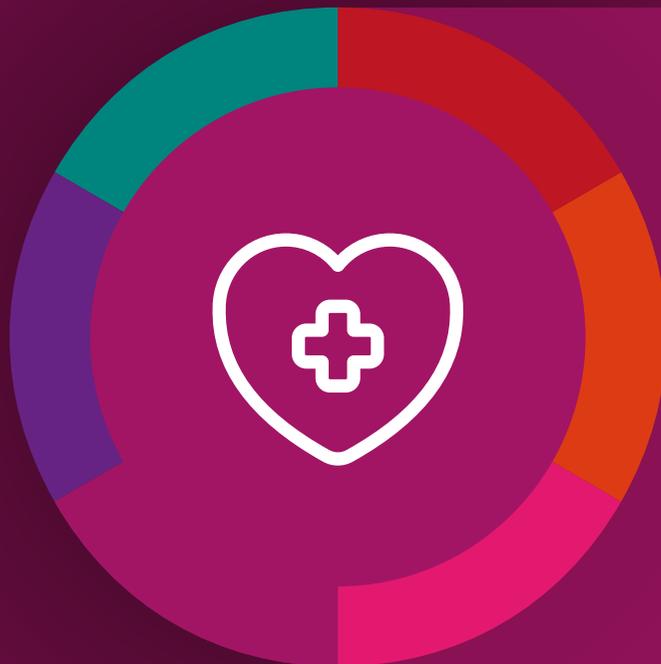
Population Indicator: Percentage of people with poor mental health (ghq12 score >=4) and wellbeing.

Data Source: Heath Survey - 2020/21 and 2021/22

Data Provider: Northern Ireland Department of Health

Across the equality groups available for the analysis, there was a general reduction in the prevalence of high GHQ12 mental health scores from 2020/21 (27%) to 2021/22 (21%). However, the percentages of people scoring a high GHQ12 (4+) was more evident for separated respondents (from 49% to 37%), divorced (43% to 36%), those with Other or No religion (34% to 22%), respondents of the age group of 25-34 (31% to 17%), and female respondents (30% to 25%) during the two years of analysis, with generally substantial decreases across these equality groups of respondents.





Priority Area:

Access to Health Care & Social Care Services

Everyone can access timely and good quality health
and social care

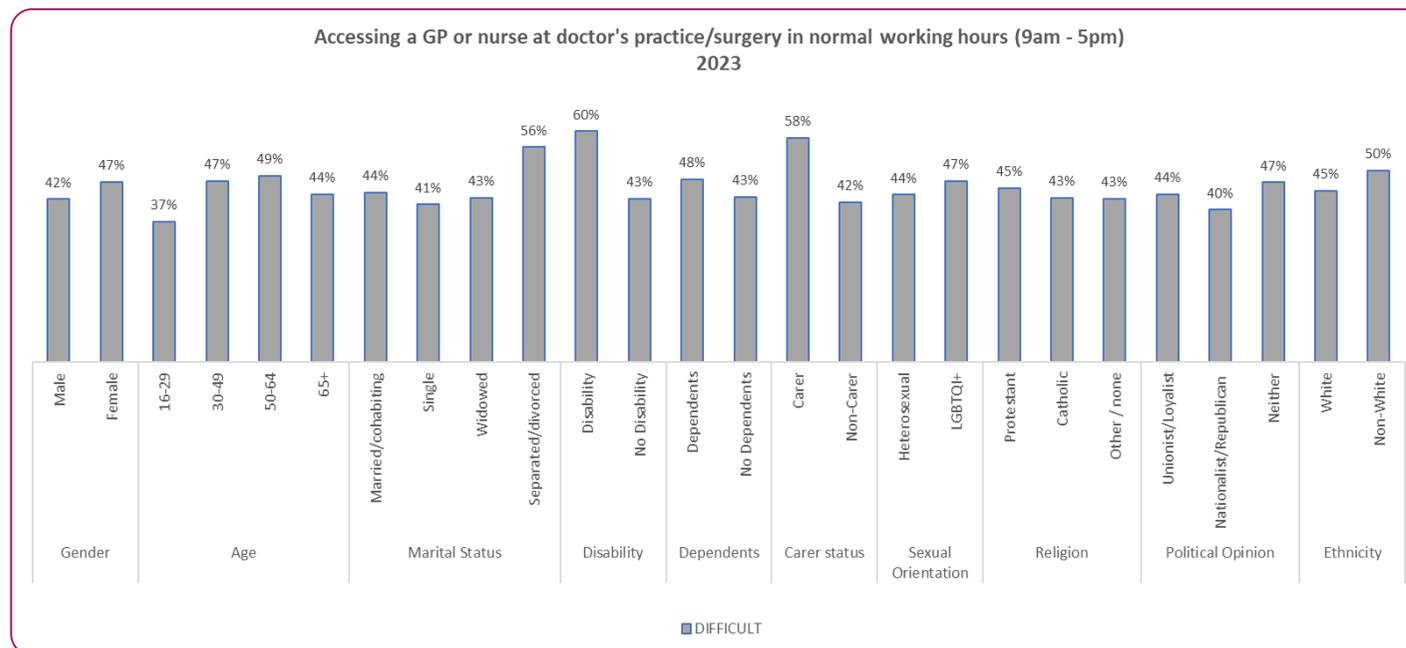
Population Indicator: Percentage of people who find it easy or difficult accessing the following health services in normal working hours (i.e. 5pm-9am): GP or nurse at your doctor’s practice/ surgery in normal working hours

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

Date Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Across equality groups, those more likely to find it difficult accessing a GP or a nurse at doctor’s practice or surgery in normal working hours were respondents with a disability (60%), carer respondents (58%), separated/divorced respondents (56%), non-white respondents (50%), respondents with dependents (48%), respondents of the age groups of 50-64 (49%) and 30-49 (47%), female respondents (47%), LGBTQI+ respondents (47%) and those describing their political opinion as neither Unionist/Loyalist nor Nationalist/Republican (47%) compared to an overall level of difficulty of 45%.

Within equality grounds, those more likely to find it difficult to access a GP or nurse at your doctor’s practice / surgery in normal working hours included those with a disability (60%) compared to those with no disability (43%), those with caring responsibilities (58%) compared to those without (42%), those Neither political opinion (47%) compared to Unionist/Loyalist (44%) or Nationalist/Republican (40%).



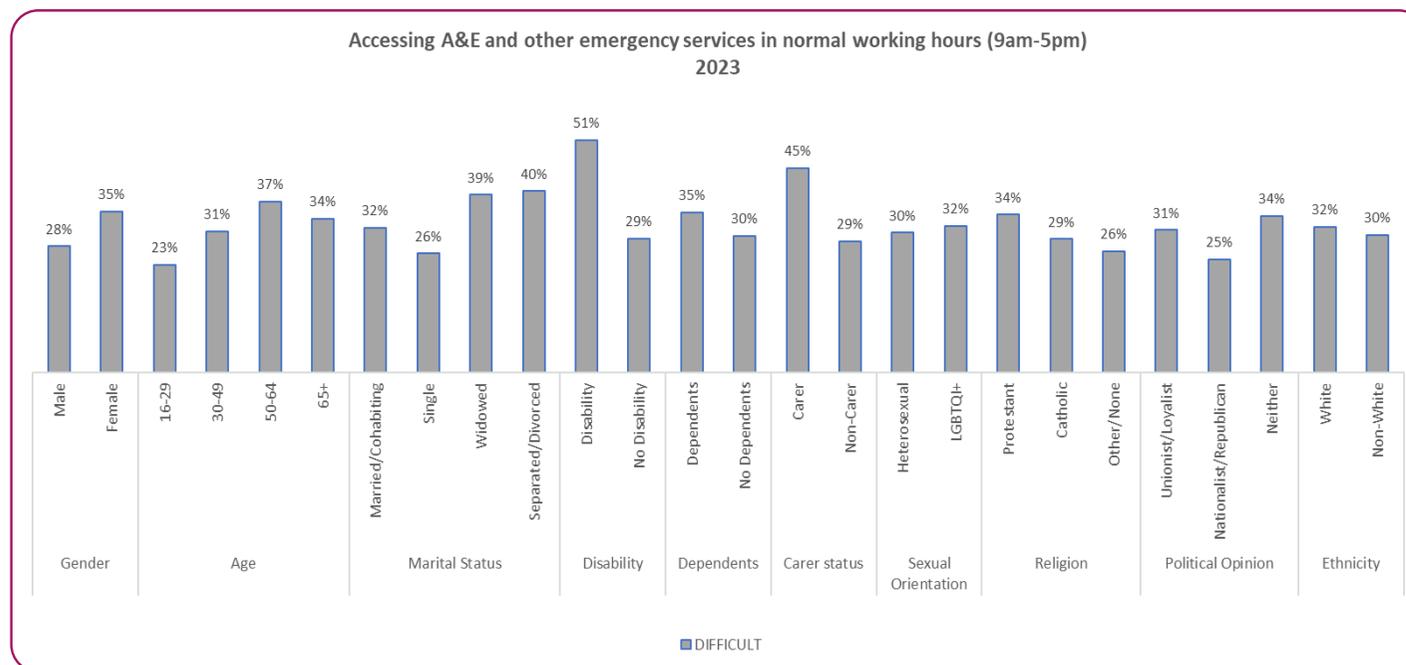
A&E, and other emergency services in normal working hours

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

Date Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Across equality groups, respondents more likely to finding it difficult accessing A&E and other emergency services were respondents with a disability (51%), carer respondents (45%), those who were separated/divorced (40%), those who were widowed (39%), those in the age groups of 50-64 (37%) and 65+ (34%) and female respondents (35%) compared to an overall difficulty level of 32%.

Within equality grounds, those more likely to find it difficult to access A&E and other emergency services (such as an ambulance services) in normal working hours included those aged 50-64 (37%) compared with other age groups (16-29, 23%: 30-49, 31%: 65+, 34%), those with a disability (51%) compared to those with no disability (29%), those with caring responsibilities (45%) compared to those without (29%), and those who were Neither political opinion (34%) compared to Unionist/Loyalist (31%) or Nationalist/Republican (25%) respondents.

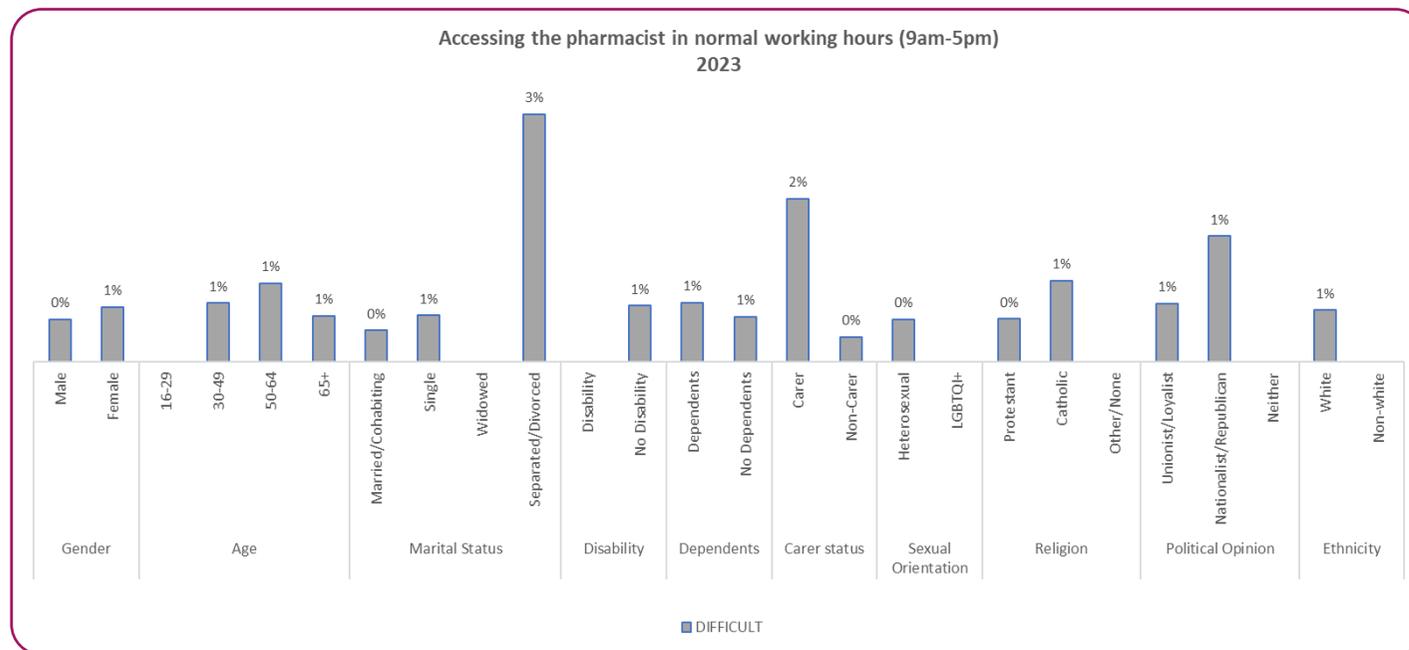


Accessing the pharmacist in normal working hours

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

Date Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Across equality groups, the percentages for respondents who found it difficult accessing the pharmacist in normal working hours were marginal, with separated/divorced (3%) and carer (2%) respondents more likely to express this opinion.



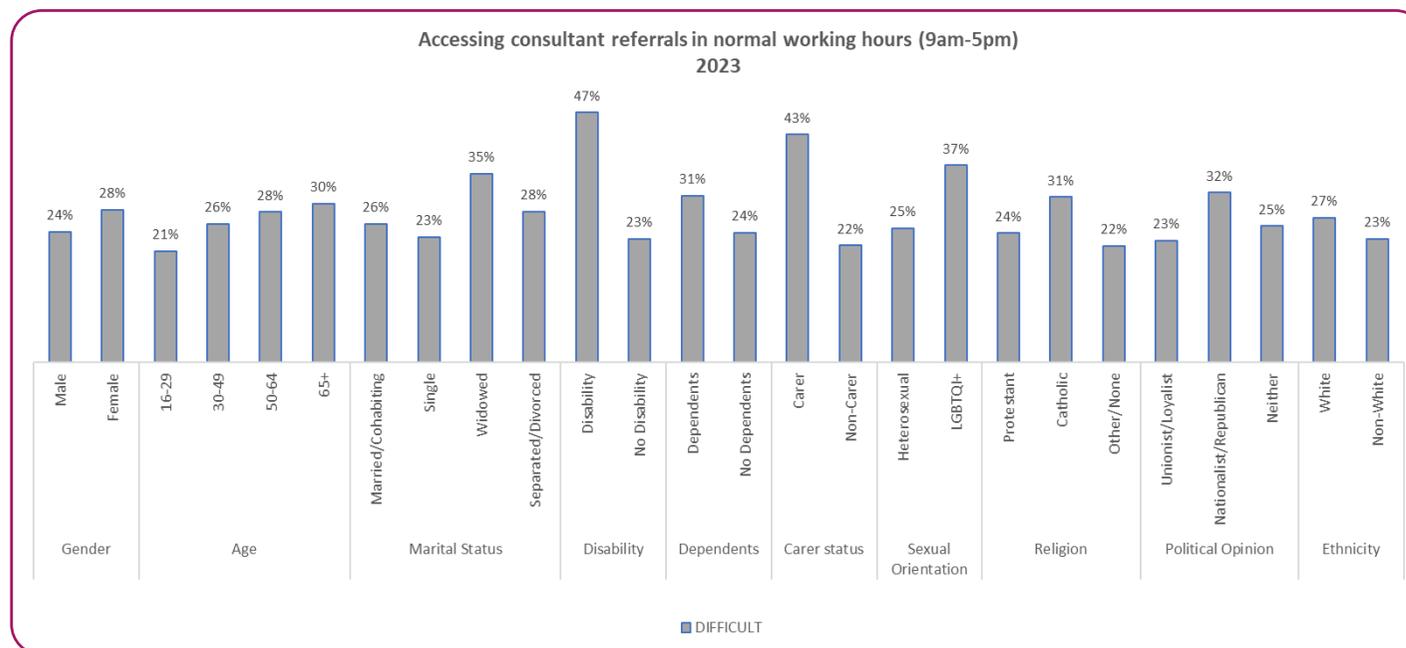
Referrals to consultants for health treatments in normal working hours

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

Date Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Across equality groups, those more likely to find it difficult accessing consultant referrals in normal working hours were mainly respondents with a disability (47%), carers (43%), LGBTQI+ respondents (37%), widowed respondents (35%), Nationalist/Republican respondents (32%), respondents with dependent children (31%), Catholic respondents (31%) and those age 65+ (30%) compared to an overall level of difficulty of 27%.

Within equality grounds, those more likely to find it difficult to access referrals to consultants in normal working hours included those with a disability (47%) compared to those with no disability (23%), those with caring responsibilities (43%) compared to those without (22%), widowed (35%) respondents compared to married/cohab. (26%), single (23%), or separated/divorced (28%), and Nationalist/Republican (32%) respondents compared with Unionist/Loyalist (23%) and those of Neither political (26%).



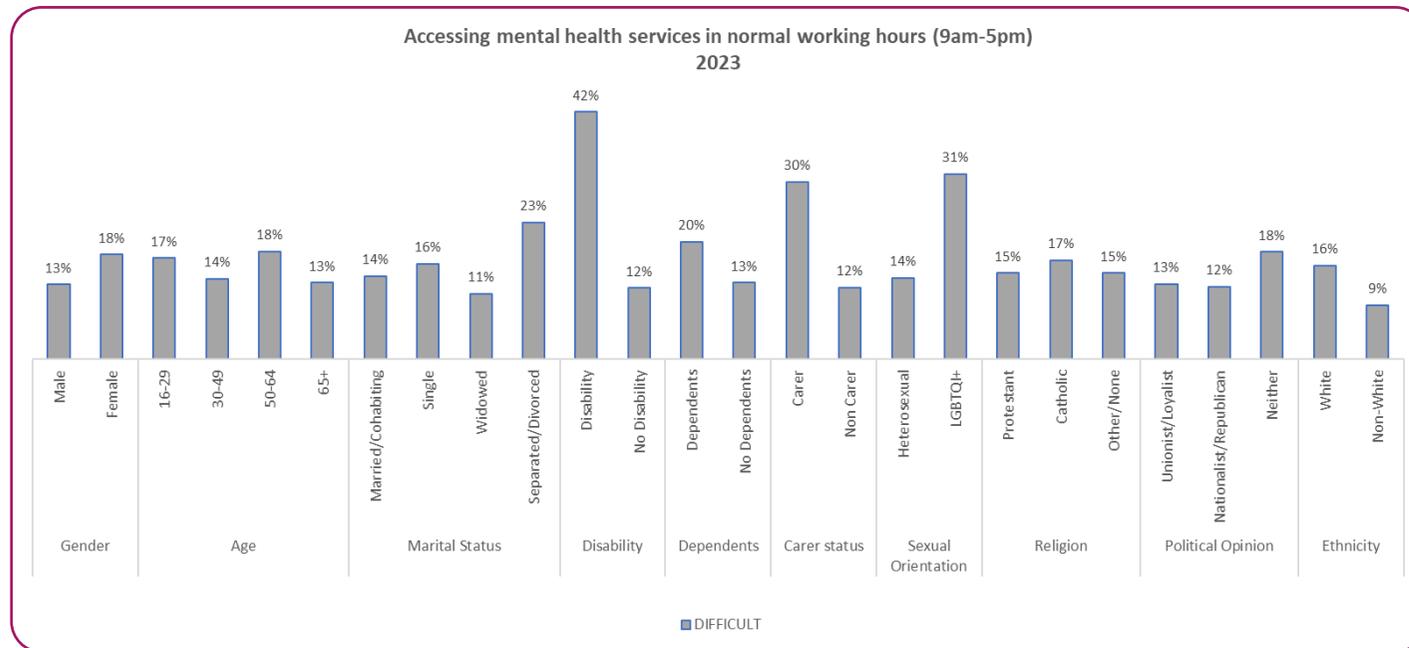
Referrals to, and ongoing access for continuing support from, mental health services in normal working hours

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

Date Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Across all equality groups, respondents more likely to find it difficult accessing mental health services in normal working hours were those with a disability (42%), LGBTQI+ respondents (31%), carer respondents (30%), separated/divorced respondents (23%) and those with dependents (20%) compared to an overall level of difficulty of 15%.

Within equality grounds, those more likely to find it difficult to access mental health services in normal working hours included those with a disability (42%) compared to those with no disability (12%), LGBTQI+ respondents (31%) compared to those who were heterosexual (14%), those with caring responsibilities (30%) compared to those without (12%), and those with Neither political opinion (18%) compared to Unionist/Loyalist (13%), or Nationalist/Republican respondents (12%).



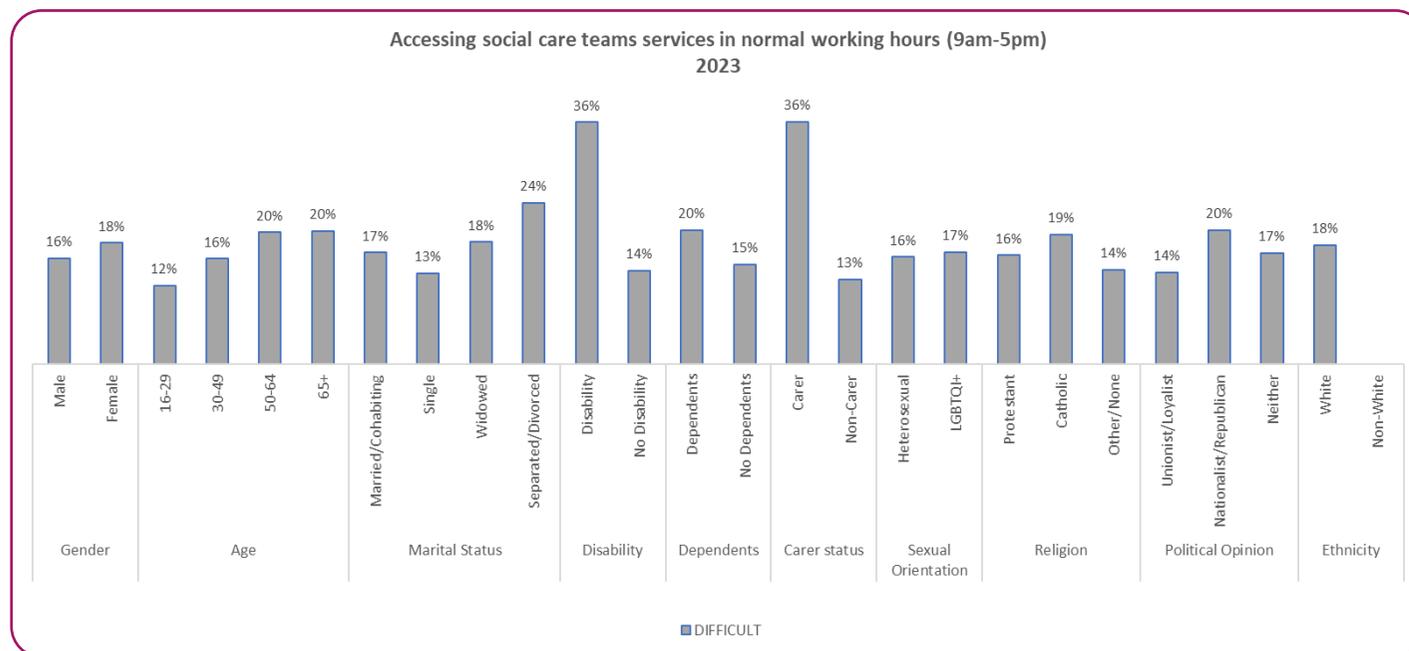
Referrals to, and ongoing access to continuing support from social care teams (such as social workers, support services for people with disabilities and the elderly) in normal working hours

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

Date Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Across equality groups, respondents more likely to find difficult accessing social care teams in normal working hours were those with a disability (36%), carers (36%), and separated/divorced respondents (24%) compared to an overall level of difficulty of 17%

Within equality grounds, those more likely to find it difficult to access referrals to, and ongoing access to continuing support from social care teams (such as social workers, support services for people with disabilities and the elderly) in normal working hours included those with a disability (36%) compared to those with no disability (14%), those with caring responsibilities (36%) compared to those without (13%), separated or divorced respondents (24%) compared to married/cohab. (17%), single (14%) or widowed (18%), and Nationalist/Republican (20%) respondents compared with Unionist/Loyalist (14%) or Neither political opinion (17%) respondents.



Population Indicator: Percentage of people who find it easy or difficult accessing the following health services OUTSIDE normal working hours (i.e. 5pm-9am)

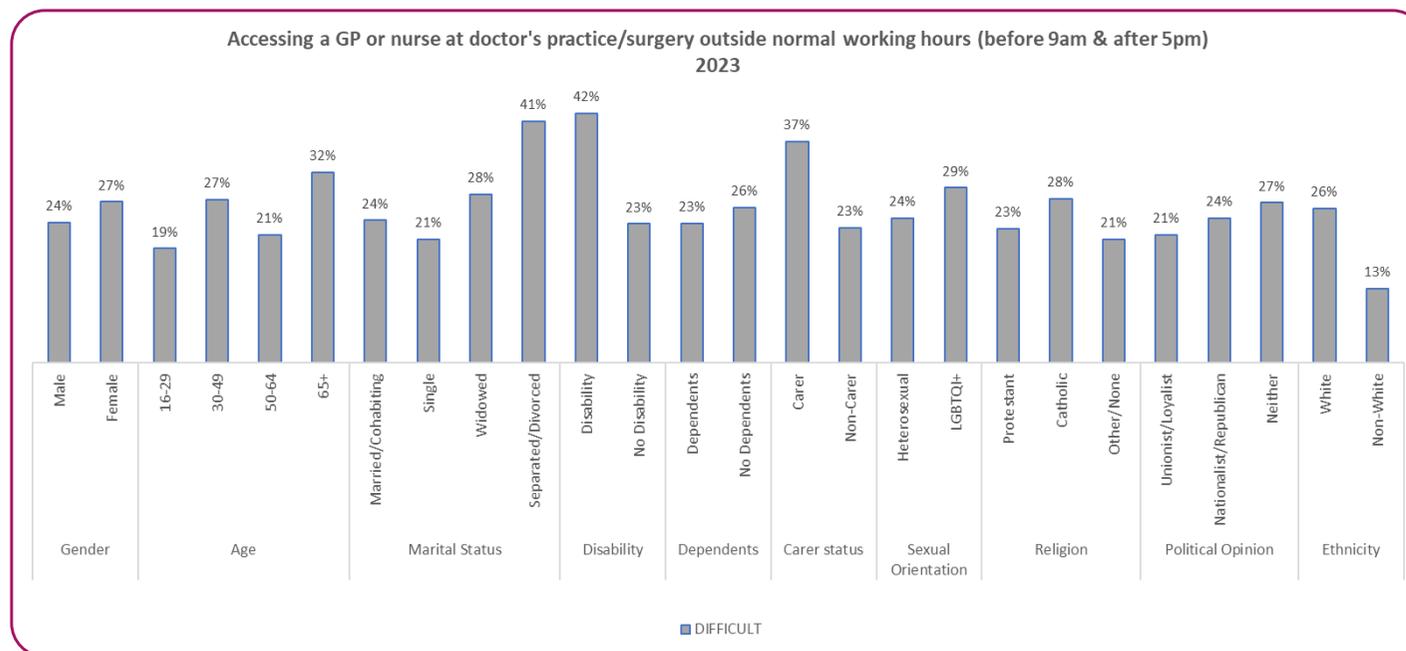
Accessing a GP or nurse at doctor’s practice/surgery outside normal working hours

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

Date Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Across all equality groups, respondents more likely to find it difficult to access a GP or nurse outside working hours were those with a disability (42%), separated/divorced respondents (41%), carers (37%) and respondents of the age group of 65+ (32%) compared to the overall level of difficulty of 26%.

Within equality grounds, those more likely to find it difficult to access the service outside of normal working hours included persons with a disability (42%) compared to those with no disability (23%), those with caring responsibilities (37%) compared to those without (23%), those describing themselves as having Neither political opinion (27%) compared to Unionist/Loyalist (22%) or Nationalist/Republican (24%) respondents.



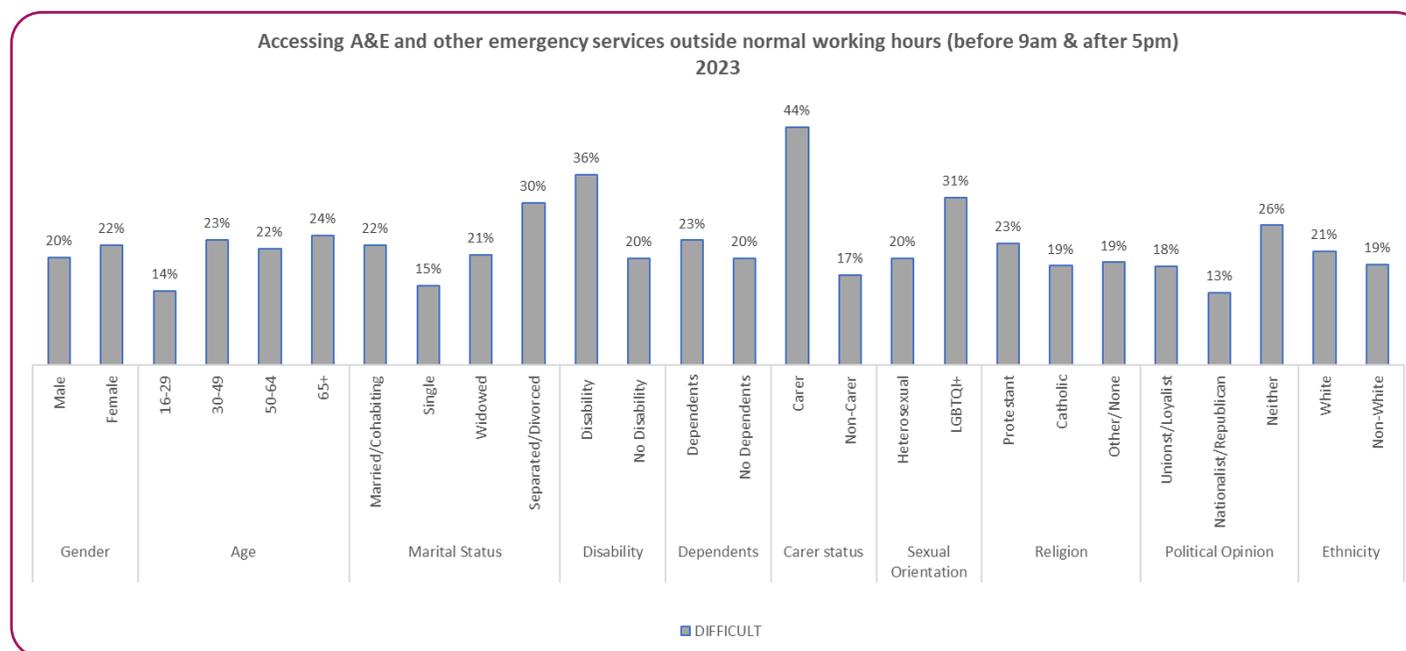
Accessing A&E, and other emergency services outside normal working hours

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

Date Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Across equality groups, respondents more likely to find it difficult accessing A&E and other emergency services outside working hours were carer respondents (44%), those with a disability (36%), LGBTQI+ respondents (31%), separated/divorced (30%) and those with neither political opinion (26%) compared with an overall level of difficulty of 21%.

Within equality grounds, those more likely to find it difficult to access A&E and other emergency services (such as an ambulance services) outside of normal working hours included those with a disability (36%) compared to those with no disability (20%), those with caring responsibilities (44%) compared to those without (17%), and those with Neither political opinion (26%) compared with those who stated they were Unionist/Loyalist (14%) or Nationalist/Republican (14%) respondents.

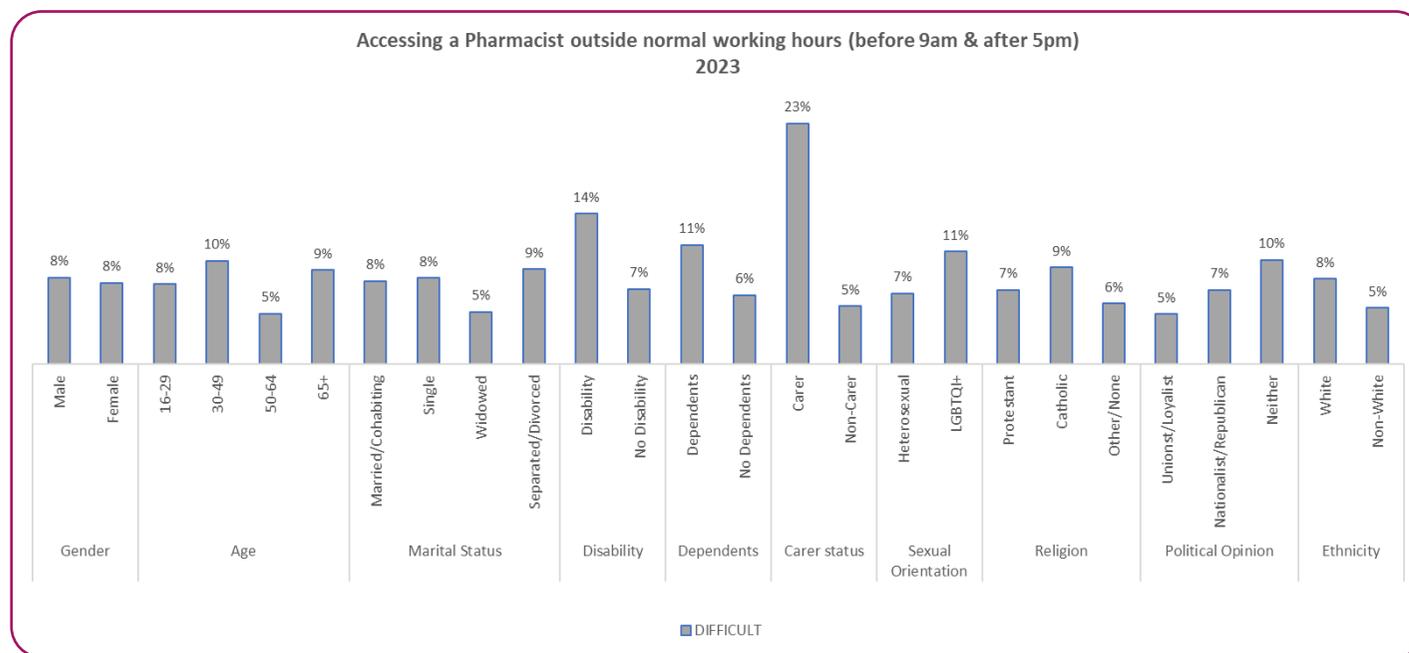


Accessing a pharmacist outside normal working hours

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

Date Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Across all equality groups, respondents more likely to find difficult accessing a pharmacist outside working hours are carers (23%), those with a disability (14%), respondents with dependents (11%) and LGBTQI+ respondents (11%) compared to an overall level of difficulty of 8%.



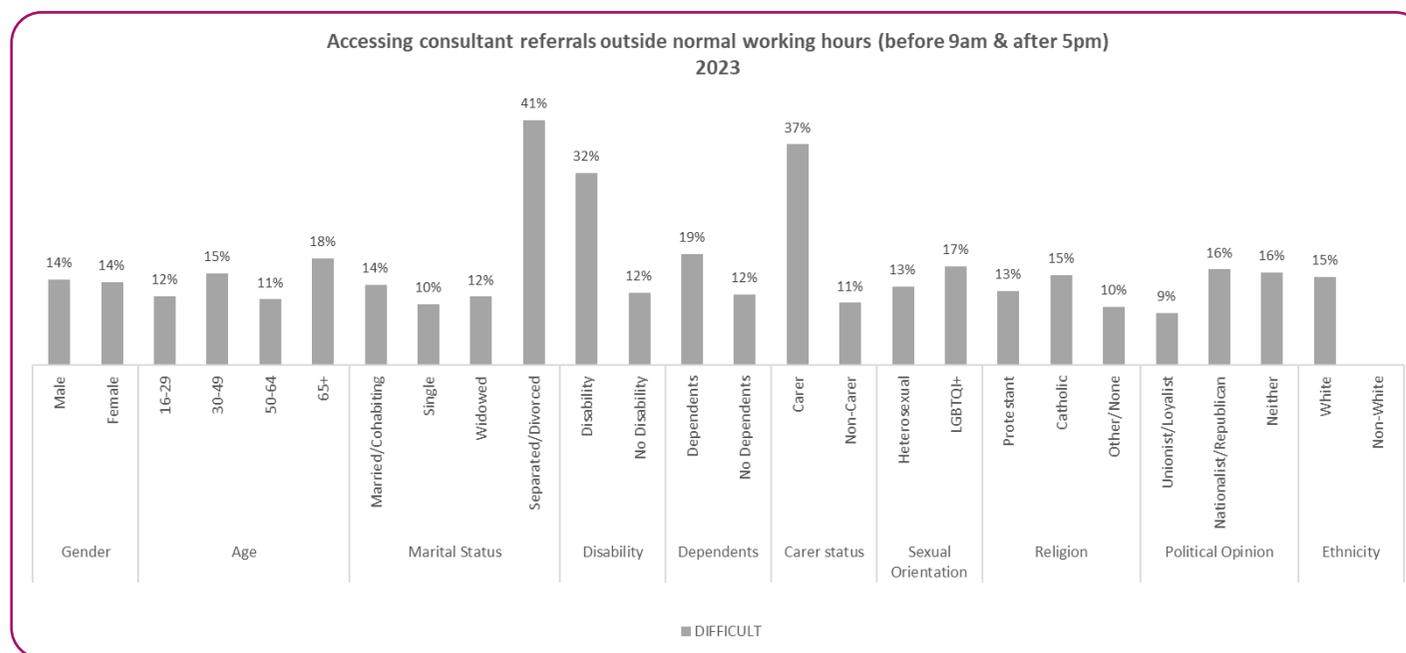
Accessing referrals to consultants for health treatments outside normal working hours

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

Date Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Across all equality groups, respondents more likely to find it difficult to access consultant referrals outside normal working hours were separated/divorced respondents (41%), carers (37%), those with a disability (32%), respondents with dependents (19%) and respondents in the age group of 65+ (18%) compared to an overall level of difficulty of 14%.

Within equality grounds, those more likely to find it difficult to access referrals to consultants for health treatments outside of normal working hours included those with a disability (32%) compared to those with no disability (12%), those with caring responsibilities (37%) compared to those without (11%) and separated/divorced respondents (41%) compared to married/cohab. (14%), single (10%) or widowed (12%) respondents.



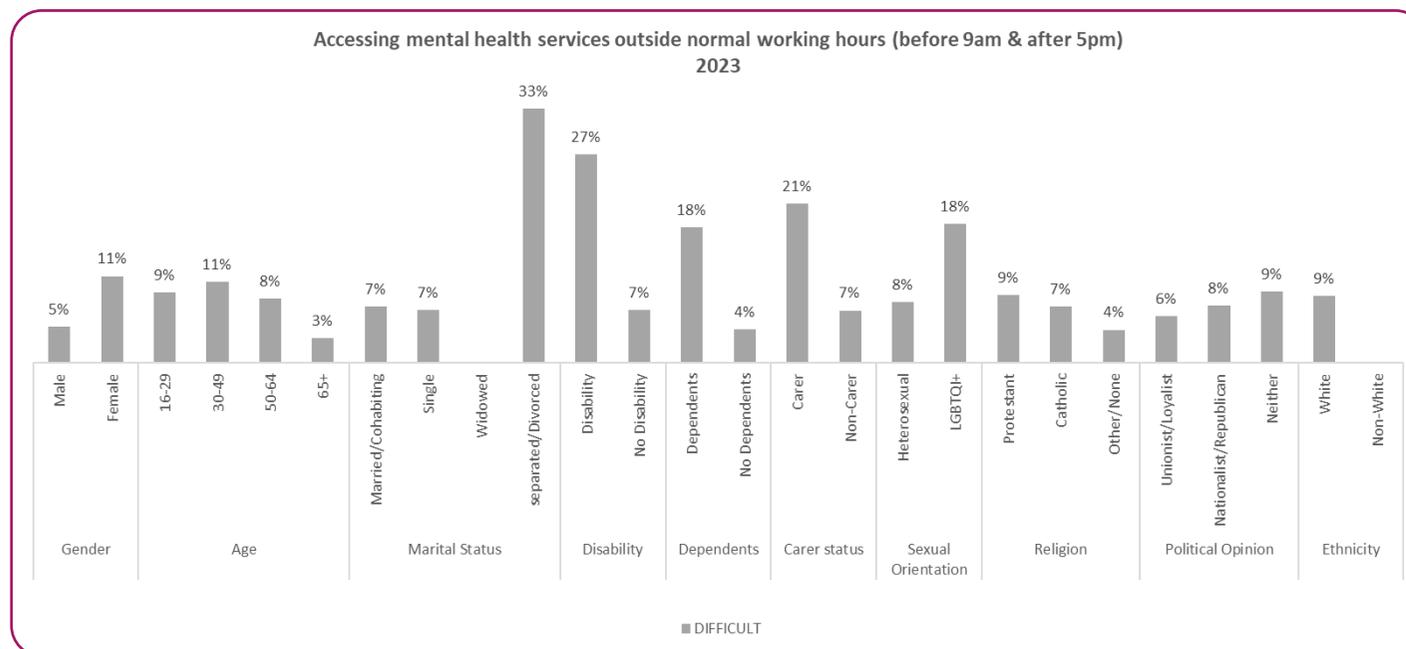
Accessing mental health services outside normal working hours

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

Date Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Across all equality groups, respondents more likely to find it difficult accessing mental health services outside working hours were separated/divorced respondents (33%), respondents with a disability (27%), carers (21%), respondents with dependents (18%) and LGBTQI+ respondents (18%) compared to an overall level of difficulty of 8%.

Within equality grounds, those more likely to find it difficult to access mental health services outside of normal working hours included women (11%) compared with men (5%), those with a disability (27%) compared to those with no disability (7%), those with dependent children (18%) compared to those without (4%), those with caring responsibilities (21%) compared to those without (7%), separated or divorced respondents (33%) compared to married/cohab. (7%), single (7%) or widowed (0%) respondents, those describing themselves as having Neither political opinion compared to Unionist/Loyalist (6%), Nationalist/Republican (8%) respondents.



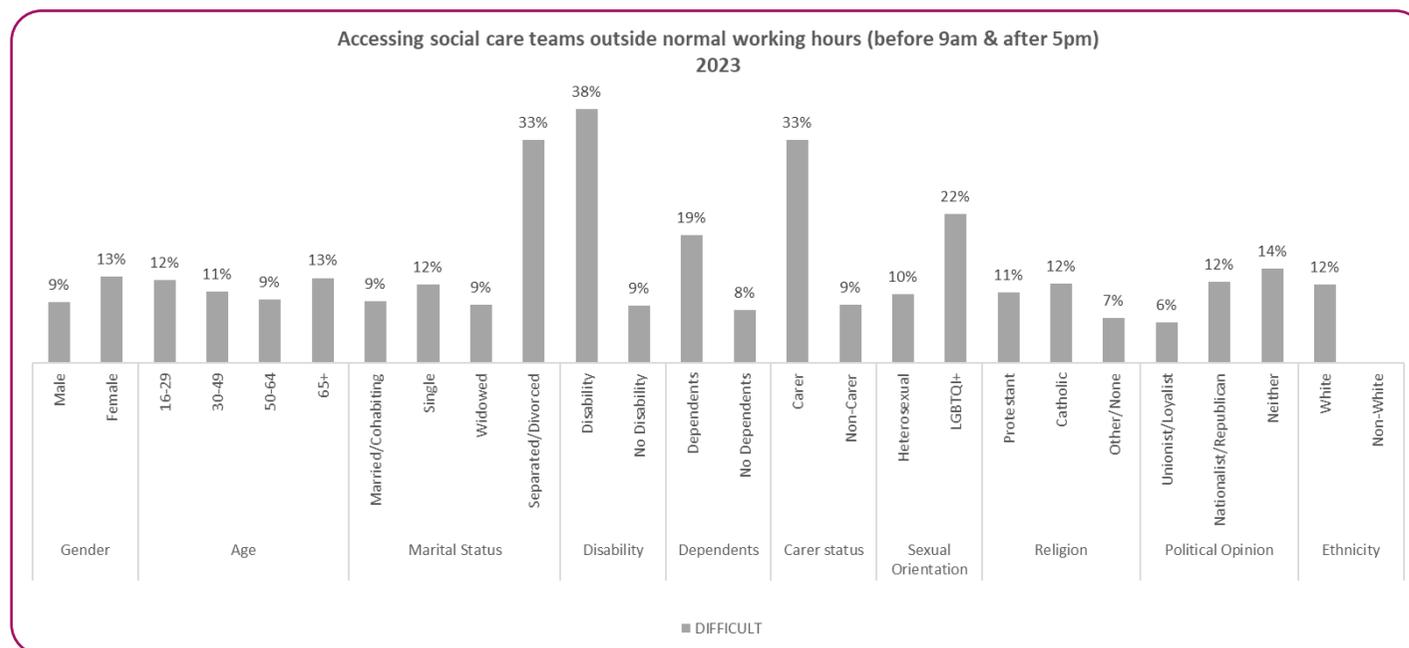
Accessing social care teams and ongoing access to continuing support from, social care teams (such as social workers, support services for people with disabilities and the elderly) outside normal working hours outside normal working hours

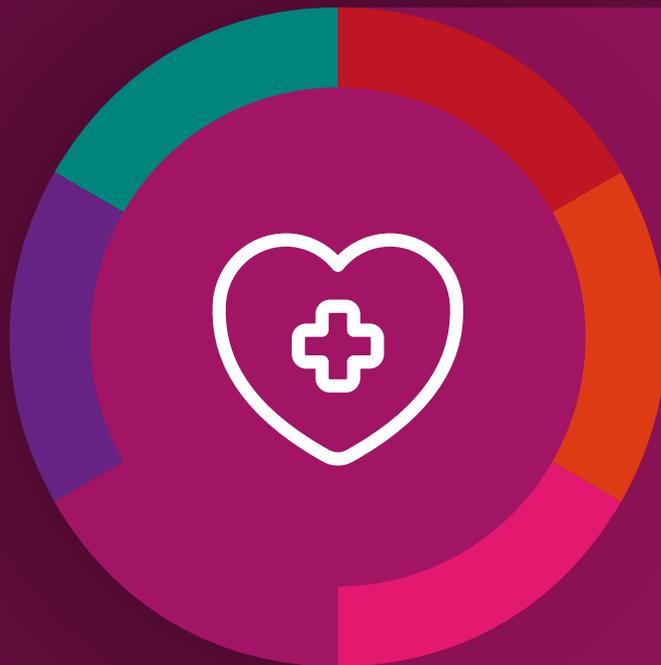
Data Source: Public Opinion Survey of Equality in Northern Ireland - 2023

Date Provider: Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Across all equality groups, respondents more likely to find it difficult to access social care teams outside working hours were respondents with a disability (38%), separated/divorced respondents (33%), carers (33%), LGBTQI+ respondents (22%) and respondents with dependents (19%) compared to an overall level of difficulty of 11%.

Within equality grounds, those more likely to find it difficult to access social care teams (such as social workers, support services for people with disabilities and the elderly) outside of normal working hours included those with a disability (38%) compared to those with no disability (9%), those with dependents (19%) compared to those without (8%), those with caring responsibilities (33%) compared to those without (9%), separated or divorced respondents (33%) compared to married/cohab. (9%), single (12%), or widowed (9%) respondents. Those who were of Neither political opinion (14%) compared to Unionist/Loyalist (6%) or Nationalist/Republican (12%) respondents.





Priority Area:

Access to Information

Timely and impartial information about health and healthcare options is available and accessible to all

Population Indicator: Percentage of people who find easy or difficult to obtain information on treatments or illnesses that concern them.

Data Source: Health Survey - 2020/21 and 2021/22

Data Provider: Northern Ireland Department of Health

Data Status: Not available in all the editions of the Health Survey; not included in the last three years.

Population Indicator: Percentage of people who say if it is easy or difficult to make decisions to improve health.

Data Source: Health Survey - 2020/21 and 2021/22

Data Provider: Northern Ireland Department of Health

Data Status: Not available in all the editions of the Health Survey; not included in the last three years.



**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