



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

AUDIT OF INEQUALITIES 2023



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Accessibility Statement - Alternative Formats

Requests for this Audit of Inequalities document in another format or language will be reasonably considered. Please contact egdiv@qub.ac.uk for further information.

Foreword

Mainstreaming equality and diversity into everything we do at Queen's is not only our statutory responsibility but an ambition under Strategy 2030, which identifies our people as a strategic enabler, fundamental to shaping "a better world through life-changing education and research."



We are pleased to present our Audit of Inequalities which has informed our new Equality Scheme and draft Action Plan for the next five years (2024-2029).

As part of this Audit, we carried out a wide-ranging desk-top and literature review enabling us to identify a range of inequalities which appear to have affected individuals from diverse backgrounds.

However, we also appreciate that many of our staff, students and key stakeholders may have experienced other and further inequalities which we are unaware of, and which impact their work, studies and/or research.

We also used this Audit to reflect upon the significant progress Queen's has made over the past five years in embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into campus life.

The findings from our Audit have informed our draft Action Plan. Your feedback will also inform our Action Plan and to that end, we look forward to receiving your responses in shaping our activity at Queen's for the next five years.

Going forward we hope to build on and sustain an environment that values and celebrates the diversity of our staff and student body.

Conor Curran
Head of Diversity Inclusion and Staff Wellbeing

1. Executive Summary

Established in 1845, Queen's University Belfast is one of the leading universities in the UK and Ireland, respected globally as a centre of teaching excellence and world-class research innovation.

At Queen's University we translate ideas, academic teaching, research, and professional expertise into action, tackling diverse and complex issues faced by individuals, societies at a local, regional, and global level.

We are conscious of the societal inequalities that continue to exist for certain communities and in higher education. Some of these inequalities exist beyond the scope of the University and the higher education system itself.

In fulfilment of the University's statutory equality duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 we have carried out a systematic review and analysis of key inequalities which exist for staff and students.

This will be used to inform institutional actions for the promotion of Section 75 equality and good relations duties and supporting our strategic ambitions.

The University's previous Audit of Inequalities and subsequent Equality Action Plan were developed in 2018. At that time Audit findings highlighted areas of focus on equal pay; academic progression; gender equality; and widening participation for students, along with staff and student wellbeing; international staff and student integration; LGBT+ inclusion; disability equality; policy reviews; and outreach, engagement and public life activities.

These areas were all reflected in our Equality Action Plan 2018-2023.

In this updated Audit of Inequalities in 2023, we have reviewed progress against our Equality Action Plan 2018-2023 to sense-check and assist development of our new Equality Action Plan for 2024-2029.

We have identified the inequalities that continue to impact upon the work of the University, our students, staff, and wider community.

We have also acknowledged that some inequalities were compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, and the impact of a suspended and devolved government in Northern Ireland.

The new Equality Action Plan 2024-2029 maintains the same institutional themes and focus as the previous plan with an emphasis on support for carers, gender equality, improved data and monitoring, support for staff and student wellbeing, and further enabling of staff networks.

Data and research summary tables, broken down by the Section 75 groups include references to the draft actions in the associated draft Equality Action Plan 2024-2029.

The University's new five-year Equality Scheme and Equality Action Plan 2024-2029 will be developed, after a period of consultation with key stakeholders, and will seek to align outputs with the Strategy 2030 and associated workplans (namely the University's People Plan, Athena SWAN Action Plan, Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, Disability Action Plan (2021-2026) and Race Equality Charter).

The previous Equality Scheme and Equality Scheme Action Plan can be found on the Queen's website:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/diversity-and-inclusion/#equality-reporting-954135-1>.

2. Introduction

Audit of Inequalities – Section 75 statutory equality duties

The University is subject to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (“the Act”) which requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions to comply with two statutory duties.

The first duty requires public authorities in carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between the nine equality characteristics:

- religious belief
- political opinion
- racial group
- age
- marital status
- sexual orientation
- men and women generally (gender)
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without

The second duty requires authorities to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different: religious beliefs, political opinion, and racial groups.

The University’s Equality Scheme was approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 23 May 2012 and was revised in 2018. The Equality Scheme contains a commitment to conduct this Audit of Inequalities which should inform the contents of our new Equality Action Plan.

The Equality Commission, in its guide ‘Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities’ defines an Audit of Inequalities as a systematic review and analysis of inequalities which exist for service users and those affected by a public authority’s policies.

The Guide recommends that *‘in order to effectively demonstrate that a public authority has paid due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations through the implementation of the Equality Scheme, a public authority should develop action measures/action plans to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.’*

The Commission also recommends designated public authorities undertake an audit of inequalities on a five yearly basis across all the nine Section 75 categories that are relevant to their functions.

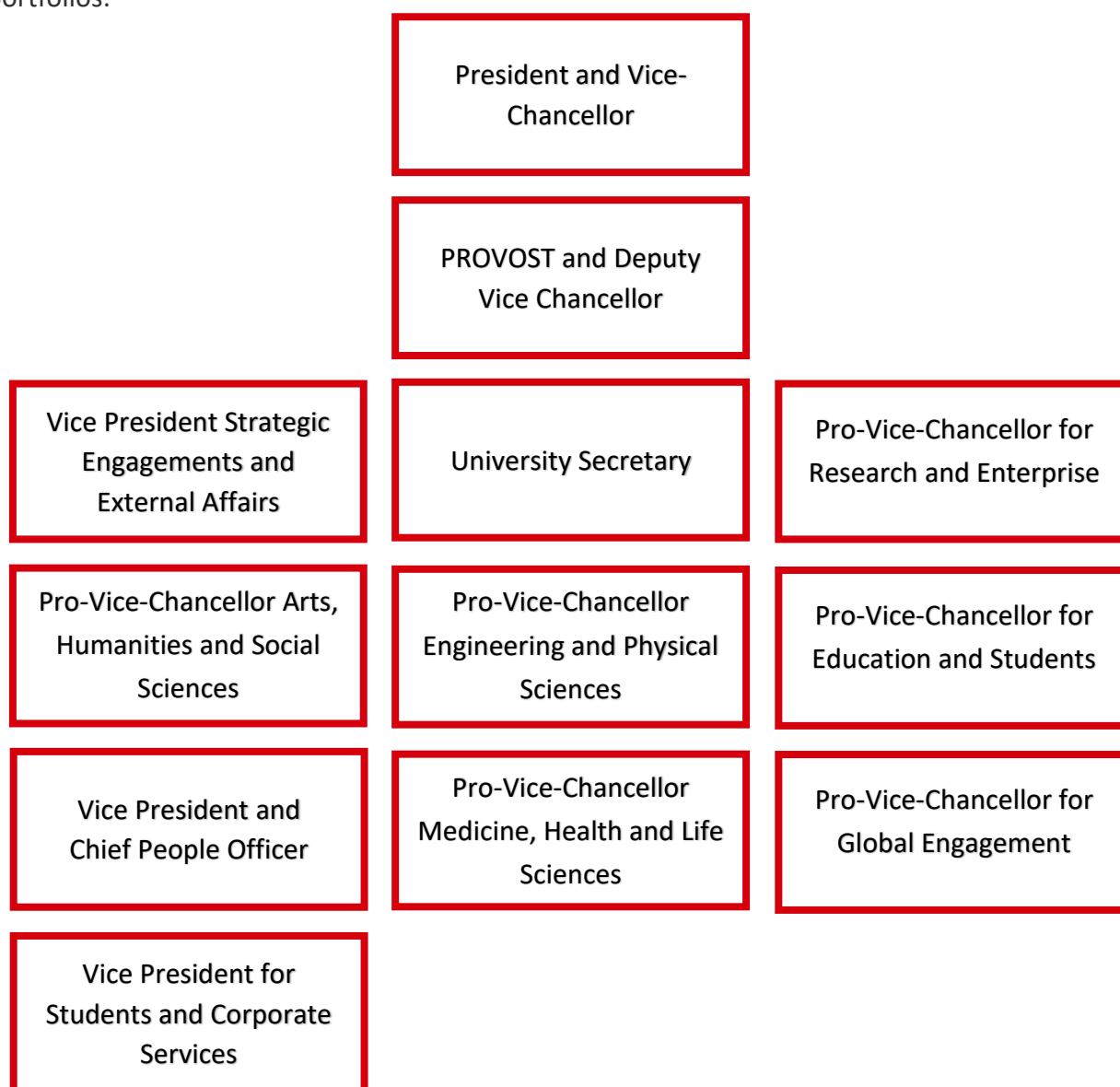
This Audit is intended to produce a more strategic picture of inequalities the University may be able to influence through action measures and timeframes for addressing identified issues.

It does not examine inequalities or potential inequalities on a policy-by-policy basis. These are examined through the University’s equality screening and Equality Impact Assessment processes at the time of policy development or review.

3. Role and Functions of Queen’s University Belfast

Queen’s University Belfast is respected across the globe as a centre of teaching excellence and research innovation. Since 1845, our world-leading researchers, pioneering students and inspirational alumni have made a difference to society in Northern Ireland and across the world. Currently ranked 198 globally¹, with a student-centred ethos, we deliver education and training to over 24,000 students including over 4,000 students from 120 different countries.

The University’s senior leadership structure is comprised of the President and Vice-Chancellor supported by the Vice Presidents and Pro-Vice-Chancellors, each with specific portfolios:



¹ Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2023 [Queen’s University Belfast | World University Rankings | THE \(timeshighereducation.com\)](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/queen-university-belfast)

The University's Professional Services sector is responsible for the delivery of a comprehensive and integrated range of services in support of the University's corporate objectives.

| | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Education and Student Support | Development and Alumni Relations | Estates |
| Finance | People and Culture | Information Services |
| Global Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions | Research | Innovation and Enterprise QUBIS |
| Student and Campus Life | Legal and Governance | Transformation and Strategic Delivery |
| Strategic Communications | Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility | |

There are three faculty groupings, each headed up by a Pro-Vice-Chancellor and there are 15 schools each run by a Head of School, supported by a School Manager.

Faculties

- Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
- Engineering and Physical Sciences
- Medicine, Health and Life Sciences

↓ Schools

- Arts, English and Languages
- Biological Sciences
- Chemistry and Chemical Engineering
- Electronics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences
- History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics
- Law
- Mathematics and Physics
- Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
- Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences
- Natural and Built Environment
- Nursing and Midwifery
- Pharmacy
- Psychology
- Queen's Management School
- Social Sciences, Education and Social Work

Workforce Profile

The University currently employs over 4,500 staff:



Female 54.4%

Male 45.6%



Protestant background 31.92%

Roman Catholic background 37.63%

Non-determined 29.73%



White 84.41%

Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic 9.35%

Not known 6.22%



Disability or long-term condition 9.2%

Dependants and/or caring responsibilities. 47.3%

LGB 3.9%



Aged 0-44 years, 17%. Aged 40-49 years, 30%.

Highest percentage of staff from EU or international nationality by job category are found in Academic and Research roles - 16.1% in Academic roles (30.3% EU and International) and 30.2% of staff in Research roles (40.8% EU and International).

Student Profile

Of over 25,000 students at the University in 2020-2021:



Female 58%

Male 42%



Protestant background 36%

Roman Catholic background 51%

Non-determine 12%



White 95%.

Minority Ethnic 5.1% - Of those: 53% identify as Asian; 12.8% as Black; 28% as Mixed; and 6.6% as 'Other'



Disability or long term condition 15.7%.

No disability or long term condition 84%



Majority of students are 18-20 years old (39.4%), with 33% at 21-24 years old.

94% of students have no dependants.

4. Strategic Focus

Equality has been a guiding principle in the University for more than 100 years.

In 1908, equality was first written into the University's Charter, *"to provide and maintain equality of opportunity to all persons"*.

We are committed to sustaining an environment that values and celebrates the diversity of our staff and student body, with a culture with wellbeing, inclusivity and cultural diversity at the fore.

Strategy 2030

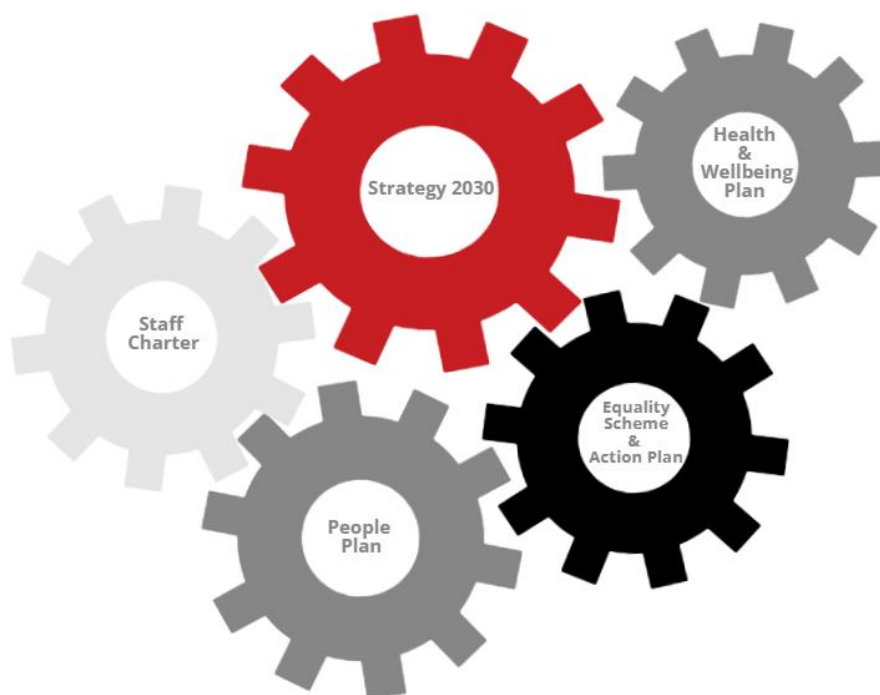
Equality forms a key pillar of **Strategy 2030** which sets out ambition for the next ten years to 'Shape A Better World through life-changing education and research'.

It is also the basis of our **Staff Charter** which puts our people at the centre of what we do and how we do it.

Our core values, Excellence, Connectivity, Ambition, Respect and Integrity support the University's vision, shape our culture and reflect the behaviours espoused at the University.

Our **Equality Scheme and Action Plan** are integral to the realisation of Strategy 2030 and enabling success of all other strategic plans in the University, including our People Plan.

Diversity Inclusion and Wellbeing Unit Interaction with Strategy 2030



Social Charter

Within the University's Corporate Plan, our commitment to making meaningful and positive contributions to society are outlined: our **Social Charter** outlines the significant contribution made by our students and staff and the positive impact we have on our society, at regional, national and global levels.

Sustainable Development Goals

As a global institution, Queen's University has a major role to play in making a positive impact in the environment.

Strategy 2030 sets out how we will embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across all our activities, from research and education to adopting a leadership role in the promotion of the SDGs, and leading by example in areas such as equality, diversity and inclusion, sustainable procurement and a commitment to divestment from fossil fuels.



Athena SWAN



We have a long-established commitment to and sustained record in gender equality.

We currently hold a prestigious Institutional Athena SWAN Silver Award, in addition to 15 School Awards comprising 3 Gold, 6 Silver and 6 Bronze, making Queen's a leader in gender equality in the Higher Education Sector.

We have an established record of developing differentiated and bespoke support programmes to develop women's careers, and of enhancing the visibility of the contribution of women in Queen's.

5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Progress

Since the last Audit of Inequalities and Equality Scheme, the Diversity and Inclusion Unit has grown in terms of resources and now encompasses Staff Wellbeing.

Significant progress has been made across the institution and efforts continued whilst the University navigated the Covid-19 pandemic and adapted to new ways of working and delivering the academic programme for its students and researchers.

For Staff

A new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy was developed in 2020 for the University following a lengthy period of consultation with staff, students and 240 external stakeholders.

The Policy outlines our commitment to creating and sustaining an inclusive environment that values and celebrates the diversity of our staff and student body and further supports the work set out in our:

- 5-year Equality Scheme Action Plan;
- Athena Swan Institutional/School Action plans;
- Research Culture Action Plan;
- Diversity Mark NI Action Plan;
- Stonewall Workplace Equality Index; and
- Disability Action Plan (2021-2026).

We have also made significant progress in the areas of LGBTQ+ and Race Equality, promoting visibility and inclusion in addition to supporting staff on campus through the establishment of PRISM (LGBTQ+) and iRISE (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and International) staff networks.

In relation to in Race Equality, we are continuing to strengthen our progress through utilising the Race Equality Charter framework. This identifies and assists critical reflection on institutional and cultural barriers for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and students, and ensures that the work on racial equity right across the University is focused, relevant and impactful.

Our Race Equity Champions network supports institution-wide connectivity and collaborative approaches to programmes such as our Race Equality conference, planned for September 2023.

We introduced our Carers Passport in 2022 to further support our staff and our carers and disability staff network CONNECT now has over 100 members.

Progress was also made in relation to policy support for staff.

We created enhanced guidance regarding gender on Forms, Transgender and non-binary individual. We also developed and published our Fertility Treatment Leave Policy and support. Our Menopause Policy, Guidance, training and support for all staff and Line

Managers/supervisors has also been well-received. In relation to language diversity, we established a pilot Linguistic Residential Scheme for Irish Language speakers and a new Staff Network has been approved to promote awareness of, and respect for all languages.

For Students

Since our last Equality Scheme, the Student Wellbeing Service has been further resourced to support students referred through the Report and Support system involving Disability, Wellbeing and Assessment, and Support teams.

The Service has built a strong values-based team culture and works towards operational excellence through models of support and a Quality Assurance Framework that enables a lessons learnt approach to cases.

Student Wellbeing teams are also focused on maximising digital infrastructure to track and monitor engagement with students and ensure an outstanding student and staff experience.

The #QUBeWell Healthy Campus Framework priorities are focused initiatives which embed wellbeing in the curriculum, including focus on mental health and suicide awareness. The University strives for a diverse, engaged, and satisfied student body through a full offering of support via a Stepped Care Model.

Joint collaboration with the Students Union has included support for initiatives on Period Poverty; Sexual Health Clinic; Mind Your Mate; and Social prescribing. In addition to pre-emptive Wellbeing initiatives, the Service is also embedding cultural awareness in all support services to students, including initiatives led through International Student Guides.

The University's Widening Participation Strategy has focused on widening participation, raising attainment; contributing to a strong regional skills base; and bridging gaps in retention, progression, and success to ensure that students enjoy the best possible outcomes, at university and as graduates. Whilst Covid-19 impacted on strategy implementation progress was made in our outreach for educational attainment piloted with targeted primary and post primary schools.

The Widening Participation Unit also met ambitious targets for the Pathway Opportunity Programme with a range of new Access programmes. Work during the 2021-2022 period focused on support for care experienced young people, delivery of the Junior Academy and piloting of interventions pre and post GCSE. In relation to support for care experienced young people, the Reading Together Project (aimed at P6 pupils, age 9-10 years) was delivered online. Twenty-nine students across the University were in receipt of a care leaver bursary from a total of eighty-eight students who declared having experience of being in care.

Collaboration and partnerships with sector partners and in the community are key to the work of the Widening Participation Unit, in addition to fundraising under the Bright Futures Collective. The Unit has also developed projects in support of mature and Access students' transition to higher education in Queen's, and a student mentoring programme through

Careers, Employability & Skills whereby employers are invited as mentors and matched to individual students. A Real-World Challenge in Hydebank Prison and a Work Shadowing Programme have also been developed, both with a high proportion of student participants from a widening participation.

Over the last five years the University has engaged with community representatives in the Greater Shankill Children and Young People Zone (The Zone) which has been high in volume and output. Efforts are being made on a greater collective strategic focus and internal cohesion and a Strategic Oversight Group for this purpose. Work is underway to provide a framework for new engaged research; provide a platform to engage within the 'civic university' network and recognise and celebrate the impact of collaborative working.

6. Audit of Inequalities

Methodology

A two-stage approach has been taken to review the Queen's University Equality Scheme and to develop the Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan.

Stage One – we reviewed the University's Equality Scheme to ensure it remains current, compliant with Equality Commission guidance and aligns with Strategy 2030 ambitions.

A draft Equality Scheme 2024-2029 for Queen's University has now been developed and will be publicly consulted upon. It will be submitted to Senate approval prior to submission to the Equality Commission.

Stage Two – we conducted this Audit of Inequalities which involved reviewing progress against the previous Audit and Equality Action Plan and a desktop review of broad research and evidence.

This included revisiting our Equality Diversity and Inclusion statutory reports and a sweep of available research and published findings relating to the experiences of the Section 75 equality groups.

Emerging evidence on the inequalities arising or further compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic was also considered.

Key documents reviewed include (list not exhaustive):

- Strategy 2030
- Disability Action Plan (2021-2026)
- People and Culture Plan 2023 - 2026
- Article 55 Review and affirmative Action Plan
- Previous Section 75 Annual Progress Reports up to 2022
- Staff Pulse Survey stakeholder feedback (January 2022)
- Application for Athena SWAN Gold 2023
- Research and Benchmarking Data
- People and Culture Policies

- Staff Network activities and plans
- Staff Training evaluations
- Health and Wellbeing initiatives and feedback
- Equality and inclusion good practice examples in Great Britain & Northern Ireland
- Other public authorities Audits of Inequalities
- Best practice by other Russell Group Universities
- Relevant Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Codes of Practice, guidance and advice information
- External Reviews

A draft Equality Action Plan 2024-2029 has now been developed with actions the University to address inequalities and to truly succeed in promoting diversity and inclusion. The actions provide the foundation and direction for the University to ensure it achieves success, not just in working towards equality ambitions under Strategy 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, but also for widening participation and sustaining a healthy, productive and engaged student and staff body.

Key findings on inequalities for the Section 75 groups are summarised at pages 15-21.

Appendix 1 expands on the evidence and refers to the corresponding Equality Action Plan actions.

Summary of key findings (from research conducted)

Summary findings for the Section 75 groups are outlined below. Appendix 1 provides further detail and source information.

Religious Belief

- Number of **Catholics now outnumber number of Protestants** in Northern Ireland.
- **Employment rates gap between two predominant communities in Northern Ireland considerably narrowed.**
- Religious discrimination and persisting inequalities matter because of **impact for peace, stability, and plural, inclusive societies.**
- Traditional religious belief/community background **persistent segregation in education, housing and in communities.**
- **Growth in integrated education sector** now underpinned by supporting legislation.
- Political and financial climate in Northern Ireland – **challenges for progressing good relations** and the ongoing delivery of Northern Ireland Executive Together: Building a United Community Strategy.

Political Opinion

- **Sensitivities persist around use of Irish and Ulster Scots.** The Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act 2022 is now law. However, in the absence of a functioning Executive, language Commissioners are not yet appointed.
- **Correlation between political opinion, health inequalities and negative impacts on health outcomes.** Measurement of deprivation indicates most health-deprived constituencies in Northern Ireland are Belfast West, Foyle and Belfast North.
- **'Digital extinction' of Irish in digital life** due to English taking precedence. Gaeilgeoirí are forced out of using Irish in many contexts due to technical difficulties associated with the language and are required to shift to using English instead.

Ethnicity

- **6.53% people in Northern Ireland are minority ethnic** and communities are expanding.
- **Public and political spheres in Northern Ireland fail to reflect** growing diversity.
- People of colour were at **greater risk of financial insecurity, bereavement, job loss and lower access to care** during Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Black and minority ethnic individuals** in Northern Ireland have **less protection under anti-discrimination law** than in Great Britain.
- **Minority ethnic groups and migrant workers subject to prejudicial attitudes in employment.** Migrant workers and refugees face multiple barriers to employment (including recognition of qualifications, language proficiency, uncertainty around right to work, duration of time between seeking and being granted asylum).
- **Irish Traveller community continue to encounter persistent inequalities** in education, healthcare, and housing, with these issues also being experienced by more recently arrived communities.
- **Racially motivated hate crime in Northern Ireland has increased.** There were a higher number of racially motivated crimes reported than sectarian motivated crimes, despite the significantly small proportion of the population from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- People from **Minority Ethnic backgrounds report life in Northern Ireland as feeling more uncertain** and insecure following Brexit.

Age

- Northern Ireland has an **ageing population**. Working age population (aged 16-64) estimated to fall to 59% by 2045, with those aged 65 and above rising to 25% of the population by that time.
- **Queen's University staff profile demonstrates 63% aged over 40**, reflecting broad demography of Northern Ireland.
- **Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated issues for both young and older people in relation to physical and mental health**. Older people with pre-existing health conditions were some of the hardest hit and those who were shielding experienced increased anxiety in comparison with those not shielding.
- **Wages are lower for young people at work. A quarter of young people in the population live in an area of deprivation.**
- **People aged 50-64 can experience age-related inequalities** with this group less likely to be in employment and increased levels of economic inactivity linked to long-term sickness, rising retirement age and provision of informal care.
- **More than one-third of young people in Northern Ireland live in communities defined as rural**. Experiential impact of reduced access to transport and facilities. Many young people in rural communities are also living in hidden poverty.
- There are more than **8000 young carers** in Northern Ireland (average age 12).
- There are **6,000 young people classified as homeless**.
- There are at least **3,100 young people identified as Care Experienced**.
- **Rates of depression amongst students increased** since onset of Covid-19 pandemic.

Marital Status

- 45% of Northern Ireland adult population are married or in a civil partnership. **There is an estimated 113,00 lone parent families with a higher number of lone mothers than lone fathers.**
- **Lone parents are more likely to be living in poverty and experiencing poorer physical and mental health.**
- The February 2023 **change to the increase in the legal age of marriage to 18 in England and Wales has not been applied to Northern Ireland. The changes are to protect vulnerable children from being forced into marriage**. The minimum age for marriage in Northern Ireland remains at 16 and 17 with parental consent.
- **Widowed people or those whose relationship has broken down in later life more likely to experience adverse physical and mental health, addiction issues and are more likely to become homeless.**

Sexual Orientation

- **Increase in homophobic and transphobic hate crimes in Northern Ireland.**
- For the LGBTQ+ community there are **higher levels of discrimination and conflicts, lower levels of psychological safety, fear, and under-representation of trans and non-binary people in the workplace.**
- Young LGBT+ people experience **increased levels of suicide contemplation.**
- In the UK, there has been an **increase in the voicing of the gender critical viewpoint and anti-trans rhetoric/debate** and significant discussion and press regarding transgender people and ability to access services.
- The LGBTQ+ community experiences **increased poor mental health, depression and anxiety disorders, exacerbated by the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic**, including barriers to accessing healthcare.

Gender

- **Some women may not achieve full economic independence or salary parity** which can affect retirement income.
- **Women's employment rate in Northern Ireland consistently lower than for males.** Women experience a lower employment rate and a higher economic inactivity rate when they have dependants.
- **Cost and availability of childcare impact on families**, with Northern Ireland one of the most expensive regions for childcare in the UK. Women disproportionately affected.
- **Number of domestic abuse crimes in Northern Ireland rose to 22,343 from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.** PSNI indicate a response every 16 minutes to reported incidents. During Covid-19 lockdown, 17 women were killed in Northern Ireland by someone close to them.
- **Women twice as dependent on social security as men.** Welfare reform and austerity agenda disproportionately impacting on women.
- **Disproportionate share of caregiving by women** and more likely to experience interruption to work through having to provide unpaid care.
- **Lone parents with dependants experience a lower employment and higher economic inactivity rate**, with women constituting most lone parents.
- **Cultural issues in University sector around response to sexual violence and harassment.** Compounded by power-based relationships, people of influence and prevalence of non-permanent contracts making staff hesitant to report unwelcome behaviours.

- **Educational underachievement of Protestant boys in areas of deprivation in Northern Ireland.** More boys leave school with no GCSEs or equivalent qualifications than girls. Higher number of pupils entitled to Free School Meals left without any GCSEs compared to school leavers who were not entitled to Free School Meals.
- **Increase in the voicing of the gender critical viewpoint and anti-trans rhetoric/debate** and significant discussion and press regarding transgender people and ability to access services.
- **Lower level of pay protection for women and gender pay gap reporting and strategy action plan not in force in Northern Ireland.**
- Women in **most deprived areas** has a **lower life expectancy and higher prevalence of chronic diseases.**
- The Republic of Ireland has introduced a national policy on Men's Health. There is **no national strategy or policy on Men's Health in Northern Ireland**
- As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic a **greater percentage of older men (aged 50+) reported moderate to high levels of social isolation. Older men without partners report higher levels of loneliness and isolation** than women without partners.
- **Impact of Brexit on women's rights and gaps in equality law for women in Northern Ireland. Issues on protections of equality legislation and progression of CEDAW** (UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women)
- **Women are less likely to participate in sport** which can impact on health outcomes, particularly in later life.
- **BAME women have a higher mortality rate.** Women from Black or minority ethnic backgrounds have **greater difficulty accessing healthcare services.**
- The **elimination of traditional roles as a result of automation through Artificial Intelligence practices adversely impacts on women's economic empowerment.**

Dependants

- **Lone parents face financial difficulties** when returning to work, study or training. This is compounded for those living in poverty and those in rural communities.
- **Lone parents with dependents (particularly women) experience barriers to their participation and a lower employment rate,** or more likely work part-time basis, in roles typically associated with the minimum wage and on atypical contracts

- **Accessible and affordable childcare is a key barrier to employment for parents. Government funded childcare is lower in Northern Ireland than rest of UK.** Extension of free childcare provision in England to cover one and two-year-olds also not reflected in Northern Ireland.
- **Unpaid carers in Northern Ireland experience longevity of caring obligations** and have increased mental and physical health impacts, exacerbated by Covid-19 pandemic.
- **High number of unpaid carers in Northern Ireland** with over 220,000 people providing unpaid care to a relative or friend with a health condition or illness. One in 25 provide 50 or more hours of unpaid care.
- There is **increased challenge for carers in balancing work with caring responsibilities** and this has further been compounded by the cost-of-living crisis.

Disability

- **In Northern Ireland 34.7% of the population has a long-term health problem or disability.**
- **Disabled people are more likely to experience social isolation and loneliness** and rely on informal and family care.
- **In employment, disabled people are more likely to work part-time, be in lower-skilled jobs and earn less money.**
- **Covid-19 exacerbated existing inequalities and presented significant challenges for disabled people** in terms of education, health and social care and domestic support systems.
- **At Queen's University 9.2% of staff have disclosed a disability or long-term condition.**
- **Northern Ireland has the lowest rate of employment for disabled people in the UK**, with disabled people more likely to have no qualifications, to be unemployed and to be economically inactive.
- **A significant majority of adults report experiencing a mental health problem in their lifetime** – with women, young adults aged 18-34 and people living alone more likely to have experienced mental health difficulties.
- **Legal protections which exist elsewhere in the UK for disabled people and their family members do not exist in Northern Ireland.** Principal protections for disabled people in employment are found within the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) as amended.

- **Limited measures have been taken in Northern Ireland to give effect to the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.** Uneven implementation of the Convention across all policy areas and levels in the UK.

Other considerations for Section 75 groups

- **Impact of Brexit on the divergence of rights and best practice on the island of Ireland.** The risk exists that gaps in legal protections will widen and people in Northern Ireland will continue to have fewer equality and human rights protections than elsewhere.
- There is a **persistent skills gap in Northern Ireland** compared to the rest of the UK. The region is the **poorest performing in terms of economy and productivity in the UK. Increasing productivity is key to improving Northern Ireland's prosperity.**
- The **geographic peripherality of Northern Ireland and a lower level of investment in research and development** and also the **attainment gap and 'brain drain'** contributes to poor productivity performance.

7. Draft Equality Action Plan

The draft Equality Action Plan 2024-2029 considers the known societal inequalities and which impact directly on the University's staff and students.

The draft Plan is further informed by the evidence in this Audit of Inequalities and actions over the next five years will be focused on delivering better outcomes for everyone associated with the institution now and in the future.

Once finalised, the University's Equality Action Plan will be responsive and adaptable to changing needs and circumstances in the context of the unique operating environment in Northern Ireland.

It is evident that support for a health and wellbeing culture for staff and students is essential to sustaining the University's success and ability to thrive. The Equality Action Plan will be complemented by the University's Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and strategic Student Wellbeing Support plans.

The Equality Action Plan will include numbered high-level actions across four core groupings:

- Institutional Analysis and Reporting
- Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities
- Policy, Process and Practices
- Learning and Development

Review of Equality Action Plan

The Audit of Inequalities will be revisited annually, or more frequently where key inequalities research becomes available or stakeholder engagement highlights areas requiring attention.

The University's Equality Action Plan will be a 'live' document and will be reviewed annually to ensure actions are strategically aligned, up to date, relevant and realistic in terms of impact. The Equality Action Plan can be found on the University's website at <https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/diversity-and-inclusion/>.

8. Conclusion

This Audit of Inequalities references a range of key inequalities across the Section 75 groups but is not an exhaustive list.

In addition to quantitative and qualitative information and data available within the University, external evidence by way of research published by advocacy and lobby groups, academics, charities and third sector bodies, and other sources continues to emerge.

The Diversity Inclusion and Staff Wellbeing Unit will continue to monitor in this regard and collaborate with internal and external stakeholders in keeping abreast of developments.

This Audit of Inequalities supports Queen's University in identifying what action it needs to take over the next 5 years. The Equality Action Plan outlines the action measures and timeframes to address identified inequalities.

Both the Audit of Inequalities and associated Equality Action Plan will be kept under review in the context of the University's strategic commitments and updated as appropriate to reflect experiential evidence or anticipated issues for Section 75 groups.

Appendix 1 Data/Research by Section 75 Group

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Religious Belief | <p>Community Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protestants no longer the majority community in Northern Ireland Employment rates gap between two communities narrowed | <p>In the Northern Ireland 2021 census Catholics outnumber Protestants in Northern Ireland for the first time since partition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The main religions were: Catholic (42.3%); Presbyterian (16.6%); Church of Ireland (11.5%); Methodist (2.3%); Other Christian denominations (6.9%); and Other religions (1.3%).</i> 17.4% of our population had ‘No religion’ –a marked increase on 2011 when 10.1% had ‘No religion’. Indicating increased secularisation of the Northern Ireland population. Proportion of the population in Census 2021 with ‘No religion’ ranges from 30.6% in Ards & North Down council to 7.8% in Mid Ulster council. All councils are more secular in 2021 than they were ten years ago. Combining current religion and religion of upbringing indicates 45.7% of the population as ‘Catholic’, 43.5% as ‘Protestant, Other Christian or Christian related’ and 1.5% from other non-Christian religions. The remaining 9.3% of the population neither belonged to nor were brought up in any religion. This group has increased in size from 2011 when 5.6% or 101,200 people were recorded as such. <p>The Labour Force Survey (2022) does not have the same data as provided previously in 2017 which estimated that 70% of working age Protestants in Northern Ireland were in employment, compared to 67% of working age Roman Catholics. The employment rates gap between the two communities has narrowed considerably since the early 1990’s.</p> | <p>Northern Ireland Census 2021 Main statistics for Northern Ireland Statistical bulletin 22 September 2022</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 1, 3, 4, 5, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Religious Belief | <p>Religious inequalities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures for addressing religious inequalities are absent in methods that assess human development progress, including the 17 SDGs <p>Segregation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional segregation in education, housing and communities Growth of integrated education sector Impact on faith-based schools and parental choice | <p>Religion can influence gender inequality not only by promoting patriarchal attitudes, values, and practices but also through hindering policies aimed to promote gender equality. ‘Religious inequalities’ refers to the way in which individuals and groups suffer from systemic marginalisation, exclusion and, in extreme cases, genocide on account of their religious beliefs and affiliation.</p> <p>Religious discrimination and persisting inequalities matter because of their human cost and, more broadly, implications for peace, stability, and plural, inclusive societies.</p> <p>In Northern Ireland the school’s system has traditionally been segregated on religious grounds, along with segregated housing and communities. The Integrated Education movement has grown over the last 40 years and the number of children attending an Integrated school has doubled since 1998, with Integrated School created by parents, rather than government, either by setting up a new school or by parents voting in favour of their child’s school becoming Integrated through the process called ‘Transformation’.</p> <p>The Integrated Education Act became operational in October 2022. The Department of Education in Northern Ireland is required to publish and maintain an Integrated Education Strategy by April 2023 (25 years since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement which held a commitment to ‘encourage and facilitate’ Integrated Education).</p> <p>The new Act will require the Department of Education to “support” as well as “encourage and facilitate” Integrated Education. Concerns remain on the impact on faith-based schools and misperceptions around inclusivity within the sector.</p> | <p>Freedom of religion or belief and religious inequalities: how is evidence collected? Institute of Development Studies January 2021</p> <p>A Strategy for Integrated Education in Northern Ireland Department of Education April 2023</p> <p>Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Education Official Report (Hansard) Integrated Education Bill 10 November 2021</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 1, 3, 4, 5, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Religious Belief | <p>Good relations in Northern Ireland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progression of T:BUC strategy in current political and financial climate | <p>Equality, social attitudes and good relations are inextricably linked and must be central to all public policy decisions. The Northern Ireland Executive’s ‘Together: Building a United Community’ (T:BUC) is aimed at improving community relations and continued Northern Ireland’s journey towards a more united and shared society and achieve change against the following key priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • our children and young people • our shared community • our safe community • our cultural expression • Each of the four key priorities also has a set of tangible and practical commitments. <p>ECNI’s response to T:BUC highlights the need for the Executive to address areas in relation to defining good relations; measurements and outcomes; and ensuring compliance.</p> <p>The religious belief profile of staff and students at Queen’s University:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For staff, the religious belief is broadly equal with 38% disclosing as Roman Catholic, 32% of staff identifying as Protestant and 30% identifying as Non-Determined. • Including all religious beliefs, 33.6% identify as Christian, followed by Muslim (1.7%), Hindu (1.4%), Buddhist (0.4%), Jewish (0.2%) and Sikh (0.1%). • For students In 2020-2021, 11.9% identified as having no religion, 35.6% identified as Protestant and 51.2% as Roman Catholic and 1.3% as Other. • Including all religious beliefs, 86.7% identified as Christian, 0.5% as Muslim, 0.3% Hindu, 0.3% Buddhist, a nominal amount identified as Sikh and 0.2% as Other religion. | <p>Together: Building a United Community The Executive Office 2013</p> <p>Religion and Politics The Equality Commission’s work in the area of religious or similar philosophical belief and political opinion Equality Commission for Northern Ireland</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 1, 3, 4, 5, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42</p> |

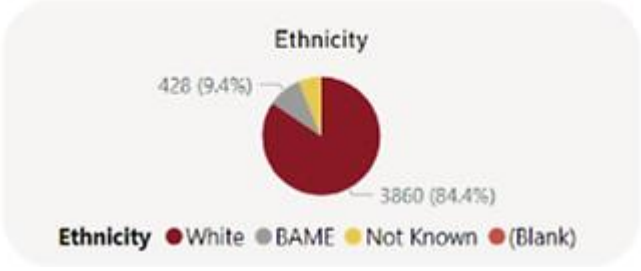
| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|-------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Political Opinion | <p>Maintaining a Shared Working Environment Ireland</p> <p>Identity and Culture in Northern Ireland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language diversity | <p>Employers are responsible for providing and promoting a good and harmonious working environment. 2009 ECNI guidance for employers on Promoting a Good & Harmonious Working Environment remains in force and has not been updated.</p> <p>The Commission on Flags Identity Culture and Tradition scoped the issues relating to flags, identity, culture, and tradition in Northern Ireland and produced a report and recommendations on way forward. The report explored the environment in which cultural identity is learned and expressed and examined issues in education, the media, in sport and in the use of language and broader issues of cultural heritage.</p> <p>The Commission made specific recommendations for leadership positive impact within media, arts and heritage, sport, and community development, advanced through legislation within the education system and departmental and local government’s policy developments. Recommendations were primarily aimed at the Northern Ireland Executive, as well as offices, departments, arm’s length bodies and community stakeholders vested in the issues.</p> <p>Cultural rights are realised within the Human Rights framework. The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) recommends that language is embedded within the General Principles in Clause 78A, enabling the right to identity and cultural expression and that, in upholding the right to identity and cultural expression, that other smaller minority communities are included.</p> | <p>Promoting a Good & Harmonious Working Environment ECNI 2009</p> <p>Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition Final Report December 2021</p> <p>Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission Office for Identity and Cultural Expression Provisions of the Draft Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Amendment No 1) May 2020</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 1, 3, 4, 5, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42</p> |

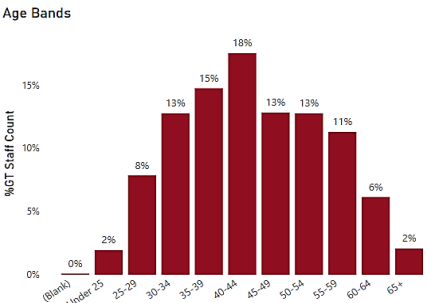
| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|-------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Political Opinion | <p>Identity and Culture in Northern Ireland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language diversity • Digital gaps for Irish language • Technology forcing use of English <p>Correlation with health inequalities</p> | <p>The need for further language legislation in Northern Ireland has been raised by the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities; and the Committee of Experts on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.</p> <p>The UK and Irish Government’s New Decade, New Approach document contained areas which superseded some of the Commission’s work. Legal language protection of Irish and Ulster-Scots is a sensitive issue. The Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act 2022 became law after the bill received Royal Assent in December 2022, giving the Irish language official recognition. In the absence of a Northern Ireland Executive, responsibility for implementing the legislation remains with the Secretary of State and the Northern Ireland Office. Introduction of an Irish Language Commissioner and Ulster Scots Commissioner has stalled because of the absence of an Executive minister to authorise the appointments.</p> <p>‘Digital extinction’ is when a language becomes less relevant in daily digital life and subsequently becomes less spoken offline. English takes precedence in online technologies. In the Irish language context, all Irish speakers also speak English, Gaeilgeoirí are forced out of using Irish in many contexts due to technical difficulties that come with it and shift to English instead.</p> <p>Measures of spatial distribution of deprivation are used in Northern Ireland to target resources to the most deprived areas. There is a correlation between political opinion, health inequalities and negative impacts on health outcomes as indicated by the measurement of health deprivation for the population. The most health-deprived constituencies are Belfast West, Foyle and Belfast North.</p> | <p>New Decade New Approach Deal UK Government and Irish Government January 2020</p> <p>Siri can’t speak Irish: Tackling the digital gaps for the Irish Language The Journal 31 March 2022</p> <p>Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures 2017</p> <p>HSC Audit of inequalities and Equality Action Plans (hscni.net)</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 1, 3, 4, 5, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| Ethnicity | <p>Population in Northern Ireland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minority ethnic over 6% of Northern Ireland population <p>Impact of Covid-19 pandemic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher death rates due to Covid-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to culturally sensitive mental health and wellbeing interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethnic minority representation in public life | <p>In the Northern Ireland 2021 Census, minority ethnic people comprised 6.53% (124,283) of the total population. People born in other EU countries comprised 3.54% (67,451) and non-EU countries 2.99% (56,832). The largest ethnic group in Belfast included people who identified as White (92.9%), followed by Chinese (1.37%), Indian (1.26%), people of mixed ethnicity (1.2%), and Black African (1.19%).</p> <p>People of Polish nationality are counted within the White ethnic group (1.29%). Northern Ireland also has a small population of asylum seekers and refugees from various ethnic groups and nationalities.</p> <p>Evidence of inequalities for ethnic groups during waves of Covid-19 pandemic, with rates of death highest amongst the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities.</p> <p>The 2021 report by Business in the Community found that people of colour were at greater risk of financial insecurity, bereavement, job loss and lower access to care during the Covid-19 pandemic, which are all risks for mental health conditions.</p> <p>Culturally sensitive counselling services to overcome a range of barriers faced by the expanding ethnic minority communities living in Northern Ireland should be considered to significantly influence BAME mental health access, interventions, and wellbeing in NI.</p> <p>The public and political spheres have so far largely failed to reflect the growing diversity of Northern Ireland, with very few and in some cases no people from ethnic minorities represented in local government or by parties at the Assembly. The first black councillor was elected in Northern Ireland local elections.</p> | <p>Northern Ireland Census 2021 Ethnicity Tables NISRA</p> <p>Inequalities Experienced by Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Traveller people residing in Belfast (belfastcity.gov.uk)</p> <p>Business in the Community Annual Report 2021-22</p> <p>CANS: Hearing our Needs. Exploring the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities across Northern Ireland: 2020.</p> <p>The experiences of minority ethnic and migrant people in Northern Ireland Second House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee Report of Session 2021–22</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 3, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34, 39</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|----------------|--|---|---|---|
| Ethnicity | <p>Experience of BAME community in Belfast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide range of challenges • Insufficient understanding of experiences across Northern Ireland • Housing issues and overcrowding | <p>Over past 20 years, Belfast has experienced an increase in Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities making Belfast their home. Minority ethnic residents have made significant and lasting contributions to the city. Many still face challenges of racism, isolation and poverty. These have impacted on how they can participate in political, social, and economic life.</p> <p>There are a wide range of challenges identified for both minority ethnic and migrant individuals in gaining employment, accessing suitable housing, healthcare, education, leisure, political participation, access to justice, safety, economic inclusion, receiving language support, and cultural integration. Not all these issues are shared, and it is necessary to understand how different groups are affected by these, as well as how they are highly successful in other areas.</p> <p>Across Northern Ireland, there has been an insufficient understanding of the experiences of minority ethnic and migrant populations. Often these populations are side-lined in policymaking due to a focus on the comparative experiences of White British and Irish populations or considered only in respect of specific policy areas.</p> <p>Housing quality and overcrowding are the most significant issues facing migrant and minority ethnic residents of Belfast. House ownership can be difficult due to low-income, insecure occupations, cost of living and availability of credit. Discrimination in the rental market is also driving people into precarious living situations, with a growing risk of migrant and refugee destitution in the city. There continues to be a substantial level of racist and xenophobic hate crime in the city, used strategically in some areas to deter migrants and minority ethnic residents from choosing to live there.</p> | <p>Inequalities Experienced by Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Traveller people residing in Belfast (belfastcity.gov.uk)</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 3, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34, 39</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42</p> |

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|----------------|--|---|---------------------|--|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------|-------|-------|------|-----|-----|-----|---|---|
| Ethnicity | <p>Crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevalence of racially motivated hate crime <p>Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prejudicial attitudes and barriers to employment • Persistent inequalities for Irish Traveller community | <p>Black and minority Ethnic Individuals in Northern Ireland have less protection under anti-discrimination legislation law than their counterparts in Great Britain.</p> <p>PSNI Statistics show that racially motivated hate crime in Northern Ireland increased year on year to September 2021 (although remained lower than 2014/15 peak). At that time there were a higher number of racially motivated crimes reported than sectarian (41% vs 38% of all hate-motivated crimes)—a statistic more significant when considered in relation to the small proportion of the population from minority ethnic backgrounds. There has been a decrease in Racist Hate crimes recorded in 2022-2023 in comparison to 2021 -2022. However, despite the decrease, racism and prejudicial attitudes prevail.</p> <p>Table 1 Overall summary of hate motivated incidents and crimes</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="689 837 1323 930"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Incidents Apr'21-Mar'22</th> <th>Incidents Apr'22-Mar'23</th> <th>Incidents Change</th> <th>Crimes Apr'21-Mar'22</th> <th>Crimes Apr'22-Mar'23</th> <th>Crimes Change</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Racist</td> <td>1,335</td> <td>1,221</td> <td>-114</td> <td>933</td> <td>880</td> <td>-53</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>People from minority ethnic groups and migrant workers are subject to prejudice and discrimination in employment. Prejudicial attitudes have been expressed toward Irish Travellers, migrant workers and minority ethnic groups. Racial prejudice and discrimination can impact on the ability of minority ethnic groups and migrant workers to participate in employment, sustain employment and progress in employment. Racial prejudice has been identified in accessing employment and in experiences of racial harassment and intimidation in workplaces.</p> <p>The Irish Traveller community continue to encounter many persistent inequalities in areas such as education, healthcare and housing, issues that are also experienced by other, more recently arrived communities.</p> | | Incidents Apr'21-Mar'22 | Incidents Apr'22-Mar'23 | Incidents Change | Crimes Apr'21-Mar'22 | Crimes Apr'22-Mar'23 | Crimes Change | Racist | 1,335 | 1,221 | -114 | 933 | 880 | -53 | <p>Submission to the Inquiry by the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee into the experiences of minority ethnic and migrant people in Northern Ireland June 2021</p> <p>Hate Motivation Statistics PSNI</p> <p>ECNI - Key Inequalities in Employment in Northern Ireland - Research and statement (equalityni.org)</p> <p>The experiences of minority ethnic and migrant people in Northern Ireland Second House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee Report of Session 2021–22</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 3, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34, 39</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42</p> |
| | Incidents Apr'21-Mar'22 | Incidents Apr'22-Mar'23 | Incidents Change | Crimes Apr'21-Mar'22 | Crimes Apr'22-Mar'23 | Crimes Change | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Racist | 1,335 | 1,221 | -114 | 933 | 880 | -53 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|--------------------|--|------------|-------|------|-------|------|-----|------|-----------|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---|
| Ethnicity | <p>Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Right to Work’ barriers • Impact of Brexit | <p>Migrant workers and Refugees face multiple barriers to employment. Recognition of qualifications, inadequate language proficiency. Uncertainty about an employee’s ‘right to work’ may create perceived legislative barriers for foreign nationals accessing and sustaining employment in Northern Ireland. Long periods between seeking and being granted asylum represents a long time out of employment which can de-skill refugees.</p> <p>For people from minority and ethnic backgrounds, ECNI report that life in NI feels more difficult following Brexit and that minority and ethnic people faced particularly additional barriers due to Brexit that made their situations more challenging, their rights and entitlements more complicated and resulted in feelings of uncertainty and insecurity.</p> <p>QUB Staff Ethnicity Profile: 9.4% of staff are from a minority ethnic background, which is higher than the ethnicity representation in the Northern Ireland population (6.53%). This is due to the number of international academic staff working at the University.</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>QUB Staff Ethnicity Profile</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Ethnicity</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>White</td> <td>3860</td> <td>84.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BAME</td> <td>426</td> <td>9.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not Known</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(Blank)</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Ethnicity | Count | Percentage | White | 3860 | 84.4% | BAME | 426 | 9.4% | Not Known | - | - | (Blank) | - | - | <p>The experiences of minority ethnic and migrant people in Northern Ireland Second House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee Report of Session 2021–22</p> <p>Impact of Brexit on Minority Ethnic and Migrant People in Northern Ireland</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 3, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34, 39</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42</p> |
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| White | 3860 | 84.4% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Not Known | - | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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|----------------|---|--|--------------------|--|---------|----|----------|----|-------|----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|----|-----|----|---|--|
| Age | <p>Ageing population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age-related inequalities in employment • Increase in economic inactivity link with long-term sickness • 50-64 years age group linked with provision of informal care for dependants | <p>Northern Ireland has an ageing population with life expectancy for males and females growing steadily since 1980-82. The latest Northern Ireland Statistical and Research Agency (NISRA) population estimates expect 2027 to be first year that the number of people aged over 65 exceeds the number of children in Northern Ireland. This will have an impact on the relative size of the working age population.</p> <p>In 2020, 62% of Northern Ireland’s population was of working age (aged 16-64), it is estimated that this will have fallen to 59% by 2045. Also, by 2045, those aged 65 and above will have increased as a proportion of the local population, from 17% to 25% of Northern Ireland’s population.</p> <p>Older people aged 50-64 years can experience age-related inequalities in employment, with this age group less likely to be in employment and more likely to be economically inactive than those aged 25-49 years old. Increases in economic inactivity in this age group may be linked to long-term sickness and the provision of informal care, such as for children as well as older and or disabled relatives.</p> <p>Queen’s University workforce profile (see left) demonstrates that 63% of the workforce is over 40 years old. The staff age profile reflects the broad trends of age demography in Northern Ireland.</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Age Bands Staff Profile</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Band</th> <th>%GT Staff Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>(blank)</td><td>0%</td></tr> <tr><td>Under 25</td><td>2%</td></tr> <tr><td>25-29</td><td>8%</td></tr> <tr><td>30-34</td><td>13%</td></tr> <tr><td>35-39</td><td>15%</td></tr> <tr><td>40-44</td><td>18%</td></tr> <tr><td>45-49</td><td>13%</td></tr> <tr><td>50-54</td><td>13%</td></tr> <tr><td>55-59</td><td>11%</td></tr> <tr><td>60-64</td><td>6%</td></tr> <tr><td>65+</td><td>2%</td></tr> </tbody> </table> | Age Band | %GT Staff Count | (blank) | 0% | Under 25 | 2% | 25-29 | 8% | 30-34 | 13% | 35-39 | 15% | 40-44 | 18% | 45-49 | 13% | 50-54 | 13% | 55-59 | 11% | 60-64 | 6% | 65+ | 2% | <p>NISRA Statistical Bulletin 12 January 2022</p> <p>IFS Report R194 Living Standards, Poverty and Inequality in the UK:2021 Institute for Fiscal Studies</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 3, 4, 5, 6</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 19</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42</p> |
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| (blank) | 0% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Under 25 | 2% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25-29 | 8% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 30-34 | 13% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 35-39 | 15% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 40-44 | 18% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 45-49 | 13% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 50-54 | 13% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 55-59 | 11% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 60-64 | 6% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 65+ | 2% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|----------------|---|---|--|--|
| Age | <p>Rural Inequalities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people impacted by limited access to transport/ facilities • Disproportionate impact for social and digital connectivity • Higher cost of living <p>Impact of Covid-19 pandemic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exacerbation of physical and mental health issues | <p>More than a third (36%) of Northern Ireland’s population live in a rural area, with more than one third of young people living in these communities. In Newry, Mourne and Down more than half of all young people, in Mid-Ulster almost two-thirds of young people and in Fermanagh and Omagh almost three-quarters of young people live in rural areas. Young people living in rural communities are impacted by access to transport and they usually have limited access to facilities such as cinemas, gyms, music venues than those living in urban areas. Many young people in rural communities are also living in hidden poverty.</p> <p>Despite similarities in aspects of urban and rural life, challenges tend to be more pronounced in rural areas outside of Belfast. Access to services, and issues with social and digital connectivity tend to have a disproportionate impact on rural dwellers. The cost of living also tends to be higher in rural areas, with households more likely to experience fuel poverty. However, those living in rural areas on average enjoy a better self-reported quality of life than their urban counterparts, in terms of health, happiness and life satisfaction.</p> <p>The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on inequalities and has exacerbated issues relating to physical and mental health for many people. Not only have children and young people been impacted at the time of the pandemic, but potentially could feel the negative impact throughout their lifetime if the response and recovery from the pandemic exacerbates inequalities for these groups.</p> <p>Older people with pre-existing health conditions were some of the most severely impacted by the pandemic and those who were shielding were about half as likely again to be feeling more anxious since lockdown than those who were not.</p> | <p>ECNI - Key Inequalities in Employment in Northern Ireland - Research and statement (equalityni.org)</p> <p>Regional Assessment of Need 2023 Education Authority Youth Service</p> <p>Key Rural Issues, Northern Ireland 2022 Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs</p> <p>The continuing impact of Covid-19 on health and inequalities. The Health Foundation 24 August 2022</p> <p>The Mental Health Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Northern Ireland. A Rapid Review Department of Health July 2020</p> | <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 25, 27</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|----------------|--|--|--|---|
| Age | <p>Impact of Covid-19 pandemic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student mental health <p>Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wage disparity for young people | <p>Rates of depression amongst students increased since onset of Covid-19 pandemic. A University of Ulster/Letterkenny Institute of Technology joint study involved more than 1800 students who started courses in 2019 and where data around students’ mental health before the pandemic had already been collected. Academic research suggests that many students begin university or college with pre-existing mental health problems.</p> <p>Social distancing measures and the closure of social venues also significantly reduced opportunities for socialisation. Students with mental health problems were more likely to say that they experienced either very severe or severe stress.</p> <p>Wages are lower for young people at work. For those available to work, unemployment is higher. This is a persistent inequality in respect of 16–24-year-olds who want and are available to work, they find it harder to get a job.</p> <p>Wages reflect the wider picture in the labour market for the overall population, the trend starts at a young age and becomes embedded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 16–24-year-olds males account for 65% of full-time employees and hourly earnings are 2% higher; and • Females make up 61% of part-time employees, but hourly earnings are 1% lower than male counterparts. | <p>Depression, Anxiety and Suicidal Behaviour Among College Students: Comparisons Pre-Covid-19 and During the Pandemic University of Ulster, Letterkenny Institute of Technology, Western Health and Social Care Trust</p> <p>Employee Earnings in Northern Ireland 2022 NISRA</p> | <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 32, 35, 26, 37, 38, 39</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|----------------|--|--|--|---|
| Age | <p>Inequalities Profile (young people)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deprivation • Mental health need • LGBTQ • Young carers • Homelessness • NEET • Care Experienced • Free School Meals • SEN or Disability • Newcomers/ Traveller/ Roma | <p>In considering young people in Northern Ireland and prospective students from Northern Ireland - key data collated by the Education Authority for the period 2020-2023 indicates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 156,992 young people (25.2%) live in an area of deprivation. • 214,930 young people (34.5%) live in a rural community. • One in five young people have a mental health need (124,597). • 11,485 young people identify as LGBTQ (aged 14-25). • More than 8000 young carers (average age 12). • 6000 young people classified as homeless. • 20,000 young people aged 16-24 Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). • At least 3,100 Care Experienced. • 97,144 (29.2%) of all pupils eligible for Free School Meals. • 77,965 (23%) of all pupils with a Special Educational Need or a Disability. • 15,290 Newcomers attending schools. • 1,027 Traveller children and young people attend schools. • 660 Roma children and young people attend schools. <p>Prince’s Trust research in 2022 revealed that almost half of young people in the UK feel anxious about their future on a daily basis. 51% feel their aspirations for the future are lower due to global events since 2020 and 33% no longer think they will achieve their career goals; 36% think their job prospects will never recover from Covid.</p> | <p>Regional Assessment of Need 2023 Education Authority Youth Service</p> <p>Class of Covid Report 2022 (UK 16-25 year olds) Prince’s Trust Report</p> | <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 32, 35, 26, 37, 38, 39</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|----------------|---|--|--|--|
| Marital status | <p>Lone Parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher number of lone mothers than lone fathers • Financial and health impact <p>Legal age of marriage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase to 18 applicable in England and Wales not implemented in Northern Ireland <p>Death of spouse/ relationship breakdown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health impacts | <p>The 2021 Census shows that around 45.77% of the Northern Ireland population were married or in a civil partnership and 38.07% were single. In 2020 the estimated number of lone parent families in Northern Ireland was 113,000, with 93,000 being lone mothers and 20,000 being lone fathers.</p> <p>Lone parents are more likely to be living in poverty and experiencing poorer physical and mental health.</p> <p>In Northern Ireland there are fewer than 100 marriages each year where at least one participant is aged under 18. In 2019, there were 80 marriages where one or both involved were under 18, up from 60 in 2018, and there were 61 in 2017, 43 in 2016 and 79 in 2015.</p> <p>In February 2023 the legal age of marriage in England and Wales increased to 18. Previously people could get married at 16 or 17 with parental consent and there was no law against ceremonies for younger children not registered with local councils. The new legislation also covers non-legally binding ceremonies, and the changes protect vulnerable children from being forced into marriage. The changes do not apply in Scotland and Northern Ireland where the minimum age for marriage remains at 16. Parental consent is required in Northern Ireland for those under 18 but not in Scotland. Consultation was launched in Northern Ireland in November 2021 around plans to increase the minimum age to 18 but this has not been brought forward due to suspension of the devolved government.</p> <p>People who are widowed or experiencing relationship breakdown in later life more likely to identify with physical and mental health problems, alcohol abuse, gambling problems, more likely to become homeless</p> | <p>Northern Ireland Census 2021 Marital and Civil Partnership Statistics</p> <p>Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2022). Poverty in Northern Ireland 2022</p> <p>Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People Advice on Public Consultation on Marriage Law</p> <p>Mental Health in Later Life Mental Health Foundation August 2021</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 3, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|----------------|--|--|---|--|
| Marital status | <p>Legal status of marriage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative change to convert civil partnerships/ marriages | <p>The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) (NI) Regulations 2019 came into force on 13 January 2020. From 7 December 2020, the Marriage and Civil Partnership (NI)(No2) Regulations 2020 allowed a same sex couple to convert a previous civil partnership to a marriage. The Regulations also permitted opposite sex couples to convert a previous marriage to a civil partnership.</p> | <p>Registrar General Annual Report 2021 NISRA</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 3, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|--------------------|--|---|-------------------------|-----|-------|-----------|-----|--------|--------------------|------|--------|---------------|----|-------|-----------------|-----|-------|--------------|-------------|----------------|---|---|
| Sexual Orientation | <p>Hate Crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in homophobic and transphobic hate crimes • Domestic abuse • Gender critical viewpoint and anti-trans rhetoric/debate | <p>In the 2021 Census, 2.1% of residents in Northern Ireland identified as LGB+ (LGB+ is the definition used in the Census) 1.17% identified as Gay or Lesbian, 0.75% identified as Bisexual and 0.17 identified as Other Sexual Orientation.</p> <p>In 2023, 3.9% of staff at Queen’s University disclosed that their sexual orientation (sexual preference) was towards someone of the same sex and 1.9% towards someone of either sex.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="622 563 1111 850"> <thead> <tr> <th>Sexual Orientation</th> <th>No.</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>I do not wish to answer</td> <td>431</td> <td>9.49%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not Known</td> <td>534</td> <td>11.75%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Of a different sex</td> <td>3314</td> <td>72.95%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Of either sex</td> <td>88</td> <td>1.94%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Of the same sex</td> <td>176</td> <td>3.87%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>4543</td> <td>100.00%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>In a 2018 YouGov survey more than a quarter of trans people (28%) in a relationship reported they had faced domestic abuse from a partner and 25% had experienced homelessness at some point in their lives.</p> <p>LGBT people in Northern Ireland continue to experience homophobic and transphobic incidents and crimes. Transphobic hate incidents increased in 2022-23 with homophobic incidents and crimes at their second highest levels since records began. From 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 there were 435 homophobic incidents and 290 crimes respectively. 72 transphobic incidents and 39 transphobic crimes were reported. Homophobic incidents tend to peak May to September.</p> <p>In UK, the public consultation regarding proposed amendments to the 2004 Gender Recognition Act has led to significant debate and press regarding transgender people and ability to access services.</p> | Sexual Orientation | No. | % | I do not wish to answer | 431 | 9.49% | Not Known | 534 | 11.75% | Of a different sex | 3314 | 72.95% | Of either sex | 88 | 1.94% | Of the same sex | 176 | 3.87% | Total | 4543 | 100.00% | <p>Main statistics for Northern Ireland Statistical Bulletin Sexual orientation 21 March 2023 NISRA</p> <p>LGBT in Britain – Trans Report Stonewall UK 2018</p> <p>PSNI Hate Motivation Statistics 2022/23</p> <p>The Growth of the Anti-Transgender Movement in the United Kingdom. The Silent Radicalization of the British Electorate International Journal of Sociology June 2021</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 3</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 13, 14, 17, 19, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34, 35</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42, 43, 44</p> |
| Sexual Orientation | No. | % | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| I do not wish to answer | 431 | 9.49% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Not Known | 534 | 11.75% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Of a different sex | 3314 | 72.95% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Of either sex | 88 | 1.94% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Of the same sex | 176 | 3.87% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 4543 | 100.00% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Sexual Orientation | <p>Discrimination at work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher levels of workplace conflicts • Lower levels of psychological safety • Fear of discrimination • Under-representation of trans and non-binary workers in UK | <p>CIPD research found that LGB+ workers experience more workplace conflict; in particular, being undermined/humiliated or discriminatory behaviour aimed at a protected characteristic. Female LGB+ often report multiple conflicts, and more conflicts associated with sexual harassment. Trans workers also reported high levels of workplace conflicts, many of which are left unresolved.</p> <p>Significant differences were found between LGB+ workers' job quality, compared with heterosexual employees e.g., experiencing lower levels of psychological safety and poor work relationships. LGB+ employees are more likely to report that work has a negative impact on their health and are more likely to be dissatisfied with their jobs. Trans employees in particular report especially low levels of psychological safety and higher levels of workplace conflict compared with LGB+ workers.</p> <p>More than a third of LGBT staff had hidden or disguised that they were LGBT at work because they were afraid of discrimination and a significant minority (40% of trans people) reported they would not feel confident reporting homophobic or bi-phobic bullying in the workplace.</p> <p>Over 50% of trans and non-binary workers report hiding their identity at work for fear of discrimination or harassment and 40% didn't feel able to wear work attire representing their gender identity or adjusted the way they dress. Trans and non-binary workers are unrepresented in the UK workforce with considerably lower employment rates (only 63% of trans and non-binary respondents having a job in the 12 months preceding the National LGBT Survey in 2018).</p> | <p>Inclusion at Work Perspectives on LGBT+ Working Lives Research Report CIPD February 2021</p> <p>LGBT in Britain Work Report Stonewall 2018</p> <p>National LGBT Survey Summary Report Government Equalities Office July 2018</p> <p>Briefing Paper Equal access to and equal opportunities for all at work ECNI March 2023</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 3</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 13, 14, 17, 19, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34, 35</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42, 43, 44</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|--------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Sexual Orientation | <p>Health and Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in poor mental health, depression, anxiety disorders • Health inequalities and barriers to accessing healthcare | <p>CIPD found that anti-discrimination policies, top management support for trans inclusion, and voice and participation opportunities for trans employees are key for quality of trans working experience and that practices could be improved in organisations</p> <p>LGBTI people are more likely to experience health inequalities due to heteronormativity or heterosexism, minority stress, experiences of victimisation and discrimination, compounded by stigma. Inequalities pertaining to LGBTI healthcare varies depending on gender, age, income and disability as well as being LGBTI groupings.</p> <p>LGBT people are more likely to report enduring psychological or emotional problems compared to the general population. Suicide attempts and ideation, depression and anxiety disorders were 1.5 times higher for LGB people compared to heterosexual peers with alcohol related substance dependence over the previous 12 months being 1.5 times more common in LGB people.</p> <p>Bisexual and trans people are often more likely to experience poor mental health than lesbian and gay counterparts.</p> <p>LGBTQIA people are also more likely to experience health inequalities, and experience victimisation and discrimination which can result in some avoiding medical treatment, including emergency care. Trans people can experience inequalities and barriers to accessing healthcare in the UK. Prior to Covid-19, waiting lists for an initial appointment at a Gender Identity Service in the UK was a year and a half on average. Delays and dissatisfaction can result in some going abroad for medical treatment to alter their physical appearance, including buying hormones over the internet from other countries, with many citing the barriers they currently face in accessing medical treatment in the UK.</p> | <p>A review of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) health and healthcare inequalities European Journal of Public Health, Volume 29, Issue 5, October 2019</p> <p>Hidden Figures: The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on LGBT Communities in the UK LGBT Foundation May 2020</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 3</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 13, 14, 17, 19, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34, 35</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42, 43, 44</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|--------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Sexual Orientation | <p>Health and Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young LGBT+ people increased levels of suicide contemplation <p>Impact of Covid-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in poor mental health, depression, anxiety disorders • Impact of lockdown on living arrangements • Heightened social isolation | <p>Young LGBT people are more likely to be estranged from family, due to experiences of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in many communities. For many LGBT people, their main source of support is a network of LGBT peers, sometimes known as their “chosen family”.</p> <p>Covid-19 had a significant adverse impact of LGBT+ people and further exacerbated inequalities around mental health and wellbeing outcomes. Lockdowns may have resulted in people living in/returning to households where they may not be out to family or housemates, heightening feelings of stress, anxiety, isolation and loss of identity.</p> <p>Some people were made homeless during the crisis after their families found out they are LGBT. In addition, LGBT people working in the UK may have had to return home during the pandemic to countries and homes in which it is not safe to be LGBT.</p> <p>LGBT people are already more likely to use drugs and drink everyday - the LGBT Foundation’s Substance Misuse Programme saw previous service users who no longer needed support return to the service because of the pandemic.</p> <p>A lack of access to LGBT specific spaces and ability to socialise with other LGBT people because of social distancing heightened isolation for some individuals. Older LGBT people, more likely to be socially isolated before the lockdown began, and less likely to have children have been particularly impacted by feelings of isolation and lack of support.</p> <p>During the pandemic face-to-face appointments were suspended, waiting lists frozen and new referrals were not accepted. Gender affirming surgeries were cancelled or postponed with people unsure of impact on the waiting list. Trans and non-binary people also faced issues accessing scheduled hormonal therapy.</p> | <p>Growing Up LGBT+ Just Like Us Report 2021</p> <p>Positive Futures How supporting LGBT+ young people enables them to thrive in adulthood Just Like Us Report 2023</p> <p>Trades Union Congress Equality Audit 2022</p> <p>Hidden Figures: The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on LGBT Communities in the UK LGBT Foundation May 2020</p> <p>Briefing Paper Equal access to and equal opportunities for all at work ECNI March 2023</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 3</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 13, 14, 17, 19, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34, 35</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42, 43, 44</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|----------------|---|--|---|---|
| Gender | <p>Persistent inequalities for women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prejudicial attitudes • Economic independence/ impact of welfare reform • Employment rates impacted by dependants/ lone parent role | <p>Gender stereotypes, the objectification of women and prejudicial attitudes towards trans people remain persistent inequalities. Some women may not achieve full economic independence or salary parity which can affect retirement income. Systemic issues often see women twice as dependent on social security as men, with welfare reform and the wider austerity agenda having a disproportionate impact on women’s access to resources, security and safety.</p> <p>The employment rate for women in Northern Ireland has been consistently lower than for males over the past ten years. Although number of employees was similar for males and females in 2021, the number of self-employed males was more than two and a half times the number of self-employed females. In Northern Ireland, women’s employment is characterised by gender segregated labour-markets, gender gaps in pay, higher levels of part-time work and a high concentration in low paying and precarious sectors such as caring, cleaning and the service/hospitality industry.</p> <p>Women experience a lower employment rate and a higher economic inactivity rate when they have dependents. This is linked to the disproportionate share of caregiving by women. Women are more likely to be providing care and the interruption of women’s employment for unpaid care work continues to significantly undermine women’s career progression and lifetime earnings, including pension provision.</p> <p>Lone parents, of which 91% are women, have the highest poverty and are worst impacted by welfare reform. Lone parents experience a lower employment and a higher economic inactivity rate. The largest gender pay gap across all age groups occurred in the 50 to 59 age group, where men earned almost £2.50 more per hour than women (£15.33 compared to £12.87).</p> | <p>Gender Equality Policy Priorities and Recommendation Key Point Briefing ECNI 2016</p> <p>Women in Northern Ireland 2020/21 Theme: Labour Market NISRA March 2022</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34, 39</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|----------------|--|---|---|---|
| Gender | <p>Childcare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs in region <p>Health Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women’s participation in sport • Lower life expectancy rates in deprived areas • Higher mortality rate for BAME women • Prevalence of chronic diseases • Access to healthcare services | <p>Barriers may also be attributed to the cost and availability of childcare, with Northern Ireland having one of the lowest levels of available childcare and being one of the most expensive regions for childcare in the UK. For women, paid work may not be considered worthwhile if a significant proportion of female-generated income is being spent on childcare.</p> <p>Women are less likely to participate in sport which can impact on health outcomes, particularly in later life. Women in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland have a life expectancy that is 5 years lower than women in the least deprived areas. The mortality rate for women from a Black or minority ethnic background is higher than the mortality rate for women from the general population. For example, in 2021, the mortality rate for women from a Black or minority ethnic background was 10.5 per 1,000, compared to 7.7 per 1,000 for women from the general population.</p> <p>Prevalence of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, and cancer, is higher for women in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland. For example, in 2021, the prevalence of heart disease for women in the most deprived areas was 16.2%, compared to 12.7% for women in the least deprived areas.</p> <p>Women from some Section 75 categories are more likely to report that they have difficulty accessing healthcare services. For example, in 2021, 22% of women from a Black or minority ethnic background reported that they had difficulty accessing healthcare services, compared to 14% of women from the general population.</p> | <p>Gender Equality Policy Priorities and Recommendation Key Point Briefing ECNI 2016</p> <p>Time to tackle the physical activity gender gap The Lancet Public Health 2019</p> <p>Health Inequalities Annual Report 2023 Department of Health Northern Ireland</p> | <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34, 39</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|----------------|--|---|---|--|
| Gender | <p>Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rise in incidents in Northern Ireland | <p>The Police Service of Northern Ireland record a crime as having a domestic abuse motivation where it meets the relevant definition - ‘threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member’. Not all domestic abuse incidents will result in the recording of a crime.</p> <p>In the 12 months from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 there were 32,875 domestic abuse incidents in Northern Ireland. This is the second highest financial year figure recorded since the start of the data series in 2004/05. The number of domestic abuse crimes rose to 22,343, the highest financial year figure recorded since 2004/05.</p> <p>There were 17 domestic abuse incidents and 12 domestic abuse crimes per 1,000 population. There were increases in all major offence types, except for criminal damage, breaches of non-molestation orders, and the ‘all other offences’ classification.</p> <p>PSNI statistics represents a response approximately every 16 minutes and does not account for unreported incidents of abuse.</p> <p>Some older women may be the victims of gender violence.</p> <p>During the Covid-19 lockdown period, 17 women were killed in Northern Ireland by someone close to them. In passing the Bill, Northern Ireland is the first jurisdiction within the United Kingdom and Ireland to provide a legal entitlement to paid leave for those affected by domestic violence.</p> | <p>Domestic Abuse Statistics PSNI</p> | <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 39</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|----------------|---|--|--|--|
| Gender | <p>Violence against women and girls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strategy in Northern Ireland in comparison with other jurisdictions | <p>The term “violence against women and girls” refers to acts of violence or abuse that we know disproportionately affect women and girls. Crimes and behaviour covered by this term include rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, ‘honour’ based abuse (including female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and ‘honour’ killings), as well as many others, including offences committed online” UK Home Office, 2021</p> <p>A significant majority of violent offences committed against women and girls in Northern Ireland are perpetrated by men. Between 2017 and 2021, Police statistics show that 34 women and girls across Northern Ireland were killed by men.</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Executive Office launched a consultation on 4 July 2023 on a strategic framework and foundational action plan to end violence against women and girls. The draft framework sets the agenda for government and society in Northern Ireland and has been co-designed with partners from across government, community and voluntary sectors and organisations. The Framework informs actions to create ‘a changed society where women and girls are free from all forms of gender-based violence, abuse, and harm, including the attitudes, systems, and structural inequalities that cause them’.</p> <p>The focus on tackling the root causes of violence against women and girls which includes damaging social norms, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours which are discriminatory. These factors create a culture that enables violence, harm, and abuse to develop and be sustained.</p> <p>Proposals for the Strategic Framework and Foundational Action Plan are subject to the views of the NI Executive who will be responsible for final approval.</p> | <p>Violence Against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations Guidance on commissioning services to support victims and survivors of violence against women and girls Home Office March 2022</p> <p>Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan (psni.police.uk)</p> <p>Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategic Framework and Action Plan public consultation launched Northern Ireland Executive</p> | <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 39</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|----------------|--|---|--|---|
| Gender | <p>UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of Brexit on women’s rights in Northern Ireland • Lower level of pay protection for women • Gaps in gender equality legislation • Gender pay gap reporting and strategy and action plan not in force | <p>CEDAW (also called the International Bill of Rights for Women) provides a framework for EU States for tackling discrimination against women and achieving substantive equality for women in both the private and public spheres. It outlines a comprehensive set of rights of women in a variety of areas including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and is the first human rights treaty to affirm the reproductive rights of women.</p> <p>The Shadow Report is produced by civil society organisations alongside the UK government’s own report, for the CEDAW Committee to have a more accurate account of the status of women’s rights in the UK. It is submitted to the CEDAW monitoring body after the UK government has published its report. The CEDAW Committee uses the Shadow Report for evidence in their examination of the UK Government’s progress on implementing CEDAW.</p> <p>ECNI response to the Shadow Report 2019 highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower level of protection for women in Northern Ireland against sex discrimination than in the rest of the UK • Significant gaps and weaknesses in gender equality legislation requiring urgent address through single equality legislation in Northern Ireland. • No commitments by Government to give effect to CEDAW Committee recommendations in 2013 to strengthen gender equality law in Northern Ireland, including recommendations on pay secrecy clauses and multiple discrimination • Gender pay reporting requirements for large employers, introduced in Great Britain in 2017, do not apply to Northern Ireland. A gender pay strategy and action plan have not been brought into force as envisaged. | <p>Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women United Nations</p> <p>Equality Commission for Northern Ireland - CEDAW</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34, 39</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 43, 43, 44</p> |

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|----------------|--|---|--|---|
| Gender | <p>UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No diminution of rights, safeguard and equality of opportunity protections under the Belfast Agreement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider establishing a national oversight mechanism to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Convention, with the participation of women’s organisations. <p>In response the Government published its’ report in May 2021 outlined its commitment, in Article 2 of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol, to ensuring no ‘no diminution of rights, safeguards and equality of opportunity protections set out in the relevant chapter of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement’ as a result of the UK leaving the EU, with the commitment referencing six relevant EU equality directives.</p> <p>The relevant Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement rights specifically protecting the rights of women, include the right to equal opportunity in all social and economic activity, regardless of gender, and the right of women to full and equal political participation.</p> <p>In the event that the substantive rights contained in the relevant EU law listed at Annex 1 of the Protocol are updated or replaced by the EU to improve the minimum levels of protection available, the corresponding substantive rights protections in relevant domestic law in Northern Ireland will also develop to take account of this. Enforcement will be a matter for UK courts, and there will not be any direct application in Northern Ireland of the EU law in Annex 1.</p> | <p>Accessible from Women’s Resource Centre website</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34, 39</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 43, 43, 44</p> |

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|----------------|--|--|--|---|
| Gender | <p>Cultural issues in Universities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual harassment and violence • Research findings support development of more effective based interventions for male students who have sexually harmed | <p>Survey of nearly 4000 University and College Union members in the UK described sexual harassment as “endemic” in universities and colleges, with one in 10 staff saying they experienced sexual violence in past five years. Women were nearly two-and-a-half times as likely to experience sexual violence as men, while staff on insecure contracts, those with disabilities, LGBTQ+, or black, Asian or minority ethnic were also at greater risk.</p> <p>Survey findings suggest cultural problems within universities failing to acknowledge the prevalence of sexual violence and harassment and a reluctance to discipline perpetrators for fear of damaging institutional reputation, especially where alleged perpetrators are staff who attract significant funding. Insecure contracts can also make staff hesitant to report unwelcome behaviours at risk of jeopardising their careers. The report found that over the past five years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12% of women and 5% of men had directly experienced workplace sexual violence. • 52% of those who directly experienced sexual violence did not disclose or report it to their employer. • 70% of those who directly experienced sexual violence experienced it as an ongoing pattern of behaviour rather than a one-off incident. • staff on non-permanent contracts were 1.3 times as likely to experience direct sexual violence than those in permanent roles. • staff on insecure contracts, those with disabilities, those who are trans & non binary, those in racialised minorities and those with a sexual orientation other than heterosexual are all at significantly greater risk of sexual violence. | <p>Eradicating Sexual Violence in Tertiary Education UCU Sexual Violence Task Group December 2021</p> <p>Understanding Sexual Aggression in UK Male University Students: An Empirical Assessment of Prevalence and Psychological Risk Factors - Samuel T. Hales, Theresa A. Gannon, 2022 (sagepub.com)</p> | <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 39</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 41, 43</p> |

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|----------------|--|---|--|---|
| Gender | <p>Cultural issues in Universities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual harassment and violence | <p>Universities must give more help to students to report sexual misconduct by staff – when they experience or witness it, through an inclusive and positive culture, supported by clear policies, practices and data, to tackle staff to student sexual misconduct.</p> <p>University-based male sexual aggression is considered an international public health issue, with an estimated one-in-five female university students across most developed countries will be a victim of a sexually aggressive act. A research study gave a first detailed overview of sexual aggression amongst UK male university students, as well as the psychological risk factors associated with their pro-abuse behaviours.</p> <p>In 2022 Universities UK published A Strategic Guide for Universities to support vice-chancellors and governing bodies and recommends that institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put clear policies in place to tackle staff-to-student sexual misconduct. Strongly discourage close personal relationships between staff and students. Where relationships do happen, the staff member should declare this and be removed from all responsibilities which could mean a conflict of interest. Ban the use of non-disclosure agreements or confidentiality clauses in settlement agreements in sexual misconduct and harassment cases. Encourage reporting of concerns and collect and keep records. Establish joined up thinking between HR and student services on policy and practices. | <p>Changing the culture: tackling staff-to-student sexual misconduct. Strategic guide for Universities 2022</p> <p>Sexual harassment and violence in further and higher education Research Briefing House of Commons Library 9 February 2022</p> | <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 39</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 41, 43</p> |

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|----------------|---|---|--------------------|--|---|---|------|--------|---|------|--------|--------------|-------------|----------------|--|---|
| Gender | <p>Educational Attainment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under Achievement in Boys • Free School Meal entitlement and attainment | <p>Queen’s University gender profile:</p> <p>Gender Split</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="685 456 1068 707"> <thead> <tr> <th>Gender</th> <th>No.</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>F</td> <td>2467</td> <td>54.29%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>M</td> <td>2077</td> <td>45.71%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>4544</td> <td>100.00%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>In 2021-2022 more boys in Northern Ireland left school with no GCSEs or equivalent qualifications than girls, equating to 1% of all male school leavers and 0.8% of all female school leavers.</p> <p>1.7% of those entitled to free school meals left without any GCSEs compared with 0.7% of school leavers who were not entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils who left school without any formal qualifications has increased slightly from 0.6% in 2020-2021 to 0.8% in 2021-2022. The proportion of boys and girls leaving without any formal qualifications in 2021-2022 was 0.8% and 0.7%, respectively.</p> | Gender | No. | % | F | 2467 | 54.29% | M | 2077 | 45.71% | Total | 4544 | 100.00% | <p>Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) Portal - Economic Policy Centre (ulster.ac.uk)</p> <p>Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers Department of Education and NISRA</p> | <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34, 39</p> |
| Gender | No. | % | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| F | 2467 | 54.29% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| M | 2077 | 45.71% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 4544 | 100.00% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|----------------|---|---|--|---|
| Gender | <p>Older Men</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social isolation and loneliness • Perceptions of others <p>Men's Health Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for national policy in Northern Ireland | <p>A greater percentage of older men (50+) report moderate to high levels of social isolation. Older men without partners report higher levels of loneliness and isolation than women without partners. Age UK study uncovered insights into how men from different groups experience loneliness and social isolation, the pros and cons to group participation, and the barriers men face and how to overcome them.</p> <p>Many of the men had difficulty seeking help and talking about loneliness because of negative perceptions about emotional distress and mental health, and fears of stigma and embarrassment. Home can be both a source of comfort and or isolation and separation from others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single, straight men felt very aware of being seen as on their own in groups of couples and worried that being affectionate could be interpreted as being flirtatious. • Gay men felt that being older in youth-centric spaces could lead to them not being desired or included, being overlooked or being perceived as a 'dirty old man'. • Carers were most concerned about feeling invisible. • Men with hearing loss found social interaction more difficult in noisier group environments. Some felt embarrassed by having to ask people to repeat themselves. <p>The impact of COVID-19 on the physical, mental, social and financial wellbeing of men and boys is unprecedented and will have long lasting effects. Addressing these issues requires changes at personal, societal, service delivery and policy levels. The Republic of Ireland was the first country in the world to adopt a National Men's Health Policy, although there is no such policy within Northern Ireland.</p> | <p>Older Men at the Margins: Lonely older men Age UK</p> <p>Queen's University Belfast Policy Engagement ARK Feature 2020</p> <p>Men's Health Forum launches key report for their 21st birthday Queen's Policy Engagement 2020</p> | <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34, 39</p> |

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|----------------|---|--|--|---|
| Gender | <p>Artificial Intelligence (AI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on women's economic empowerment | <p>AI poses significant risks to gender equality by leading to job automation having a negative impact on women's economic empowerment and labour market opportunities. Women are at a significantly higher risk of displacement due to job automation than men, in jobs that face a high-risk of automation, such as clerical, administrative, bookkeeping and cashier positions. Women must not be left behind in terms of retraining and reskilling strategies to mitigate the impact of automation on job losses.</p> <p>While AI poses significant threats to gender equality, it has the potential of making positive changes by challenging existing gender norms. While an AI-powered recruitment software was found to discriminate against women, AI-powered gender-decoders can help employers use gender-sensitive language to write more inclusive job advertisements. AI therefore has the potential of being part of the solution for advancing gender equality in our societies.</p> | <p>UNESCO report on Artificial Intelligence and Gender Equality Key Findings of UNESCO's Global Dialogue August 2020</p> | <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34, 39</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
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| <p>Dependants</p> | <p>Lone parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial impact • Rural impact <p>Accessible and affordable childcare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government funded provision lower in Northern Ireland • Women with children more likely to work part-time than those without | <p>Lone Parents face huge financial difficulties when returning to work, study or training. With further difficulties for those who also already live in poverty and those who face have limited access to transport in rural communities.</p> <p>Lone Parents face huge financial difficulties when returning to work, study or training. With further difficulties for those who also already live in poverty and those who face have limited access to transport in rural communities.</p> <p>Lone parents with dependents (particularly women) experience barriers to their participation and a lower employment rate, more likely to be in employment on a part-time basis, in roles typically associated with the minimum wage and on atypical contracts.</p> <p>Childcare provisions for three and four-year olds Northern Ireland are less than half what they are in the rest of the UK. Parents in Northern Ireland are entitled to 12.5 hours of funded term-time pre-school education per week, compared to 30 hours in the rest of the UK. A childcare strategy was under development by the devolved government until suspension. Meanwhile, UK government have announced that the 30 hours free childcare provision for working parents in England would be expanded to cover one and two-year-olds</p> <p>Women with dependent children of any age are more likely to work part-time than those without, with women in NI 4 times more likely to take on the majority of active childcare duties than men (56% vs.13%)</p> | <p>Gender Equality Strategy Department for Communities (communities-ni.gov.uk)</p> <p>Census 2021 Main Statistics for Northern Ireland Health, disability and unpaid care December 2022 NISRA</p> <p>Northern Ireland Women’s Budget Group Press Release January 2021</p> <p>ECNI: Key Inequalities in Employment – Statement May 2018</p> <p>NISRA (2022) report ‘Women in Northern Ireland 2021</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Women’s Budget Group (2021)</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 3, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42, 44</p> |

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|----------------|--|--|---|---|
| Dependants | <p>Unpaid carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High number of unpaid carers in Northern Ireland • Impact of Covid-19 | <p>As of 2023 at Queen’s University:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly 48% (2163) of staff reported that they had care of a dependant or caring responsibilities. care per week, an increase of 22% since the 2011 census. • f those, the majority 78% (1696) reported caring for a child/ children, 7% reported care of a dependant older person and 5% reported care of both children and a dependant older person. • Queen’s staff who have caring responsibilities are almost evenly split between the genders with females comprising 55% of carers and males, 45%. • Queen’s student population reports that in 2020-21, 5.8% of students had caring responsibilities. 4.8% had caring responsibilities for young people/children, 0.5% had caring responsibility for other relatives/ friends and 0.5% had caring responsibilities for both young people/ children and other relatives. <p>According to the 2021 Census, one in eight (222,200) people in Northern Ireland currently provide unpaid care to a relative or friend with a health condition or illness. Of those, one in 25 provided 50 or more hours of care unpaid.</p> <p>Carers UK found that the number of those caring for older people and people with disabilities in Northern Ireland increased substantially during the pandemic, from 212,000 to 310,000 in 2021. In many cases the intensity of caring roles increased. Carers reported difficulties in accessing services post Covid-19, with less than 10% reporting that day services previously used had fully reopened. .</p> | <p>Census 2021 Main Statistics for Northern Ireland Health, disability and unpaid care December 2022 NISRA</p> <p>Juggling Work and Unpaid Care Carers UK 2019</p> <p>State of Caring 2022 A snapshot of unpaid caring in Northern Ireland 2022 Carers NI</p> <p>ECNI 2023: Equality and Work 2023 Briefing Paper</p> <p>Carers UK, 2022 - State of Caring in Northern Ireland, Carers UK, 2022</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 3, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42, 44</p> |

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|----------------|--|--|--|---|
| Dependants | <p>Unpaid carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longevity of caring role • Responsibility for more than one person requiring care • Mental and physical health impacts • Impact of cost-of-living crisis • Balancing work with caring responsibilities | <p>This is compounded by the reported difficulty in accessing regular breaks and respite, with 40% reporting not having had a break within the last 12 months, and provision in NI described as patchy and poorly served in rural areas</p> <p>People aged 40 to 64 were the largest age group to become unpaid carers (41%), with women more likely to enter and exit unpaid care and provide more hours of unpaid care than men. Over 2,500 children between the ages of 5 and 14 provided unpaid care to a friend or relative at the time of the survey in March 2021.</p> <p>The 2022 State of Caring survey was carried out between July and September 2022 and completed by 1,648 unpaid carers across Northern Ireland – the largest snapshot sample size in the survey’s history.</p> <p>The demographic breakdown of survey respondents indicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 82% identified as female and 17% identified as male. • 4% are aged 25-34, 17% are aged 35-44, 33% are aged 45-54, 31% are aged 55-64 and 14% are aged 65+. • 24% have a disability. • 98% described their ethnicity as white. • 28% have childcare responsibilities for a non-disabled child under the age of 18 alongside their caring role. • 56% are in some form of employment and 18% are retired from work. • 31% have been caring for 15 years or more, 16% for between 10-14 years, 25% for 5-9 years, 25% for 1-4 years, and 3% for less than a year. • 46% provide 90 hours or more of care per week, 13% care for 50-89 hours, 23% care for 20-49 hours, and 19% care for 1-19 hours per week. | <p>Cycles of caring: transitions in and out of unpaid care Carers UK 2022</p> <p>Juggling work and unpaid caring: A growing issue Carers UK 2019.</p> <p>State of Caring 2022 A snapshot of unpaid caring in Northern Ireland 2022 Carers NI</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 3, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42, 44</p> |

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|----------------|---|---|--|---|
| Dependants | <p>Unpaid Carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balancing work with caring responsibilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 67% care for one person, 25% care for two people, 5% care for three people and 3% care for four or more people <p>Caring can be a significant driver of ill-health and wellbeing with 1 in 5 carers reporting their physical health to be bad or very bad, and 27% of carers reporting their mental health as bad or very bad, rising further for those who have been caring for longer periods, or for greater hours per week.</p> <p>Many unpaid carers have and continue to suffer in the face of the cost-of-living crisis, compounded by the above average household bills linked to caring roles. Almost 30% of carers struggling to make ends meet and most carers reported a negative impact on their physical and/or mental health.</p> <p>In 2019, nearly 130,000 people in Northern Ireland reduced their hours, or left work entirely, due to the demands of a caring role with most carers (79%) reported that the stress of juggling work and care a contributing factor.</p> <p>When balancing work and employment Northern Ireland carers reported using their annual leave to care and almost half (48%) had used overtime to make up hours spent caring. Less than a third of carers (28%) said they had access to paid carer's leave from work, while just over half (54%) said they had been offered flexible working arrangements.</p> <p>Those who provided the greatest volumes of care in hours per week are less likely to be in employment and face more barriers and carers are more likely to be in part-time employment, in turn negatively impacting on career progression, with many carers taking a less qualified, lower paid job or turning down promotion to care.</p> | <p>State of Caring 2022 A snapshot of unpaid caring in Northern Ireland 2022 Carers NI</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 3, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, 31</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 33, 34</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42, 44</p> |

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|----------------|--|---|---|--|
| Disability | <p>Poorer outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers to services/ negative stereotyping • Access to information • Increased risk of experiencing adverse treatment • Increased isolation/ reliance on care • Poor educational attainment • Physical and mental health impacts | <p>Northern Ireland Census 2021 reported 34.7% of the resident population had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities.</p> <p>People with disabilities report negative attitudes towards them and experience barriers to services and support created by society’s attitudes, the negative stereotyping of disabled people and a lack of accessible information and communication difficulties.</p> <p>They are also at a higher risk of experiencing violence, exploitation and abuse compared to their non-disabled counterparts with disability hate crimes and incidents at their highest in 2022-23 than in any other year in Northern Ireland since records began.</p> <p>The PSNI Hate Motivation Statistics for 2022-2023 show that of the incidents and crimes with a hate motivation recorded in the 12 months from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 – there were more disability hate crimes and incidents recorded when compared with the previous twelve months. Also, disability incidents increased from 123 to 139 and crimes rose from 93 to 102 - the highest financial year figures for both disability incidents and crimes since the recording began in 2005/06</p> <p>Disabled people are at risk of a range of poorer health, social and economic outcomes. They are more likely to experience social isolation and loneliness and rely on informal and family care, have poor educational attainment, be unemployed or economically inactive and experience poor physical and mental health.</p> | <p>Northern Ireland Census 2021 main statistics health, disability and unpaid care tables NISRA</p> <p>Disability Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report & Recommendations December 2020 (Department for Communities)</p> <p>PSNI’s Hate Motivation Statistics for 2022/2023</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 2, 3, 5, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42, 44</p> |

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|----------------|--|--|---|--|
| Disability | <p>Participation and employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest rate of employment for people with disabilities • Financial limitations • Discrimination in employment • Degree attainment for disabled people • Workplace culture | <p>There is a lack of direct participation and representation of disabled people, including involving disabled people in consultation and engagement.</p> <p>Almost one in five people of working age in Northern Ireland has a disability and the region has the lowest rate of employment for people with disabilities in the UK (37.3% compared to 54.4% England, 49% Scotland and 48.9% Wales), with disabled people are more likely to have no qualifications, to be unemployed and to be economically inactive. Whilst the gap is not as wide as other age groups it is evident at a young age.</p> <p>Disabled people are more likely to work part-time, be in lower-skilled jobs and to earn less money. In 2021, disabled people earned 19.6% less than non-disabled people, with the gap for disabled women significantly higher at 36%.</p> <p>One-quarter (24.9%) of disabled people aged 21 to 64 years in the UK had a degree as their highest qualification compared with 42.7% of non-disabled people; 13.3% of disabled people had no qualifications compared with 4.6% of non-disabled people (year ending June 2021).</p> <p>Disabled people are more likely to experience prejudice in employment than those without. ‘Disability discrimination’ was the most common request for advice to ECNI in 2021/22, with enquiries on ‘Reasonable Adjustments’ the highest reported. In December 2021-November 2022, 51% of enquiries to ECNI’s helpline were regarding disability (1,388 people) - 31% related to Reasonable Adjustments, 8% dismissal/redundancy, 8% harassment, 7% sickness absence, and 3% recruitment and selection.</p> | <p>Making it Work Equality Commission for Northern Ireland 2021</p> <p>Employee earnings in NI 2022 Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (nisra.gov.uk)</p> <p>Office for National Statistics Outcomes for Disabled People in the UK 2021</p> <p>ECNI, 2020: A Welcoming and Inclusive Workplace</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 2, 3, 5, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42, 44</p> |

| Equality Group | Issue/Inequality | Statistics/Research | Source of Evidence | Corresponding Actions in Equality Scheme Action Plan 2024-2029 |
|----------------|---|---|--|--|
| Disability | <p>Participation and employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment prospects of autistic people <p>Funding gap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of cessation of ESF funding | <p>Deaf and disabled people in Northern Ireland are substantially disadvantaged in obtaining and progressing in employment. Only 38.9% of working age d/Deaf and disabled people in Northern Ireland are in employment (compared to non-disabled peers with an employment rate of over 80.1%). Northern Ireland’s disability employment gap sits at 41.2%.</p> <p>In April 2023 the UK government announced a review to boost the employment prospects of autistic people. People with autism have particularly low employment rates – with fewer than three in 10 in work. The Buckland Review of Autism Employment will consider issues including how employers identify and better support autistic staff already in their workforce; what more could be done to prepare autistic people effectively for beginning or returning to a career; and working practices or initiatives to reduce stigma and improve the productivity of autistic employees. Adjustments and initiatives may also benefit a wider group of people with neurodevelopmental conditions such as ADHD, dyslexia and dyspraxia. The report and recommendations are due in September 2023.</p> <p>The European Social Fund (ESF), a primary and consistent source of funding for employment projects for disabled people in Northern Ireland, ended in 2022. This support is not matched by UK replacement funding under the Shared Prosperity Fund and highlights a current and future gap in the provisions supporting persons with a disability to employment in Northern Ireland</p> | <p>Disability Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report & Recommendations December 2020 (Department for Communities)</p> <p>NISRA Quarterly Labour Force Survey Tables Disability and the Labour Market May 2023</p> <p>New review to boost employment prospects of autistic people - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Future for funding disability employment services NIUSE Policy Group Briefing Paper 2019</p> <p>ESF USER GROUP Briefing PAPER NOVEMBER 2021 (nicva.org)</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 2, 3, 5, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42, 44</p> |

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|----------------|--|---|--|--|
| Disability | <p>Health and Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mortality rate • Increased rates of mental health problems for disabled people | <p>People with disabilities in Northern Ireland have a lower life expectancy than people without disabilities. For example, in 2021, the life expectancy for men with a disability was 73.4 years, compared to 79.2 years for men without a disability. Mortality rates also higher for people with disabilities in Northern Ireland than for people without disabilities. For example, in 2021, the mortality rate for women with a disability was 11.7 per 1,000, compared to 7.7 per 1,000 for women without a disability.</p> <p>The prevalence of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, and cancer, is also higher for people with disabilities in Northern Ireland than for people without disabilities. For example, in 2021, the prevalence of heart disease for men with a disability was 13.3%, compared to 8.4% for men without a disability.</p> <p>People with disabilities in Northern Ireland are more likely to report that they have difficulty accessing healthcare services. For example, in 2021, 26% of people with a disability reported that they had difficulty accessing healthcare services, compared to 14% of people without a disability.</p> <p>A significant majority of adults report experiencing a mental health problem in their lifetime with women, young adults aged 18-34 and people living alone even more likely to have experienced a mental health problem. This figure increases for people with a disability with 80% of adults with autism having at least one mental health condition and d/Deaf people twice as likely to experience mental health difficulties. Men and women from African-Caribbean communities in the UK have higher rates of PTSD and suicide risk. 70% of children with autism and 80% of adults with autism have at least one mental health condition.</p> | <p>Health Inequalities Annual Report 2023 Department of Health</p> <p>Surviving or Thriving? The State of the UK's Mental Health Mental Health Foundation 2017</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 2, 3, 5, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42, 44</p> |

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|----------------|--|---|--|--|
| Disability | <p>Health and Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stigma around mental ill-health decreasing • One third of people with mental health issues not seeking support <p>Impact of Covid-19 pandemic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, health and social care and domestic support challenges • Increased anxiety/ isolation/ decline in physical health | <p>Stigma surrounding mental ill-health has decreased since 2015 and asking for help is now perceived to be more socially acceptable; there has been a dramatic reduction in the proportions of people holding negative and inaccurate beliefs about suicide.</p> <p>Around 15% of people at work have symptoms of an existing mental health condition. However, many who may benefit from help have not accessed support: with 34% of people reporting that they had not sought support from any source if they had emotional or mental health problems in the past three years. It is important to note that spouses/partners (45%), friends (46%) and family members (30%) are identified as key providers of mental health support, and supporting those who support people with poor mental health is critical.</p> <p>Existing inequalities presented significant challenges for disabled people during the pandemic in terms of education, health and social care and domestic support systems. Risk of death from Covid 19 presented a 3 times greater risk for disabled people of all ages. For those with a diagnosed learning disability the risk was 3.7 times greater, compared to those without a learning disability. Disabled people reported increased levels of mental ill-health, anxiety, loneliness, and isolation.</p> <p>Practical and physical impacts were also reported around around digital inclusion, ability to work and maintaining access to support at home. Evidence also suggested a decline in physical health of some people with disabilities with limited opportunity for exercise and getting outdoors. Some had difficulty in accessing food and medications and reduced access to health and social care services. Additional costs and difficulties in accessing home deliveries and an increased reliance on others resulted in a loss of privacy and independence.</p> | <p>Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2021</p> <p>Thriving at Work: The Stevenson/Farmer review of mental health and employers 2017</p> <p>The Impact of Covid-19 on Disabled People Disability Action Report September 2020</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 2, 3, 5, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42, 44</p> |

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| Disability | <p>Differences in legal protections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNCRPD not in full effect in Northern Ireland • Exclusion of deaf and disabled people in law and policy setting | <p>The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 provides the principal protections for d/Deaf and disabled people in employment. However, legal protections which exist elsewhere in the UK for disabled people (and their family members) do not exist in Northern Ireland. This legislative failure is considered as enabling systemic inequality and discrimination in employment. Limited measures have been taken to give effect to the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) in Northern Ireland. Other jurisdictions in the UK are exploring how the CRPD can be given legal effect and there is precedence across the UK for giving legal effect to human rights treaties in different ways. The CRPD Committee has expressed concern at the insufficient implementation of the Convention in the UK. Failure to give legal effect to the CRPD means that the rights of d/Deaf and disabled people in Northern Ireland will not be effectively realised.</p> <p>Deaf and disabled people in Northern Ireland are often excluded from the design, implementation and monitoring of laws and policies which affect their lives. Efforts to involve d/Deaf and disabled people are often exclude marginalised groups, including sign language users, people with learning disabilities and people with experience of mental health services.</p> <div data-bbox="600 1070 1144 1289"> <table border="1"> <caption>Disability Staff Responses</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>2983</td> <td>65.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not Known</td> <td>1166</td> <td>25.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>423</td> <td>9.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(Blank)</td> <td>2983</td> <td>65.2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <p>As of 2023 at Queen's University, 9.2% of staff disclosed a disability or long-term condition. Of this figure, the most prevalent was a long-standing illness or health condition (34.8%), with mental health condition second largest (13%).</p> | Response | Count | Percentage | No | 2983 | 65.2% | Not Known | 1166 | 25.5% | Yes | 423 | 9.2% | (Blank) | 2983 | 65.2% | <p>Disability Strategy Expert Advisory Panel Report & Recommendations December 2020 (Department for Communities)</p> | <p>Institutional Analysis and Reporting Actions: 2, 3, 5, 7</p> <p>Outreach, Engagement and Public Life Activities Actions: 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32</p> <p>Policy, Process and Practices Actions: 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37</p> <p>Learning and Development Actions: 40, 41, 42, 44</p> |
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|-----------------------|--|---|--|--|
| All Section 75 groups | <p>Impact of Brexit on the Divergence of Rights and Best Practice on the island of Ireland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risks that gaps in legal protections will widen <p>Economic impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills gap in Northern Ireland compared to rest of UK Economic structure responsible for its lower productivity. | <p>People in Northern Ireland have fewer equality and human rights protections in some areas than counterparts in Ireland and Great Britain. ECNI, NIHRC and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission are warning that this disparity will widen further if the UK Government does not act.</p> <p>Prior to Brexit, many EU laws were automatically applicable in Northern Ireland and equality and human rights laws were aligned across UK and Ireland. The UK Government has committed that certain protections in place in Northern Ireland regarding the rights, safeguards and equality of opportunity provisions will not be reduced now that the UK has left the EU. It also committed that certain Northern Ireland’s equality rights laws will keep pace with future EU equality law changes. A Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland remains an outstanding commitment of the Good Friday Agreement and Article 2 of the Windsor Framework is an important protection but does not substitute a comprehensive human rights framework.</p> <p>Increasing productivity is key to improving Northern Ireland’s prosperity, with low productivity identified as central to explaining the region’s persistently poor economic performance. Northern Ireland is the poorest performing UK region for productivity, almost 20% below the UK level. The productivity gap has existed for so long and showed signs of closing rather than widening during the 1970s and 1980s, also suggests the productivity gap was not due to the Troubles. Despite some evidence of the gap closing during the second half of the twentieth century, this progress has stalled during the past decade.</p> | <p>Policy Recommendations European Union Developments in Equality and Human Rights: The Impact of Brexit on the Divergence of Rights and Best Practice on the Island of Ireland February 2023</p> <p>Northern Ireland’s Productivity Challenge: Exploring the issues Northern Ireland Productivity Forum, Queen’s University, Belfast The Productivity Institute Productivity Insights Paper No.004 October 2021</p> | |

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|------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| All Section 75 groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy was highly concentrated in declining staple industries • Geographic peripherality • Lower level of investment, particularly in research and development | <p>Improving productivity continues to be an aspiration of policymakers, but the reasons why policy interventions have persistently been ineffective are unclear, although are likely linked to institutions. Local institutions provide a link between the different explanations of the productivity gap, suggesting policy must address their role if other policy interventions are to be successful.</p> <p>Issues related to human capital are very strongly linked to Northern Ireland’s productivity problem. An attainment gap exists where too many individuals leave school without skills and the ‘brain drain’, which leaves Northern Ireland with a lower proportion of the population with tertiary education. There is evidence to suggest a managerial skills gap, which may be exacerbated by issues around culture, leadership, and ambition.</p> | <p>Northern Ireland’s Productivity Challenge: Exploring the issues Northern Ireland Productivity Forum, Queen’s University, Belfast The Productivity Institute Productivity Insights Paper No.004 October 2021</p> | |