

A Welcoming and Inclusive Workplace

Employer Information Gathering Exercise

MARCH 2020

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



Content

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

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INTRODUCTION:

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Background

- The Commission's **Statement on Key Inequalities in Employment in Northern Ireland** highlighted that:
'Prejudicial attitudes both within and outside the workplace are experienced by people with disabilities, women, Trans people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, people from minority ethnic groups, migrant workers and those of different religious beliefs'.
- The Commission identified the need to enhance the evidence base. This evidence will support the development of further advice and guidance for employers to improve practices.
- Between 29 November 2018 and 1 March 2019, **two information gathering exercises** asked employers and employees to complete online surveys. The information gathering exercises allowed respondents to self-select and refer the surveys onwards to other respondents. Therefore, the findings are not representative for either all employers or all employees in Northern Ireland.
- This report on the Survey for the **Employer information gathering exercise** provides findings for frequency analyses, and cross-tabulations by workplace size, business sector, and whether they have union representation from closed questions within the Employer survey.
- The report also provides information from qualitative analyses of open questions within the Employer survey.
- This report will be followed by further findings on the equality issues and situations raised by respondents.

Headline Findings:

Workplace Culture and Values

- The majority of employers perceived they had a *'reasonably diverse workforce'* (70%)
- The majority of employers perceived that *'their workplace had a culture that values promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment'* (78%)
- The most common way of communicating their workplace values was by, *'Incorporat[ion] into business and corporate plans'* (47%), *'training of managers and staff'* (45%) and *'...by internal briefings'* (39%).
- Most employers had policies in place to promote welcoming and inclusive workplaces.
 - However, only around one in three employers stated they had a policy for *'Affirmative action and/or positive action'* (36%) or a *'Stakeholder engagement /consultation policy'* (29%).
- When employers were asked to agree or disagree with statements on **developing, and implementing workplace policies:**
 - the majority agreed that *'Staff were made aware of our equality policies...'* (83% of all respondents).
- In respect to the **monitoring of workplace policies**, the majority of employers agreed that they *'...regularly monitor the implementation of policies to ensure consistency across the organisation'* (74%) , and *'...monitor the composition of applicants and employees... '* (69%).
- Over two-thirds (69%) of employers agreed that they had *'... clear support structures for complainants, alleged harassers and managers investigating complaints'*.

Headline Findings:

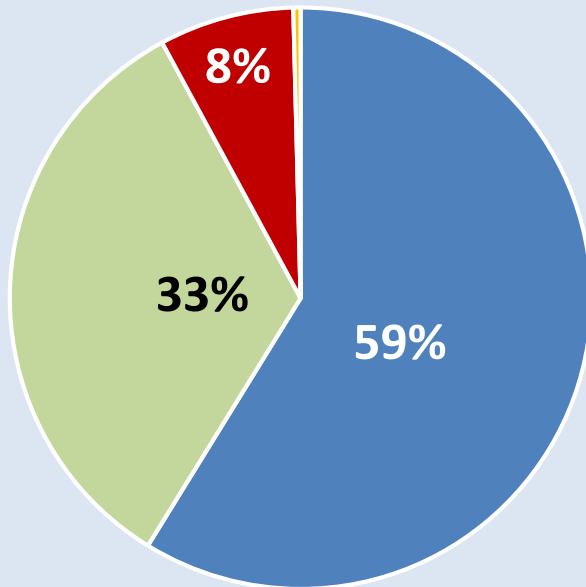
Employer Viewpoints on Shaping a Welcoming and Inclusive Workplace

- Employers highlighted **key barriers** “employers generally encounter in promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment that values equality and diversity?”
 - Employers identified **attitudes** of staff and other colleagues; lack of **knowledge**; and lack of **resources** (staff, time and finance) as key barriers to promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment.
- Employers identified examples of “**good practice** from their workplace in promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment”, including **workplace initiatives; encouraging diversity; recruitment and promotion; company values, policy and induction practices.**
- Employers also identified examples of something they or their organisation have done “**to prevent unwanted behaviours** occurring in the workplace” including implementing **training**; developing and implementing **policies**, ensuring they **take action** against unwanted behaviour; ensuring good **communication** with staff; sending **reminders** to staff about appropriate behaviour and showing **leadership**.
- Lastly, employers identified **training**; access to further **guidance and tools**, actions to **promote equality, monitoring** and/or changes to monitoring; greater **communication and engagement**; access to examples of **good practice** and greater **advertising** as examples of **actions government and other organisations could take** to promote a welcoming and inclusive workplace.

Who Completed the Information Gathering Exercise?

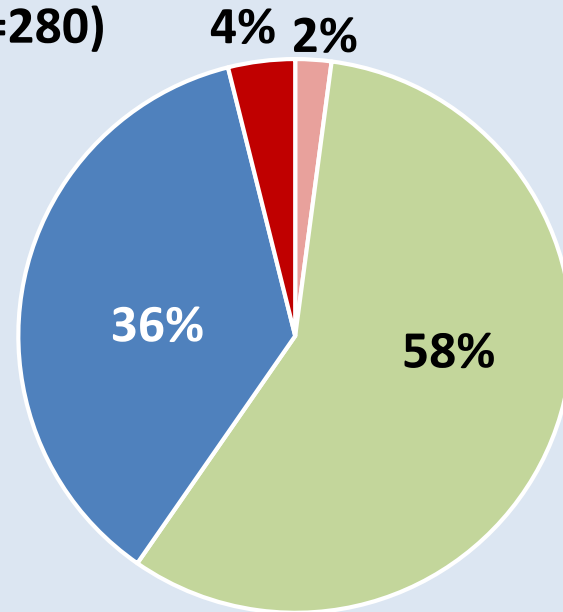
282 Employers

Business Sectors (n=279)



- Public sector
- Private sector
- Third Sector*
- Other

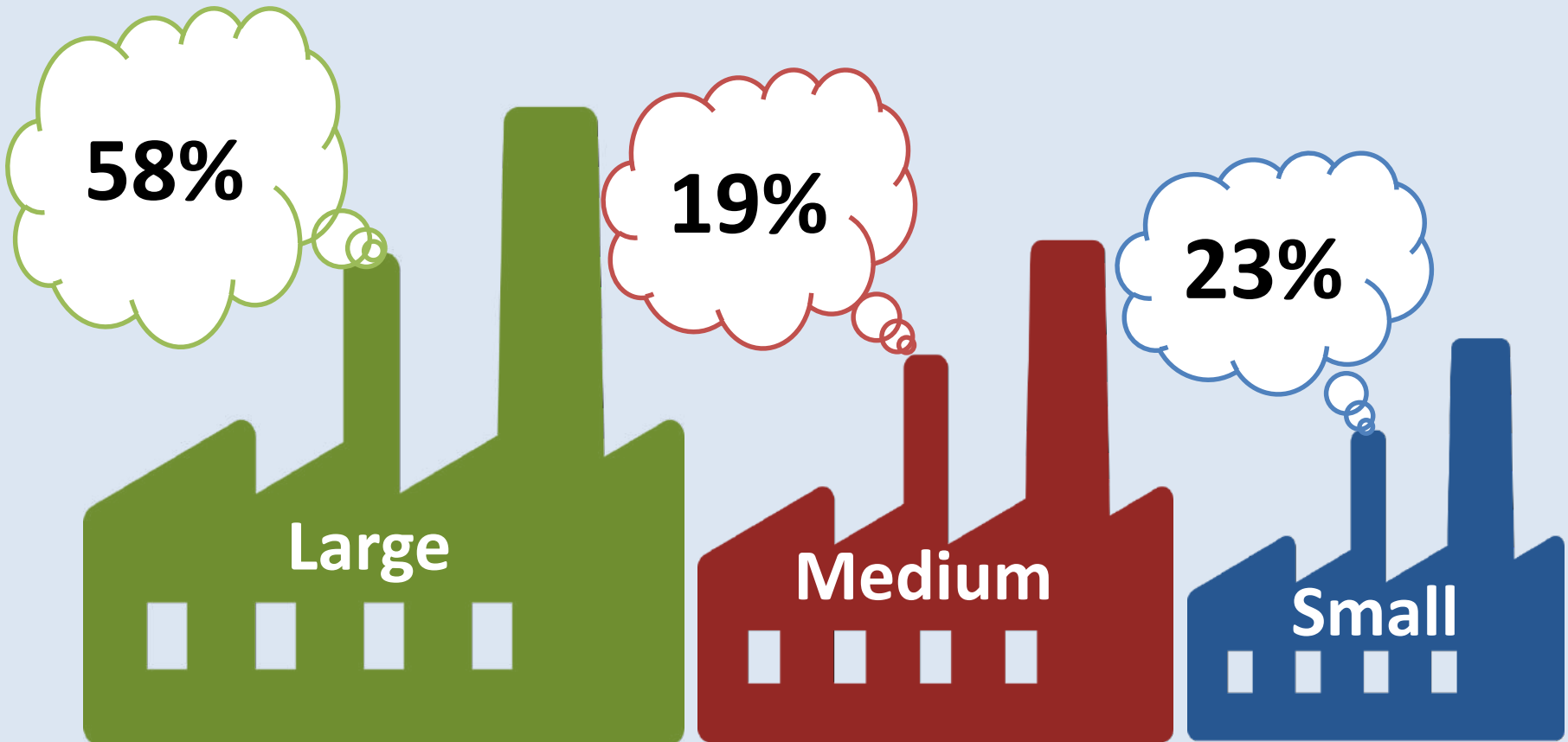
Employers with and without a union (n=280)



- Other
- Not unionised
- Unionised
- Don't know

*A charity or voluntary sector organisation or social enterprise
Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

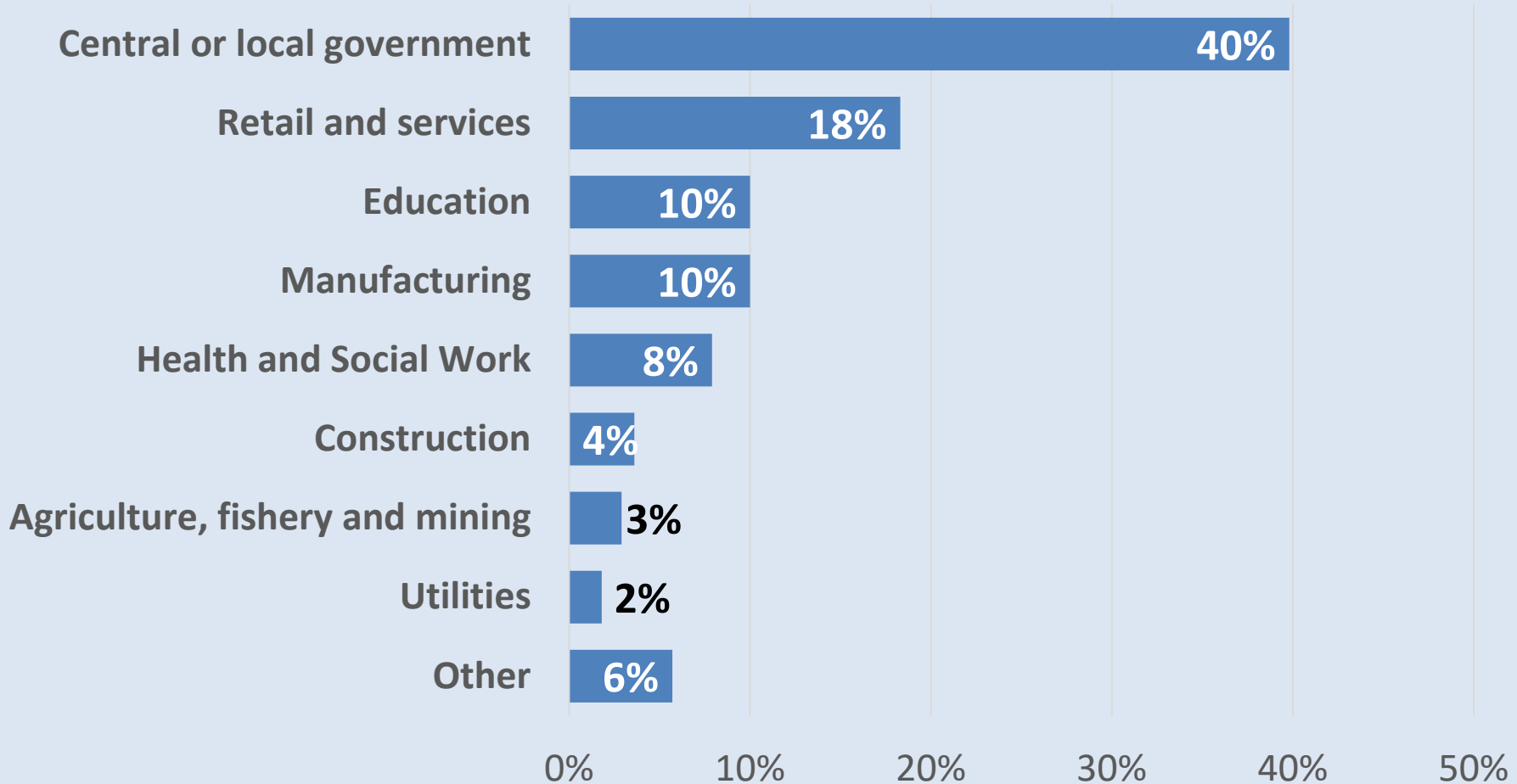
Employers from this size of organisation (n=280)



Large employers have 250+ employees: Medium employers have 50-250 employees: Small employers have less than 50 employees

Icon courtesy of: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/2/2a/Industry5.svg/1024px-Industry5.svg.png>

Employers from these industry sectors



Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

FINDINGS:

A Welcoming and Inclusive Workplace?

Workplace Policies that Promote a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

A Welcoming and Inclusive Workplace?

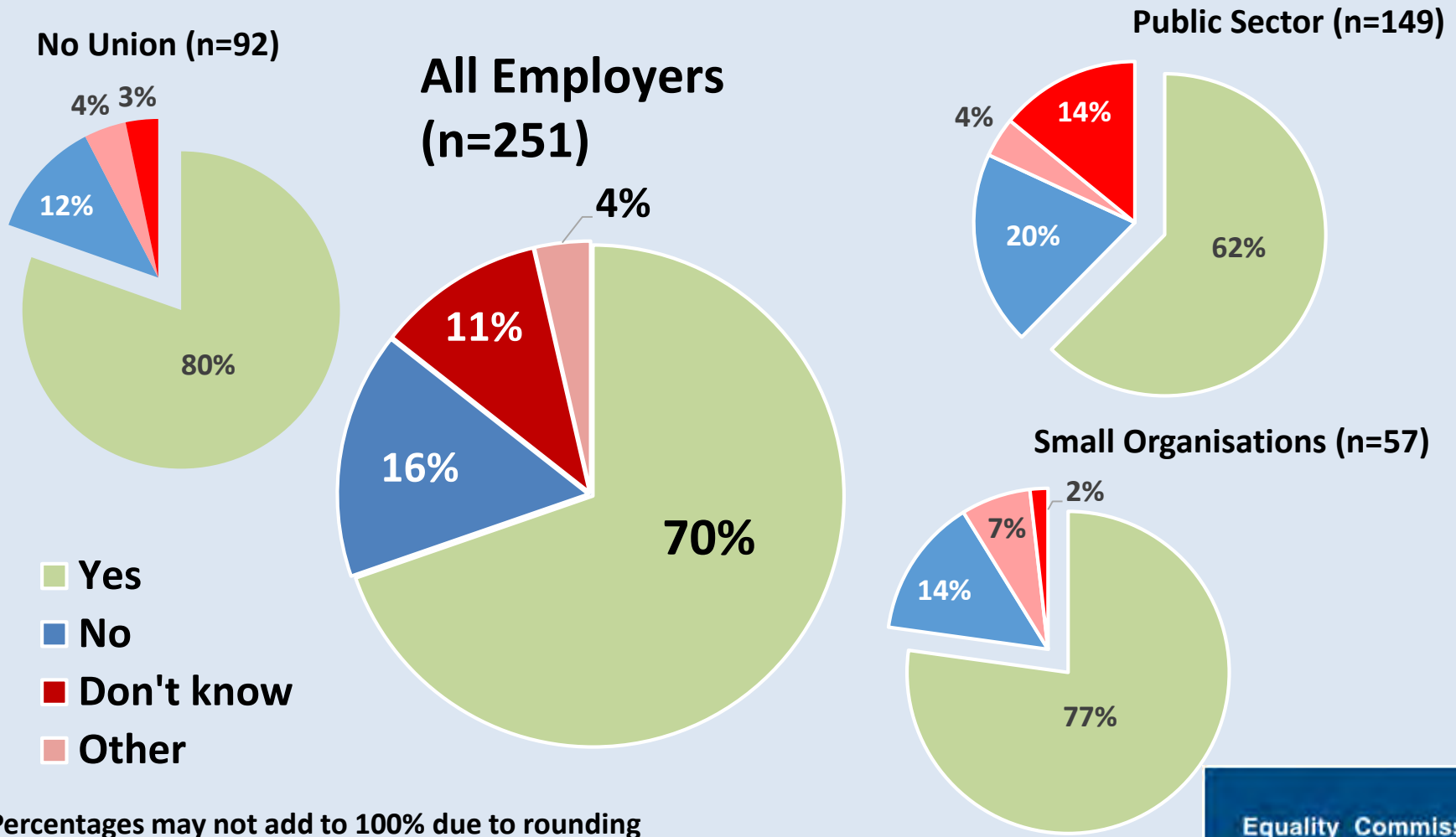
Employers who perceived they had a “reasonably diverse workforce”.

Employers who perceived they had a workplace culture that values promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment.

How are these workplace values communicated?

A Welcoming and Inclusive Workplace?

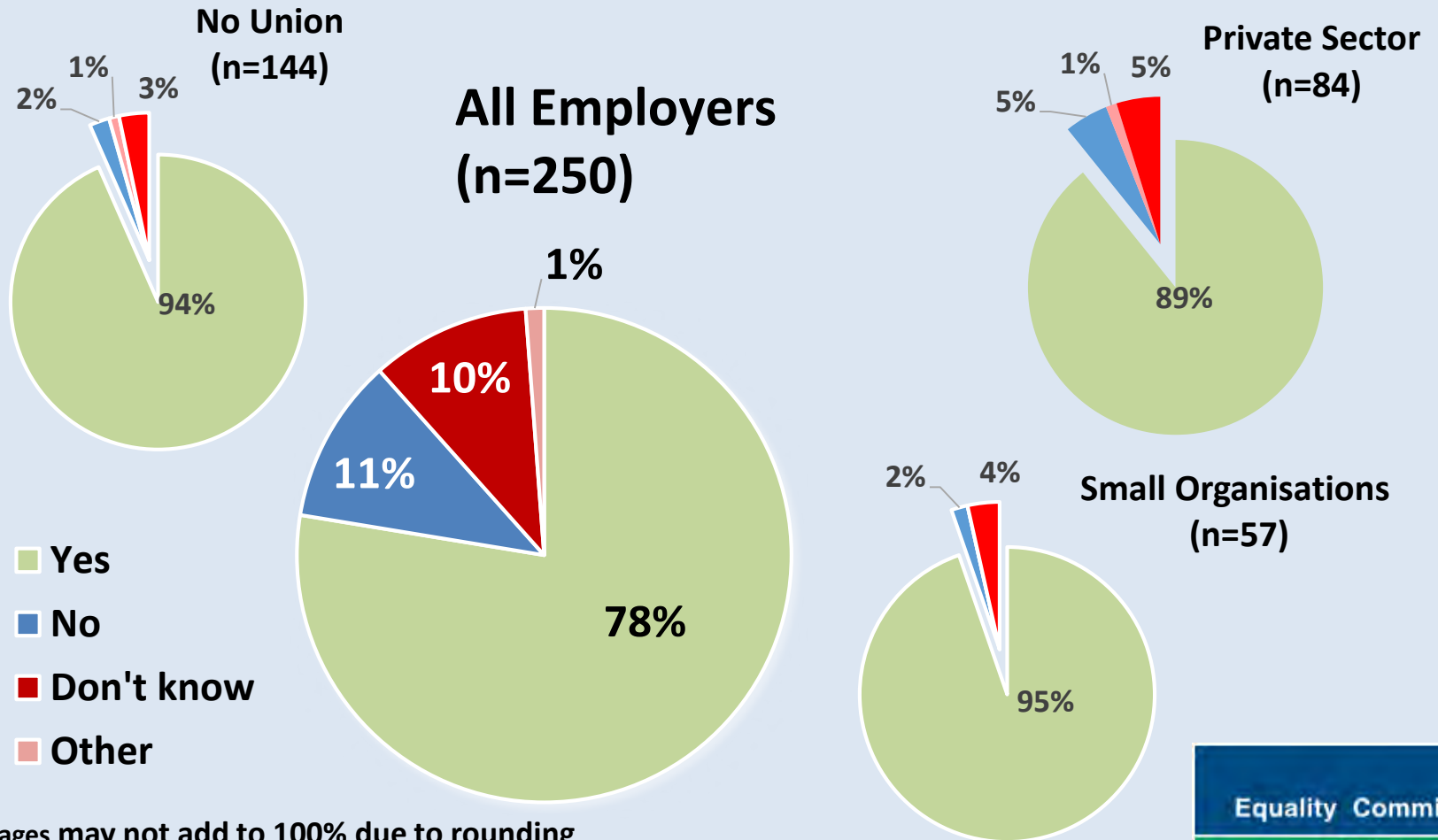
Employers who perceived they had “a reasonably diverse workforce”



Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

A Welcoming and Inclusive Workplace?

Employers who perceived their workplace had a culture that values promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment

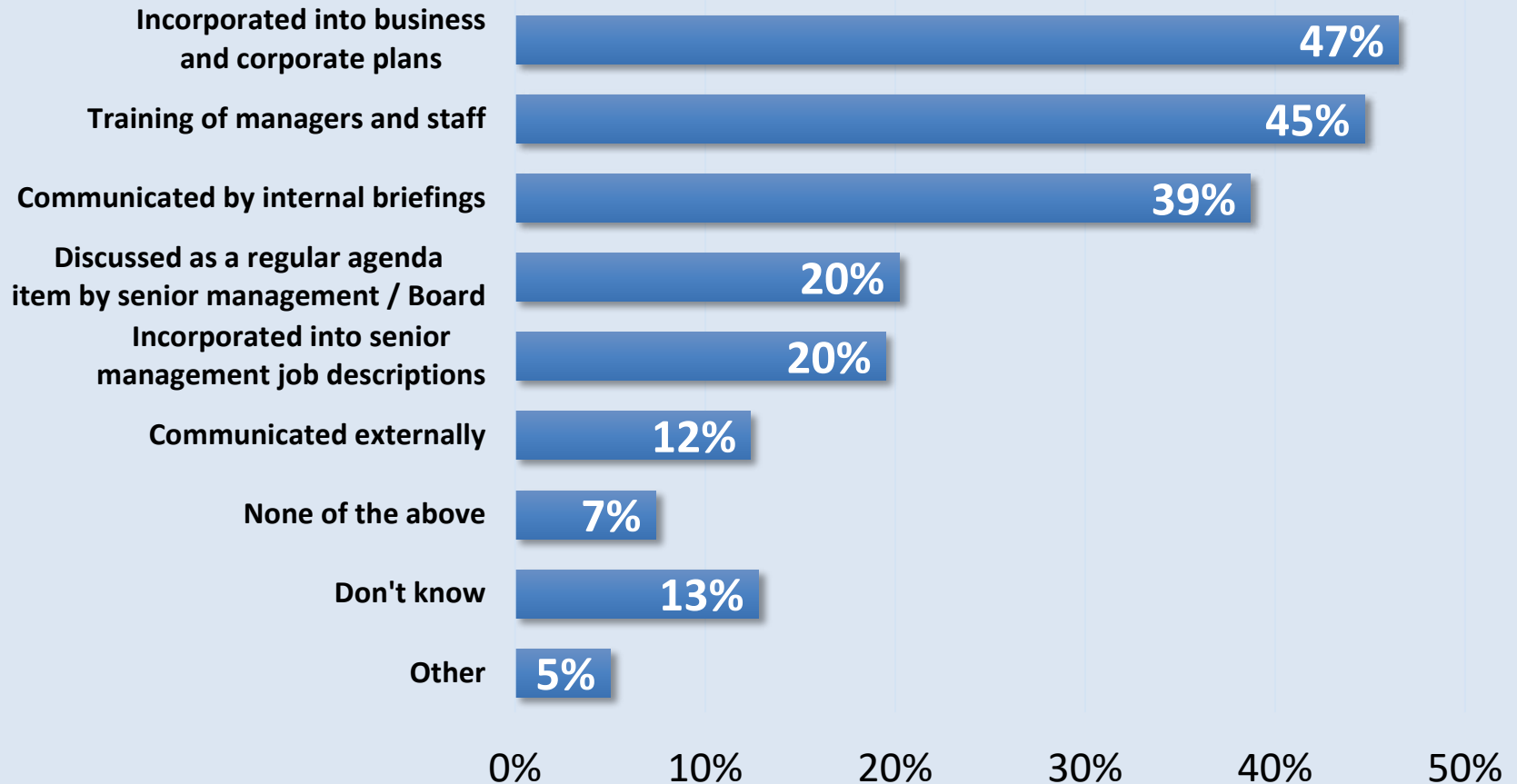


Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

A Welcoming and Inclusive Workplace?

How are these workplace values communicated?

How are these workplace values communicated? (n=282)



Multiple response question: Percentages do not add to 100%

Workplace Policies that Promote a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Employers with policies that promote a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Developing and Implementing Workplace Policies

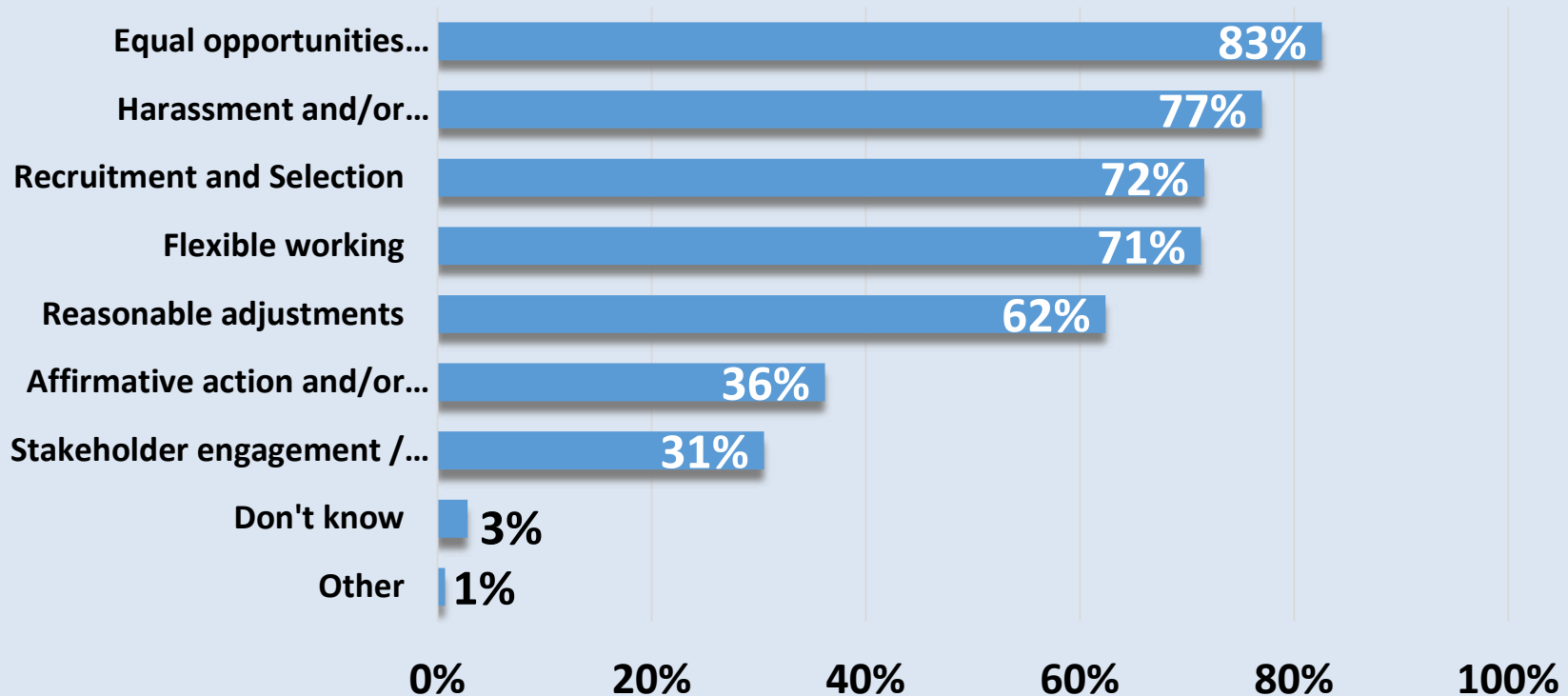
Monitoring Workplace Policies

Handling Complaints

Workplace Policies that Promote a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Employers with policies that promote a welcoming and inclusive workplace

My Workplace has the following policies in place (n=282)

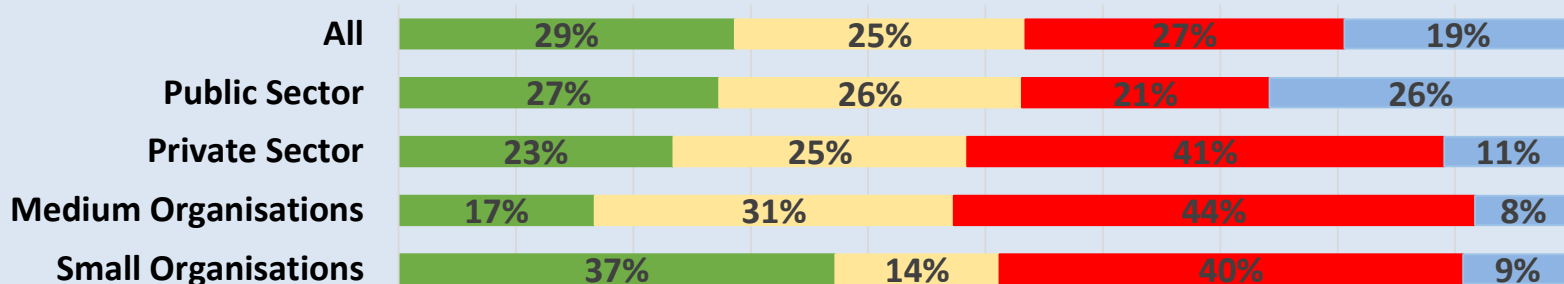


Multiple response question: Percentages do not add to 100%

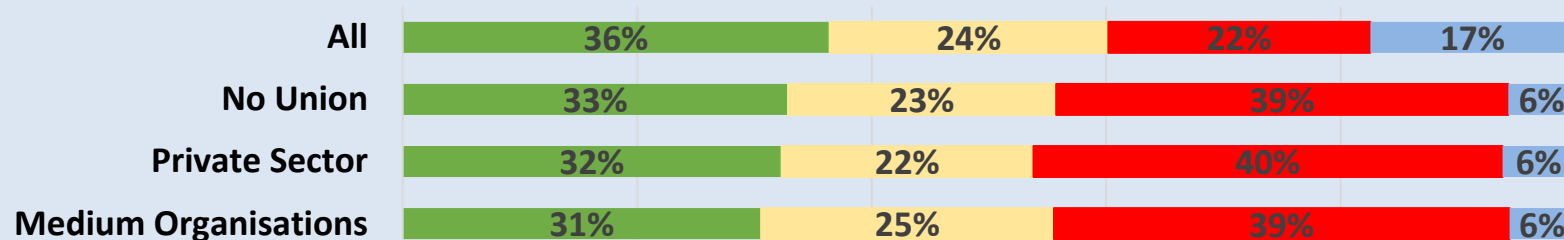
Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Developing and Implementing Workplace Policies

We benchmark our organisation against exemplar employers in relation to the promotion of a welcoming and inclusive environment (n=205)*



We consult with external organisations (e.g. representatives of disabled people, carers etc.) when developing and implementing our strategy on promoting a welcoming and inclusive (n=205)*



0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

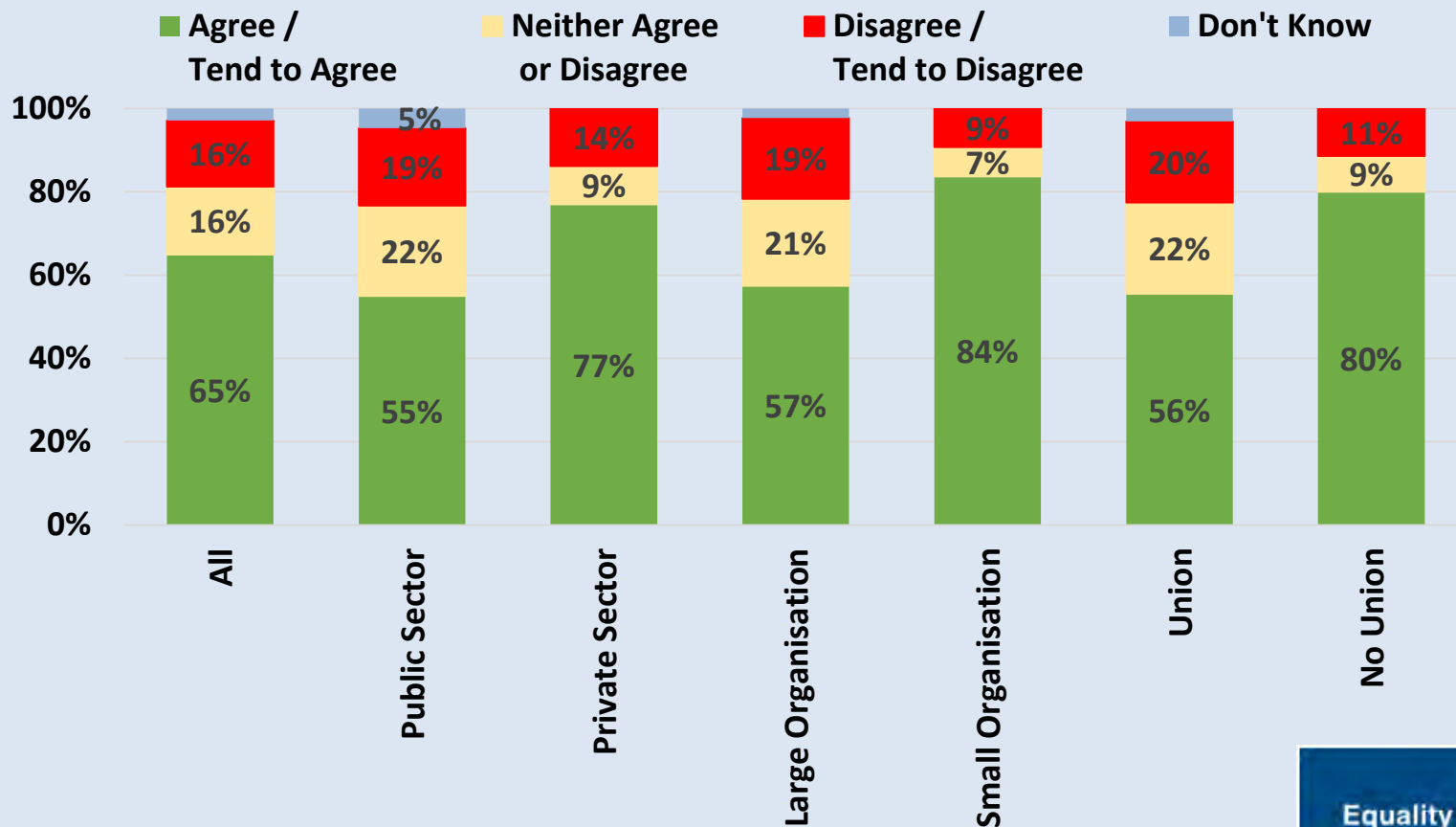
■ Agree / Tend to Agree
 ■ Neither Agree or Disagree
 ■ Disagree / Tend to Disagree
 ■ Don't Know

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Developing and Implementing Workplace Policies

Managers and/or supervisors are trained on implementing our policies
(n=207)

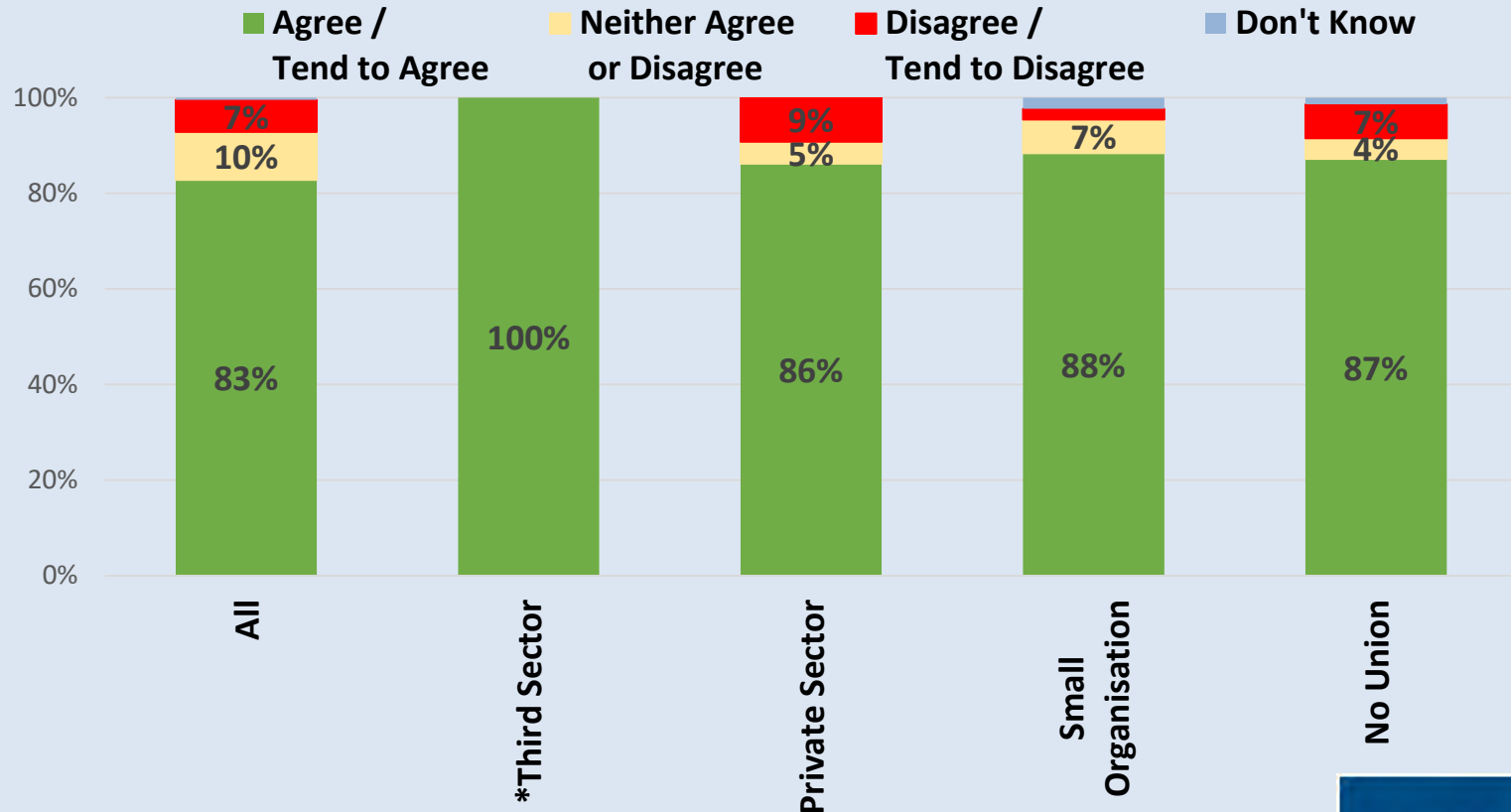


Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Developing and Implementing Workplace Policies

Staff are made aware of our equality policies and their rights and responsibilities under these policies (n=208)

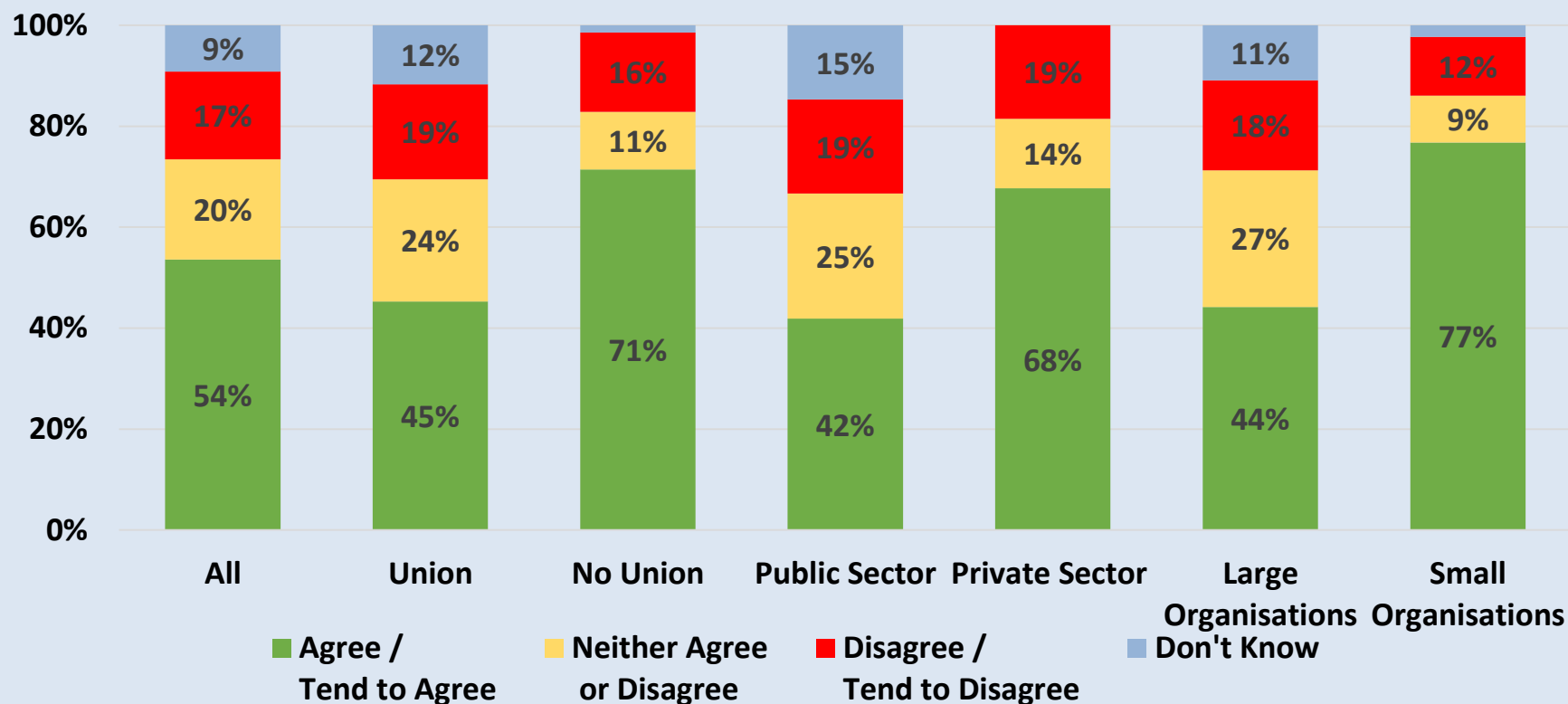


*A charity or voluntary sector organisation or social enterprise
Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Monitoring Workplace Policies

We regularly monitor the implementation of policies to ensure consistency across the organisation (n=208)

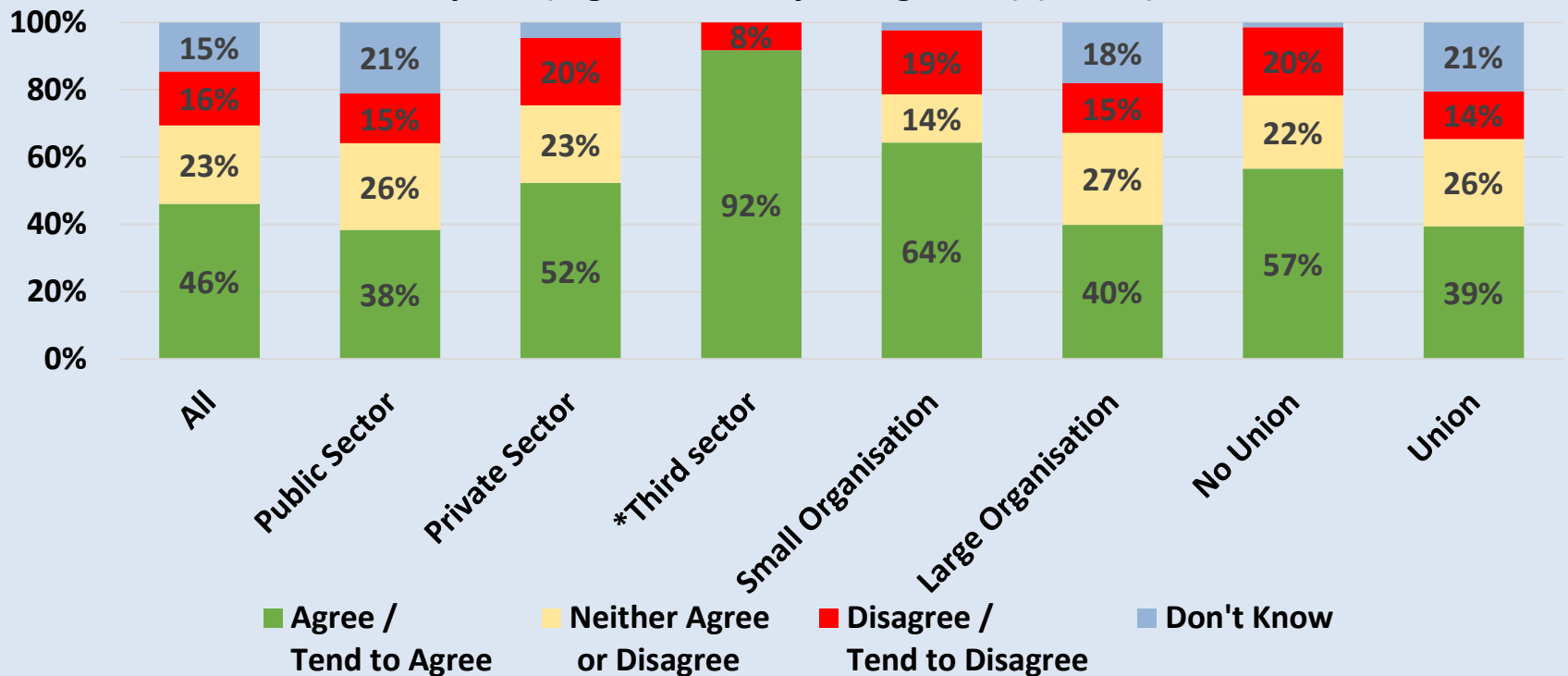


Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Monitoring Workplace Policies

We monitor the composition of applicants and employees to assess the diversity of our workforce across equality grounds OTHER than that required by law (e.g. community background) (n=205)

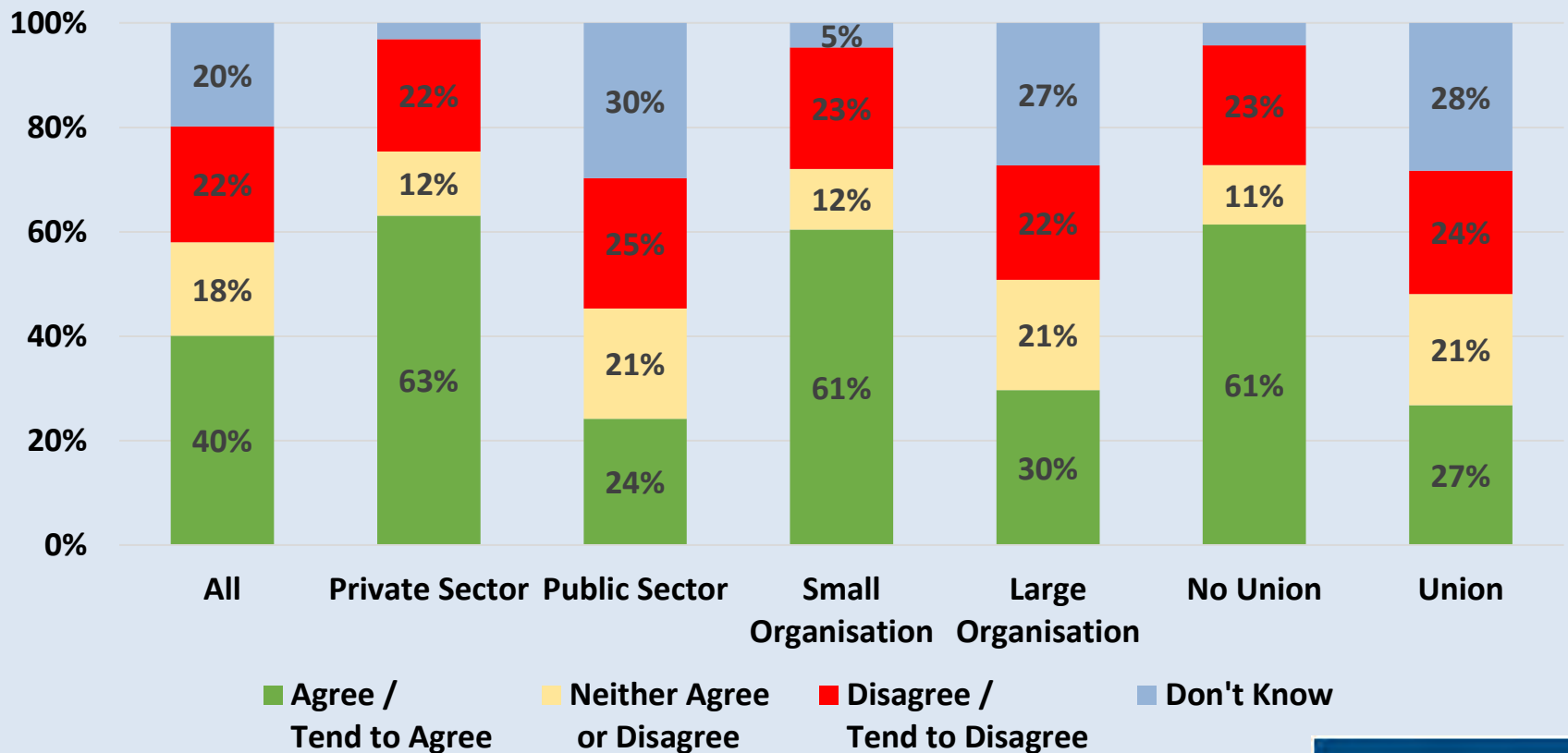


*A charity or voluntary sector organisation or social enterprise
 Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Monitoring Workplace Policies

We regularly use exit interviews as an opportunity to evaluate the extent to which we provide a welcoming and inclusive environment (n=206)*

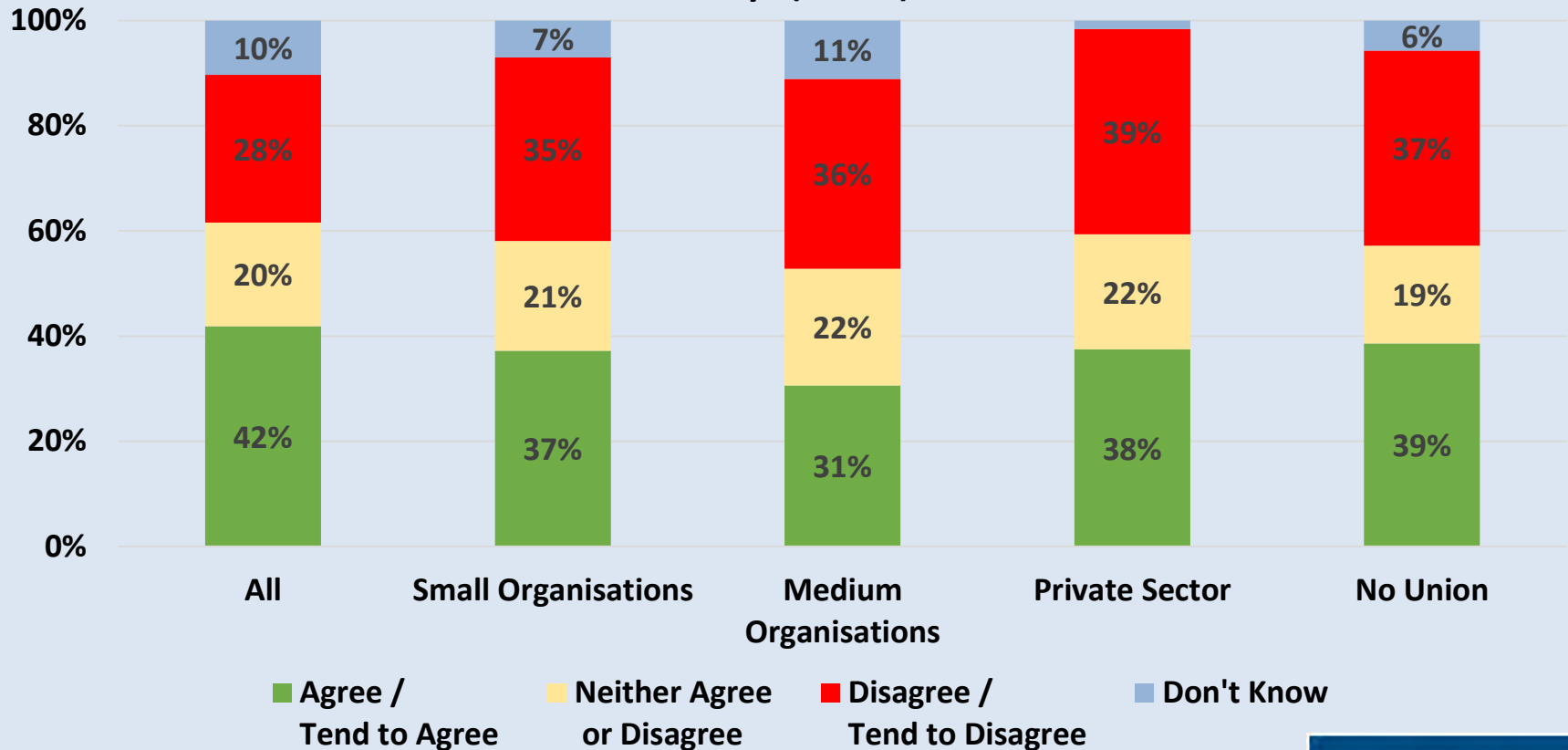


Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Monitoring Workplace Policies

We evaluate the provision of an inclusive culture through regular staff surveys (n=203)*

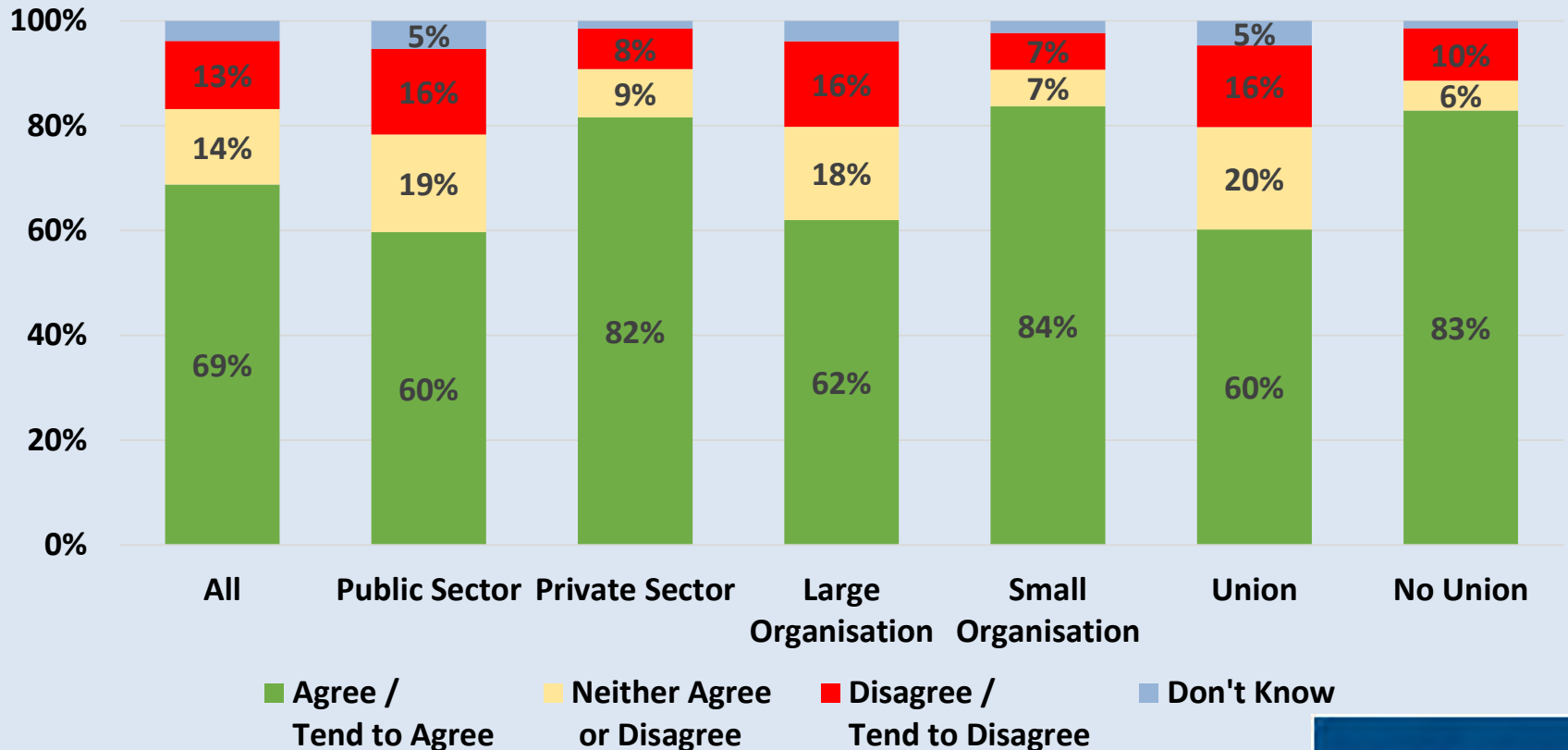


Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Handling Complaints

We have clear support structures for complainants, alleged harassers and managers investigation complaints (n=208)

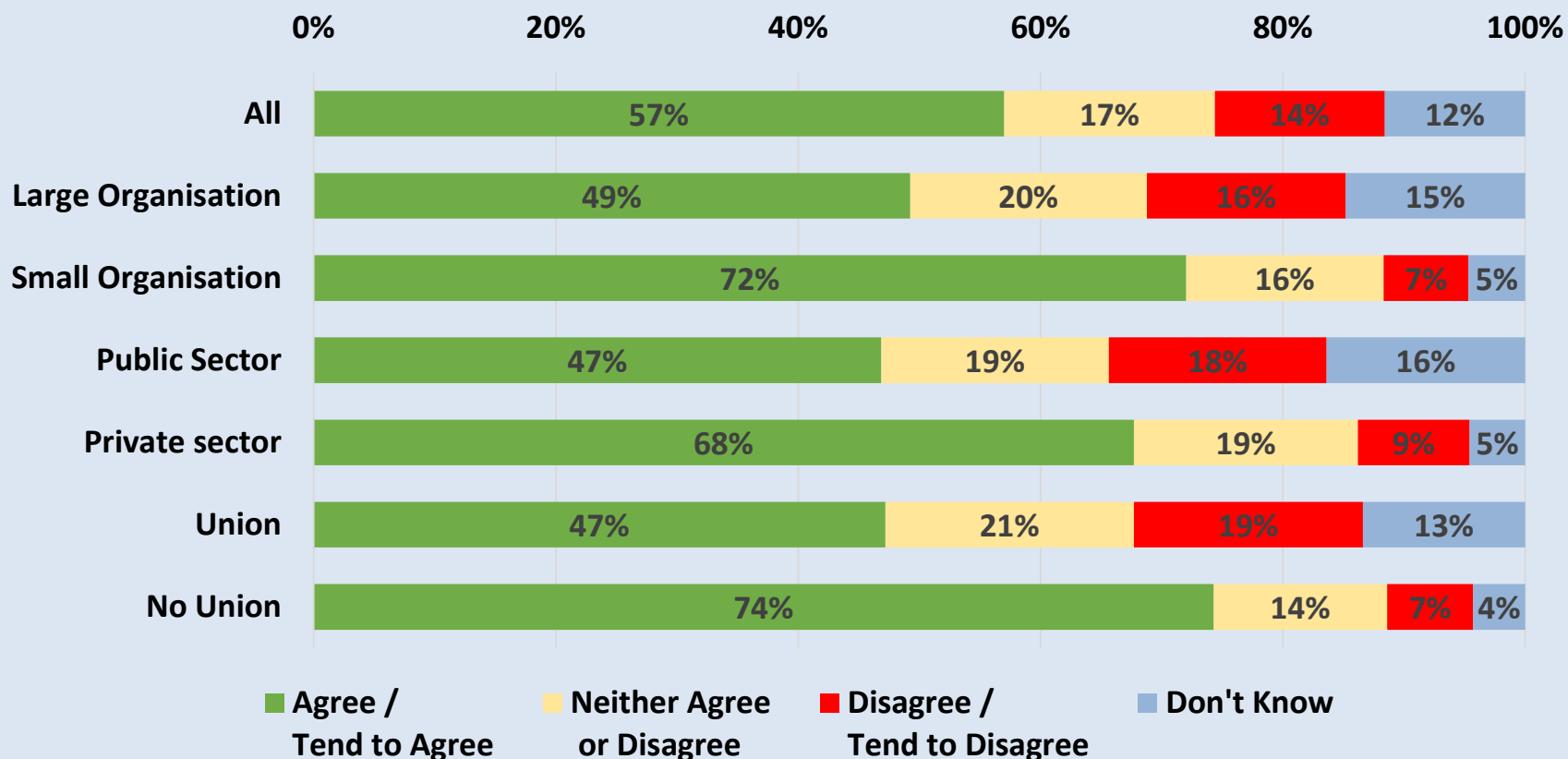


Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Handling Complaints

Our organisation has effective whistle-blowing mechanisms (n=207)*



Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Barriers to Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment: Key barriers employers generally encounter in promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment that values equality and diversity.

Good Practice in Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment: Examples, provided by employers, of good practice in promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment in the workplace.

Preventing Unwanted Behaviour in the Workplace: Examples, provided by employers, of actions taken by them or their organisation to prevent unwanted behaviours occurring in the workplace.

Help to Promote a Welcoming and Inclusive Work Environment: Examples, provided by employers, of what government and other organisations could do to help promote a welcoming and inclusive environment

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Barriers to Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment: Key barriers employers encounter in promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment*



*Employers were able to provide multiple responses to this question.
n=282 employers; n=196 responses; n= 6 none / not applicable responses

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Barriers to Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment: Key barriers employers encounter in promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment

Employers were asked “In your opinion, what key barriers do employers generally encounter in promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment that values equality and diversity?..”

Most frequently given barriers related to the following:

- **Attitudes:** Employers felt that the *attitudes of staff and other colleagues* were a key barrier to promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment (n=33 responses).
- **Knowledge:** Employers felt that a *lack of knowledge* was a key barrier to promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment (n= 24 responses).
- **Resources:** Employers felt that a *lack of resources in terms of staff, time and finance* were a key barrier to promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment (n=22 responses).

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Barriers to Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Attitudes: Examples from employers who felt that attitudes were a key barrier to promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment (*n=33 responses)

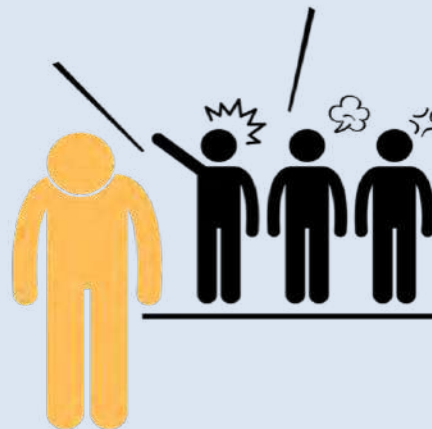
"use of social media among employees"
Medium, Private sector

Negative attitudes from staff."
Large, Public sector

"Lack of motivation and poor attitude"
Large, Public sector

Employee mindset"
Medium, Private sector

"Prejudices"
Small, Private sector



"poor attitude towards the concept"
Small, Private sector

"people refusing to embrace change"
Large, Public sector

"disinterest"
Small, Public sector

"Lack of interest from the ethnic group"
Large, Private sector

"ignorant management attitudes"
Large, Public sector

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Barriers to Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Knowledge: Examples from employers who felt that knowledge was a key barrier to promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment (*n=24 responses)

<i>"understanding among workforce of the importance of equality and diversity"</i> Small, Charity / voluntary sector	<i>"Ignorance of legal obligations"</i> Small, Public sector	<i>"lack of knowledge"</i> Medium, Private sector
<i>"Keeping up with emerging best practice"</i> Medium, Public sector		<i>Lack of knowledge in the day to day challenges of inclusivity"</i> Small, Private sector
<i>"fear of unknown how to handle difficult issues"</i> Small, Private sector		<i>Culture barriers and unknowns and myths"</i> Large, Public sector
<i>"Lack of understanding of other cultures"</i> Large, Public sector	<i>"Lack of education with regards to disabilities ie: not all are visible"</i> Large, Public sector	<i>A focus on neutrality rather than diversity"</i> Medium, Public sector

*Employers were asked to provide up to 3 key barriers that employers generally encounter in promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Barriers to Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Resources: Examples from employers who felt that resources were a key barrier to promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment (*n=22 responses)

"The uncertainty of the future for planning and securing posts."
Small, Charity / voluntary sector

"Financial constraints"
Large, Private sector

"Not a priority"
Large, Private sector

"The current cuts to the voluntary sector"
Small, Charity / voluntary sector

"Insufficient resources allocated to effectively promoting and implementing equality and inclusion"
Large, Public sector



"Commitment from employees due to work load."
Large, Private sector

"Training and implementation costs"
Small, Private sector

"time and financial restraints - training/ time to do so/cover"
Medium, Public sector

"Limited resources in small business"
Small, Private sector

***Employers were asked to provide up to 3 key barriers that employers generally encounter in promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment.**

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Barriers to Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Other Issues: Examples from employers who felt that the following issues were also key barriers to promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment

PREJUDICE & BIAS

(n=18 responses)

"occasional hostility / incredulity from staff about some diversity issues such as the retention of a trans person post op or the promotion of breastfeeding in the workplace"
Large, Public sector

LABOUR POOL

(n=7 responses)

"lack of diversity in the pool of people we are recruiting from"
Large, Public sector

COMMITMENT

(n=6 responses)

"the will to do it"
Medium, Public sector

FEAR

(n=7 responses)

"Fear they may get it wrong"
Medium, Public sector

CULTURE

(n=17 responses)

"Organisational culture"
Large, Private sector

LEADERSHIP

(n=6 responses)

"leadership and management"
Large, Private sector

TRAINING

(n=7 responses)

"Lack of training"
Small, Private sector

POLICY

(n=6 responses)

"ensuring that all staff are on board and adhere to the relevant policies"
Large, Private sector

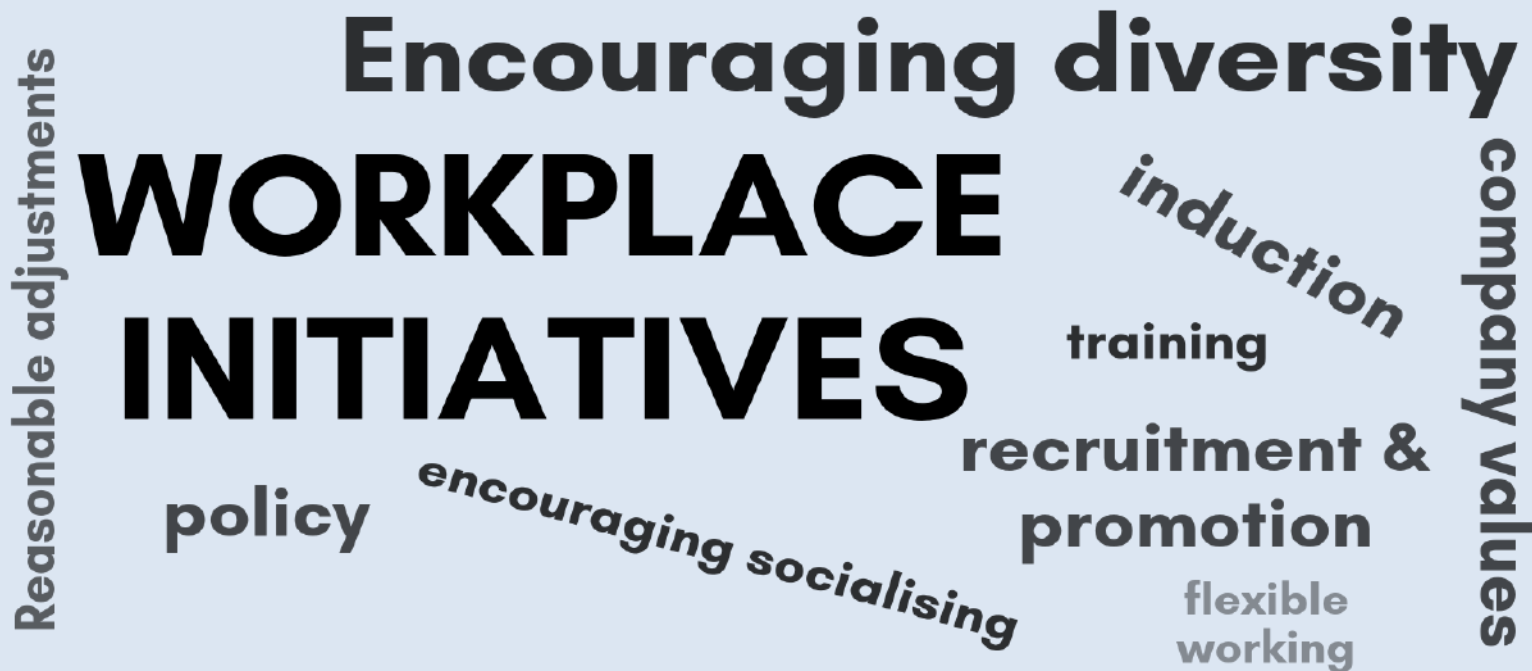
PRACTICALITY

(n=6 responses)

"Physical demand of job role"
Medium, Private sector

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Good Practice in Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment: Employers were asked for an example of good practice from their workplace in promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment*



*n=282 employers; n=64 responses; n=28 no / not applicable responses

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Good Practice in Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment:

Employers were asked “Do you have an example of good practice from your workplace in promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment that you would like to share?..”

Most frequently given examples related to the following:

- **Workplace Initiatives:** Employers said that *workplace initiatives* provided good practice examples of promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment (n=14 responses)
- **Encouraging diversity:** Employers said that *actions that encouraged diversity* were good practice in promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment (n=7 responses)
- **Recruitment & Promotion:** Employers gave examples of *recruitment and promotion practices* as good practice in promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment (n=5 responses).
- **Company values, policy and induction practices:** Employers said their *company values, policies and induction procedures* were examples of good practice in promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment (n=4 responses each).

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Good Practice in Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment:

Examples of Good Practice: Employers were asked for an example of good practice from their workplace in promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment (n=282 employers; *n=64 responses)

WORKPLACE INITIATIVES

(n=14 responses)

"We have a Diversity and Inclusion Council which is made up of employees throughout the business. We meet monthly and discuss a range of issues that affect the business and review our practices and make suggestions for improvement. This is supported by Senior Management."

Large, Private sector

COMPANY VALUES

(n=4 responses)

"We have our values printed and on the walls at peoples desks and we address any issues by referring to the values. They are live and we all have responsibility for ensuring they are followed."

Small, Charity / voluntary sector

ENCOURAGING DIVERSITY

(n=7 responses)

"[We] regularly use freelancers with a disability. [We] offer training places for people with a disability"

Small, Private sector

RECRUITMENT & PROMOTION

(n=5 responses)

"Conducting external independent research regarding reasons under-represented groups do not apply to our organization and implementation of associated recommendations."

Large, Public sector

INDUCTION

(n=4 responses)

"induction programme"

Medium, Private sector

POLICY

(n=4 responses)

"Family friendly policies"

Small, Charity/ voluntary sector

*n=28 no / not applicable responses

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Preventing Unwanted Behaviour in the Workplace: Employers were asked for an example of something they or their organisation has done to prevent unwanted behaviours occurring in the workplace*



*n=282 employers; *n=75 responses; n=21 no / not applicable responses

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Preventing Unwanted Behaviour in the Workplace

Employers were asked “Thinking about your workplace, can you give an example of something you or your organisation have done to prevent unwanted behaviours occurring in the workplace?..”

Most frequently given examples related to the following:

- **Training:** Employers said they have *implemented training* to prevent unwanted behaviours occurring in the workplace (n=24 responses).
- **Policy:** Employers said they have *developed and implemented policies* to prevent unwanted behaviours occurring in the workplace (n=12 responses).
- **Taking Action:** Employers said they have *taken action against perpetrators* to prevent unwanted behaviours occurring in the workplace (n=10 responses).
- **Communication:** Employers said they ensured *good communication* with staff to prevent unwanted behaviours occurring in the workplace (n=7 responses).
- **Reminders:** Employers said they sent reminders to staff regarding appropriate behaviour to prevent unwanted behaviours occurring in the workplace (n=5 response).
- **Leadership:** Employers said they had shown leadership to prevent unwanted behaviours occurring in the workplace (n=3 responses).

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Preventing Unwanted Behaviour in the Workplace:

Examples of Actions Undertaken: Employers were asked for an example of something they or their organisation has done to prevent unwanted behaviours occurring in the workplace.

TRAINING

(n=24 responses)

"We regularly hold workshops reminding staff of their obligations and the company responsibilities with respect to bullying and harassment"
Medium, Private sector

"[We have] comprehensive Fairness, Equality and Dignity at Work training for all levels of employees, with a specific module on unconscious bias."
Large, Public sector

COMMUNICATION

(n=7 responses)

"We ensure we communicate effectively with all staff and encourage their input."
Small, Charity/voluntary sector

TAKING ACTION

(n=10 responses)

"We address any issues immediately and we have regular communication across the board."
Small, Charity/voluntary sector

REMINDERS

(n=5 responses)

"Setting clear guidance and ensuring staff sign these annually".
Large, Public sector

POLICY

(n=12 responses)

"putting policies in place and ensuring staff are aware of them and the importance of why they are there."
Medium, Private sector

LEADERSHIP

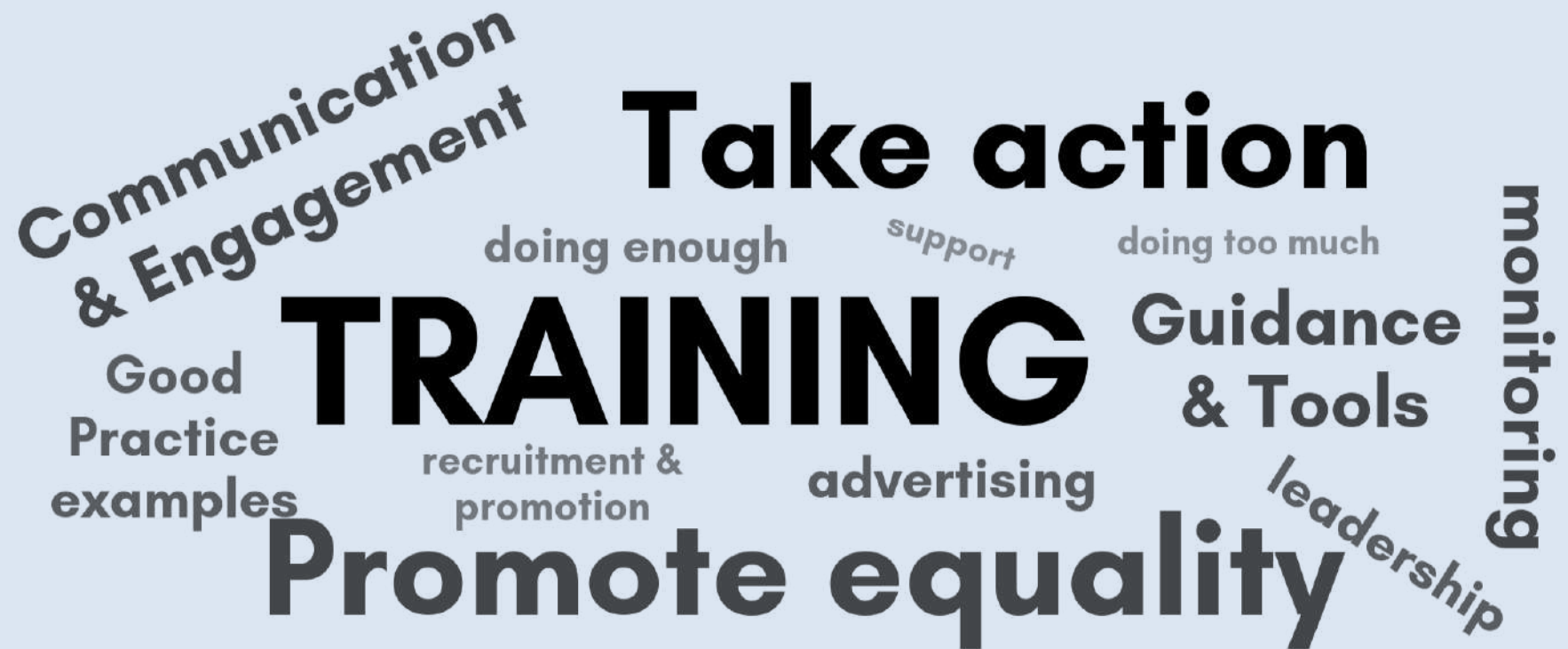
(n=3 responses)

"Many years ago I had to intervene when I heard both racist/sectarian and sexist comments made by certain staff. That, I believe, set in place among staff the understanding that such conversations in the workplace were unacceptable. We have not faced this since that I am aware of."
Small, Private sector

*n=21 no / not applicable responses

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Help to Promote a Welcoming and Inclusive Work Environment: Employers were asked for an example of something government or others organisations could do to help to promote a welcoming and inclusive work environment*



*n=282 employers; *n=66 responses; n=7 no / not applicable responses

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Help to Promote a Welcoming and Inclusive Work Environment:

Employers were asked “Can you give an example of what government and other organisations, including the Equality Commission, should do to help you promote a welcoming and inclusive working environment?..”

Most frequently given examples related to the following:

- **Training:** Employers said that further *training* would help them promote a welcoming and inclusive environment (n=12 responses).
- **Guidance and Tools:** Employers said that access to further *guidance and tools* would help them promote a welcoming and inclusive environment (n=8 responses).
- **Promoting Equality:** Employers said *actions to promote equality* by government and/or other organisations would help them promote a welcoming and inclusive environment (n=8 responses).
- **Monitoring:** Employers said *monitoring and /or changes to monitoring* would help them promote a welcoming and inclusive environment (n=7 responses).
- **Communication and Engagement:** Employers said that *greater communication and engagement* with business would help them promote a welcoming and inclusive environment (n=7 responses).
- **Good Practice:** Employers said that access to examples of *good practice* would help them promote a welcoming and inclusive environment (n=5 responses).
- **Advertising:** Employers said that *greater advertising* by government and other organisations would help them promote a welcoming and inclusive environment (n=3 responses).

Employer Experiences of Promoting a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Help to Promote a Welcoming and Inclusive Work Environment:

Actions for other organisations: Employers were asked for an example of something government or others organisations could do to help to promote a welcoming and inclusive work environment (n=282 employers; *n=66 responses)

TRAINING

(n=12 responses)

"Training and sample policies for inclusion in contracts of employment for SME's [small-medium employers]"

Small, Private sector

"Seminars indicating good practice."

Large, Public sector

GUIDANCE & TOOLS

(n=8 responses)

"Possibly more simple tools to help us identify gaps in our organisation"

Small, Charity/voluntary sector

ADVERTISING

(n=5 responses)

"Public advertising campaigns."

Large, Public sector

TAKE ACTION

(n=9 responses)

"More prosecutions of perpetrators within Industrial Tribunals."

Small, Private sector

GOOD PRACTICE

(n=5 responses)

"Communicate and promote the initiatives that other organisations have undertaken to promote diversity"

Large, Private sector

COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

(n=7 responses)

"Come out to businesses"

Large, Private sector

PROMOTING EQUALITY

(n=8 responses)

"Promoting the significance of equality and inclusion to a healthy workplace culture and effective organisation development."

Large, Public sector

MONITORING

(n=7 responses)

"The EC [Equality Commission] should be more modern in its equality monitoring. Instead of forcing people to choose one community background or another, we should be looking more at the bigger picture of diversity."

Large, Private sector

*n=7 no / not applicable responses

INFORMATION GATHERING:

Methodology
Reporting

Methodology & Reporting

Methodology

- The Commission undertook **two information gathering exercises**, asking employers and employees to complete either an employer-focused or an employee-focused online survey.
- The information gathering exercises used snowball or referral sampling methodologies, whereby respondents self-selected whether to respond to the exercise.
- The information gathering exercises took place between 29 November 2018 and 1 March 2019.
- **The findings are not representative for either all employers or employees, or any disaggregation of employers and employees, in Northern Ireland and no inferences can be made from the findings**

Reporting

- All findings presented within this report are based on simple noteworthy differences from the responses made by all respondents; no statistical methodologies or significance testing was used for this report.
- Where practical, counts are presented. These will vary due to non-response by respondents to certain questions.
- The findings are based on a self-selecting group of respondents who offered their experiences of the workplace to help the Commission gather evidence to support the development of further advice and guidance for employers to improve practices across a range of equality grounds



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