

Public Opinion Survey on Equality in Northern Ireland

Full Report

Ipsos MORI Northern Ireland
December 2019

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Ipsos Public Affairs

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

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Executive summary

Awareness and understanding

When asked what the term 'equality' means to participants thinking specifically about Northern Ireland (NI), the most commonly cited response is that it means the equal treatment of all people (16%).

Over one in ten participants (14%) hold a negative view about the level of equality in NI or feel that equality is lacking.

Attitudes

Over a third of participants agree that the term 'equality' is meaningless to them and not something they think about day to day (36%), marking a significant increase from the previous wave (28%).

Equality status and discrimination

The groups considered to be protected from unlawful discrimination overall are racial and ethnic groups (24%), those of a certain sexual orientation (18%) and those living with a disability (16%). The proportion of participants feeling that none of the listed groups are protected has increased this wave to 17%, from 10% in the previous wave.

Almost a third of participants (30%) said that they do not know any groups protected from unlawful discrimination.

In terms of the settings in which people are protected from unlawful discrimination, 36% stated the workplace. Just over one in ten considered people to be protected in education (11%). While in 2018-19 18% of participants mentioned that people are protected from unlawful discrimination in accessing public services, this has dropped to 8% in 2019. Again there is a significant increase since the last wave in participants feeling that none of these settings are covered by unlawful discrimination (up to 12% from 8%).

Over a third of participants (36%) said they do not know any settings in which people are protected from unlawful discrimination.

Views on equality in NI

The majority of participants overall agree that equality and anti-discrimination laws in NI are necessary (82%), however this marks a significant decrease since the last wave when 90% agreed. A small, albeit growing, proportion disagree that anti-discrimination laws are necessary (up to 8% in 2019 from 4% in 2018-19).

There is less optimism among NI citizens that people can achieve their potential regardless of their personal characteristics; while 61% agree that this is the case, two in ten disagree (20%), up from one in ten in 2018-19 (12%).

The majority of participants agree that workplaces are welcoming and inclusive in NI generally (58%). However, since the last wave the proportion of participants disagreeing that workplaces are welcoming and inclusive has increased from 8% to 13%.



Executive summary (cont'd)

Views on equality in NI (cont'd)

Similarly with the notion that workers are generally treated with dignity and respect, the proportion of participants disagreeing has increased from 13% in 2018-19 to 18% in 2019. The majority, however, agree that workers are generally treated with dignity and respect (57%).

The level of concern over future anti-discrimination laws in NI compared to Great Britain (GB) or the Republic of Ireland (ROI) is mixed. Over a third say they are worried that the laws protecting them from discrimination will not be as strong as for others in GB or ROI (34%). Just under a third are not worried about this (30%). It is worth noting that those who express greatest concern are non-heterosexual individuals, those who are living with a disability or illness and those who identify as nationalist.

Personal experiences of unwanted behaviour

The majority of participants stated that they had not personally experienced a situation at work where they were not treated with dignity and respect based on their personal characteristics in the last 12 months (65%). Thirteen percent of participants stated that they had not been treated with dignity and respect (13%). Twenty two percent of participants stated that they have not been in a workplace during the last 12 months (22%).

Among those participants who are working, 70% reported that they had not witnessed a situation in the last 12 months where others in their workplace were not treated with dignity and respect based on their personal characteristics. Just under a third of participants said they had witnessed this (30%).

Aspects of life in Northern Ireland

A number of statements were presented to participants covering various aspects of life in NI, including the workplace, in education, the local area and public services.

Workplaces

The level of agreement around aspects of workplaces in NI is mixed. Less than a third of participants (29%) agree that workplaces tend to employ people with disabilities, while over a third (37%) disagree that this is the case. This marks a significant shift since 2018-19, when over a third of people agreed that workplaces tend to employ people with disabilities (35%) and almost a quarter disagreed (24%).

Once in employment, just under half agree that employees with disabilities are well supported (49%). Since 2018-19, a higher proportion of participants disagree that workplaces support employees with disabilities (up to 20% in 2019 from 14% in 2018-19).

There are more mixed views over support on mental health in the workplace. Over a third of participants agree that they rarely support employees with mental ill-health (39%), however 29% disagree that this is the case.



Executive summary (cont'd)

In 2019, over half of participants (60%) share the perception that there are still jobs still more suited to men than women. Over a third (67%), reject the idea that employers should employ people according to a job being seen as a man's or a woman's job.

Education

There is broad agreement that pre-school should meet the needs of all children, including those with disabilities or whose first language is not English (86%). There is also agreement, albeit to a lesser extent, that the curriculum should be used to address bullying because of a pupil's personal characteristics (72%).

The issue of funding in schools to support the needs of all pupils draws more mixed levels of support, though the majority agree that funding should focus on those groups which do less well at school (59%). Just over two in ten participants disagree with this (21%).

Two thirds of participants agree that additional funding provided to schools by government – to meet the needs of, for example, disabled pupils – should be monitored in order to track how the funding is spent (66%). Around two in ten disagree that this funding should be monitored (19%).

Local area

Thinking about participation at a local level, the majority of participants say they would consider voluntary or community work (67%), while 21% say they would not.

There is less engagement with the prospect of sitting on a public board such as a school's board of governors or a board for a publicly funded body; over a third of participants would consider this (39%), however almost half would not (48%).

Public services

Overall, just under half of participants (49%) agree that the needs of different groups of people are taken into account when planning public services, while 25% disagree.

Less than a quarter of participants (22%) agree that public figures show leadership on equality matters, while over half (52%) disagree with this.

These findings are consistent with the previous wave of research.



Background to the research

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct a telephone survey measuring public opinion on equality in Northern Ireland (NI) among the general public in winter 2018-19. Following this, ECNI commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct the second wave of this telephone survey in order to:

- **Understand** the level of awareness of equality issues.
- **Gather** views on equality issues in Northern Ireland.
- **Measure** perceptions of Northern Ireland's performance on equality issues.
- Collect data that is **comparable** with the 2018 survey results

The findings from the research will be used to support ECNI's 2019-2022 corporate plan.

Presentation of the data

Corrective rim weighting has been applied to the data on the region, age, gender and social class quotas to ensure the findings are representative of the population in Northern Ireland.

Where results do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of don't knows or not stated responses. Multiple response questions are indicated on the relevant charts.

The report contains topline findings and demographic breakdowns where statistically significant differences are found. Statistical significance testing was done using a Z-score, which is designed to test the difference between two proportions or test a single proportion against the total. The data has been tested to a 95% confidence level. Statistical significance is indicated in the report as follows:

Statistical differences between a variable and the average are denoted with a solid green circle or a solid red circle, indicating that a variable is significantly **higher** or **lower** than the overall result. For example, the chart on page 21 shows that those in the ABC1 socio-economic group are significantly **more** likely to identify that people are protected from discrimination on the basis of gender (18%) than on average (14%).

Statistical differences between variables within a sub-group (such as region or age) are denoted with a dashed green circle or dashed red circle, indicating that one variable is significantly **higher** or **lower** than another variable within the same sub-group. For example, the chart on

page 40 shows that those who are gay, lesbian bisexual or other (LGB or other) are significantly **more** likely to disagree that employers should employ people according to a job being seen as suited to a man or woman (86%) than those who are straight (67%).

In some cases, a result may be both significantly **higher** or **lower** than the average *and* significantly **higher** or **lower** than other variables in the same sub-group. An example of this can also be found on page 40. The chart shows that those living in counties Tyrone/Fermanagh are significantly **more** likely to agree than the average and also significantly **more** likely to agree than those living in Greater Belfast or county Down, meaning both a solid green circle and a dashed green circle is used. Those living in county Down are significantly **less** likely to agree than the average and significantly **less** likely to disagree than those living in counties Tyrone/Fermanagh, meaning both a solid red circle and dashed red circle is used. Those in Greater Belfast are significantly **less** likely to agree than those in counties Tyrone/Fermanagh, but do not differ significantly from the average, therefore only a dashed red circle is used.

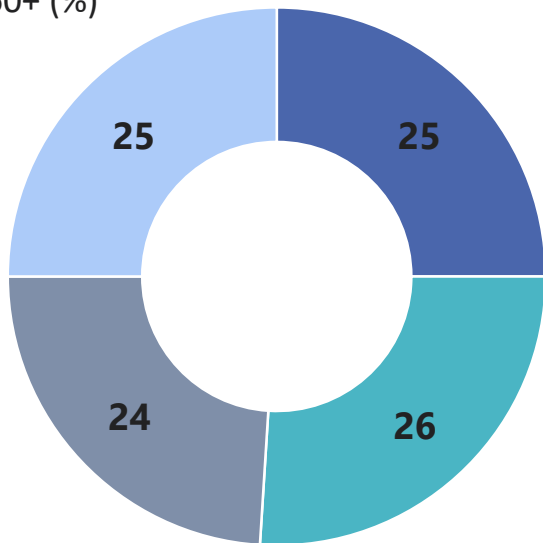
As this is the second wave of the research, comparative data is shown. Where applicable, significant differences between results in 2019 and results in 2018-19 are highlighted, with red and green triangles indicating where a result is significantly higher or lower than in the previous wave. Please note that statistical tests were not applied to Q1 as it is an open-ended question. The previous results are presented for indicative purposes only.



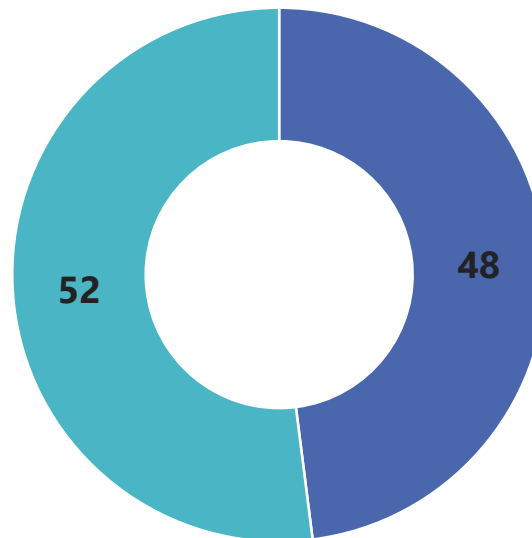
Demographics

Age, gender and sexual orientation

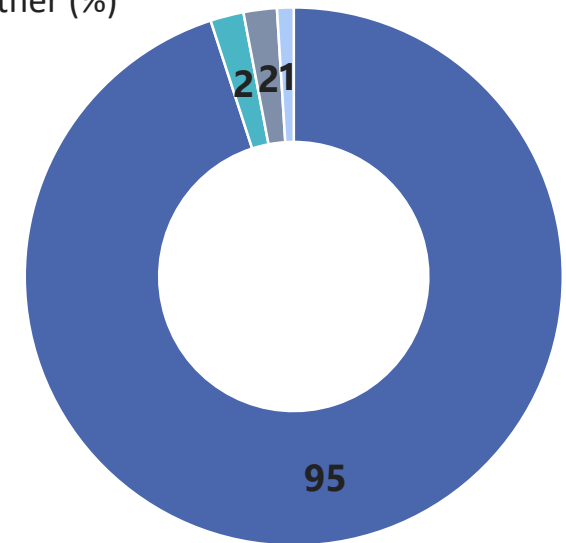
- 16-29 (%)
- 30-44 (%)
- 45-59 (%)
- 60+ (%)



- Male (%)
- Female (%)

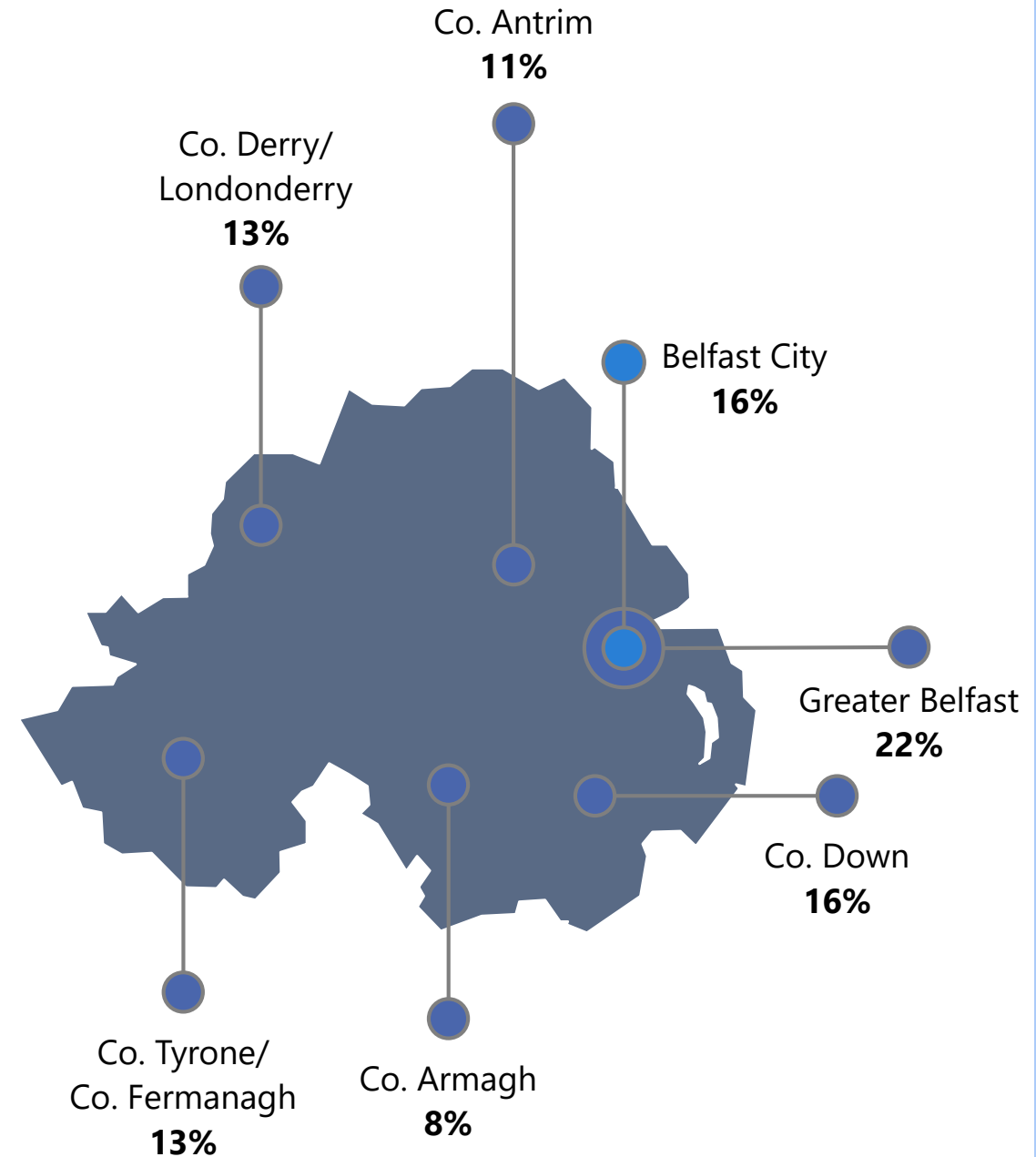
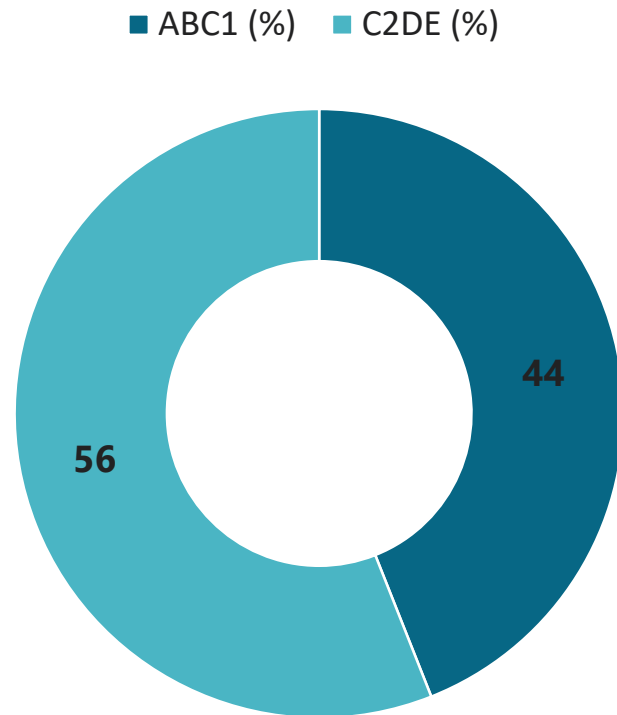


- Straight/heterosexual (%)
- Gay/lesbian (%)
- Bisexual (%)
- Other (%)



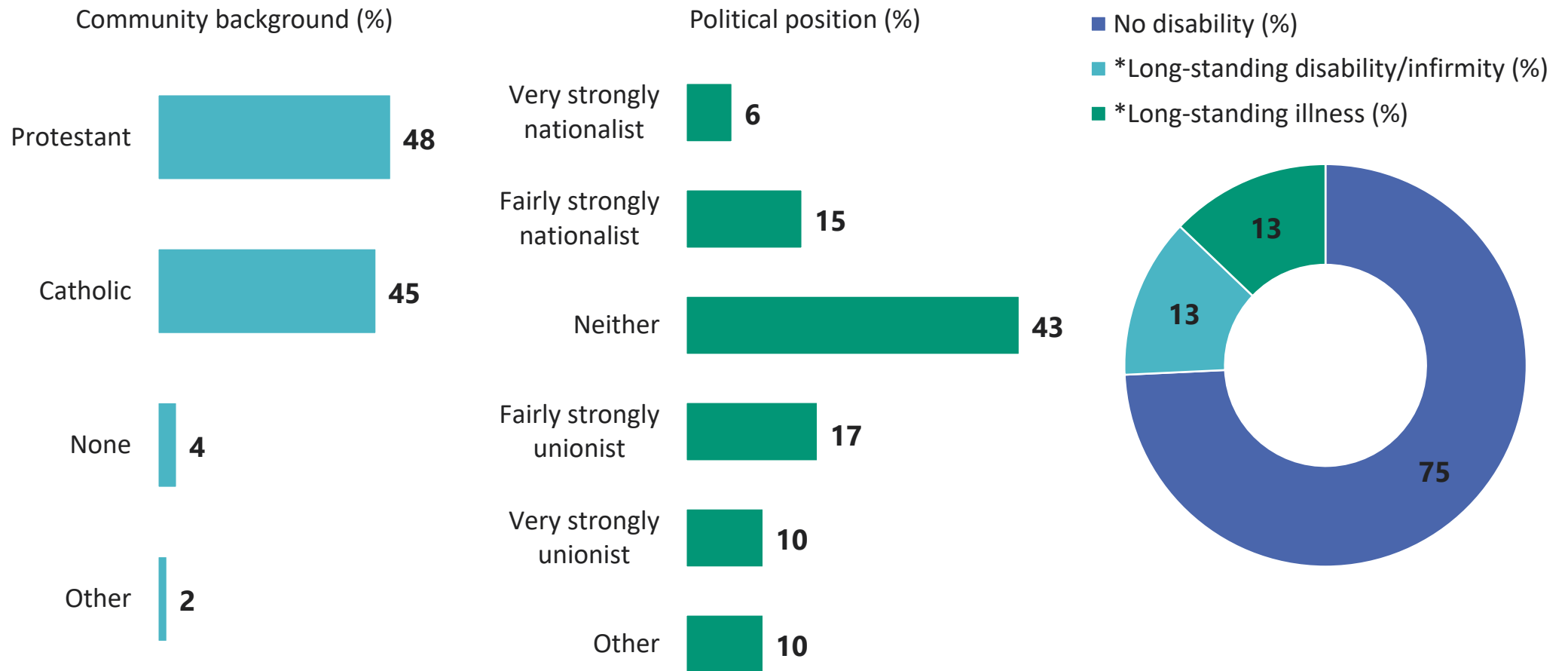
Demographics

Social class and region



Demographics

Community background, political position and disability status

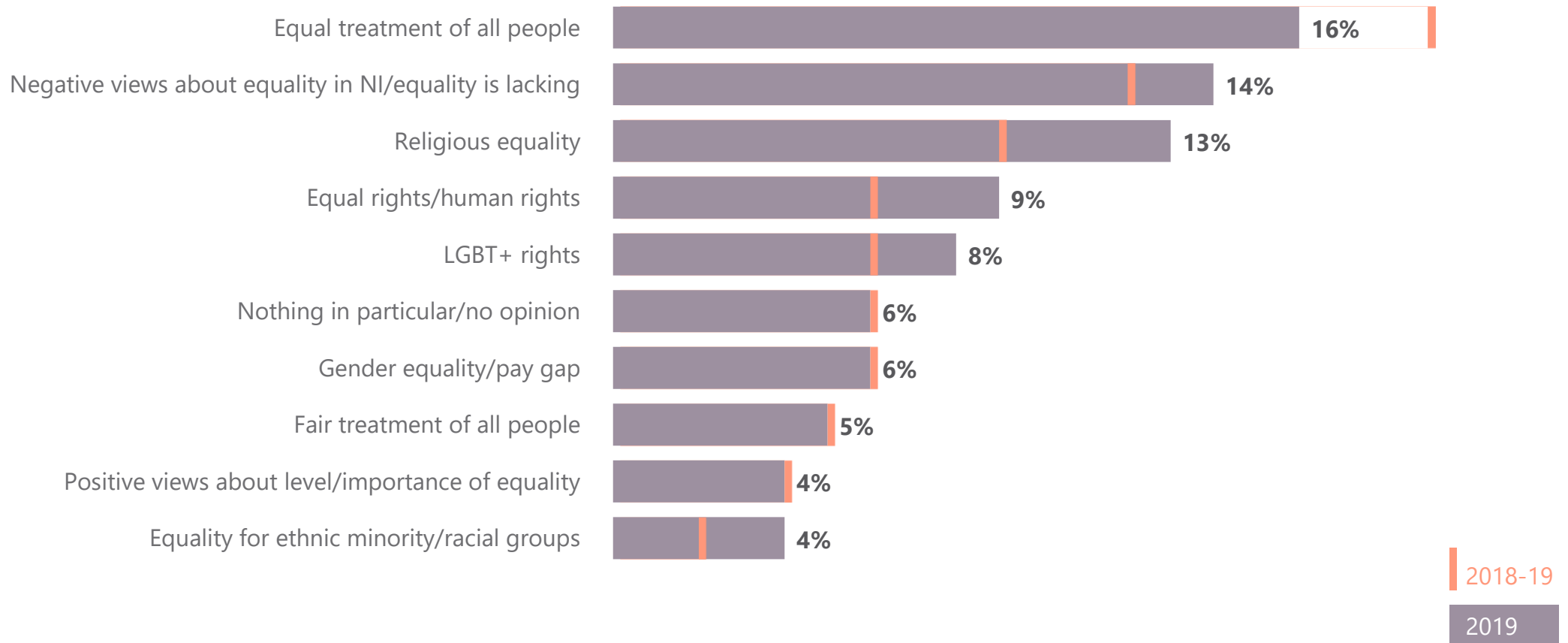


Research findings



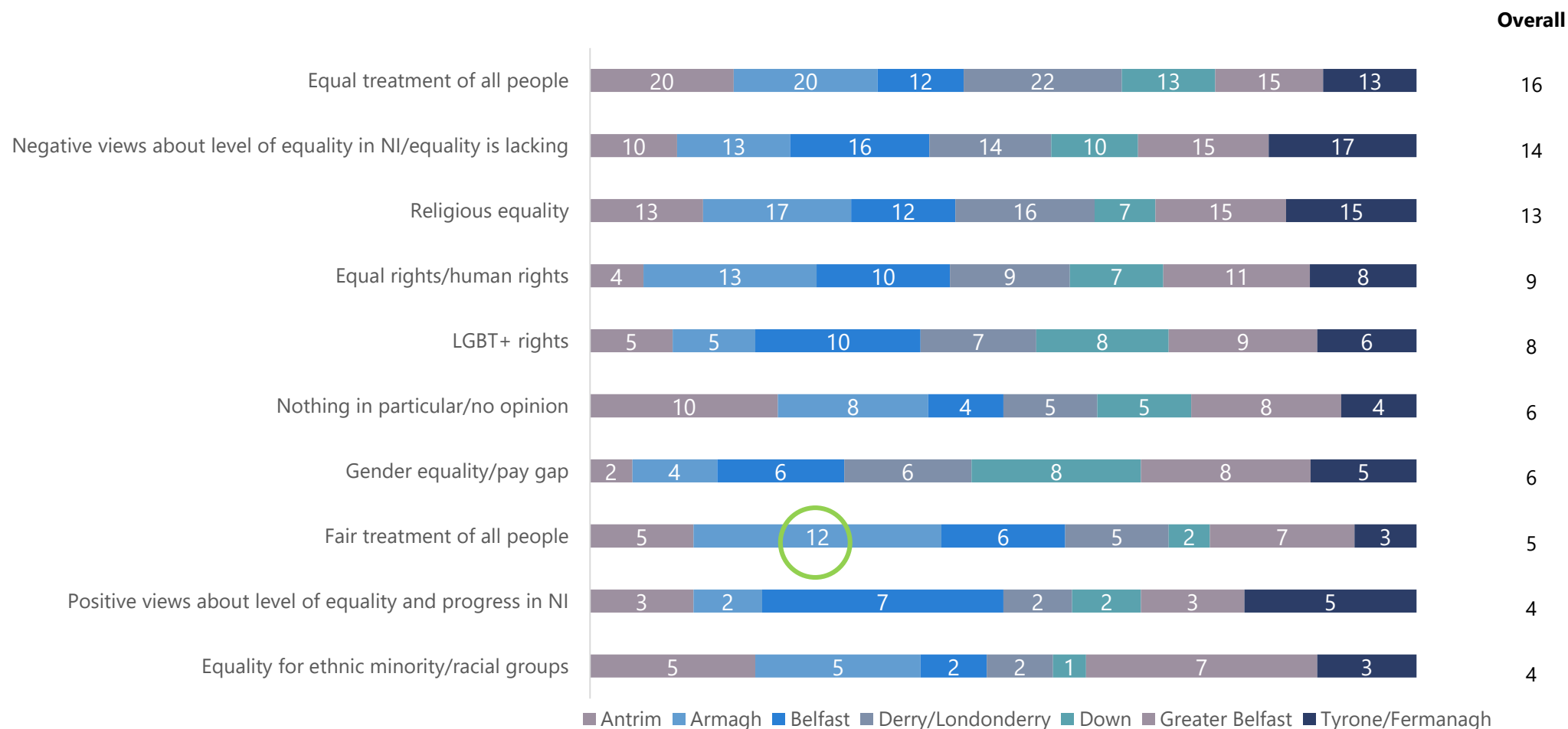
Awareness and understanding

Q1. Thinking specifically about Northern Ireland, what do you think of when you hear the term “equality”? (top 10 responses)



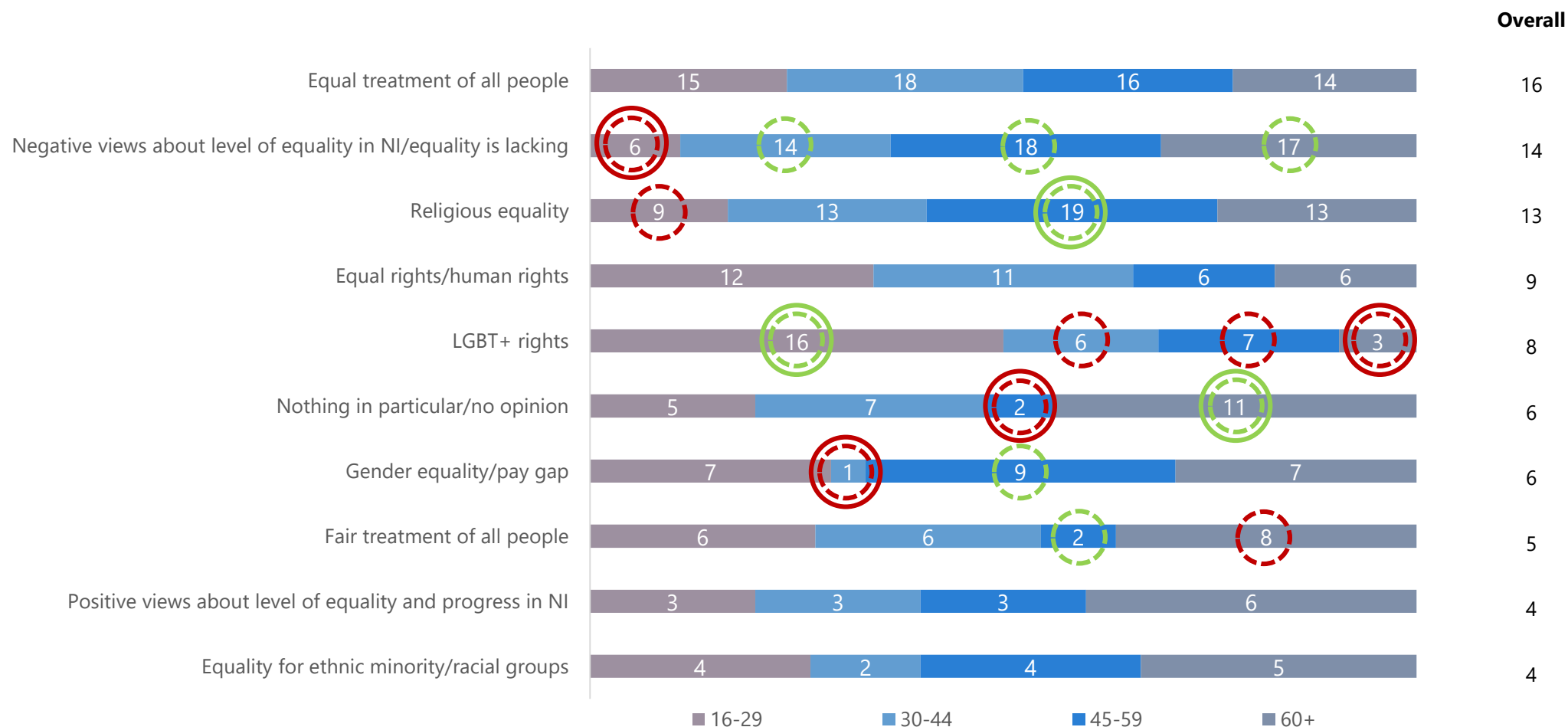
Awareness and understanding by region

Q1. Thinking specifically about Northern Ireland, what do you think of when you hear the term "equality"? (top 10 responses)



Awareness and understanding by age

Q1. Thinking specifically about Northern Ireland, what do you think of when you hear the term “equality”? (top 10 responses)



Awareness and understanding by community background

Q1. Thinking specifically about Northern Ireland, what do you think of when you hear the term "equality"? (top 10 responses)



Awareness and understanding

Q1. Thinking specifically about Northern Ireland, what do you think of when you hear the term “equality”? (all responses)

Response	% 19	% 18-19	Response (cont'd)	% 19	% 18-19
Equal treatment of all people	16	19	Historical issues/troubles	2	1
Negative views about level of equality in NI/equality is lacking	14	12	Overcoming divisions in NI/peace process	2	9
Religious equality	13	9	Inequality	2	1
Equal rights/human rights	8	6	No discrimination	1	1
LGBT+ rights	8	6	Equality is a confusing subject	1	0
Nothing in particular/no opinion	6	6	Has become overused/means too many things	1	*
Gender equality/pay gap	6	6	Not something I think about/not interested	1	4
Fair treatment of all people	5	5	Politicians/NI Assembly aren't doing enough	1	*
Equality for ethnic minority/racial groups	4	2	Equality under the law	1	*
Positive views about level/importance of equality in NI and progress	4	4	Equality for disabled people	1	1
Equality in employment	3	2	Equality has become too PC/gone too far	1	1
Equal opportunities/equality of opportunity	3	0	<i>Other</i>	10	6
Equality is a political/bureaucratic issue	3	2	<i>Don't know</i>	7	6
Equality is an ongoing issue/work in progress/room for improvement	2	4			





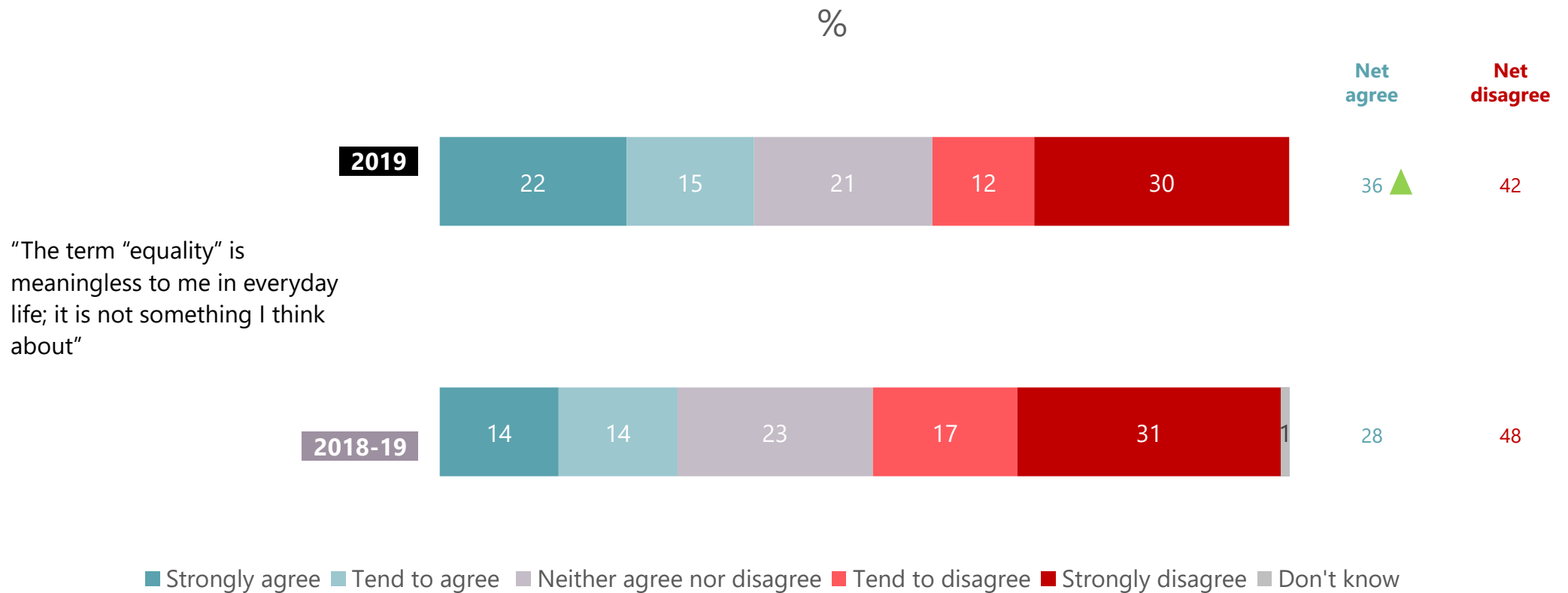
**Trying to do the same for both sides
of the community, or for any
religion in NI. Treating everybody
the same.**

Female, 30-44, Protestant, Armagh, C2DE



Attitudes

Q2. Thinking of yourself, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:



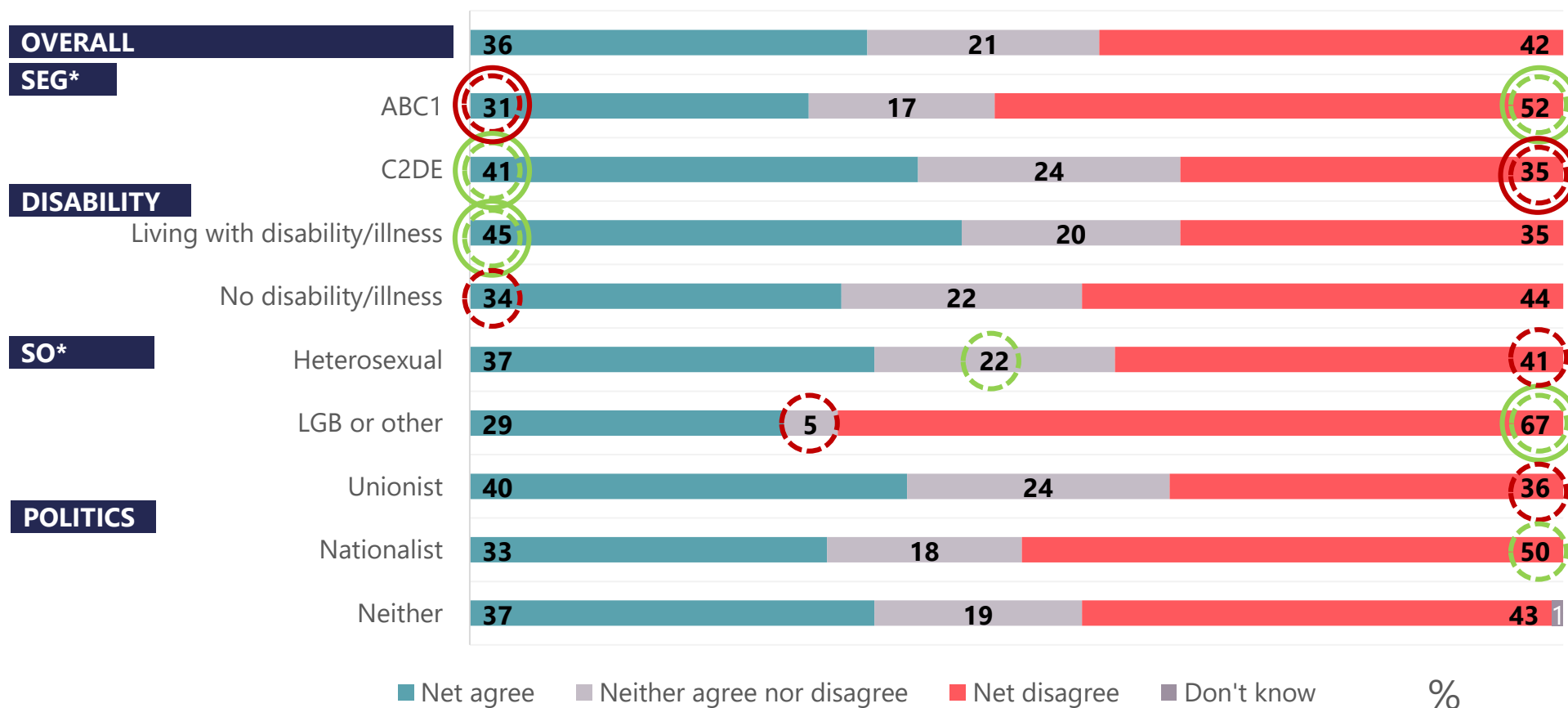
"The term "equality" is meaningless to me in everyday life; it is not something I think about"

▲ Significant increase
▼ Significant decrease

Base: 500 adults living in Northern Ireland (2019 v 2018-19)

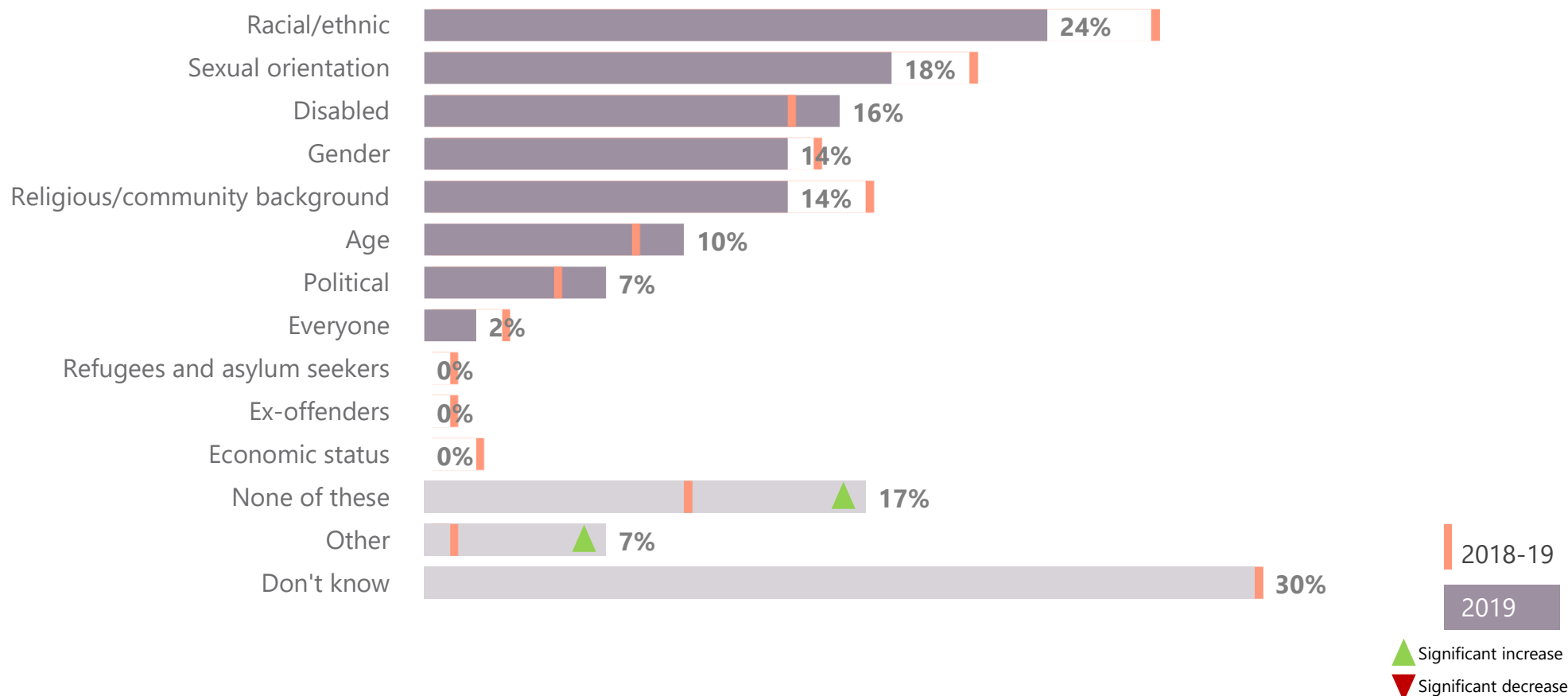
Attitudes by social class

Q2 statement: 'The term "equality" is meaningless to me in everyday life; it is not something I think about'



Equality status and discrimination

Q3. Which groups of people, if any, do you think are protected from unlawful discrimination?



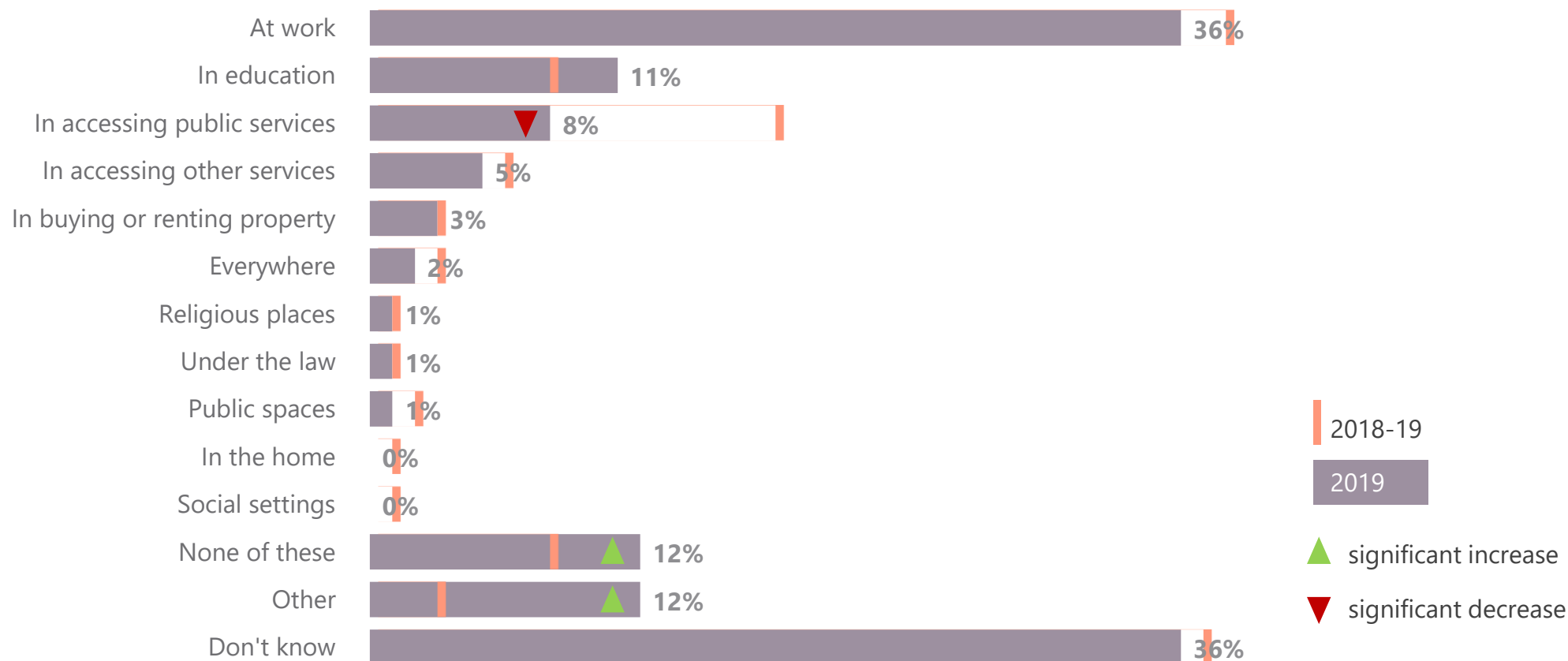
Equality status and discrimination

Q3. Which groups of people, if any, do you think are protected from unlawful discrimination?

	OVERALL %	REGION %							DISABILITY %			SEG* %		GENDER %		AGE %		
		Antrim	Armagh	Belfast	Derry/L'Derry	Down	Greater Belfast	Tyrone/Fermanagh	Living with disability/illness	Living with disability/illness	No disability/illness	ABC1	C2DE	Male	Female	16-29	30-44	45-59
Racial/ethnic	24	29	22	20	18	32	27	13	18	25	27	22	32	16	20	32	21	20
Sexual orientation	18	19	25	15	17	18	18	17	10	21	26	12	20	16	14	21	19	17
Disabled	16	14	11	20	14	20	14	13	12	17	20	13	14	17	15	14	20	14
Gender	14	10	10	17	12	16	16	11	11	15	18	12	19	10	9	17	16	14
Religious/community background	14	16	8	14	17	16	14	9	10	15	17	12	20	8	12	14	13	15
Age	10	10	8	10	6	16	9	7	9	10	10	9	11	9	10	10	11	8
Don't know	30	26	42	29	29	29	27	37	7	23	24	35	26	34	31	26	28	34

Equality status and discrimination

Q4. And in what settings, if any, do you think people are protected by these laws?



Equality status and discrimination

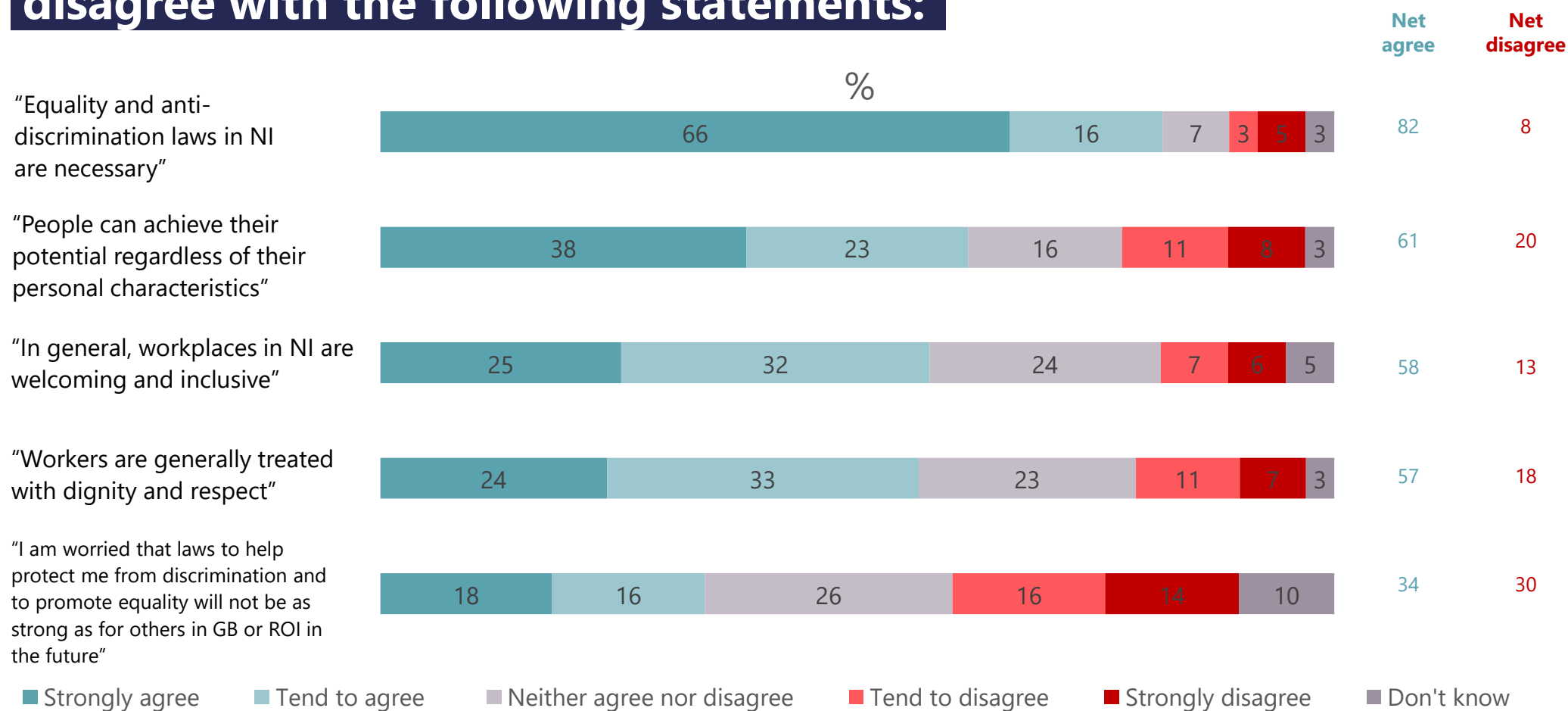
Q4. And in what settings, if any, do you think people are protected by these laws?

		DISABILITY %		SEG* %		AGE %			SO* %		
		Living with disability/illness	No disability/illness	ABC1	C2DE	16-29	30-44	45-59	60+	Heterosexual	LGB or other
At work	OVERALL % 36	28	39	47	29	29	45	41	30	37	33
In education	11	7	13	15	8	18	10	10	7	10	37
Don't know	36	43	33	28	42	40	27	34	43	36	28

Technical note: table shows settings with a frequency of >10% only

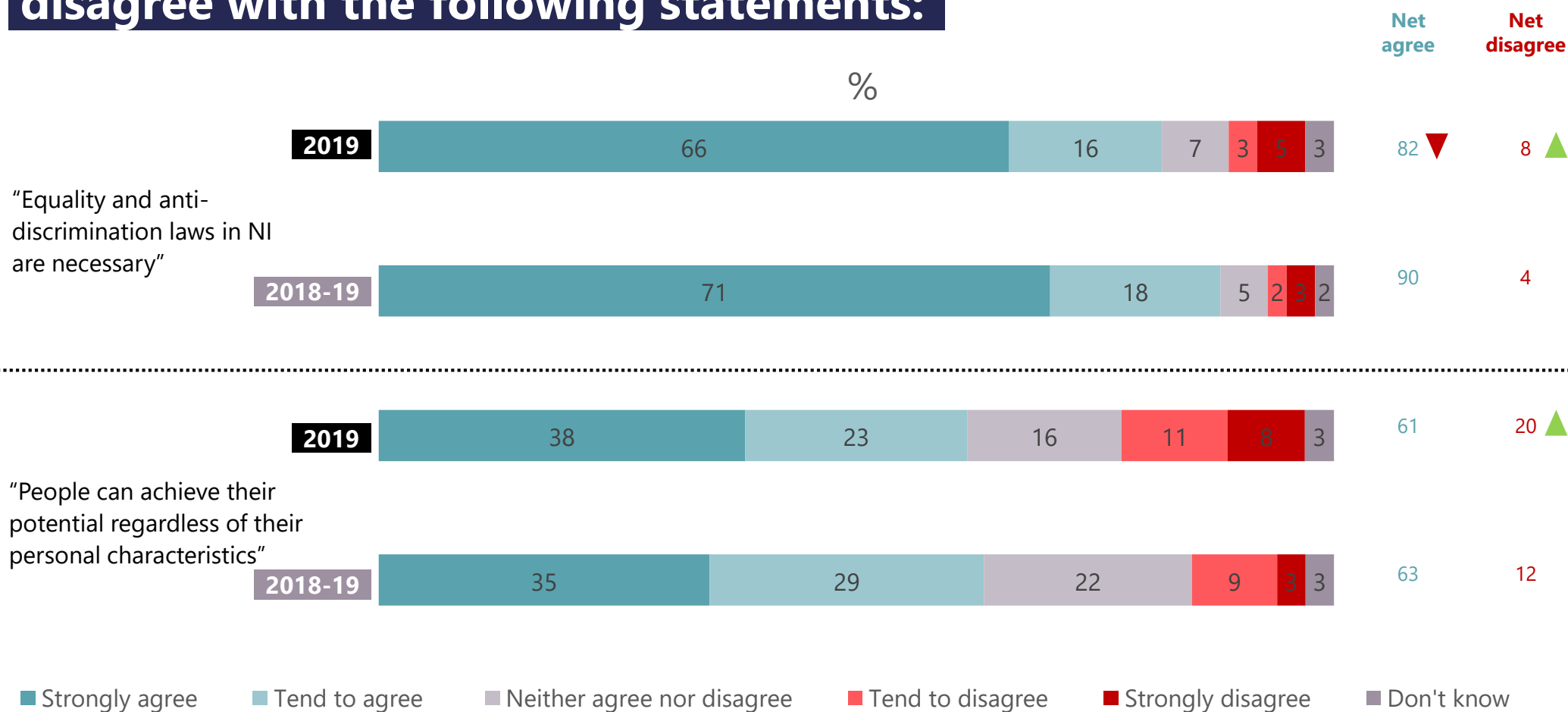
Views on equality in NI

Q5. Thinking about NI today, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:



Views on equality in NI

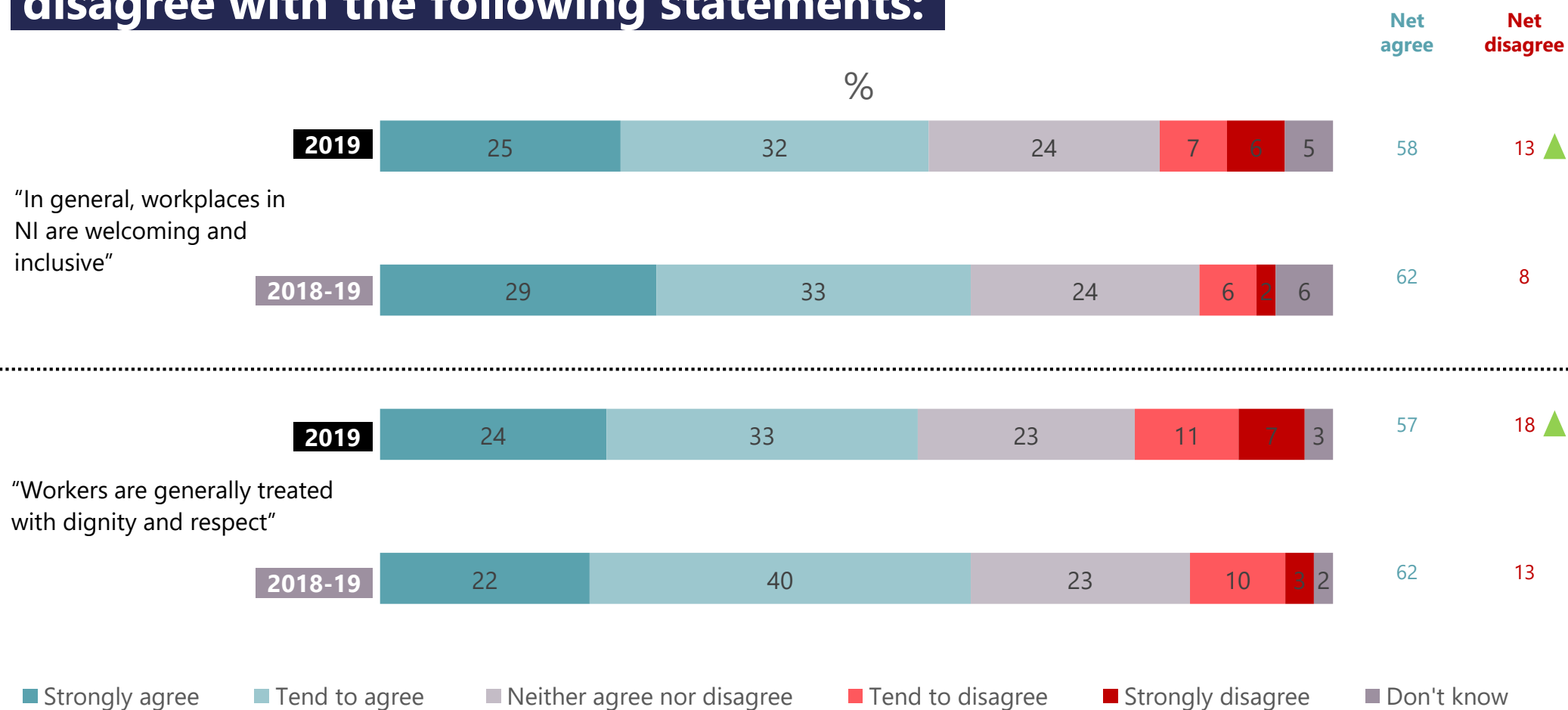
Q5. Thinking about NI today, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:



▲ Significant increase
▼ Significant decrease

Views on equality in NI

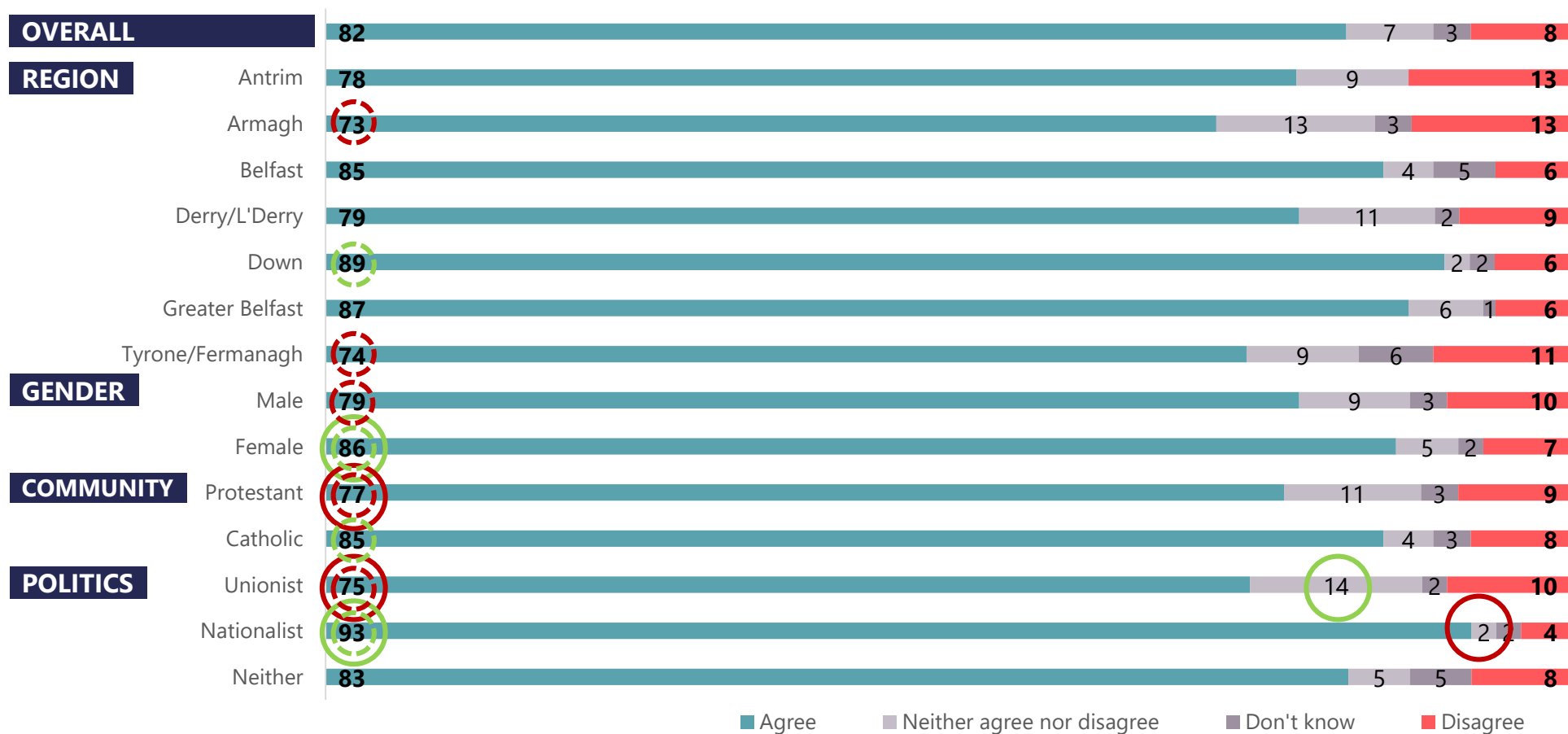
Q5. Thinking about NI today, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:



▲ Significant increase
▼ Significant decrease

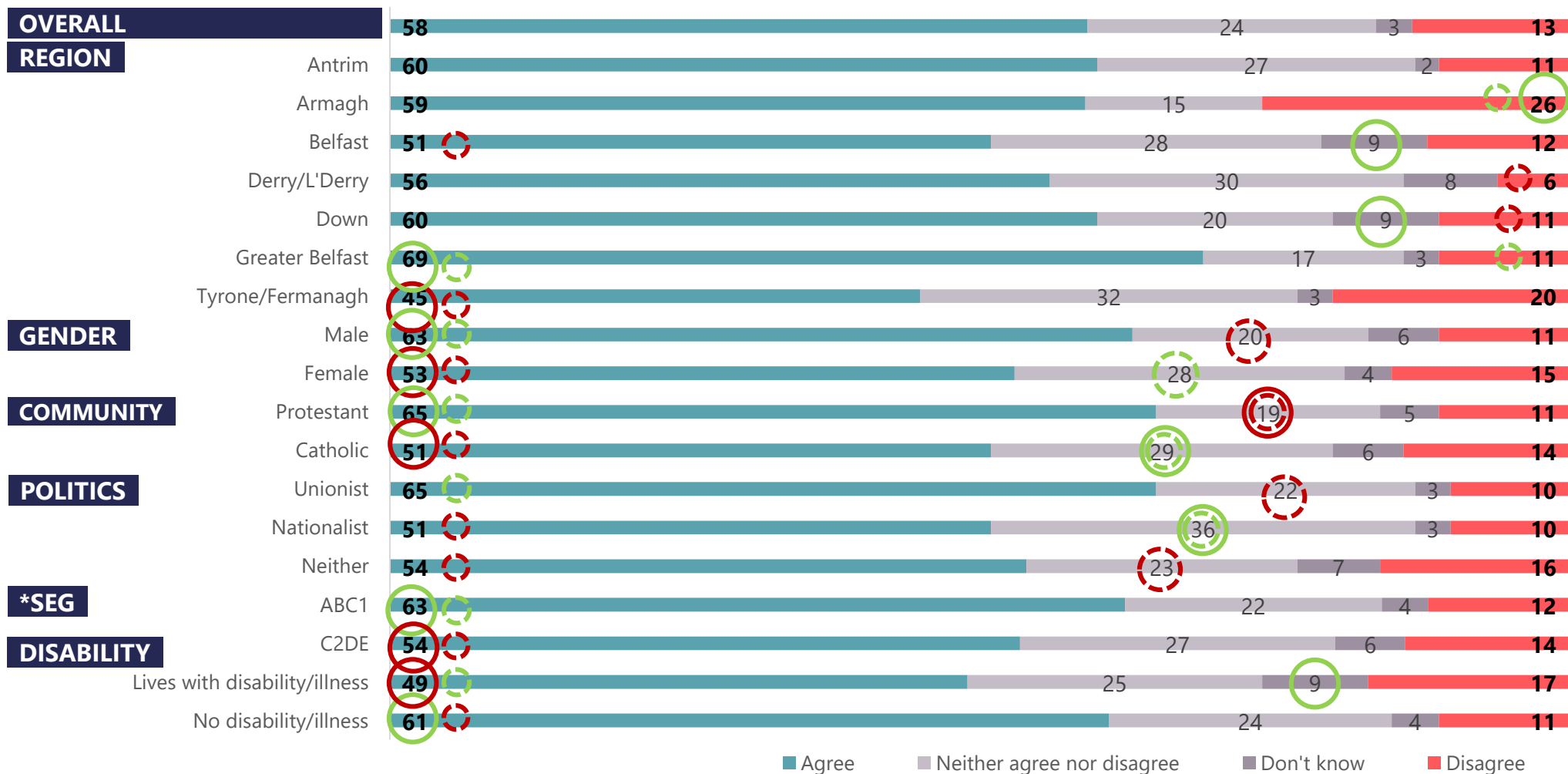
Views on equality by demographic

Q5 statement: 'Equality and anti-discrimination laws in NI are necessary'



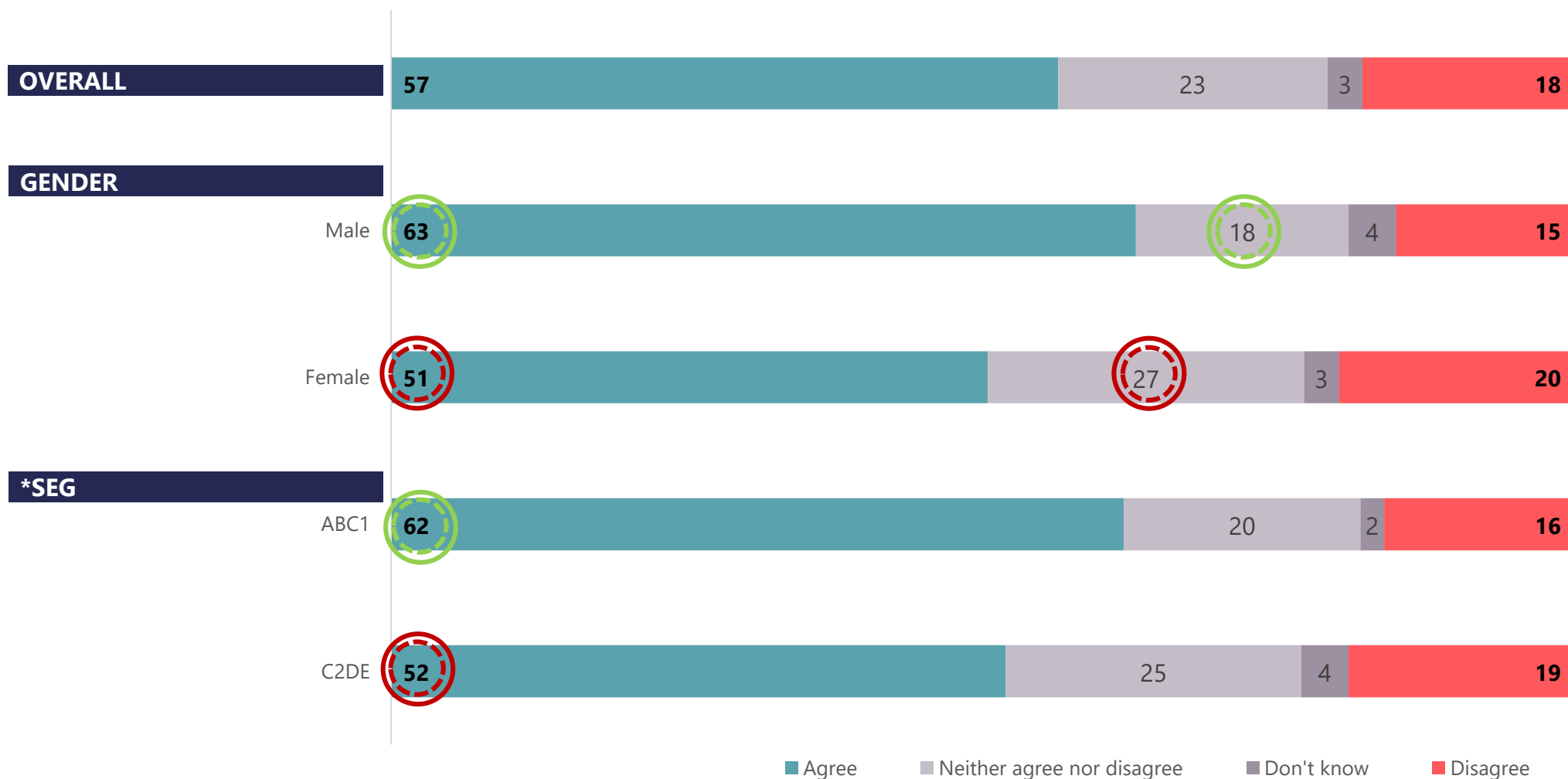
Views on equality by demographic

Q5 statement: 'in general, workplaces in NI are welcoming and inclusive'



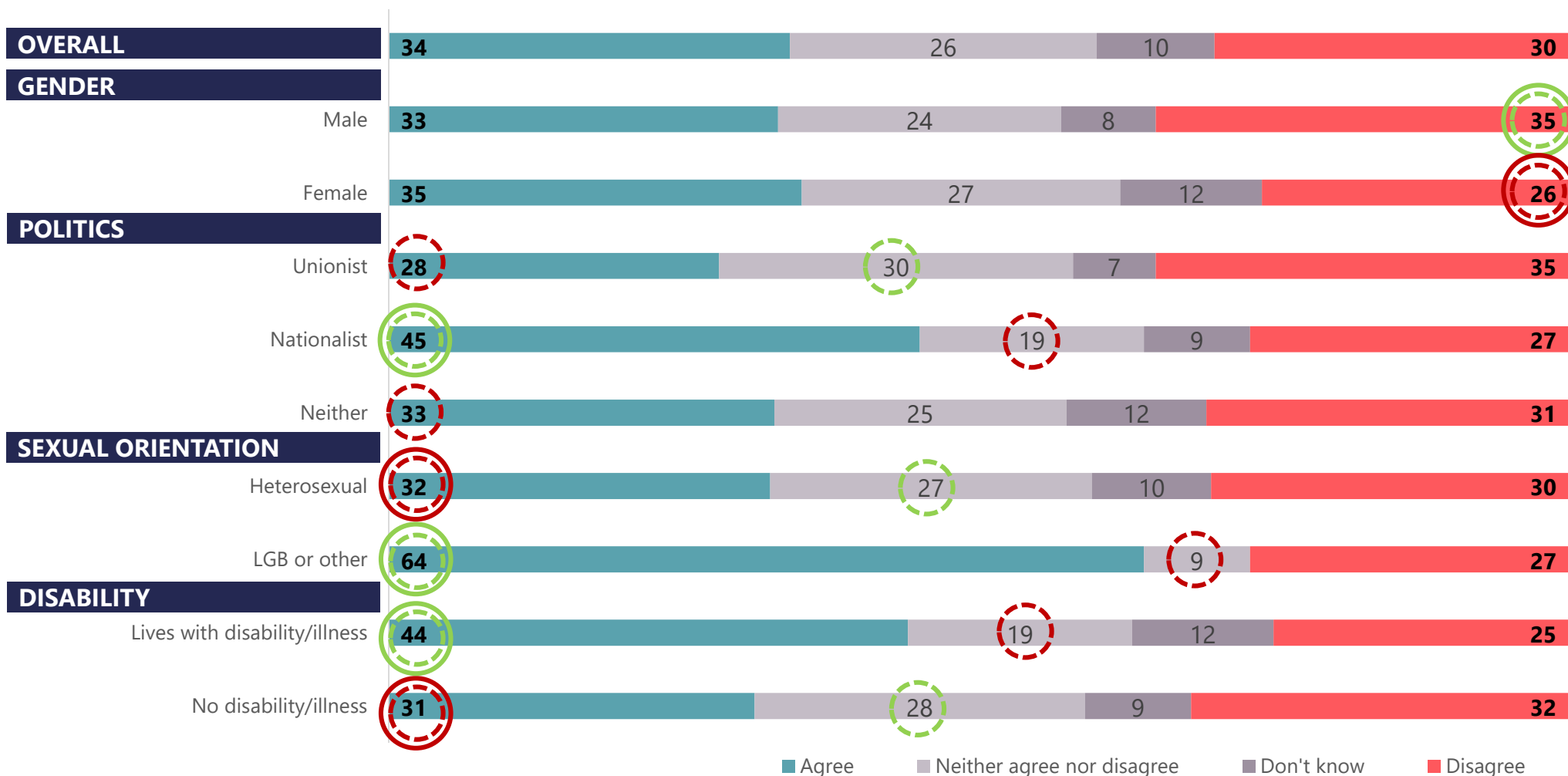
Views on equality by demographic

Q5 statement: 'workers are generally treated with dignity and respect'



Views on equality by demographic

Q5 statement: 'I'm worried that laws to help protect me from discrimination and to promote equality will not be as strong as for others in GB or ROI in the future'

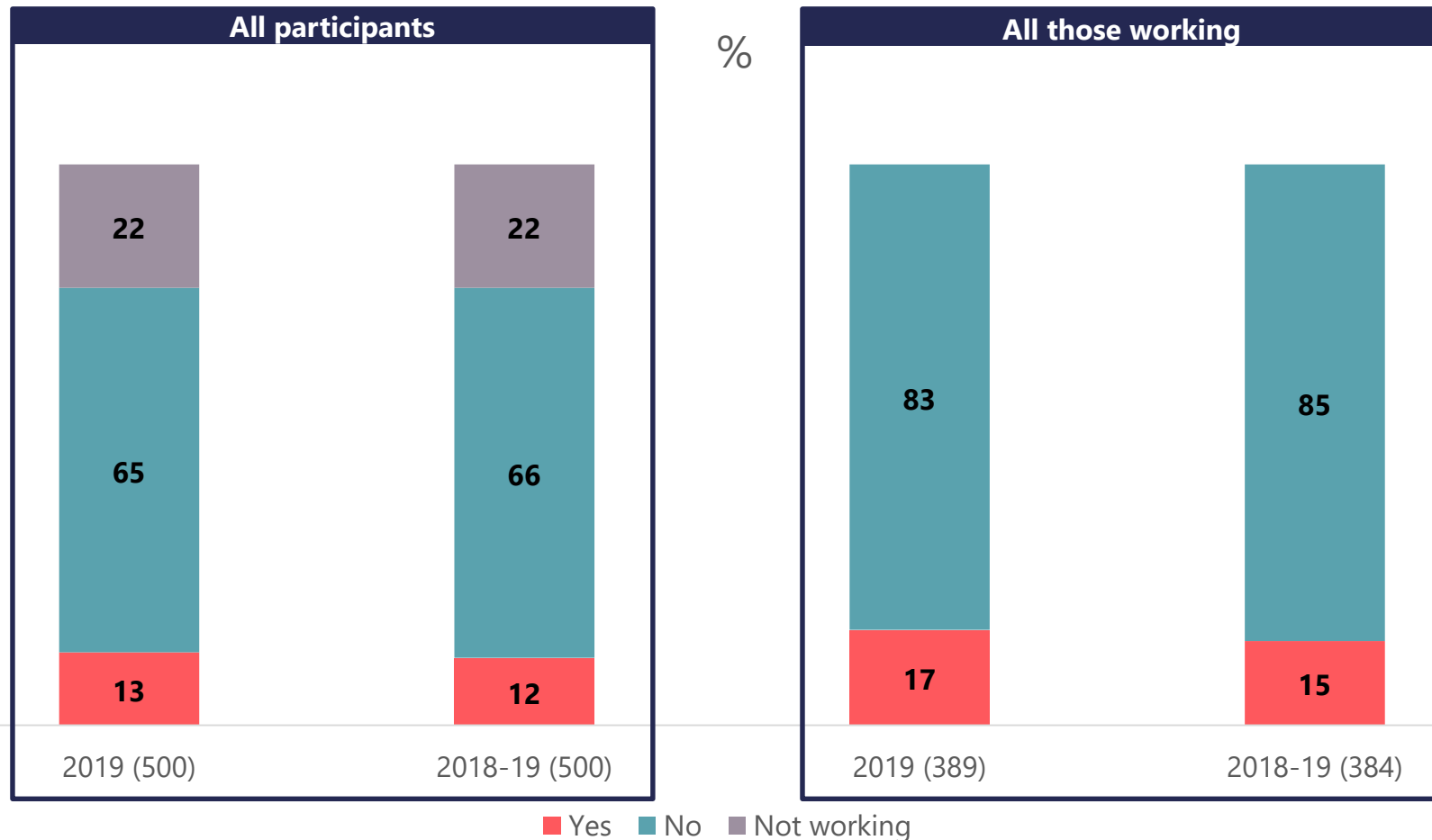


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Base: 500 adults living in Northern Ireland (2019)
*S.O = sexual orientation | *SEG = Socio-Economic Group

Personal experiences of unwanted behaviour

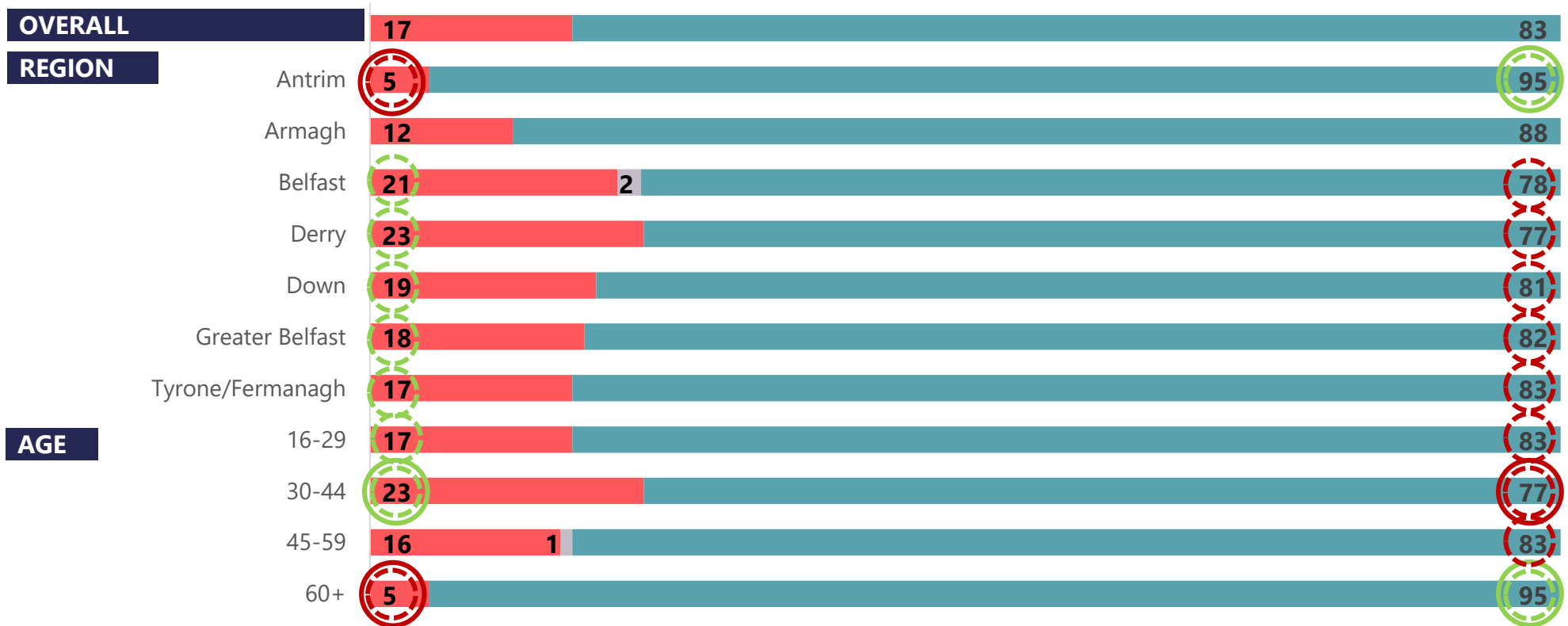
Q6. During the past 12 months, have you personally experienced a situation where you were not treated with dignity and respect in the workplace based on your personal characteristics?



Personal experiences of unwanted behaviour: demographic

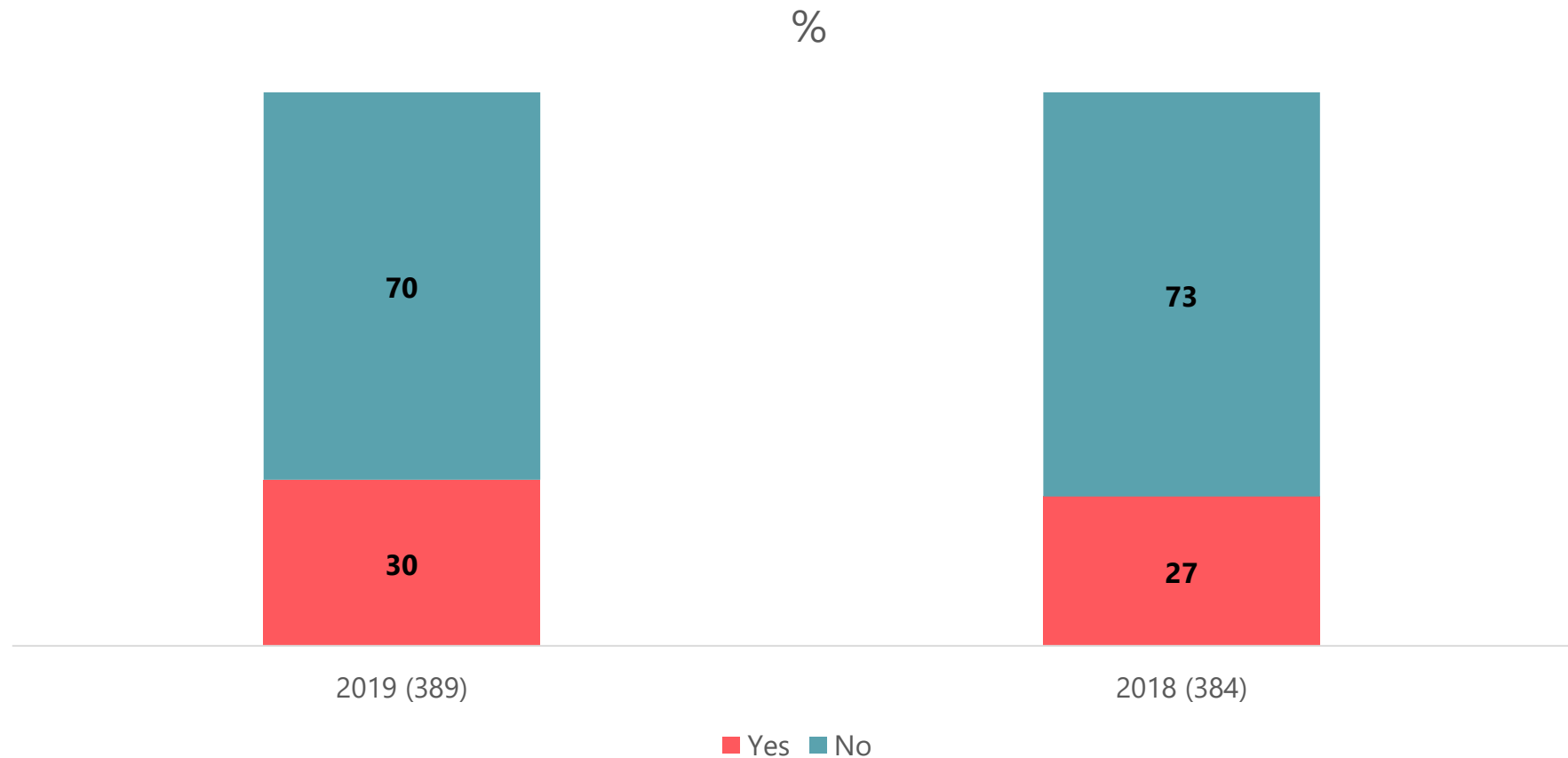
Q6. During the past 12 months, have you personally experienced a situation where you were not treated with dignity and respect in the workplace based on your personal characteristics?

% ■ Yes ■ Don't know ■ No



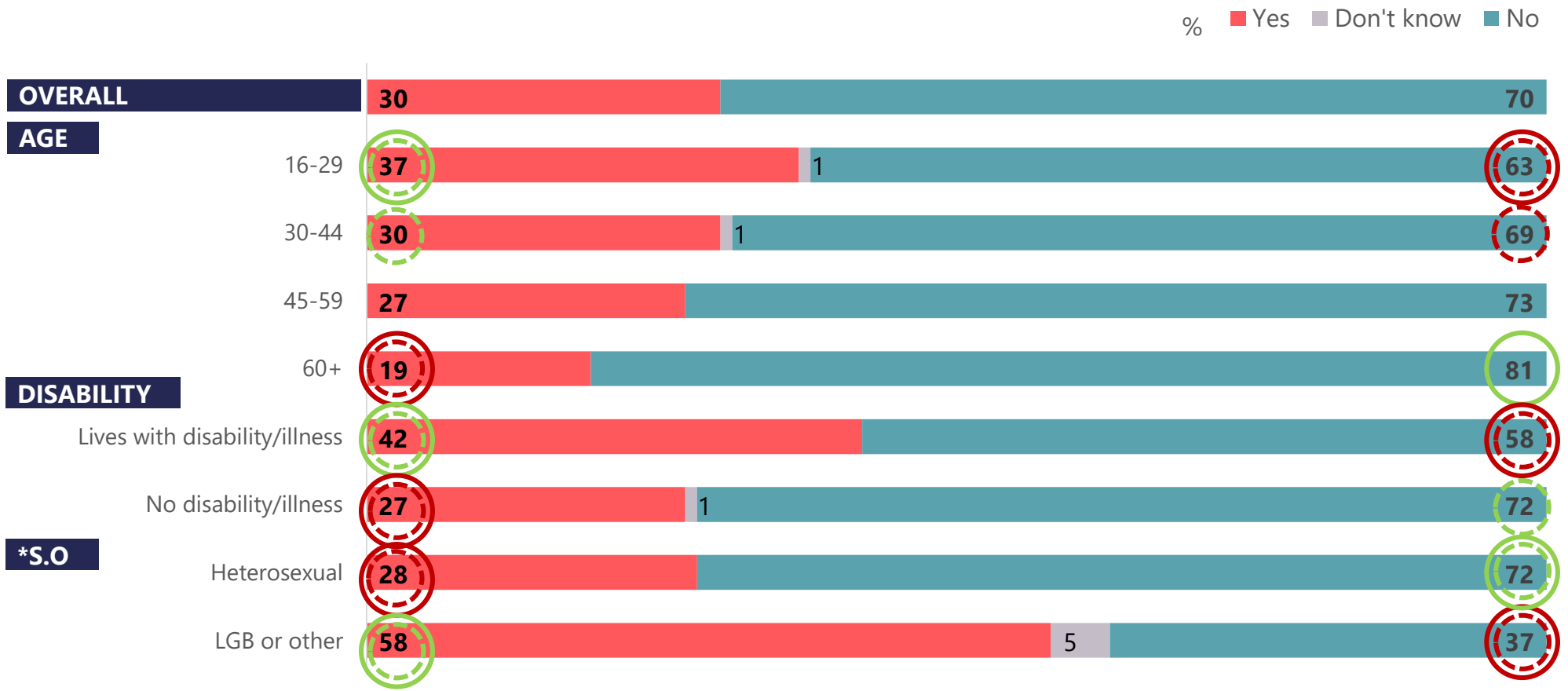
Personal experiences of unwanted behaviour

Q7. During the past 12 months, have you witnessed a situation where others in your workplace were not treated with dignity and respect based on their personal characteristics



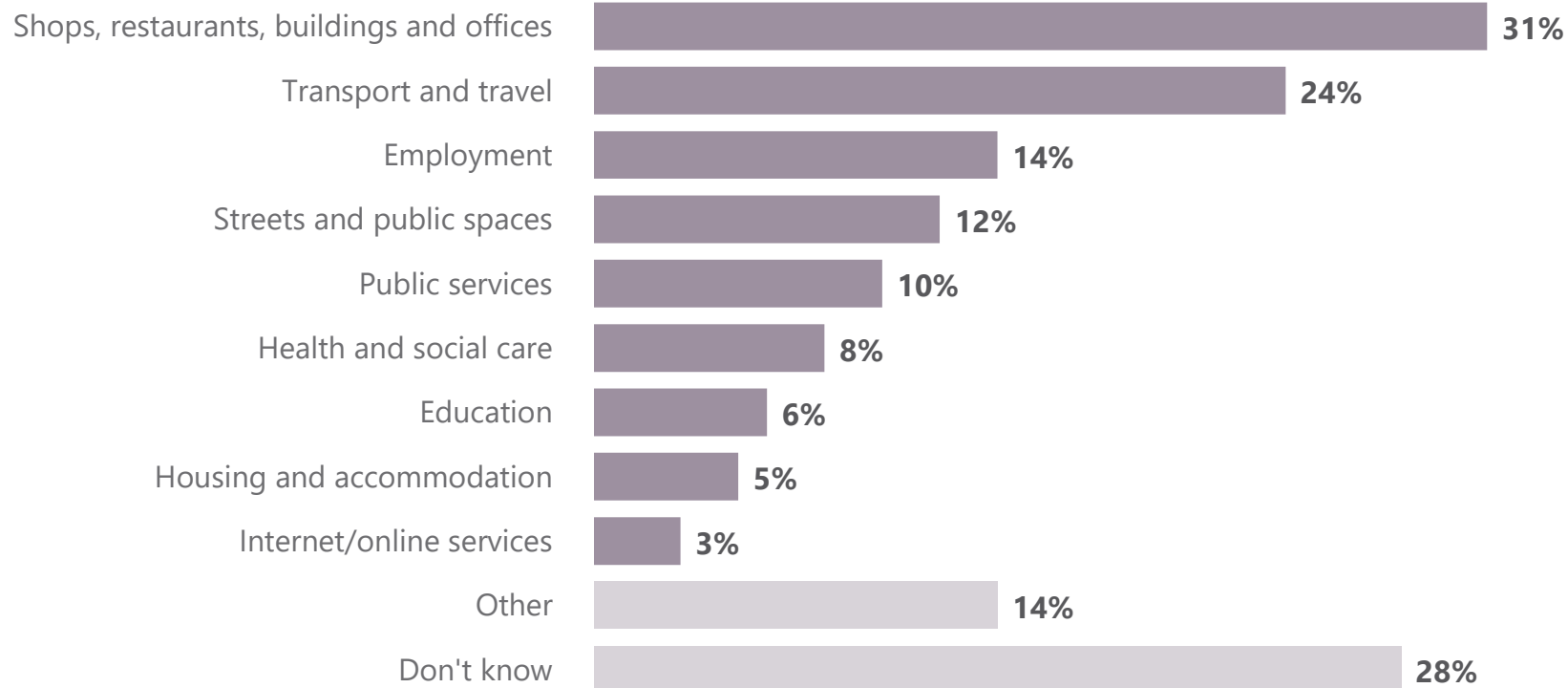
Personal experiences of unwanted behaviour: demographic

Q7. During the past 12 months, have you witnessed a situation where others in your workplace were not treated with dignity and respect based on their personal characteristics



Experience of people with disabilities

Q9. What services, facilities or settings do you think people with disabilities find it hardest to access?

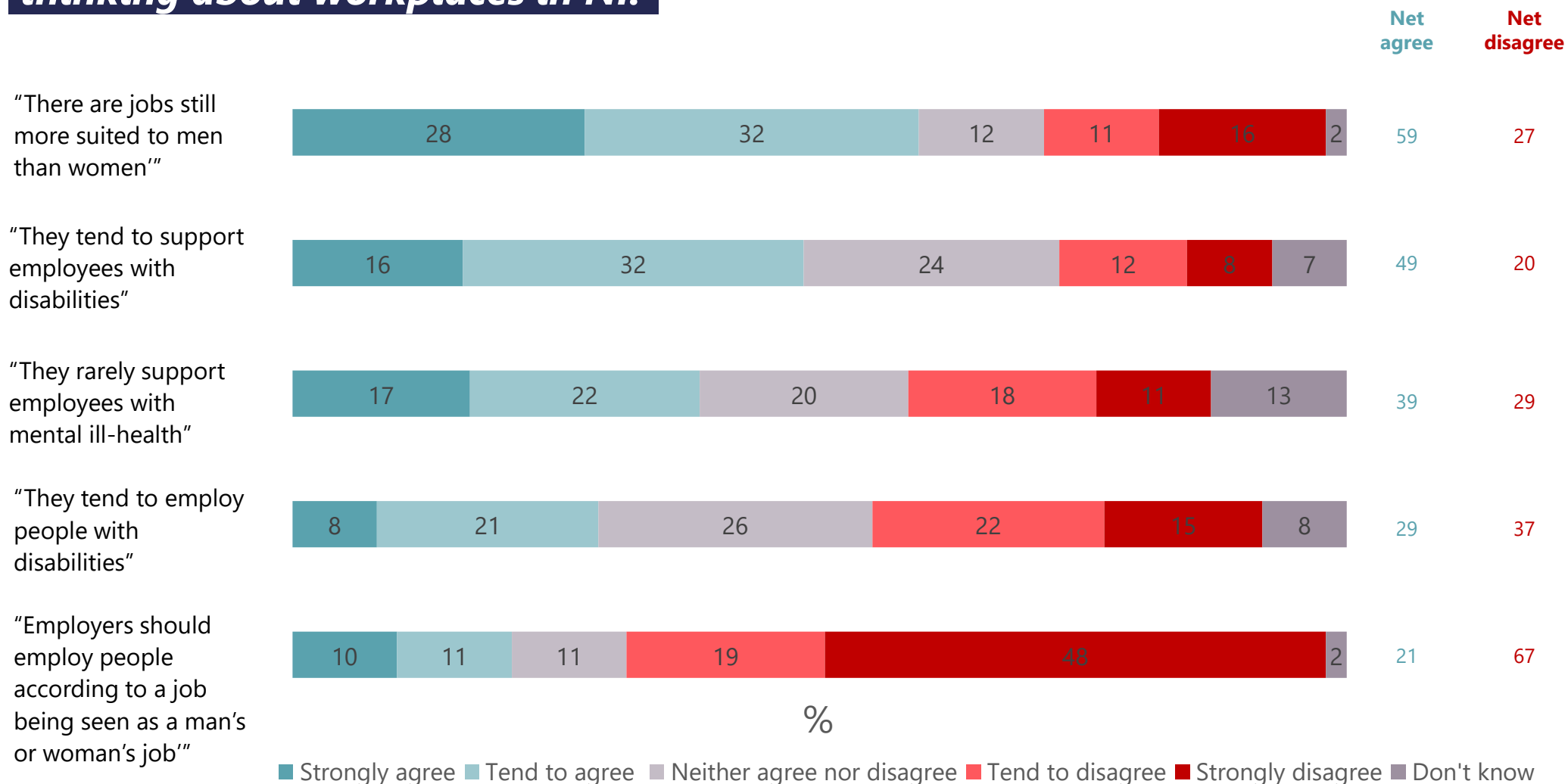


DISABILITY %	
illness / disability	Living with illness / disability No
35%	30%
23%	24%
13%	14%
13%	12%
10%	11%
10%	7%
4%	6%
5%	5%
3%	3%
14%	14%
29%	28%



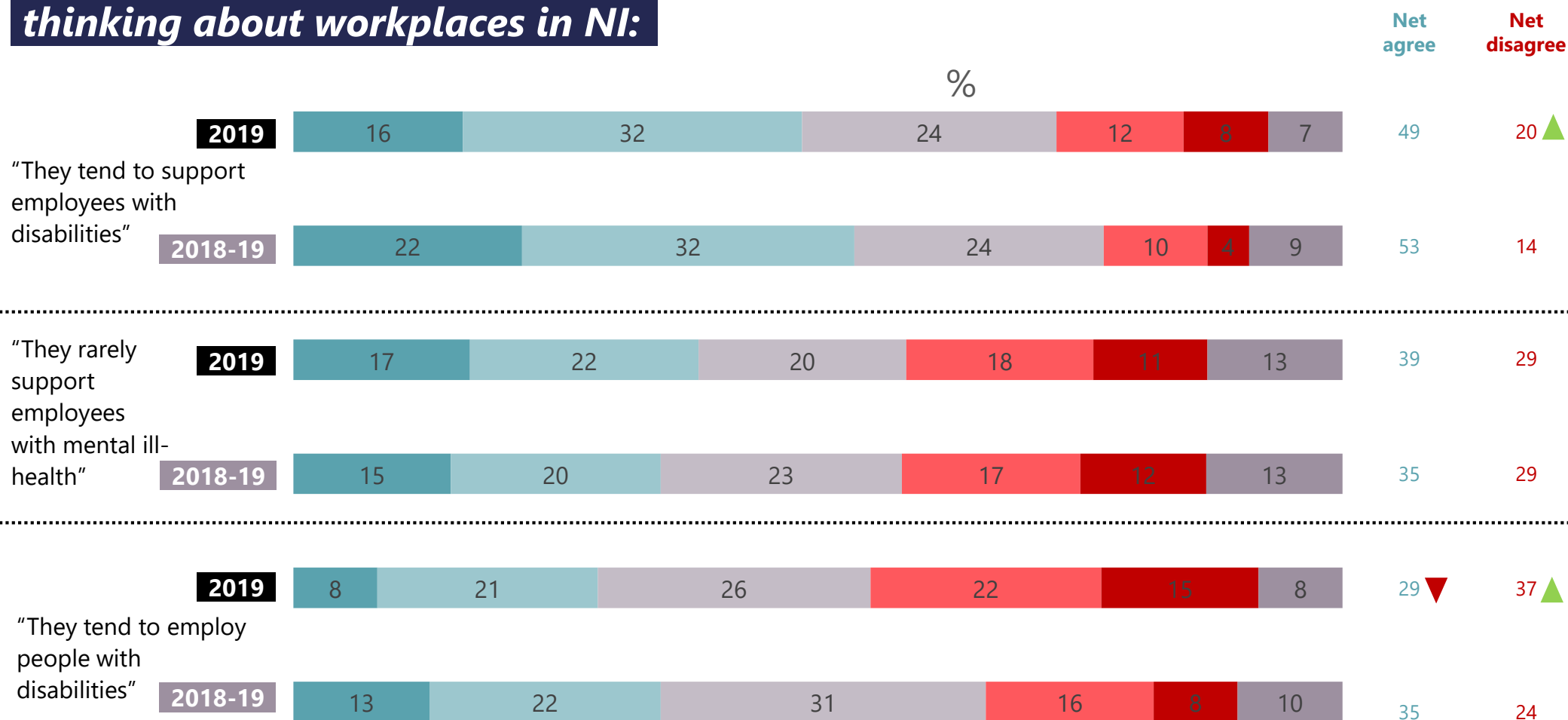
Aspects of life in NI

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements, thinking about workplaces in NI:



Aspects of life in NI

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements, thinking about workplaces in NI:



■ Strongly agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know

Workplaces in NI: demographics

Q8 statement: 'they tend to employ people with disabilities'

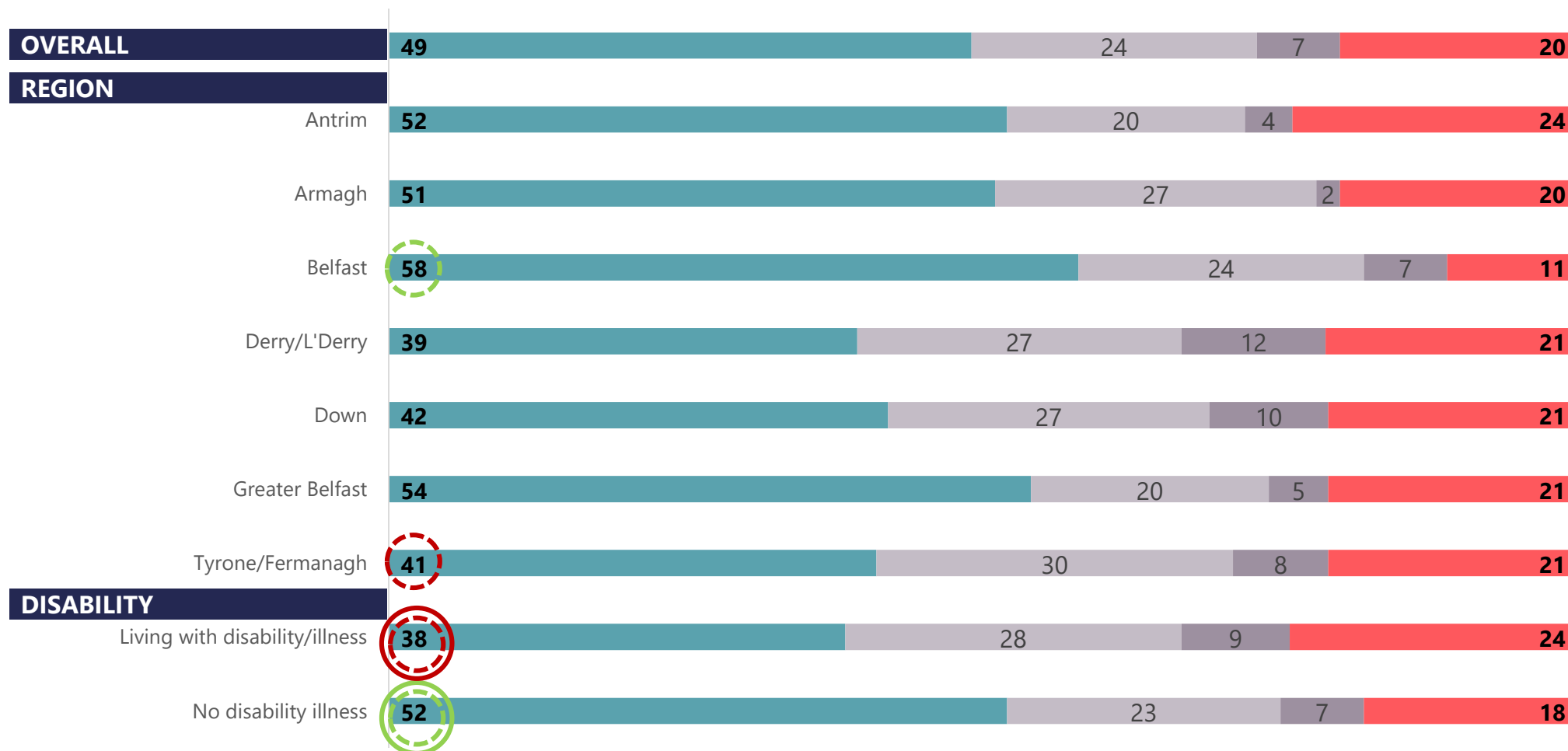
% ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Don't know ■ Disagree



Workplaces in NI: demographics

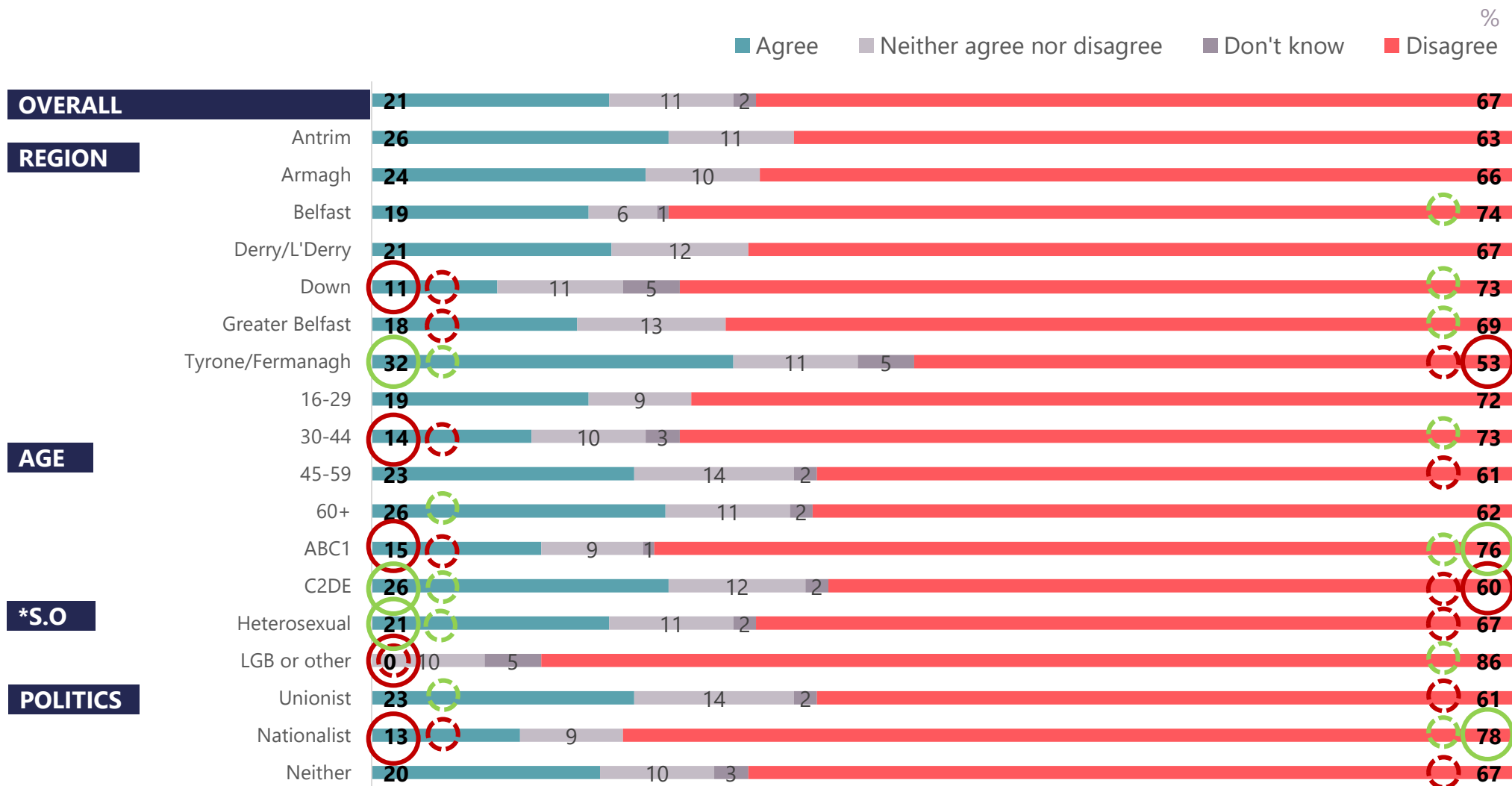
Q8 statement: 'they tend to support people with disabilities'

% ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Don't know ■ Disagree



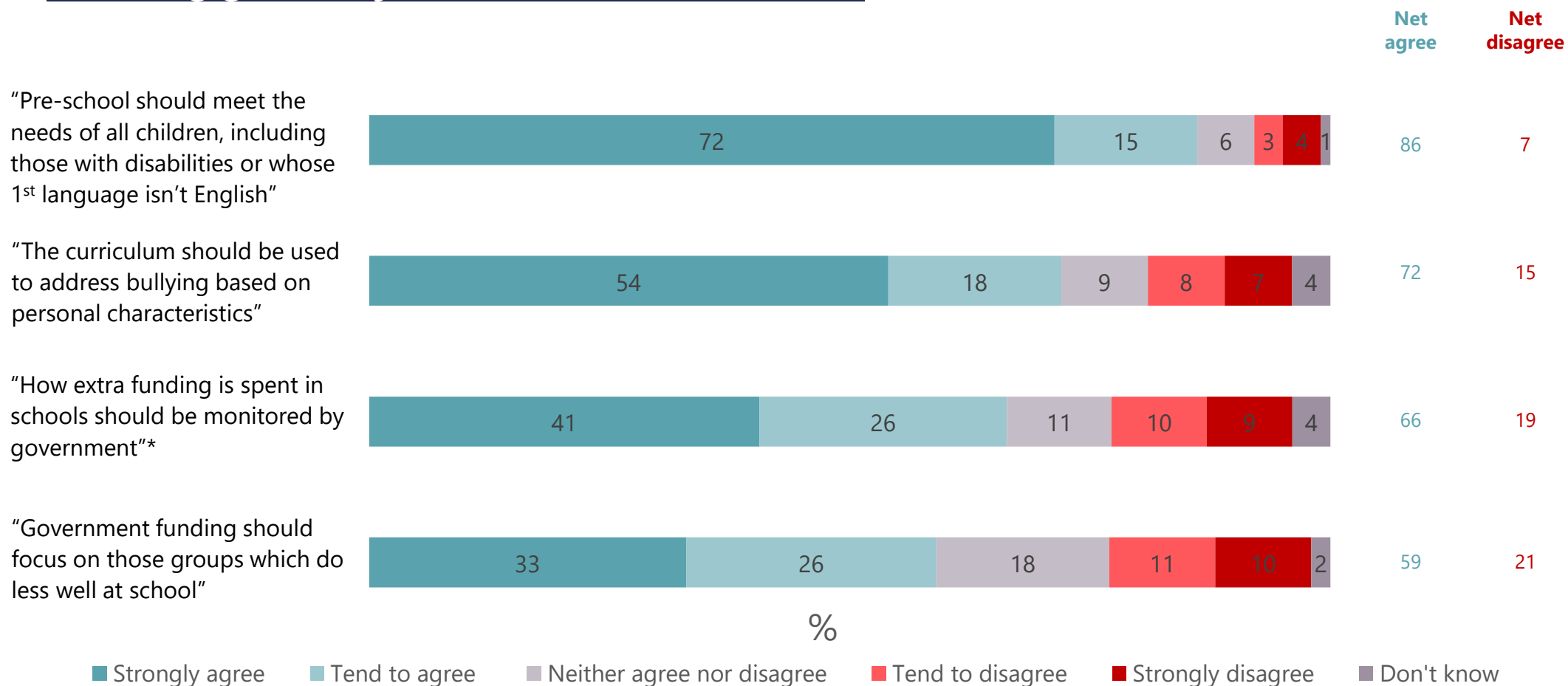
Workplaces in NI: demographics

Q8 statement: 'employers should employ people according to a job being seen as a man's/woman's'



Aspects of life in NI

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements, thinking generally about education in NI:

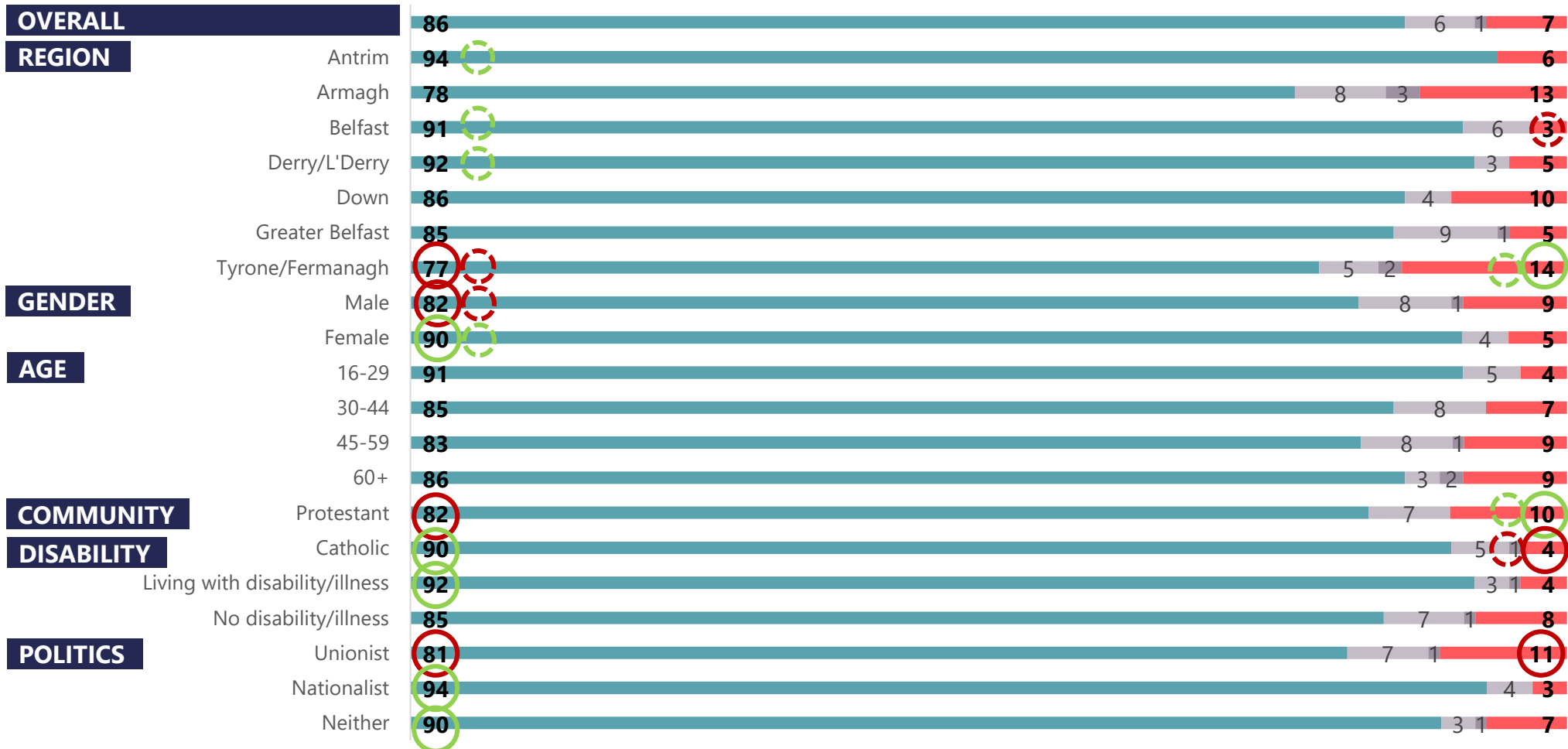


Base: 500 adults living in Northern Ireland (2019)

Education in NI: demographics

Q8 statement: 'pre-school should meet the needs of all children...'

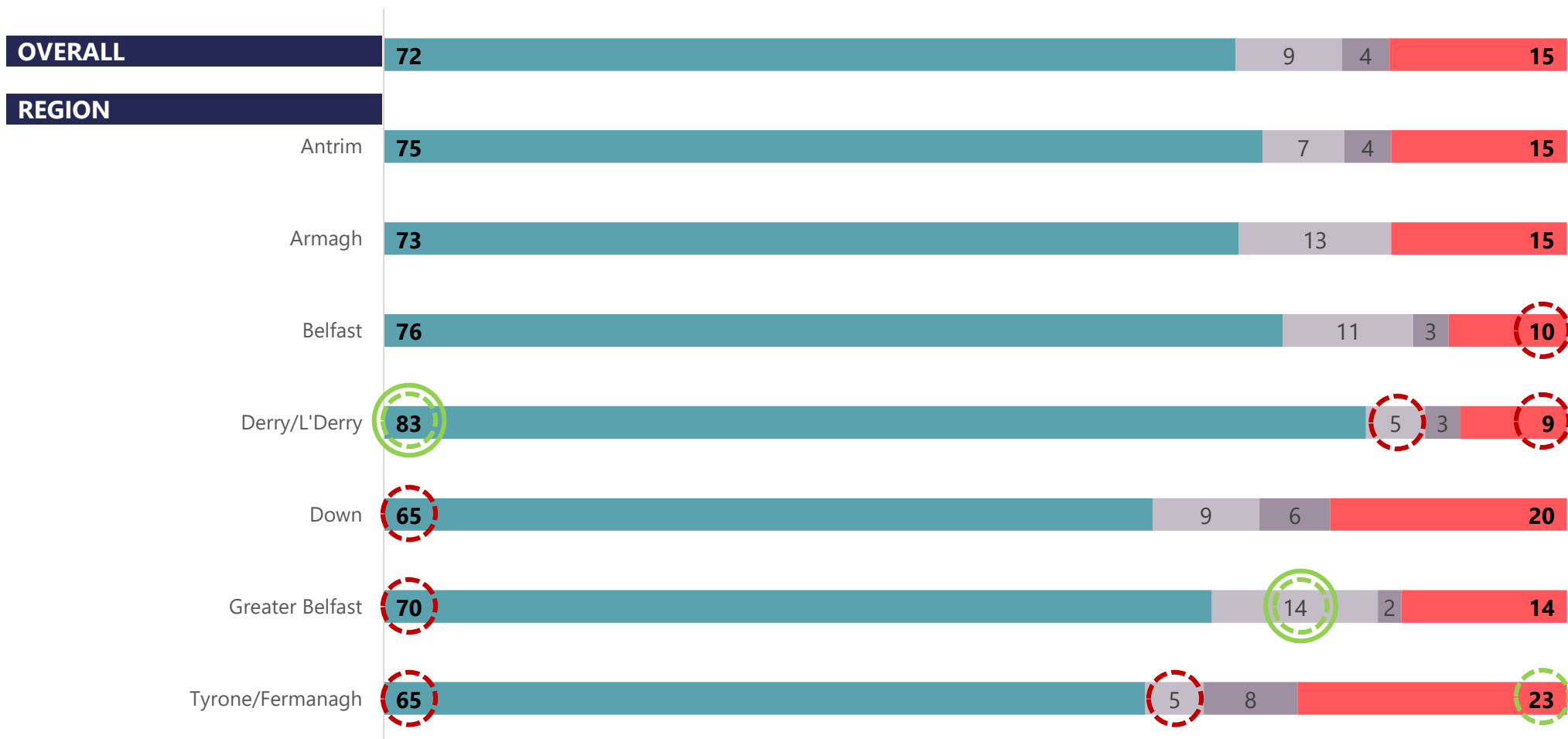
% ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Don't know ■ Disagree



Education in NI: demographics

Q8 statement: 'the curriculum should be used to address bullying based on personal characteristics'

% ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Don't know ■ Disagree



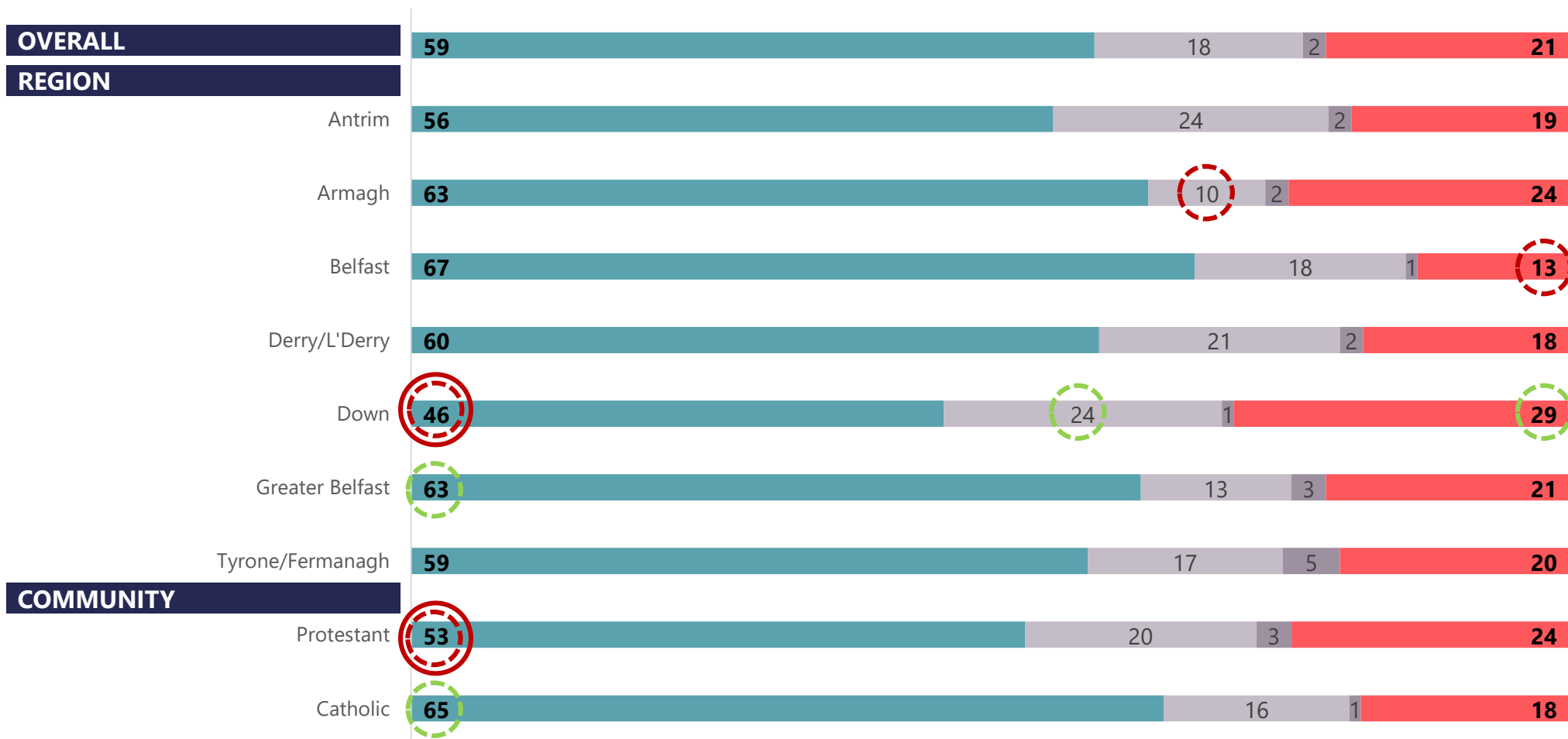
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Base: 500 adults living in Northern Ireland (2019)

Education in NI: demographics

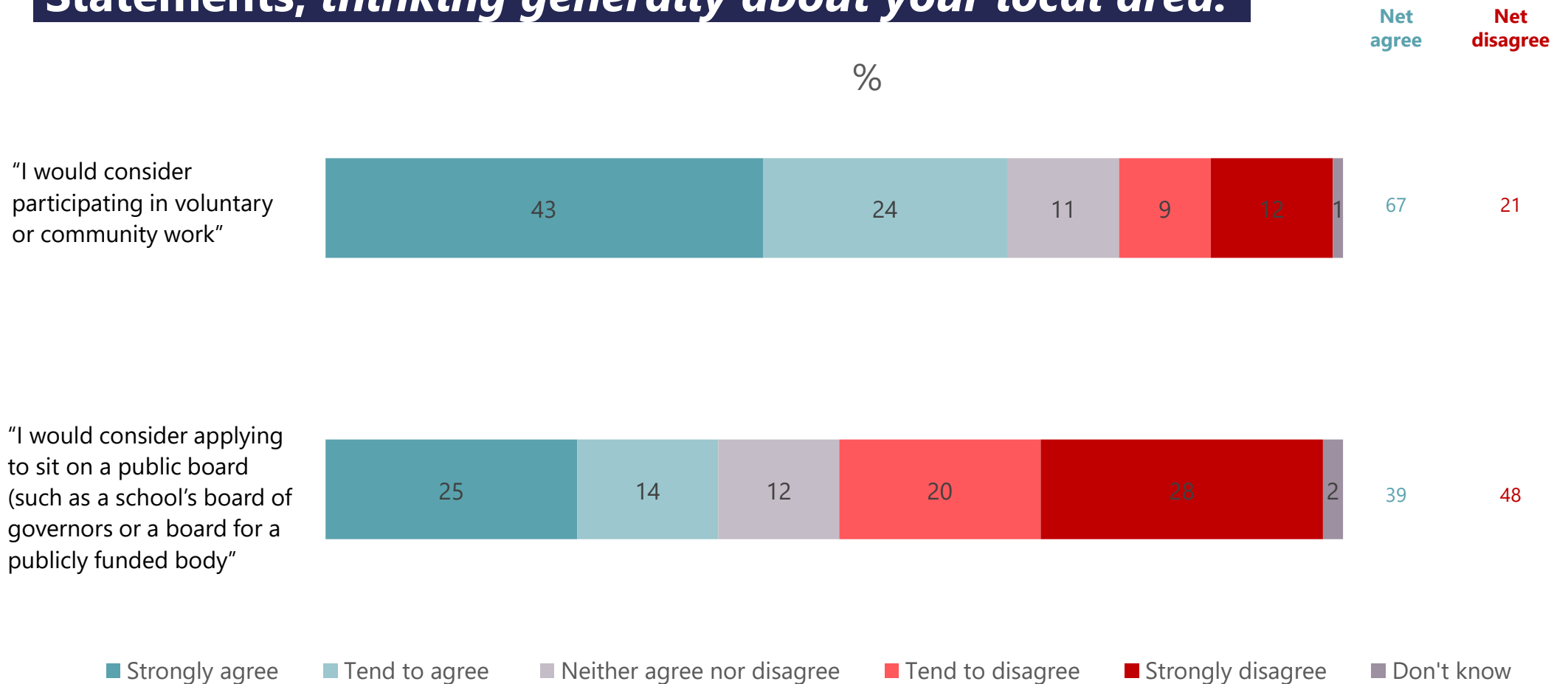
Q8 statement: 'government funding should focus on those groups which do less well at school'

% ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Don't know ■ Disagree



Local area

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following Statements, thinking generally about your local area:



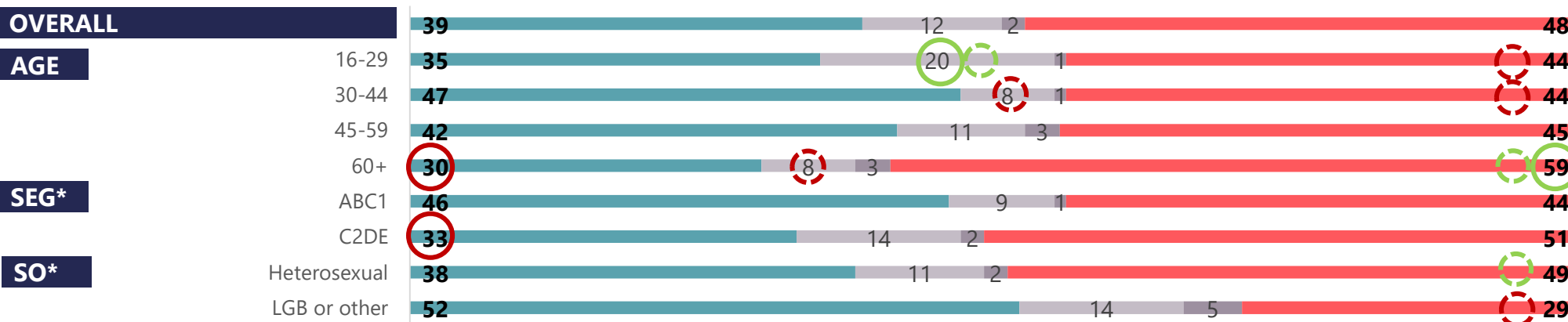
Local area: demographics

Q8 statement: 'I would consider participating in voluntary or community work'

% ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Don't know ■ Disagree

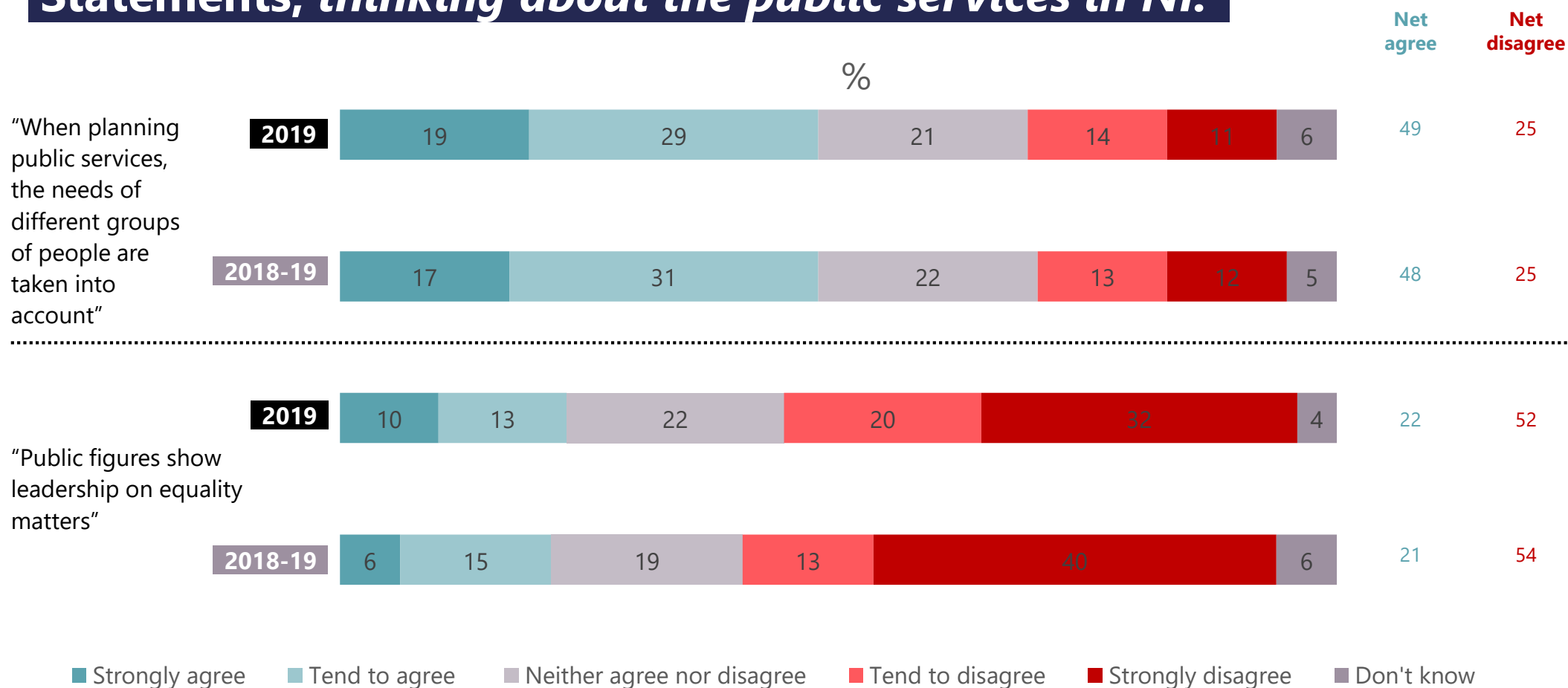


Q8 statement: 'I would consider applying to sit on a public board...'



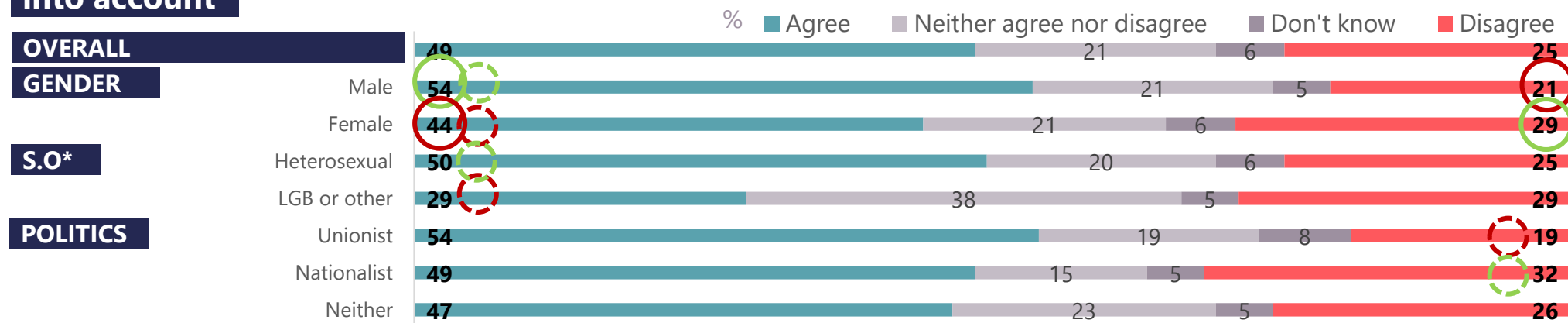
Aspects of life in NI

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following Statements, thinking about the public services in NI:

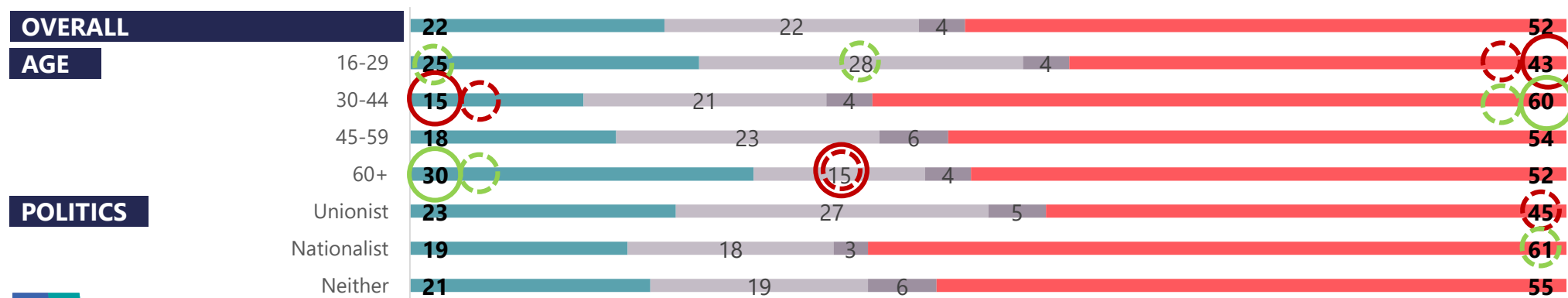


Public services in NI: demographics

Q8 statement: 'when planning public services, the needs of different groups of people are taken into account'



Q8 statement: 'Public figures show leadership on equality matters'



Research methodology

In order to meet the objectives of the research, Ipsos MORI conducted a telephone survey among a representative sample of people living in Northern Ireland. All interviews were conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) from our Belfast-based telephone centre. In total, 500 interviews were conducted with people from across Northern Ireland. The telephone survey lasted 14 minutes on average.

Ipsos MORI purchased a contact database containing 8,131 records for Northern Ireland. Therefore, a response rate of 6% was achieved from this sample. A summary of sample outcomes is provided in the table below:

Sample outcome	Count	% of sample
Completed interview	500	6%
Refused	304	4%
Unusable	1,007	12%
No answer/maximum tries/over-quota	6,320	78%
Total	8,131	100%

A quota-based sampling approach was applied to the telephone survey to ensure the results are representative of the Northern Ireland population. The demographic breakdown of participants is provided on pages 8-10.

Ipsos MORI's standards and accreditations

Ipsos MORI's standards and accreditations provide our clients with the peace of mind that they can always depend on us to deliver reliable, sustainable findings. Our focus on quality and continuous improvement means we have embedded a 'right first time' approach throughout our organisation.



ISO 20252:2012

The international market research specific standard that supersedes BS 7911 / MRQSA & incorporates IQCS (Interviewer Quality Control Scheme); it covers the 5 stages of a Market Research project. Ipsos MORI was the first company in the world to gain this accreditation.



ISO 27001:2005

International standard for information security designed to ensure the selection of adequate and proportionate security controls. Ipsos MORI was the first research company in the UK to be awarded this in August 2008.



MRS Company Partnership

By being an MRS Company Partner, Ipsos MORI endorse and support the core MRS brand values of professionalism, research excellence and business effectiveness, and commit to comply with the MRS Code of Conduct throughout the organisation.

Data Protection Act

Ipsos MORI is required to comply with the Data Protection Act; it covers the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy



ISO 9001:2008

International general company standard with a focus on continual improvement through quality management systems. In 1994 we became one of the early adopters of the ISO 9001 business standard.

This work was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the international quality standard for market research, ISO 20252:2012 and with the Ipsos MORI Terms and Conditions.

Ipsos MORI's Business Excellence

System

Ipsos MORI's Business Excellence System (BES) incorporates the requirements of the three international standards, the Data Protection Act, and the MRS Code of Conduct. The Business Excellence System is continually reviewed for effectiveness and improvement – we achieve this in a number of ways:

Business Excellence System (BES) Group:

BES representatives from all areas of the business meet regularly. Their remit includes: promoting and encouraging Business Excellence within their business units; reviewing, developing and maintaining Ipsos MORI's Business Excellence management systems and; learning and sharing best practice.

Ipsos MORI's Internal Audits and Metrics Team:

Ipsos MORI has a large team of trained internal auditors from across the business. Internal audits and spot checks are carried out throughout the year to measure the effectiveness of the company's Business Excellence Systems. Monthly metrics are reported to the UK Management Board and the BES Group. Where necessary corrective and preventative actions are implemented.

BES Training and Communications Team:

A team of BES Reps are responsible for developing effective and engaging training. All staff receive induction and refresher training. Delegate feedback is used to further improve training where appropriate.

External Audits:

An external auditing company visits annually to ensure that Ipsos MORI complies with the international standards we are accredited to. Findings are reported back to the business and corrective and/or preventative measures adopted where necessary.

External Client Satisfaction Monitor:

At the close of each project, an online survey is sent to the client. Returned questionnaires are reviewed and followed up where necessary. Data is used by the Audits and Metrics Team for the monthly UK Management and BES Report.

This work will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the international quality standard for market research, ISO 20252:2012 and with the Ipsos MORI Terms and Conditions.



For more information

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Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND