

Six Dimensions of the Nation Brands IndexSM 2020

International Perceptions of Northern Ireland: Immigration and Investment

11 March 2021

This bulletin is part of a series of six. The others are available on [the TEO website](#).

Key findings

- In 2020, Northern Ireland ranked 21st of 50 for the Immigration and Investment dimension (unchanged since 2019). Immigration and Investment was Northern Ireland's 2nd highest ranked dimension, as was also the case in the previous three years.
- Northern Ireland's score for Immigration and Investment decreased to 56.72 in 2020 (-0.35 since 2019).
- Immigration and Investment received significantly higher scores from those who had visited Northern Ireland than those who had not.
- Two of the four lowest scoring attributes were in the Immigration and Investment dimension ("invest in business" at 4.08 and "work and live" at 4.12). When asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed, large proportions of respondents (23 per cent and 28 per cent respectively) disagreed with these two attribute statements.
- In 2020, the largest change in rank for this dimension was from China, who ranked Northern Ireland 12 places higher. The largest drops were from South Africa and Turkey who ranked NI two places lower than in 2019.

Introduction

In order to assess and monitor its international reputation, Northern Ireland has been included on the Nation Brands IndexSM (NBISM) since 2016. The NBI measures and ranks the reputations of 50 nations across Six Dimensions: Exports; Governance; Culture; People; Tourism; and Immigration and Investment.

This bulletin examines Northern Ireland's reputation in relation to **Immigration and Investment**. The score for the Immigration and Investment dimension is calculated using scores from five attributes. For each attribute, survey participants were presented with a statement and asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a seven point Likert scale. As seen below, "work and live" was presented slightly differently, with respondents asked to rate their 'willingness' on a seven point scale.

Attribute	Statement
Work & Live	'Please rank your willingness to live and work for a substantial period in Northern Ireland.'
Quality of Life	'This country is a place with a high quality of life.'
Educational Qualifications	'This country is a good place to study for educational qualifications.'
Invest in Business	'This country has businesses I'd like to invest in.'
Equality in Society	'This country cares about equality in society.'

The score for the Immigration and Investment dimension is out of 100, while the score for each of the attributes is based on a scale from one to seven (with seven being the highest and best, and one being the lowest and worst). 50 countries are included in the NBI; rankings in the report show Northern Ireland's position among these 50 countries.

Northern Ireland's score on the Immigration and Investment dimension (56.72) was lower in 2020 than in 2019. Its rank (21st) was unchanged.

Figure 1: Northern Ireland's ranking and score on the Immigration and Investment dimension of the NBI



Rankings and scores on the Immigration and Investment dimension from around the world

Immigration and Investment was Northern Ireland's 2nd highest ranked dimension, as was also the case in the previous three years.

Northern Ireland was ranked relatively highly on the Immigration and Investment dimension globally, with all but four panel nations providing a ranking between 13th and 24th (Figure 2). This dimension has received top half rankings (25th or higher) from at least 16 of 20 panel countries in all survey years.

The highest rankings were received from China (13th), the United Kingdom (16th), Germany (19th) and France (20th). Northern Ireland's lowest rankings were received from Egypt (35th), Russia (28th), Turkey (27th) and Mexico (26th).

The largest change in rank for this dimension was from China, who ranked Northern Ireland 12 places higher. The largest drops were from South Africa and Turkey who ranked NI two places lower than in 2019.

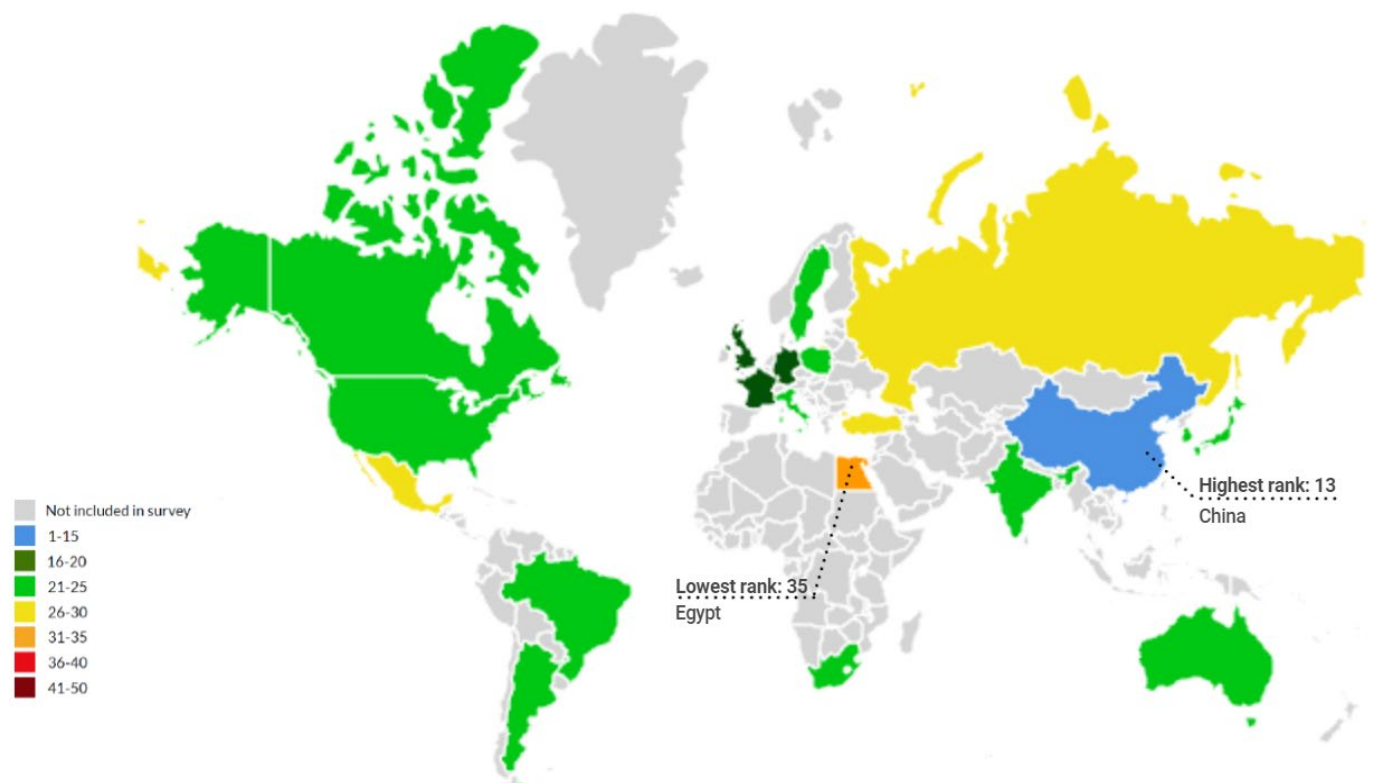
While rankings provide an insight into how Northern Ireland is viewed by panel countries relative to the other participating nations, they can be impacted year on year due to the inclusion of new countries in the survey. The dimension score provides a more absolute understanding of how Northern Ireland is viewed, both overall and by each of the individual panel countries. In this sense, it is useful to consider both rankings and scores.

Overall, Immigration and Investment was Northern Ireland's 2nd lowest scoring dimension in 2020.

Northern Ireland's highest scores were received from India (70.40) and China (69.93). Northern Ireland's lowest scores were received from Japan (46.22) and Sweden (50.94).

Northern Ireland's relatively high rank (21st) and low score (50.94) from Sweden, contrasts with the relatively low rank (35th) and high score (59.83) from Egypt. This suggests that scores from different panel countries are not necessarily comparable, again, highlighting the importance of considering both score and rank when evaluating responses from other countries.

Figure 2: Northern Ireland's rankings on the Immigration and Investment dimension from around the world



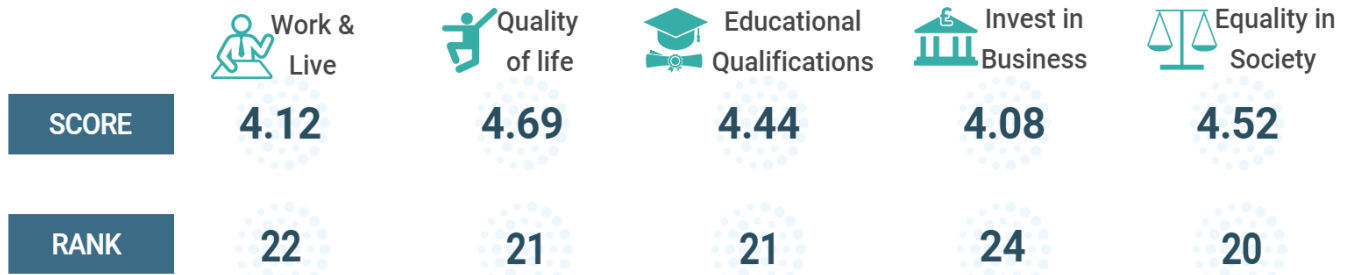
Attribute scores and rankings

The score for each attribute is an average of participants' scores, on a scale from one (lowest and worst) to seven (highest and best) with four being neither positive nor negative.

Northern Ireland's attribute scores on this dimension have been positive (i.e. above the neutral value of 4) each year since Northern Ireland was included in 2016. The highest scoring Immigration and Investment attribute in 2020, as in previous years, was "quality of life" (4.69). "Invest in business" scored lowest in this dimension (4.08) and was among the lowest scoring in any dimension, again following the same trend as in each year previous.

Northern Ireland was ranked relatively highly (20th, 21st or 22nd out of the 50 nations examined) on four out of the five Immigration and Investment attributes, with a lower ranking (24th) on the "invest in business" attribute.

Figure 3: Rankings and scores for Northern Ireland's Immigration and Investment attributes



Note: Attribute scores range from 1 to 7 and all rankings are out of 50.

Proportion of participants who agreed or disagreed with each Immigration and Investment attribute statement

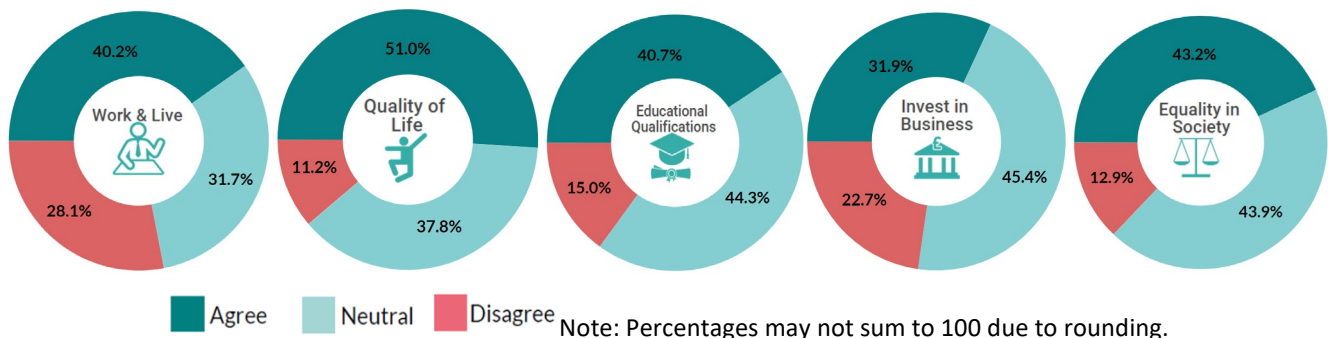
It is also useful to consider the proportion of participants who either agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement¹ (see Figure 4).

More than half of participants (51 per cent) agreed that Northern Ireland is a place with a high quality of life, 43 per cent agree that Northern Ireland cares about equality in society and around two in five participants agreed on the "work and live" (40 per cent) and "educational qualifications" (41 per cent) attributes.

A large proportion gave a neutral response to each of the five attributes, with percentages ranging from 32 per cent ("work and live") to 45 per cent ("invest in business") which could suggest a lack of awareness or strong views on Northern Ireland's Immigration and Investment reputation. The two highest disagreement rates across all 23 attributes were found in this dimension for "work and live" (28 per cent) and "invest in business" (23 per cent).

Generally, proportions are similar to those in other years. Agreement rates are slightly lower than 2019 but, for the most part, are an increase on earlier years.

Figure 4: Proportion of participants who agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement in the Immigration and Investment dimension



¹ For each attribute statement, survey participants reported to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a seven point Likert scale. These are converted to scores, where one to three were categorised as 'disagree', four as 'neutral', and five to seven as 'agree'.

Words associated with Northern Ireland's economic and business conditions

Participants were asked to select, from a predetermined list, the adjectives they thought most accurately described the current economic and business conditions in Northern Ireland (participants could choose more than one response). The most common response was 'none of these' (29 per cent of participants). Figure 5 presents adjectives chosen by remaining participants. The words most commonly associated with Northern Ireland's economic and business conditions were 'Developing' (20 per cent), 'Modern' (18 per cent) and 'Forward-thinking' (17 per cent). These are similar to those in 2019.

Figure 5: Words associated with Northern Ireland's economic and business conditions

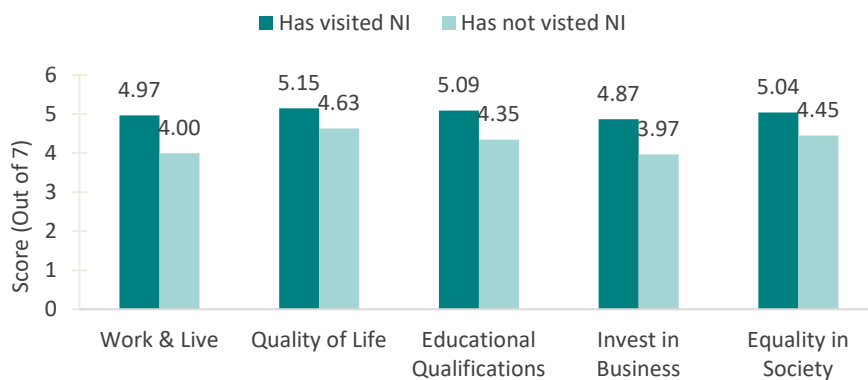


Visitors to Northern Ireland

In 2020, 12 per cent of NBI participants reported that they had previously visited Northern Ireland.

Participants who had previously visited the region scored Northern Ireland statistically significantly² higher on the Immigration and Investment dimension (67.40) than those who had not visited (55.11). This was also the case for each of the composite attributes (Figure 6). This pattern was also evident in previous survey years.

Figure 6: Attribute scores (those who have visited Northern Ireland and those who have not)



Further Information and Feedback

Further information can be found in the [overall report](#) (published February 2021) which includes data tables and methodological documents.

Feedback on these publications is gratefully received, and can be provided through our [User Feedback Survey](#) or by contacting: Emma Morgan, pfganalytics@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk.

² Statistically significant differences are at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% confident that the differences between groups are actual differences and have not just arisen by chance.