

In order to assess and monitor its international reputation, Northern Ireland has been included on the Nation Brands Index<sup>SM</sup> (NBI<sup>SM</sup>) since 2016.

The NBI<sup>SM</sup> 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 **People**. The score for the People dimension is calculated using scores from three attributes (see opposite). For each attribute, survey participants were presented with a statement and asked to state to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a seven point Likert scale, where one is strongly disagree, four is neither agree nor disagree, and seven is strongly agree\*.

The score for the People 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<sup>SM</sup>; rankings presented in the report show Northern Ireland’s position among these 50 countries.

Attribute	Statement
<b>Welcoming</b>	‘If I visited this country, the people would make me feel very welcome.’
<b>Close Friend</b>	‘I would like to have a person from this country as a close friend.’
<b>Employability*</b>	‘Imagine you are a manager needing to fill an important position in your organisation. How willing would you be to consider a well-qualified person from the following countries?’

\*In relation to the “employability” attribute, participants were not asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed but to what extent they would be willing to consider employing a well-qualified person from Northern Ireland, on a seven point Likert scale, where one is ‘very unwilling’, four is ‘neither willing nor unwilling’ and seven is ‘very willing’.

Figure 1: Northern Ireland’s ranking and score on the People dimension of the NBI<sup>SM</sup>



### Headlines

- In 2019, Northern Ireland ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> of 50 for the People dimension (up one place from 2018). People was Northern Ireland’s 3<sup>rd</sup> highest ranked dimension, as was also the case in all previous survey years.
- Northern Ireland’s score for People increased to 63.45 in 2019 (+0.50 since 2018 and higher than in 2016 and 2017). People was Northern Ireland’s 2<sup>nd</sup> highest scoring dimension of the six dimensions.
- People received significantly higher scores from those who had visited Northern Ireland compared to those who had not.
- People was Northern Ireland’s 2<sup>nd</sup> highest scoring dimension and 3<sup>rd</sup> highest rank in 2019 – this continues the trend of strong performance in score and rank observed since 2016.
- In 2019, the largest changes in rank were from Brazil and Egypt, who ranked Northern Ireland six places higher, and China, who ranked Northern Ireland seven places lower than in 2018.

## Rankings and scores on the People dimension from around the world

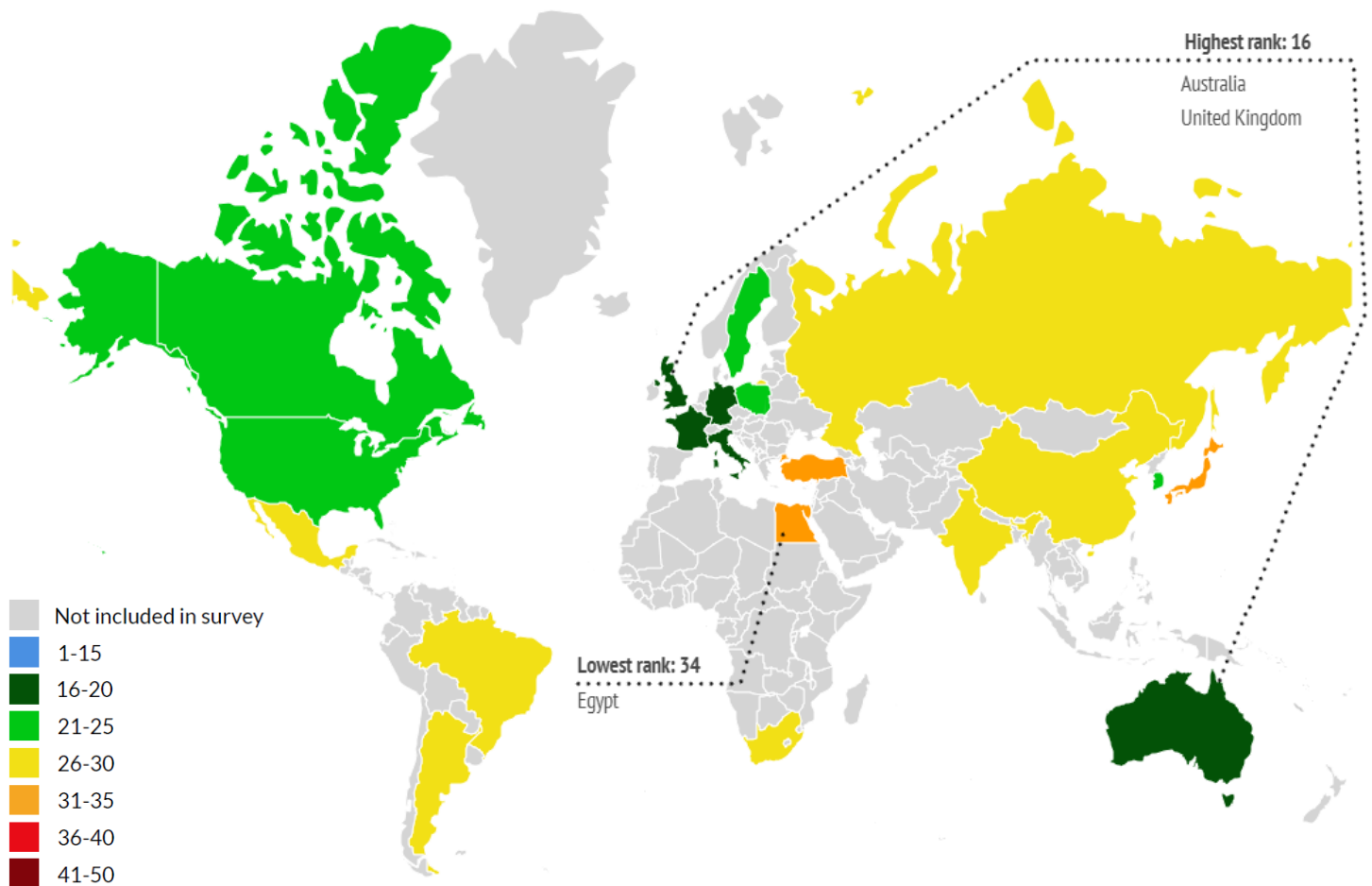
Northern Ireland's People dimension was ranked reasonably highly overall (Figure 2). The highest rankings were received from Australia and the United Kingdom (both placed Northern Ireland 16<sup>th</sup>), France and Germany (both 19<sup>th</sup>) and Italy (20<sup>th</sup>). Northern Ireland's lowest rankings were received from Egypt (34<sup>th</sup>), Turkey (33<sup>rd</sup>) and Japan (32<sup>nd</sup>). Northern Ireland was also ranked relatively highly on the People dimension in all previous survey years.

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.

Northern Ireland's highest score was received from India (69.99) with relatively high scores also received from Mexico (68.90), United Kingdom (66.46), Brazil (65.41) and Italy (65.33) in 2019. Northern Ireland's lowest scores were received from Japan (53.61), South Korea (55.91) and Turkey (58.21).

Northern Ireland received a relatively high rank (21<sup>st</sup>) and low score (55.91) from South Korea, which contrasts with the relatively low rank (30<sup>th</sup>) and high score (68.90) received from Mexico. 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 People 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 the People dimension have been positive (i.e. above the neutral value of 4) each year since Northern Ireland was included in 2016. The highest scoring People attribute in 2019 was "employability" (4.94).

When attribute scores were compared with the other participating nations, Northern Ireland was ranked relatively highly (between 21<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> out of the 50 nations examined) for all three attributes.

**Figure 3: Rankings and scores for Northern Ireland's People attributes**

SCORE	ATTRIBUTE	RANK
4.70	Welcoming 	24
4.71	Close Friend 	23
4.94	Employability 	21

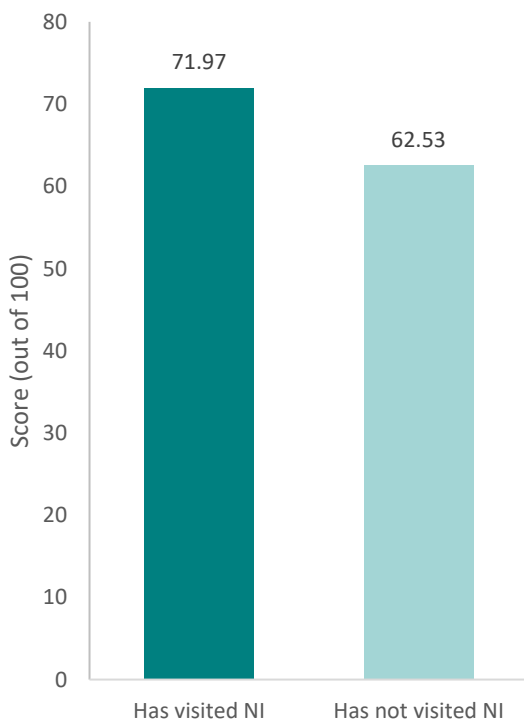
Note: Attribute scores range from 1 to 7 and all rankings are out of 50.

## Differences between those who have visited Northern Ireland and those who have not

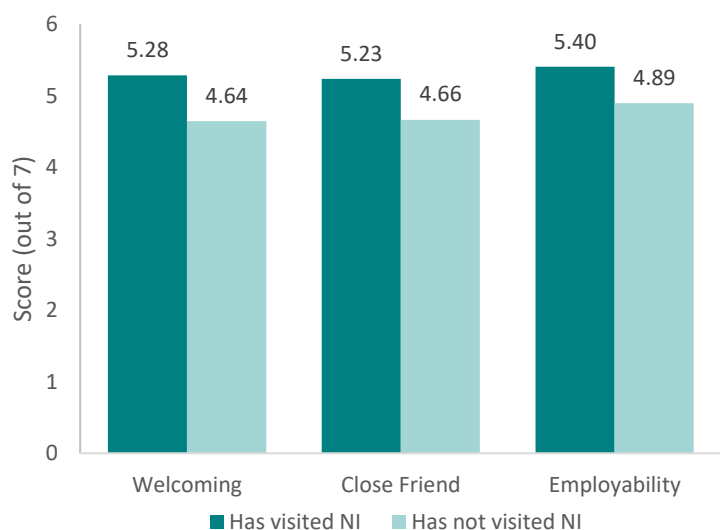
In 2019, ten per cent of NBI<sup>SM</sup> participants reported that they had previously visited Northern Ireland.

Participants who had previously visited the region scored Northern Ireland statistically significantly\* higher on the People dimension, as well as on each of the composite attributes, than those who had not visited (Figures 4 and 5). This pattern was also evident in previous years.

**Figure 4: People dimension scores – those who have visited Northern Ireland and those who have not**



**Figure 5: Attribute scores (People dimension) – those who have visited Northern Ireland and those who have not**



\*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.

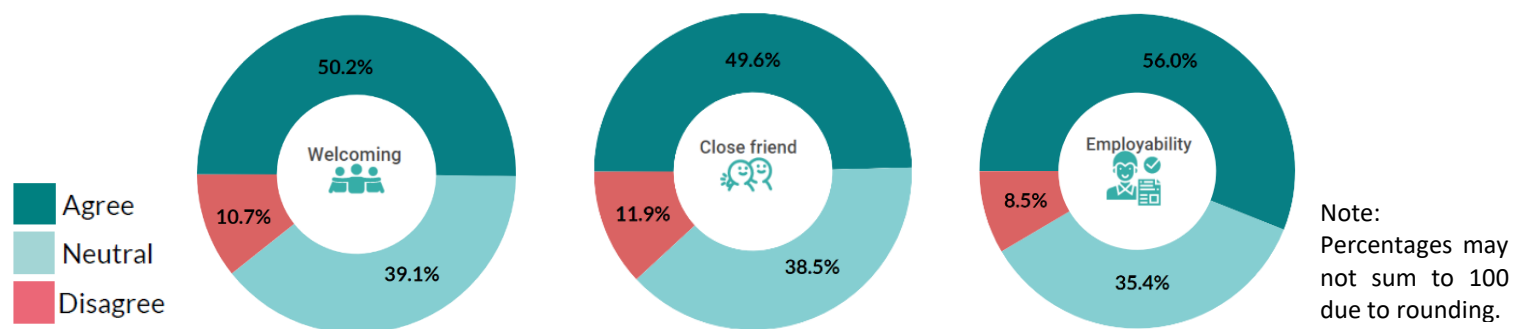
## Proportion of participants who agreed or disagreed with each People attribute statement

It is also useful to consider the proportion of participants who either agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement\* (see Figure 6). These proportions were all similar to those observed in 2018.

Over half of participants (56 per cent) said that they would be willing to employ a person from Northern Ireland. Half of participants agreed that the people of Northern Ireland would be welcoming if they visited (50 per cent) and around half agreed that they would like to have a person from Northern Ireland as a close friend (50 per cent).

A large proportion of participants provided a neutral response to each of the People attributes (ranging from 35 per cent to 39 per cent), which could suggest a lack of awareness or strong views on the reputation of the People of Northern Ireland.

**Figure 6: Proportion of participants who agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement within the People dimension**



## Words associated with the people of Northern Ireland

Participants were asked to select, from a predetermined list, the adjectives they thought most accurately described the people of Northern Ireland (participants could choose more than one response). The most common response was 'none of these' (30 per cent of participants). Figure 7 presents adjectives chosen by remaining participants. The words most commonly associated with Northern Ireland's people were 'Hard working' (26 per cent), 'Honest' (19 per cent), 'Skilful' (18 per cent), 'Fun' (16 per cent) and 'Tolerant' (15 per cent).

These proportions were all similar to those observed in the previous three years.

**Figure 7: Words associated with the people of Northern Ireland**



### Further information

The other five bulletins for the Six Dimensions of the NBI<sup>SM</sup>, as well as data tables and infographics, are available from:

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/six-dimensions-nation-brands-index-2019>

The overall NBI<sup>SM</sup> report (published February 2020), data tables and methodological documents are available from:

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nation-brands-index-2019-report-northern-ireland>

\*For each attribute statement, survey participants reported to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a seven point Likert scale, where one is strongly disagree, four is neither agree nor disagree, and seven is strongly agree. Participants who provided scores between one and three were categorised as disagreeing with the statement, scores between five and seven were categorised as agreeing, while scores of four were categorised as neutral.