

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



A Question of Attitude

Equality Awareness Survey 2016

The field work for the survey was conducted in July/August 2016 on a face-to-face basis by Social Market Research with an achieved sample of 1,143 adults aged 16 years and over.

Interviews were conducted in respondents' homes using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing.

The survey used a stratified random sample to ensure the sample was fully representative of the Northern Ireland adult population (aged 16 years and over).

These findings build on previous similar surveys undertaken in 2005, 2008 and 2011.

Our findings on social attitudes and perceptions of equality raise many questions, for example, there's a majority who say they are comfortable with difference, yet the actual experiences of some people in Northern Ireland shows that a minority are not. These expressions of prejudice can lead to real damage and harm.

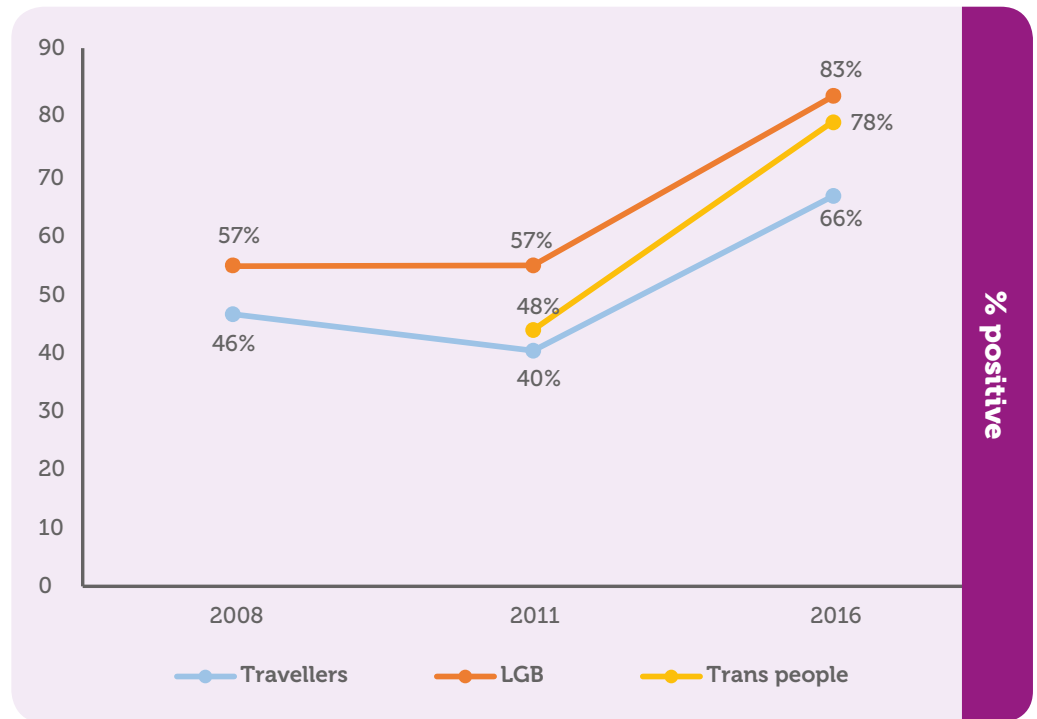


Social Attitudes and Perceptions of Equality

How Do We Feel About ...?

We asked respondents how positive or negative they felt towards 15 equality groups.

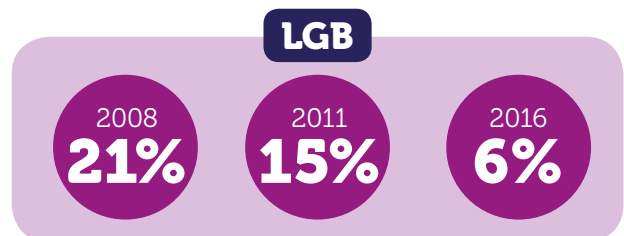
We found that, overall, attitudes toward different equality groups were much more positive than in previous equality awareness surveys, in particular towards Travellers, lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people and trans people. But there are still some noticeably negative areas, mostly in the area of race.



The five most negatively viewed groups were all racial groups. The sixth and seventh most negatively viewed groups were trans and lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

Racial Groups	% negative
Travellers	19%
Roma	18%
Asylum seekers/refugees	15%
Migrant workers	11%
Minority ethnic groups	10%

Sixth and seventh on the list were trans people (9%) and LGB (6%).



I've nothing against them, but...

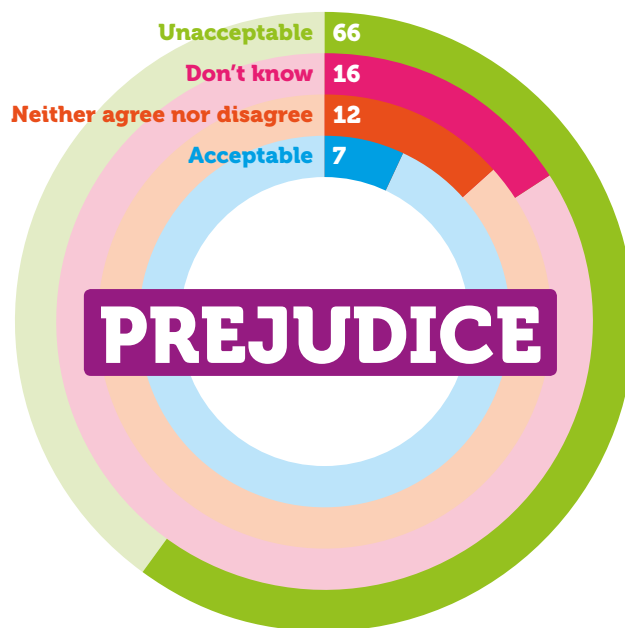
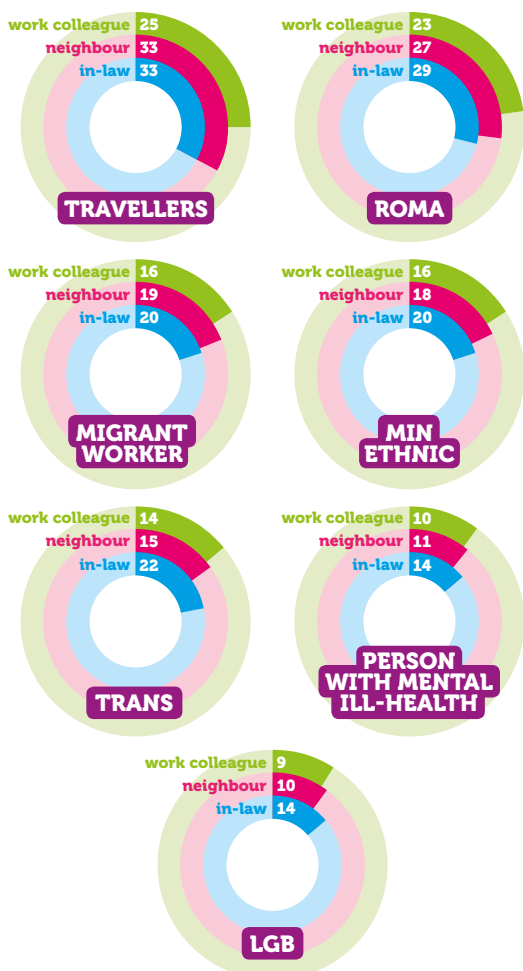
We asked respondents a series of 'social distance' questions to assess public attitudes towards ten equality groups. The scenarios explored how comfortable people felt with varying degrees of closeness to a member of a 'different' group. Respondents were asked whether they 'would mind' or 'would not mind' having a member of each group as a work colleague, a neighbour or if one of the group members were to marry a close relative.

Overall, attitudes were positive towards all equality groups across all three social distance scenarios.

Negative attitudes (the proportion of those who 'would mind') towards all the equality groups, and for all three social distance scenarios, decreased between 2011 and 2016.

The proportions of respondents who 'would mind' a person from a specific equality group increased as social distance decreased, from work colleague, to neighbour, to in-law.

Percentage (%) who 'would mind' these people as a:



We asked whether people thought there was sometimes a good reason to be prejudiced against certain groups. Two-thirds (66%) said there were no circumstances in which prejudice was acceptable.

Who do we think is unfairly treated?

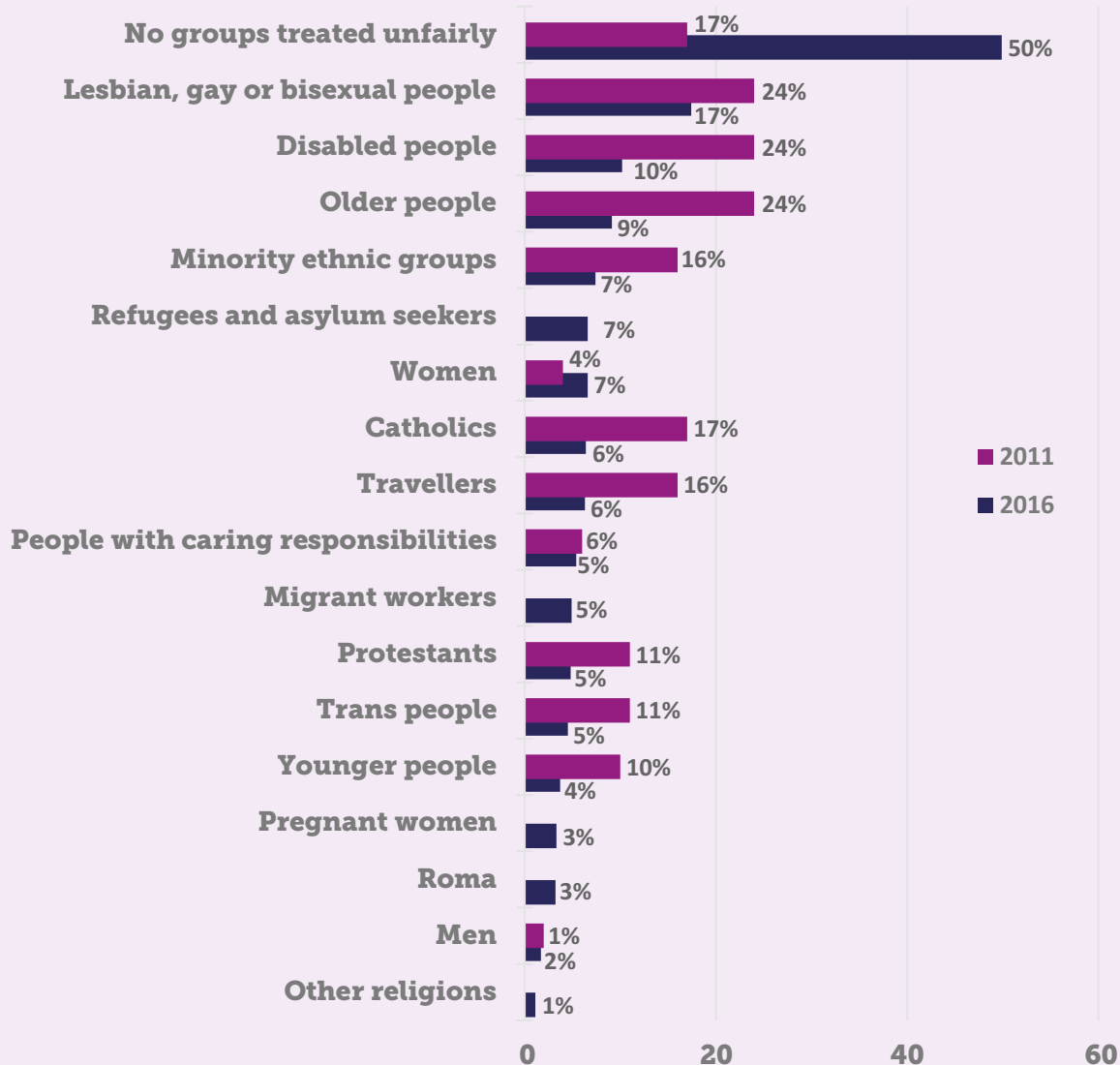
50%

believe **no** groups in **NI** are **treated unfairly**

To understand perceptions of unfair treatment against particular equality groups, we asked which groups people think are treated unfairly in Northern Ireland. Half of respondents (50%) were of the opinion that no groups were treated unfairly compared to other groups in Northern Ireland.

However, the group most likely to be perceived as being treated unfairly was lesbian, gay or bisexual people (17%), followed by disabled people (10%) and people over 70 years (9%).

Perceptions of unfair treatment for all equality groups have decreased since 2011, with the proportion of people who feel no groups are treated unfairly increasing from 17% to 50%.





Focus
on **Race**



All five of the most negatively viewed groups were racial groups – Travellers, Roma, asylum seekers and refugees, migrant workers and minority ethnic groups.

In general, how positive or negative do you feel towards...

	Negative	neither neg nor pos	Positive
Travellers	19%	15%	66%
Roma	18%	15%	68%
Asylum seekers & refugees	15%	15%	71%
Migrant workers	11%	12%	77%
Minority ethnic groups	10%	14%	77%

Travellers, Roma, migrant workers and minority ethnic groups were also the equality groups with the highest proportions of respondents who ‘would mind’ them as a work colleague, a neighbour or as an in-law.

Proportion of people who ‘would mind’ having people from these groups as:

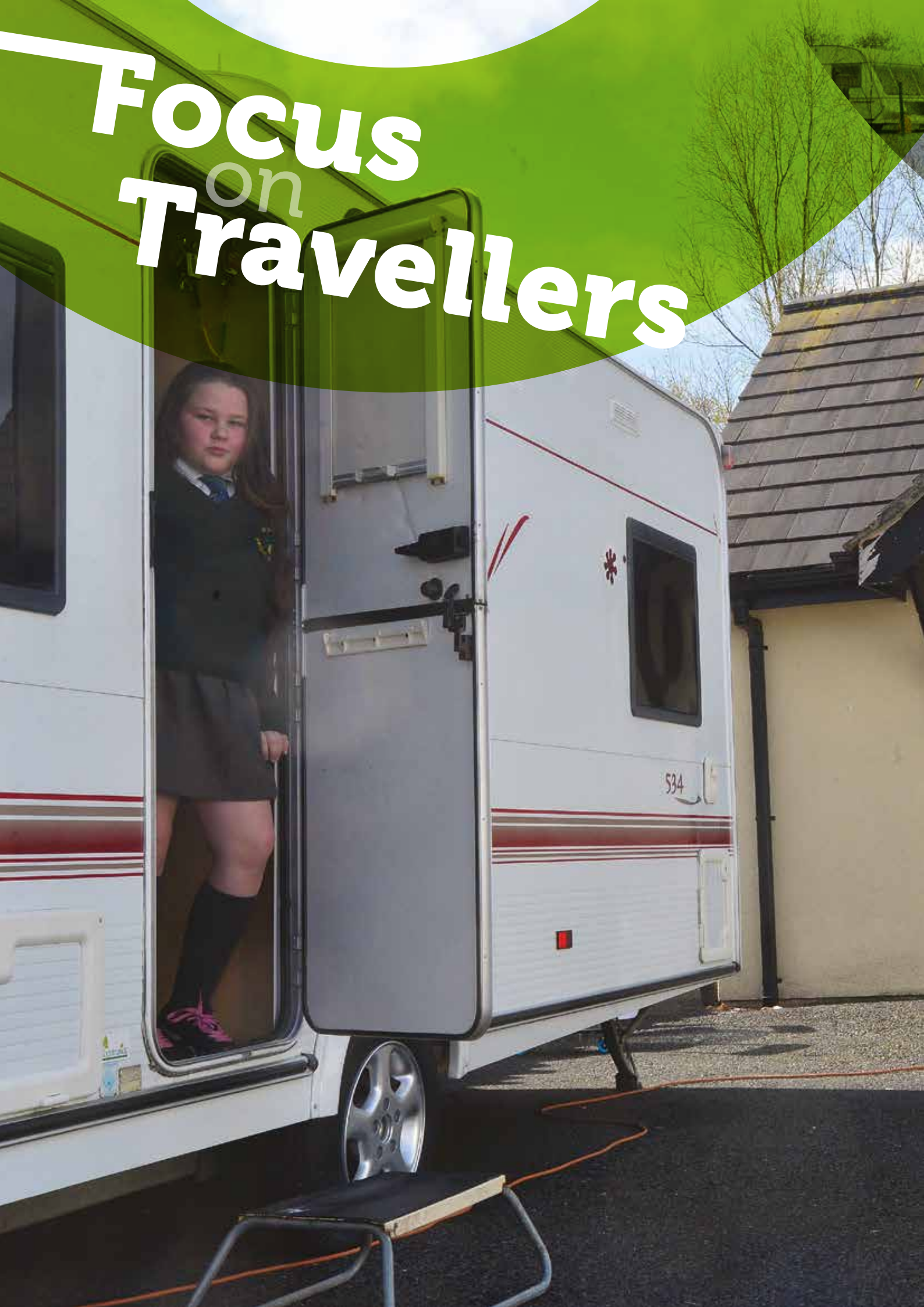
	work colleague	neighbour	in-law
Traveller	25%	33%	33%
Roma	23%	27%	29%
Migrant Worker	16%	19%	20%
Minority Ethnic	16%	18%	20%

While these results show clearly that racial groups attract the highest level of negative attitudes, they also show that respondents did not feel that racial groups were treated unfairly compared to other equality groups.

Proportion of people who believe these groups are treated unfairly compared to other groups in NI.

Minority ethnic groups	7%
Refugees & asylum seekers	7%
Travellers	6%
Migrant workers	5%
Roma	3%

Focus on Travellers





Overall, attitudes to Travellers were not as negative as in previous surveys, but they were still the equality group that attracted the most negative attitudes across all areas that we surveyed.

In general, how positive or negative do you feel towards Travellers?

	negative	neither neg nor pos	positive
2008	28%	26%	46%
2011	30%	30%	40%
2016	19%	15%	66%

Would you personally mind a traveller as a work colleague/a neighbour/an in-law?

	2005	2008	2011	2016
a work colleague	24%	38%	35%	25%
a neighbour	41%	51%	54%	33%
a close relative	38%	51%	55%	33%

More people responded with negative attitudes to Travellers in all three social distance scenarios than to any other group. The closer the relationship, proportionally more people minded. One quarter would mind working alongside a Traveller, and a third would mind a Traveller as a neighbour or a relative by marriage.

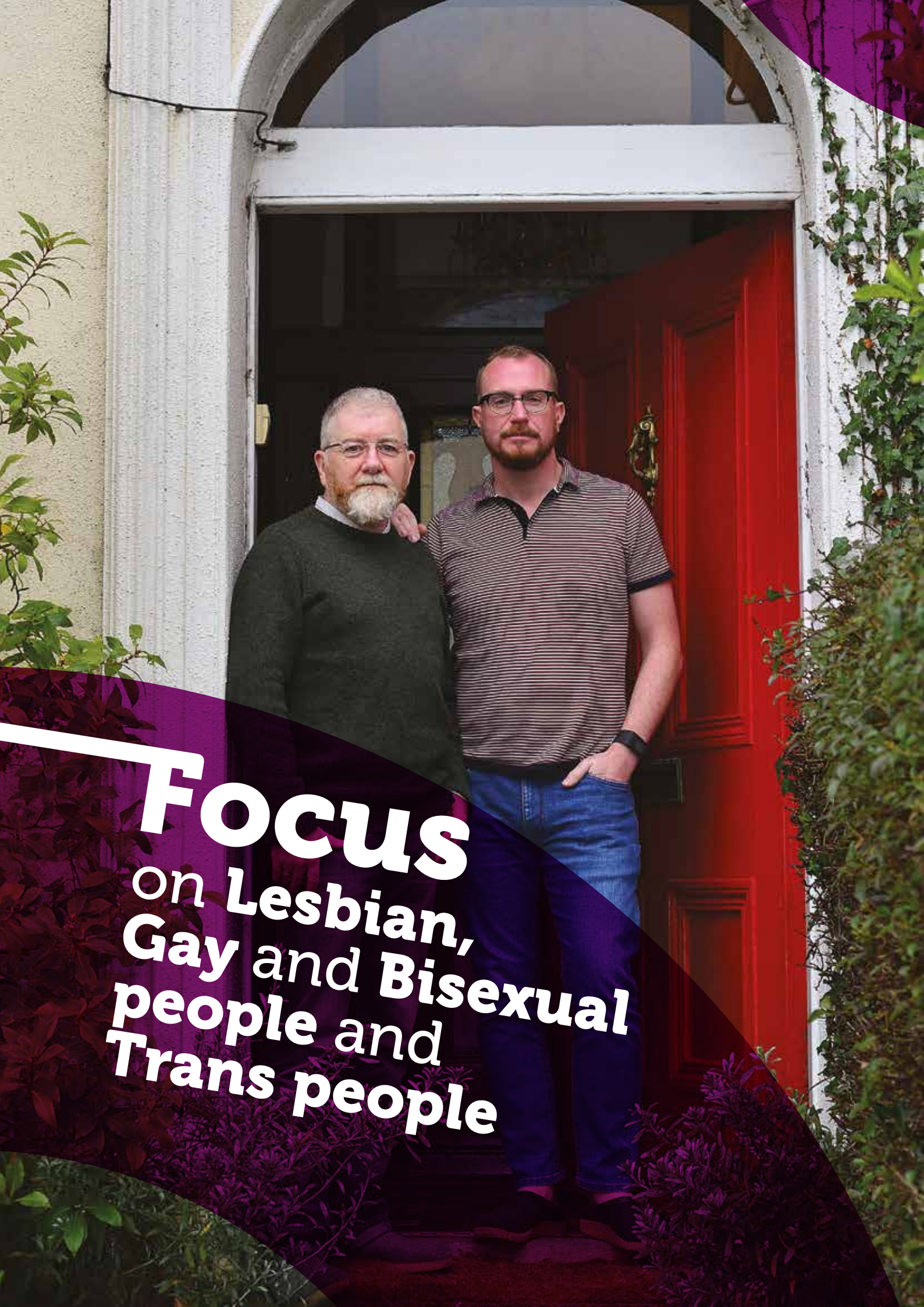
Which equality groups are treated unfairly, compared to other groups, in Northern Ireland?

Percentage of those surveyed who answered 'Travellers'	
2008	18%
2011	16%
2016	6%

While 50% of respondents said that no groups were treated unfairly in Northern Ireland, 6% said that Travellers were treated unfairly.

Which is the most unfairly treated group in Northern Ireland?

Percentage of those who answered 'Travellers'	
2005	11%
2008	16%
2011	8%
2016	6%



Focus
on Lesbian,
Gay and Bisexual
people and
Trans people



Overall, attitudes to lesbian, gay and bisexual people (LGB) and trans people were more positive than in previous surveys.

In general, how positive or negative do you feel towards LGB and Trans people?

Trans	negative	neither neg nor pos	positive
2011	22%	30%	48%
2016	9%	13%	78%

LGB	negative	neither neg nor pos	positive
2008	21%	22%	57%
2011	15%	28%	57%
2016	6%	11%	83%

How much would you personally mind a LGB or trans person as a work colleague/a neighbour/ an in-law?

LGB	2005	2008	2011	2016
Work colleague	14%	23%	22%	9%
Neighbour	14%	23%	27%	10%
Close relative	29%	35%	42%	14%

Trans	2005	2008	2011	2016
Work colleague	Not asked	Not asked	35%	14%
Neighbour	Not asked	Not asked	40%	15%
Close relative	Not asked	Not asked	53%	22%

Across all the social distance scenarios, respondents were less likely to say they would mind LGB and trans people as a work colleague, a neighbour or as a close relative than in previous equality awareness surveys.

But still more than a fifth of respondents said they would mind a trans person as a close relative by marriage.

Equality Commission

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