



Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Equality Awareness in **Northern Ireland:** **Employers and** **Service Providers**

Equality Awareness Survey –
Employers and Service Providers 2016

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1

Introduction

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In March 2016, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (the Commission) appointed Ipsos MORI to conduct a survey to provide insight into the attitudes and perceptions held by those who engage, or who could engage, with our services in their professional capacity on employment¹ and / or service provision² related matters.³ The survey asked all respondents to answer questions on three areas: attitudes, awareness, and confidence. In addition, for those who have had contact with the Commission in the previous 36 months, the survey asked questions on the areas of satisfaction and impact/change.

Role of the Equality Commission

- 1.2 The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is an independent public body established under the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Commission has the responsibility for overseeing, reviewing and enforcing equality laws in regards to religious belief, political opinion, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation and age. The statutes make discrimination unlawful in respect to employment and the provision of goods, facilities and services, with certain exceptions with regard to age.
- 1.3 In addition, the Commission has roles and responsibilities, in relation to the duties placed on public bodies under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998)⁴ and the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006⁵. The Commission also has joint responsibilities (with the Northern Ireland Human rights Commission) as the independent mechanism in Northern Ireland of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

1 For example, Human Resources related matters or FETO monitoring.

2 For example, matters to do with an organisation complying with its statutory duties and the provision of goods, facilities and services.

3 This includes all of those who engage with the Commission on a professional level i.e. as part of their job role. It does not include those who engage with us on an individual level such as members of the general public or those who seek advice or assistance as a result of experiencing discrimination.

4 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places a statutory duty on public bodies to promote equality of opportunity and good relations amongst people of different age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, political opinion, race, religious belief those with and without disability and those with and without dependants in policy and practice.

5 The Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 places a duty on public bodies to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people, and encourage their participation in public life.

Context of the Survey

- 1.4 Fieldwork for this survey was undertaken during the period July 2016 to August 2016. The findings of this survey must be taken within the context of the socio-economic and political circumstances of this time. This period was associated with relative political stability in Northern Ireland, with the Northern Ireland Assembly sitting following an Assembly election on 5 May 2016. This election returned the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Fein as the two main power sharing parties, and for the first time, the small parties decided not to nominate Members to take up Executive positions. This period was also associated with the aftermath of the United Kingdom's decision to exit the European Union. On 23rd June 2016, a referendum was held on whether the United Kingdom (UK) should leave or remain in the European Union (EU), from which a UK-wide majority (51.9%) voted to leave. However, in Northern Ireland, 55.8% of those who voted in the referendum voted to remain within the EU. Furthermore, the survey was held in-between the May 2015 County Court and October 2016 Court of Appeal judgements concerning the high profile case of Lee v Ashers Baking Co Ltd, which the Commission supported.

Survey Aim and Objectives

- 1.5 The aim of the study was to provide robust data on how stakeholders, are: aware of the Commission and its remit; aware of and understand equality and non-discrimination; confident in the Commission, and have implemented any positive changes as a result of interactions with the Commission.
- 1.6 The project objectives covered five core areas:
- **Attitudes:** *to equality and anti-discrimination; and views on selected equality themes.*
 - **Awareness:** *of equality & anti-discrimination laws; and of the Commission and its remit.*
 - **Confidence:** *in the Commission as independent and fair; its ability to fulfil its duties; and key strengths/weaknesses of the Commission.*
 - **Satisfaction:** *with the Commission's publications/website; its written materials; its events; and/or with representatives of the organisation.*

- **Impact/Change:** on the respondent organisation, including employment processes, the way services are provided, and/or policy positions.

Methodology

- 1.7 This survey was carried out alongside an Equality Awareness Survey of the General Public, and designed to provide information based on some comparable questions. The full methodology can be found in Annex 1.
- 1.8 This survey is of those who engage, or could engage, with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's services in their professional capacity on employment related and / or service related matters.
- 1.9 This report present the findings of a survey to provide insight into the attitudes and perceptions held by those who engage, or who could engage, with our services in their professional capacity in respect of employment⁶ and / or service provision⁷ related matters.⁸ These service users were considered to largely represent the users of the services provided by the Commission's Advice and Compliance Division.

6 For example, Human Resources related matters.

7 For example, matters to do with an organisation complying with its statutory duties and the provision of goods, facilities and services.

8 This includes all of those who engage with the Commission on a professional level i.e. as part of their job role. It does not include those who engage with us on an individual level such as members of the general public or those who seek advice or assistance as a result of experiencing discrimination.

2

Survey Results

2 Survey Results

2.1 Overall, 1220 individuals were surveyed in their professional roles to provide insight into their organisation's attitudes and perceptions of equality matters in respect of employment⁹ and / or service provision¹⁰ related matters.¹¹ They also provided insight into their awareness of the Commission, its functions and services, as well as the impact of our services. The report highlights findings for:

The survey asked **all respondents** to answer questions on two areas:

- *Awareness & Confidence: of the Commission and its remit;*

In addition, for **those who had contact** with the Commission in the previous 36 months, the survey asked questions on the areas of:

- *Satisfaction: with the Commission's services; and,*
- *Impact/Change: on the respondent's organisation. .*

Finally, the survey also asked **all respondents** to answer question on:

- *Attitudes: to equality and anti-discrimination.*

AWARENESS¹² & CONFIDENCE

2.2 All respondents (100%) had heard about the Commission and were aware that the Commission had responsibility for promoting equality and challenging discrimination in Northern Ireland.

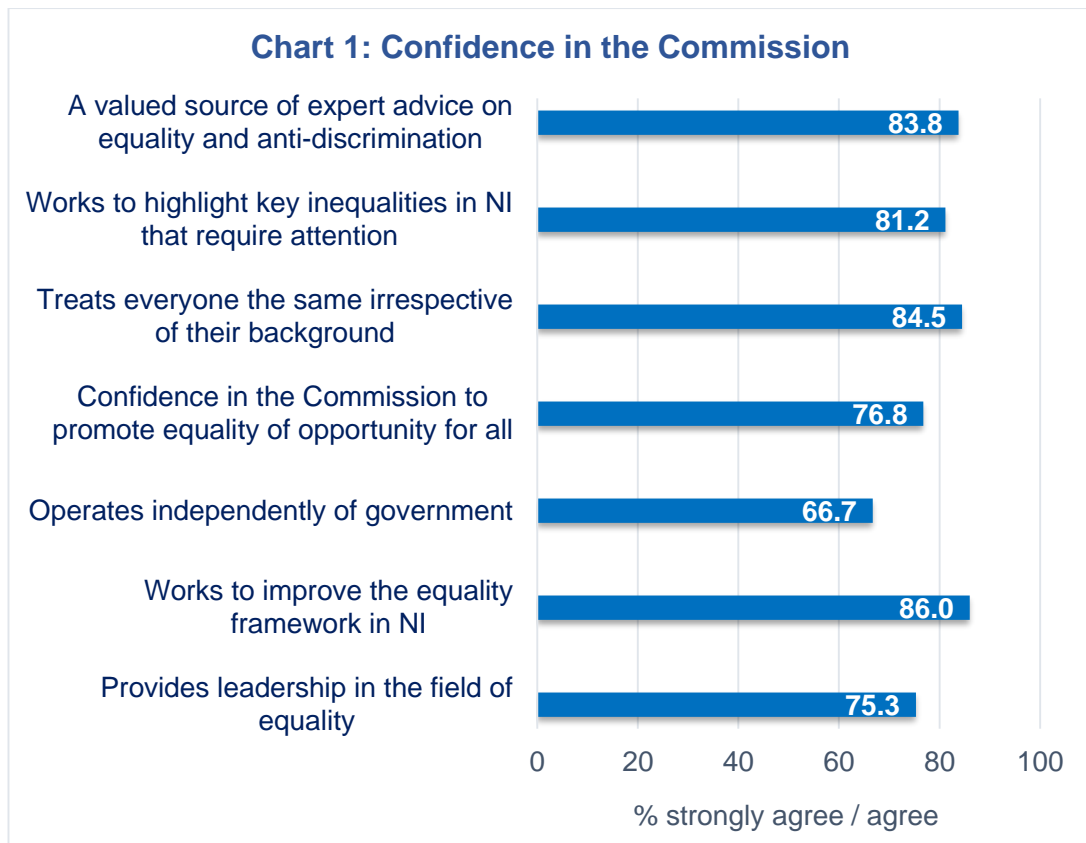
2.3 All respondents were also asked to consider their confidence in the Commission as an organisation by either agreeing or disagreeing with seven statements. Overall, confidence levels with the Commission were high across the statements tested (see Chart 1).

⁹ For example, Human Resources related matters.

¹⁰ For example, matters to do with the provision of goods, facilities and services as well as public authorities with statutory equality and good relations duties.

¹¹ This includes all of those who engage with the Commission on a professional level i.e. as part of their job role. It does not include those who engage with us on an individual level such as members of the general public or those who seek advice or assistance as a result of experiencing discrimination.

¹² Note for this section no statistical differences were observed by sector.



- 2.4 Chart 1 illustrates that more than eight out of ten service users strongly agreed or agreed that, 'The Commission provides a valued source of expert advice on equality and anti-discrimination' (83.8%) and '...works to highlight key inequalities in Northern Ireland that require attention' (81.2%).
- 2.5 Three quarters (76.8%) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that, '*I have confidence in the ability of the Commission to promote equality of opportunity for all,*' with 5.2% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing.
- 2.6 More than eight out of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that '*The Commission treats everyone the same irrespective of their background*' (84.5%), with 4.2% holding the opposite view.
- 2.7 Two-thirds (66.7%) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that, '*The Commission operates independently of government*', with 6.3% holding the opposite view.
- 2.8 The majority of respondents (86.0%) strongly agreed or agreed that, '*The Commission works to improve the equality framework in Northern Ireland*', with just 2.5% disagreeing with the statement¹³.

¹³ 1.8% of respondents disagree and 0.7% strongly disagree that the Commission works to improve the equality framework in Northern Ireland.

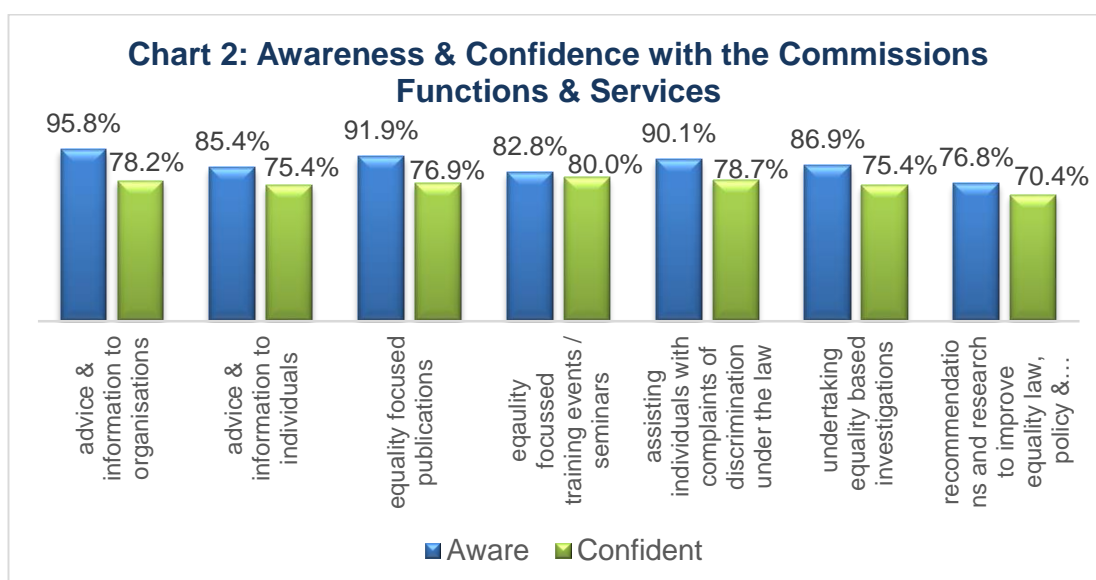
- 2.9 Three quarters (75.3%) of respondents when asked if the ‘*The Commission provides leadership in the field of equality*’, strongly agreed or agreed, with just 4.3%¹⁴, disagreeing with these statements.
- 2.10 To evaluate the awareness of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland’s areas of work and powers, all respondents (n=1218) were read out a list of functions and services the Commission provides and asked to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ regarding awareness of the provision¹⁵.
- 2.11 Overall awareness levels of the Commission’s areas of work and powers were very high across the seven functions and services tested (Chart 2):
- In respect to the provision of equality advice and information, nearly all respondents (95.8%) were aware that, ‘*The Commission provides equality advice and information to organisations*’;
 - Eight five per-cent (85.4%) of respondents were aware that, ‘*The Commission provides equality advice and information to individuals*’;
 - The vast majority (90.1%) of service users were aware that, ‘*The Commission provides assistance to individuals with complaints of discrimination under the law*’; and
 - The vast majority of respondents were aware that, ‘*The Commission provides equality focused publications...*’ (91.9%) and that, ‘*The Commission provides equality focused training, seminars and events*’ (82.8%).
 - Over 4 in 5 (86.9%) were aware that ‘*The Commission undertakes equality based investigations*’; and,
 - Over three-quarters (76.8%) were aware that ‘*The Commission provides recommendations and research to improve equality law, policy and practices*’.
- 2.12 All respondents who were aware of the Commission’s functions and services were then asked ‘...how good do you think it is as delivering on these?’ At least seventy percent of respondents

¹⁴ 2.7% of respondents disagree and 1.6% strongly disagree that the Commission provides leadership in the field of equality.

¹⁵ All (100%; n=1220) of those who participated in the survey had heard of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

thought that the Commission was 'very good' or 'good' at delivering its remit in all seven areas (see Chart 2):

- *equality advice and information to organisations (78.2%)¹⁶*
- *equality advice and information to individuals (75.4%)¹⁷*
- *assisting individuals with complaints of discrimination under the law (78.7%)¹⁸;*
- *equality focused publications (76.9%)¹⁹*
- *equality focused training, seminars and events (80.0%)²⁰*
- *recommendations and research to improve equality law, policy and practices (70.4%)²¹, and*
- *undertaking equality based investigations (75.4%)²².*



2.13 When all respondents who took part in this survey (n=1220) were asked, 'If your organisation had a problem with or query about equality or discrimination, in the future, would you seek information, advice or assistance from the Equality Commission for Northern

¹⁶ Total = 1103, 40.3% (n=444) of respondents stated the Commission was very good and 37.9% (n=418) good at delivering equality advice and information to organisations.

¹⁷ Total = 783, 35.8% (n=280) of respondents stated the Commission was very good and 39.6% (n=310) good at delivering equality advice and information to individuals.

¹⁸ Total = 829, 37.0% (n=307) of respondents stated the Commission was very good and 41.7% (n=346) good at assisting individuals with complaints of discrimination under the law

¹⁹ Total = 1051, 39.8% (n=418) of respondents stated the Commission was very good and 37.1% (n=390) good at delivering equality focussed publications.

²⁰ Total = 920, 45.8% (n=421) of respondents stated the Commission was very good and 34.2% (n=315) good at delivering equality focussed training, seminars and events.

²¹ Total = 788, 30.3% (n=239) of respondents stated the Commission was very good and 40.1% (n=316) good at making recommendations and research to improve equality law, policy and practices.

²² Total 843, 37.7% (n=318) of respondents stated the Commission was 'very good' and 37.7% (n=318) 'good' at delivering equality based investigations

Ireland?’ **nearly all (90.4%)** would seek information, advice or assistance from the Commission, with 4.0% stating ‘maybe’ and only 4.8% stating ‘no’. Of those respondents who answered ‘no’, the most common reason was that they would use an alternative, such as an internal human resource, or a solicitor.

Views on strengths and areas for improvement

2.14 Respondents²³ were asked to think about the needs of their organisation and were asked to identify the Commission’s three main strengths. These responses were unprompted and grouped for analyses. The strengths most frequently identified related to:

- *Our support and advice (39.3%, n=620);*
- *Our information provision (22.5%, n=355); and*
- *Our values (18.6%, n=294).*

2.15 Similarly, respondents²⁴ were asked to identify up to three areas for improvement. The responses were unprompted and grouped for analyses. The areas for improvement most frequently identified related to:

- *Increase or change support /advice (30.5%, n=208);*
- *Increase awareness / improve promotion of services (28.8%, n=196); and*
- *Increase or change access to services (18.5%, n=126).*

2.16 When asked, in their view, to suggest one specific action the Commission could do to improve its overall performance, of those who responded (n=542) the most frequent theme (33.8%) was that the Commission needs to do more to promote themselves or increase awareness of the Commission, followed by increase or change access to services (26.9%).

²³ 100% of respondents provided a response to this question. However, only 82.3% (n=1005) provided comments that could be considered for analysis i.e. providing an area for improvement. Thus, responses such as ‘refused’, ‘don’t know’ and ‘no suggestions’ are removed from the analysis. Additionally, some respondents provided multiple comments. Therefore, percentages are based on the total responses received (n=1578) rather than total number of respondents.

²⁴ 100% of respondents provided a response to this question. However, only 44.3% (n=541) provided comments that could be considered for analysis i.e. providing an area for improvement. Thus, responses like refused, don’t knows and no suggestions were removed from the analysis. Additionally, some respondents provided multiple comments. Therefore, percentages are based on the total responses received (n=681) rather than total number of respondents.

INTERACTION AND CONTACT WITH THE COMMISSION

- 2.17 **All respondents** were asked, '*When was your most recent interaction with the Commission?*' The majority (n=972; 79.7%) of respondents stated that their most recent interaction with the Commission had occurred in the last year, with 9.1% (n=111) stating between 1-3 years ago, 2.4% (n=29) reporting longer than 3 years ago and 8.5% (n=104) 'never' interacting with the Commission.
- 2.18 The Commission has previously surveyed **employers** [only] in order to monitor its services and impact. For the respondents to *this survey* who were initially identified with responsibility for employment-related matters (n=617), separate sub-analyses were also undertaken on interaction, satisfaction and impact.

Nature of Interaction with the Commission

- 2.19 **Those respondents who interacted with the Commission** (n=1112) were asked, '*In general, were your interactions with the Commission because of an employment, service provision or other matter?*²⁵ The most common reason for interacting with the Commission was for an '*employment related matter*' (n=952; 85.6%). Only 8.0% (n=89) of respondent interactions with the Commission were for a '*service provision related matter*'. Some service users (n=138; 12.4%) contacted the Commission for '*other*' matters²⁶.

Those respondents who interacted with the Commission for an employment related matter (n=952), were then asked if was in respect to '*...returning their organisations Annual Fair Employment Monitoring Return?*' Of those which responded to this question (n=941), the vast majority (84.1%, n=791) stated 'yes'.

- 2.20 Those respondents who interacted with the Commission for an employment related matter (n=952), were also asked if it was '*... For another employment reason?*' Of those which responded to this question (n=943), one-fifth (21.5%, n=203) stated 'yes'. The responses (n=201) provided as other reasons for interacting with the Commission on an employment related matter included training and seminar events (20.4%); Article 55 forms (16.4%); and recruitment queries (12.9%).

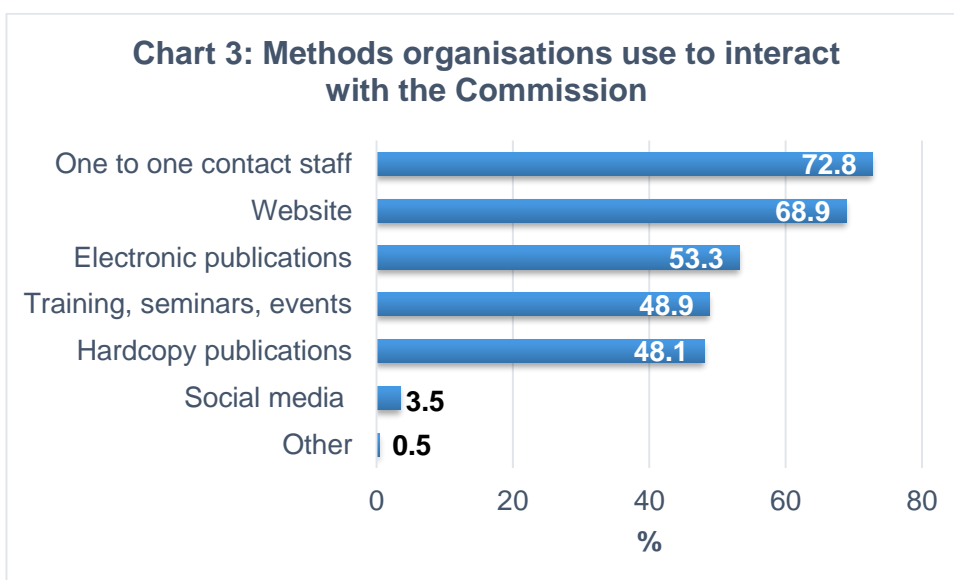
²⁵ This was a multiple-choice question and as such, respondents were able to choose more than one answer.

²⁶ This question was asked of all respondents who interacted with the Commission, regardless of whether they were identified at the start of the survey as the professional responsible for dealing with employment-related matters or service provision-related matters.

2.21 When considering those respondents who had ‘never’ (8.5%) interacted with the Commission, the most common reason given was ‘I had no need to contact the Commission for advice’ (86.5%), followed by respondents preferring to contact someone else - such as an equality broker or their organisation’s internal human resources department - for equality and/or anti-discrimination advice (4.8%²⁷).

Methods of interaction used by service users

2.22 **Of the respondents who stated that they had used the Commission’s services or had interacted with the Commission,** the survey then asked them about the Commission’s services. The respondents were asked to identify, from a list, the methods they had used to interact with the Commission, as illustrated in Chart 3.



2.23 Chart 3 shows that the most frequent interaction was one to one contact with Commission staff²⁸ (72.8%) followed by interaction with the Commission website (68.9%). The other methods of interaction included electronic publications (53.3%); attendance at training, seminars / events (48.9%); and hardcopy publications (48.1%).

2.24 Of those respondents initially identified with responsibility for employment-related matters (n=617²⁹), the most frequent interaction was one to one contact with Commission staff (68.7%) followed by the Commission website (66.0%). The other methods of interaction

²⁷ Please note that this percentage equates to only 4 respondents and due to small numbers analysis should be treated with caution.

²⁸ One to contact can include via telephone, email and face-to-face meetings.

²⁹ The base for this question is 568 as 49 respondents has never interacted with the Commission so were not asked this question.

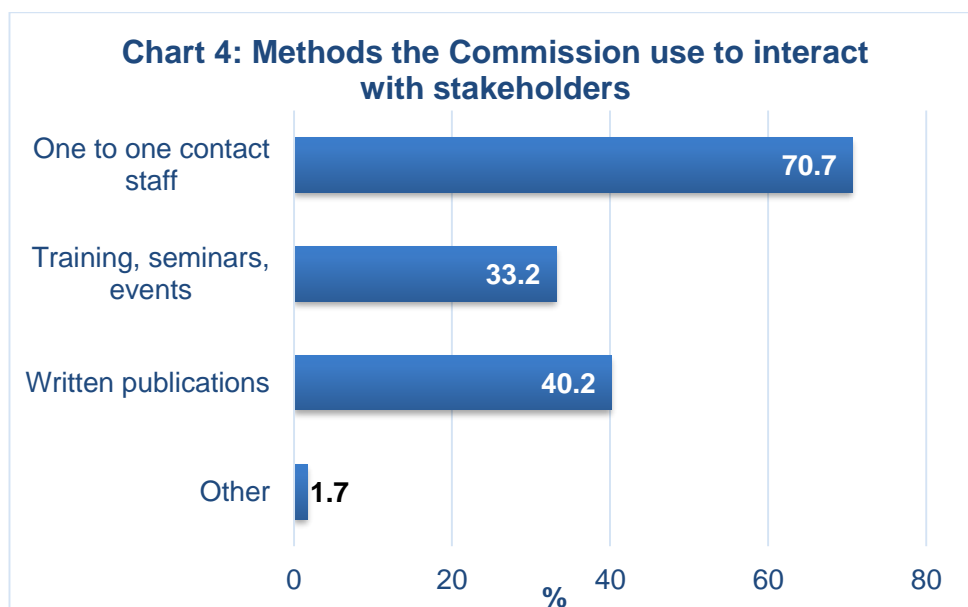
included electronic publications (51.6%); attendance at training, seminars / events (47.9%); and hardcopy publications (48.1%).

2.25 Survey respondents were then asked ‘*Of the different forms of interaction they had with Commission which was the most common?*’ Of the different forms of interaction respondents had with the Commission, the most common were one to one contact with Commission staff (43.1%) and the Commission website (34.1%).

2.26 Of those respondents initially identified with responsibility for employment-related matters (n=617³⁰) the most common forms of interaction were one to one contact with Commission staff (40.6%) and the Commission website (36.1%).

Methods of interaction used by the Commission

2.27 Respondents were asked ‘*Which of the following methods does the Commission use to interact with you?*’ When prompted, respondents recorded the following methods of interaction used by the Commission (Chart 4) including one to one contact³¹ (70.7%); written publications (40.2%); and training sessions, seminars and events (33.2%).



2.28 Of those respondents initially identified with responsibility for employment-related matters (n=617³²), respondents noted that the

³⁰ The base for this question is 568 as 49 respondents has never interacted with the Commission so were not asked this question.

³¹ One to contact can include via telephone, email and face-to-face meetings.

³² The base for this question is 568 as 49 respondents has never interacted with the Commission so were not asked this question.

Commission interacted via one to one contact (71.0%); written publications (39.6%); and training sessions, seminars and events (33.8%).

- 2.29 Again, survey respondents were then asked '*Which of the methods you mentioned was the most common way in which the Commission interacts with you?*' Nearly two-thirds (63.4%) of respondents considered one-one contact as the most common method of interaction used by the Commission, with a fifth (19.5%) stating it was by written publications. The remaining respondents (14.5%) considered training sessions, seminars and events as the most common way the Commission interacts with them.

SATISFACTION WITH METHODS OF CONTACT

- 2.30 The **respondents** (n=1112) **who stated that they had interacted with the Commission** were then asked to respond to statements regarding their interactions with specific services of the Equality Commission, such as:

- *Written Publications (hardcopy or electronic);*
- *Equality training sessions, seminars and events;*
- *One to one (bespoke) communications;*
- *Website; and*
- *Social Media (Twitter / Facebook).*

- 2.31 For each of these specific services (primarily information provision), the respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with statements relating to information being provided:

- *In a timely manner / undertaken in an acceptable time;*
- *of high quality; and*
- *met their needs.*

Commission written materials

- 2.32 Respondents who had interacted with the Commission's written materials, such as (hardcopy or electronic guides, codes, reports, publications [policy, research or legal briefings] or e-zines, (n=758) were highly satisfied:

- *Nine out of ten respondents strongly agreed or agreed that, in regard to the Commission's written materials, 'the information*

[they] gained was of high quality’ (90.6%³³) and that ‘the information gained met [their] needs’ (89.6%³⁴).

- *81.9%³⁵ of service users stated that ‘the time taken to find the information was acceptable’.*

2.33 Of those respondents initially identified with responsibility for employment-related matters (n=617), and who had interacted with the Commission’s written materials (n=377):

- *Nine out of ten respondents strongly agreed or agreed that, in regard to the Commission’s written materials, ‘the information [they] gained was of high quality’ (89.6%³⁶) and that ‘the information gained met [their] needs’ (88.0%³⁷).*
- *81.7%³⁸ of service users stated that ‘the time taken to find the information was acceptable’.*

Equality based training session, seminar or event

2.34 Almost all (90.0%³⁹) respondents who interacted with the Commission via equality based training sessions, seminars or events (n=543), strongly agreed or agreed that ‘*enough time was allowed for the event*’.

2.35 Satisfaction was high in terms of ‘the information [they] gained being of a high quality’ (88.4%⁴⁰) and in that ‘the information [they] gained met [their] needs’ (87.5%⁴¹).

2.36 Of those respondents initially identified with responsibility for employment-related matters (n=617) and who had interacted with the Commission via equality based training sessions, seminars or events (n=272), strongly agreed or agreed that:

³³ 42.6% of respondents strongly agree and 48.0% agree that Commissions written materials are of a high quality.

³⁴ 43.3% of respondents strongly agree and 46.3% agree that Commissions written materials met their needs.

³⁵ 32.8% of respondents strongly agree and 49.1% agree that the time taken to find information via the Commissions written materials is acceptable.

³⁶ 32.9% of respondents strongly agree and 48.8% agree that Commissions written materials are of a high quality.

³⁷ 42.4% of respondents strongly agree and 47.2% agree that Commissions written materials met their needs.

³⁸ 42.4% of respondents strongly agree and 45.6% agree that the time taken to find information via the Commissions written materials is acceptable.

³⁹ 53.2% of respondents strongly agree and 36.8% agree that enough time was allowed for the Commissions training session, seminar or event.

⁴⁰ 53.8% of respondents strongly agree and 34.6% agree that Commissions training session, seminar or event was of a high quality.

⁴¹ 50.3% of respondents strongly agree and 37.2% agree that Commissions training session, seminar or event met their needs.

- *'enough time was allowed for the event' (89.3%⁴²);*
- *'the information [they] gained being of a high quality' (89.0%⁴³); and that*
- *'the information [they] gained met [their] needs' (86.4%⁴⁴).*

One to one (bespoke) basis

- 2.37 Of those respondents who interacted with the Commission on a one to one basis (n=795), satisfaction across the statements was very high.
- 2.38 Almost all respondents strongly agreed or agreed that *'the time taken for someone to respond [to them] was acceptable' (93.8%⁴⁵).*
- 2.39 In respect of understanding the respondents' need and the provision of information, satisfaction was also very high:
- *'their understanding of my needs was accurate' (93.0%⁴⁶);*
 - *'the information provided was of high quality' (92.6%⁴⁷); and*
 - *'the information provided met [their] needs' (91.9%⁴⁸).*
- 2.40 Of those respondents initially identified with responsibility for employment-related matters (n=617) and who had interacted with the Commission on a one to one basis (n=390), almost all respondents strongly agreed or agreed that:
- *'the time taken for someone to respond [to them] was acceptable' (93.3%⁴⁹);*
 - *'their understanding of my needs was accurate' (92.8%⁵⁰);*

⁴² 54.0% of respondents strongly agree and 35.3% agree that enough time was allowed for the Commissions training session, seminar or event.

⁴³ 55.5% of respondents strongly agree and 33.5% agree that Commissions training session, seminar or event was of a high quality.

⁴⁴ 51.8% of respondents strongly agree and 34.6% agree that Commissions training session, seminar or event met their needs.

⁴⁵ 57.4% of respondents strongly agree and 36.4% agree that the time taken to respond was acceptable because of one to one contact.

⁴⁶ 58.9% of respondents strongly agree and 34.1% agree that the Commissions understanding of their needs was accurate.

⁴⁷ 59.0% of respondents strongly agree and 33.6% agree that information provided to them via one to one contact was of high quality.

⁴⁸ 59.7% of respondents strongly agree and 32.2% agree that information provided to them via one to one contact met [their] needs.

⁴⁹ 57.4% of respondents strongly agree and 35.9% agree that the time taken to respond was acceptable because of one to one contact.

⁵⁰ 60.0% of respondents strongly agree and 32.8% agree that the Commissions understanding of their needs was accurate.

- *'the information provided was of high quality'* (93.0%⁵¹); and
- *'the information provided met [their] needs'* (92.8%⁵²).

Commission Website

- 2.41 Of the respondents who had used the Commission's website (n=766), 75.8%⁵³ strongly agreed or agreed that *'the time taken to find the information I needed was acceptable'*. Furthermore, over four fifths of service users who had used the Commission website strongly agreed or agreed that *'the information is of a high quality'* (87.0%⁵⁴) and *'the information gained met [their] needs'* (86.7%⁵⁵), with only 2.3% and 3.7% respectively holding opposite views.
- 2.42 Of those respondents initially identified with responsibility for employment-related matters (n=617), and who had used the Commission's website (n=375), strongly agreed or agreed that:
- *'the time taken to find the information I needed was acceptable'* (76.3%⁵⁶);
 - *'the information is of a high quality'* (85.9%⁵⁷);
 - *'the information gained met [their] needs'* (86.4%⁵⁸).

Social Media

- 2.43 Of the respondents (n=39) who had interacted with the Commission's social media, nearly three quarters strongly agreed or agreed that *'the information was timely'* (74.4%⁵⁹), with slightly fewer agreeing that *'the information was of a high quality'* (71.8%⁶⁰). Respectively, no respondents disagreed with these statements.

⁵¹ 61.5% of respondents strongly agree and 31.5% agree that information provided to them via one to one contact was of high quality.

⁵² 61.5% of respondents strongly agree and 31.3% agree that information provided to them via one to one contact met [their] needs.

⁵³ 30.4% of respondents strongly agree and 45.4% agree that Commissions information via its website is timely.

⁵⁴ 43.0% of respondents strongly agree and 44.0% agree that Commissions information via its website is of a high quality.

⁵⁵ 44.3% of respondents strongly agree and 42.4% agree that the information on the Commissions website met their needs.

⁵⁶ 29.6% of respondents strongly agree and 46.7% agree that Commissions information via its website is timely.

⁵⁷ 45.1% of respondents strongly agree and 40.8% agree that Commissions information via its website is of a high quality.

⁵⁸ 44.8% of respondents strongly agree and 41.6% agree that the information on the Commissions website met their needs.

⁵⁹ 30.8% of respondents strongly agree and 43.6% agree that Commissions information via its social media is timely.

⁶⁰ 38.5% of respondents strongly agree and 33.3% agree that Commissions information via its social media is of a high quality.

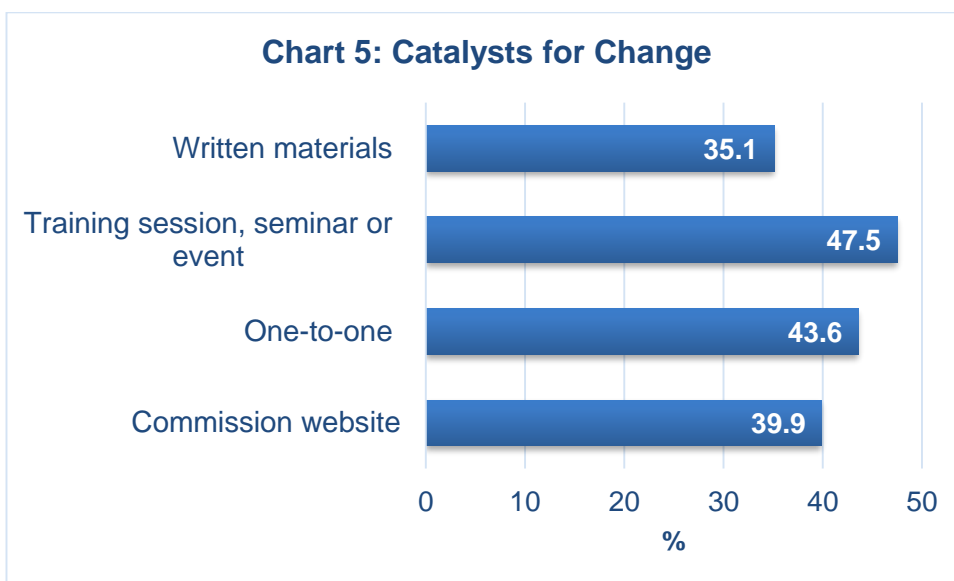
2.44 Similarly, satisfaction was high amongst respondents who had interacted with the Commission’s social media with the majority of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing that ‘*the information meeting their organisation’s needs*’ (71.8%⁶¹).

IMPACT / CHANGE

2.45 The Commission is interested in measuring its impact with employers and / or service providers have in terms of organisations’ employment policies or processes, the ways organisations provide good facilities and services and / or other matters.

2.46 Changes at the organisational level occurred as a result of all methods of interaction that respondents had with the Commission. Overall, two-fifths (40.4%) of respondents (n=1182) stated that some change to their organisations was a result of interaction with the Commission⁶².

2.47 As illustrated in Chart 5, changes most frequently occurred as a result of the respondents’ interactions with the Commission through equality based training sessions, seminars or events (47.5%) and one to one contacts (43.6%).



⁶¹ 48.7% of respondents strongly agree and 23.1% agree that the information on the Commissions social media met their needs.

⁶² Note that respondents could have more than one interaction. The total number of interactions was 2927.

Commission written materials

- 2.48 Of respondents who had interacted with the Commission through its written materials⁶³ (n=758), more than a third (35.1%) had made changes.
- 2.49 Of those respondents initially identified with responsibility for employment-related matters (n=617) and who had interacted with the Commission through its written materials (n=377), more than a quarter had made changes within their organisations (30.5%). The majority (94.0%) of these changes were to employment policies or processes.

Equality based training session, seminar or event

- 2.50 When respondents interacted with the Commission at equality based training sessions, seminars or events (n=544), nearly half stated that their organisations (47.5%) had made changes as a result of the interaction.
- 2.51 The vast majority of respondents (87.9%) stated that their organisations had changed their employment policies or processes (for example, by updating employment and / or recruitment policies (13.8%)).
- 2.52 Of those respondents initially identified with responsibility for employment-related matters (n=617) and who had interacted with the Commission at equality based training sessions, seminars or events (n=272), nearly half (49.8%) had made changes within their organisation. This predominately (87.3%) related to their employment policies or processes.

One to one basis

- 2.53 More than two-fifths (43.6%) of respondents who had interacted with the Commission on a one to one basis (n=809) stated that organisational changes had been made as a result.
- 2.54 The majority (86.4%) of the changes were to employment policies and processes, for example monitoring return form changes (41.9%) and updating policy, procedures and practices (34.3%)⁶⁴.

⁶³ This section includes respondents who had interacted with the Commission via electronic publications and hardcopy publications.

⁶⁴ This data presents an analysis based upon those who had interacted with the Commission's one to one contact (n=795) being asked a further suit of question on impact/change. It is not a presentation of disaggregation of the total sample; i.e. it is not split by the 607 service users who were originally identified as those who deal with service related matters or the 612 who were originally identified as those who deal with employment related matters.

2.55 Of those respondents initially identified with responsibility for employment-related matters (n=617) and who had interacted with the Commission on a one to one basis (n=390) more than two-fifths (41.3%) stated that organisational changes had been made as a result. Almost all respondents (90.0%) had made changes to employment policies and processes.

Commission Website

2.56 Two-fifths (39.9%) of respondents who had interacted with the Commission on its website (n=766) had made changes as a result of using information from the Commission's website.

2.57 These changes mostly related to organisations' employment policies and practices (91.1%); for example, updating policies and reviewing procedures.

2.58 Of those respondents initially identified with responsibility for employment-related matters (n=617) and who had interacted with the Commission on its website (n=375), more than a third (38.4%) had made changes as a result of using information from the Commission's website. Nearly all respondents (91.7%) had made changes to employment policies and processes.

Social Media

2.59 As the number of respondents who had interacted with the Commission through social media (n=39⁶⁵) was low, no meaningful analyses could be undertaken.

2.60 Survey respondents were asked if they had any suggestions as to how the Commission could improve its social media. Service users noted that the Commission's social media presence could be improved by the Commission increasing its use of social media (41.7%) as a method of interaction and to raise awareness (16.7%) that it interacts via social media.

ATTITUDES TO EQUALITY AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

2.61 **All respondents** were asked a series of questions in relation to **their organisation's attitudes** to equality and anti-discrimination and views on selected equality themes.

⁶⁵ Note that the total number of respondents who interacted with the Commission via social media is low and as such further analysis is limited by small numbers thus should be treated with caution.

The importance of equality for organisations

2.62 All the service users (n=1220) who took part in the survey were asked, '*For their organisation, compared with 12 months ago, has equality become [more or less important]?*' The majority of those surveyed (83.0%, n=1013) agreed that equality had the same level of importance compared with 12 months ago. Thirteen percent (13.9%, n=170) of those surveyed noted that equality had become more important compared to 12 months ago. A further 1.6% (n=19) stating that equality had become less important. A small proportion (1.5%, n=18) stated that they did not know.

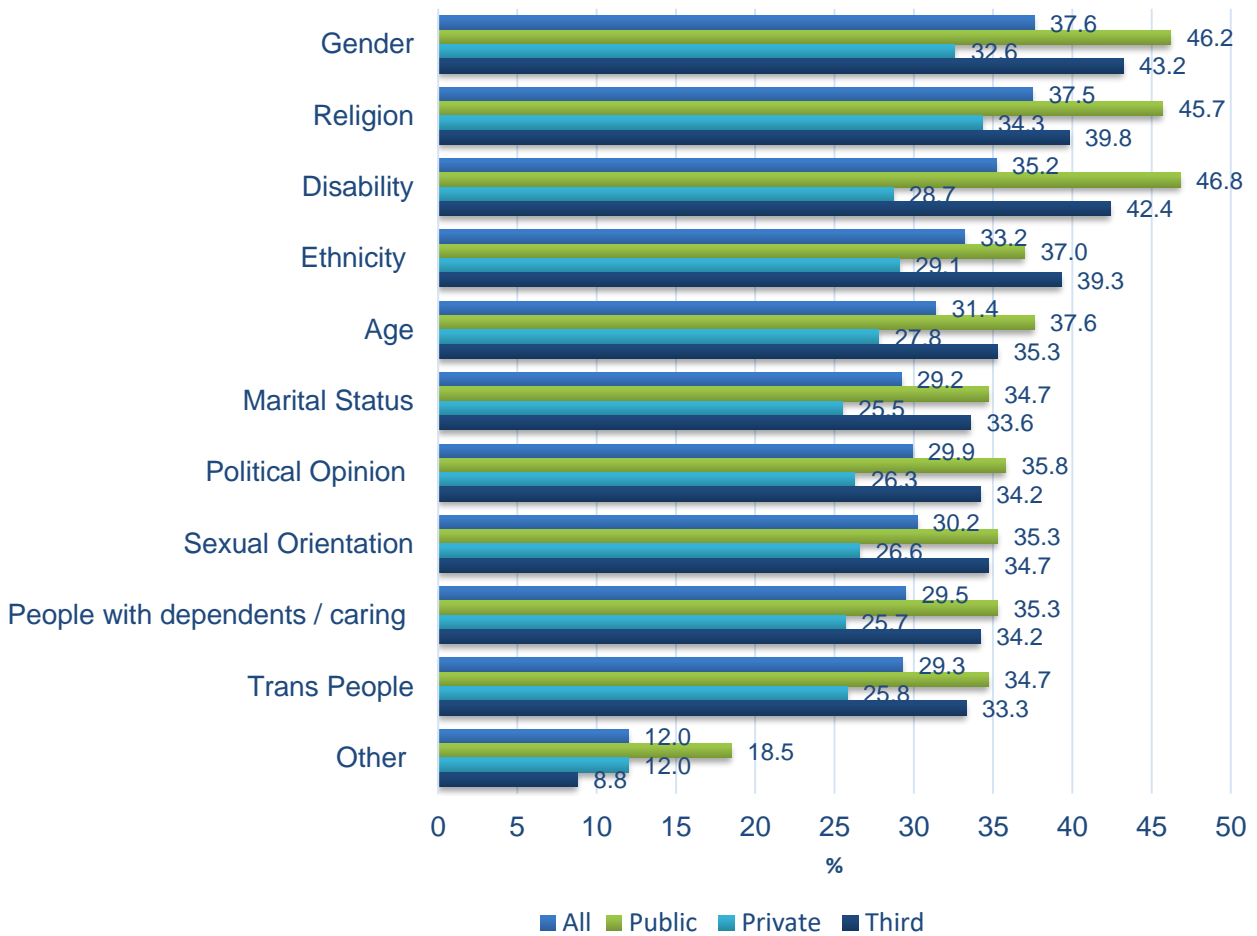
What equality issues were important to organisations?

2.63 Survey respondents (n=1220) were asked (unprompted), '*...what equality issues, if any, were important to your organisation?*' Over a third (38.7%, n=471) of respondents stated that no equality issues were important to their organisation. When considering those who mentioned an equality issue⁶⁶, Chart 6 shows that overall the most frequently mentioned issues were gender (37.6%, n=459) and religion (37.5%, n=458), followed by disability (35.2%, n=430). Marital status (29.2%, n=356) and Trans people (29.3%, n=357) and people with dependents/caring (29.5%, n=360) being the least mentioned equality issues⁶⁷.

⁶⁶ Please note that the respondents were able to mention more than one equality issue and hence the percentages presented will not sum to 100.

⁶⁷ A minority of respondents stated 'other' (12.0%) issues not specific to a particular ground, with fair recruitment / fair employment / fair treatment (40.0%) followed by equal opportunity (17.8%) as the most common responses amongst respondents.

Chart 6: Importance of equality issues



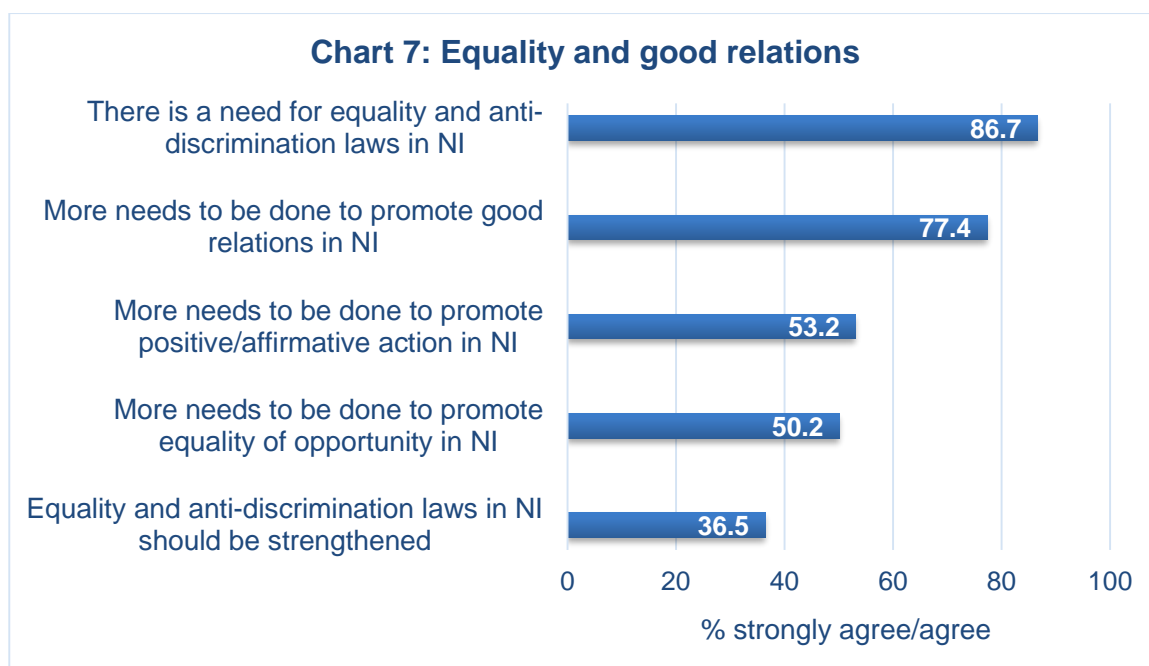
2.64 When considering sectors, respondents from the public sector and the third sector were more likely than those from the private sector to mention each of the equality issues as important⁶⁸. Respondents from the public sector were more likely to mention disability (46.8%) as an important equality issue for their organisation, whereas those from the private sector (34.3%) were more likely to mention religion with respondents from the third sector more likely to mention gender (43.2%).

Law and the promotion of equality and good relations⁶⁹

2.65 All respondents who took part in the survey were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about the need for equality and anti-discrimination legislation and measures to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

⁶⁸ Note that this was true to a lesser extent for the equality ground of religion.

⁶⁹ The reader should note that for the purposes of analysis the 'refused' category was been removed from this section.



Equality and anti-discrimination law

2.66 When respondents (n=1218) were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that ‘*There is need for equality and anti-discrimination laws in Northern Ireland*’, the majority (86.7%)⁷⁰ either strongly agreed or agreed that there was a need for such legislation (Chart 7).

Strengthening equality and anti-discrimination law

2.67 When asked if, ‘*Equality and anti-discrimination laws in Northern Ireland should be strengthened*’ (n=1217), just over a third (36.5%) of service users strongly agreed or agreed⁷¹. Over a third of survey respondents neither agreed or disagreed (36.2%). Nearly a quarter of respondents (24.2%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement⁷² (Chart 7).

The promotion of equality and good relations

2.68 All the respondents who took part in the survey (n=1217) were asked if, ‘*More needs to be done to promote equality of opportunity in Northern Ireland.*’ Half of all respondents (50.2%) strongly agreed or agreed that more needs to be done to promote equality of opportunity in Northern Ireland⁷³ (see Chart 7). Less than a third (29.9%) of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, with almost a

⁷⁰ 68.6% of respondents strongly agree and 18.1% agree that there is a need for equality and anti-discrimination laws in Northern Ireland.

⁷¹ 15.5% of respondents strongly agree and 21.0% agree that equality and anti-discrimination laws in Northern Ireland should be strengthened.

⁷² 17.5% of respondents disagree and 6.6% strongly disagree that equality and anti-discrimination laws in Northern Ireland should be strengthened.

⁷³ 19.1% of respondents strongly agree and 31.1% agree that more needs to be done to promote equality of opportunity in Northern Ireland.

fifth (17.1%) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement⁷⁴.

- 2.69 In respect to the statement, '*More needs to be done to promote positive/affirmative action to encourage greater equality of opportunity in Northern Ireland*' (n=1217), over half (53.2%) of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed. Less than one in six service users (16.3%) held the opposite view⁷⁵ (Chart 7).
- 2.70 More than three-quarters (77.4%) of respondents (n=1217) strongly agreed or agreed that, '*In Northern Ireland, more needs to be done to promote good relations between people of different backgrounds (Race, Religion or Political Opinion)*'. Nearly 8% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement⁷⁶ Chart 7).

⁷⁴ 13.7% of respondents disagree and 3.5% strongly disagree that more needs to be done to promote equality of opportunity in Northern Ireland.

⁷⁵ In 2016, 12.7% of respondents disagree and 3.6% strongly disagree that more needs to be done to promote positive / affirmative action to encourage greater equality in Northern Ireland.

⁷⁶ In 2016, 6.2% of respondents disagree and 1.5% strongly disagree that in Northern Ireland more needs to be done to promote good relations between people of different backgrounds.

Annex 1

ANNEX 1: Methodology

Survey Strategy & Framework

This survey is part of a wider Survey Strategy developed by the Commission to assist with monitoring stakeholder attitudes and awareness to equality and anti-discrimination, awareness and confidence of the Commission, and upon stakeholder interaction with the Commission to measure satisfaction and impact.

The Commission's survey framework identified that a key determinant in filtering the types of questions to be asked would be whether the focus of the survey was to ask about the use of Commission services (service users); or wider issues only (non-service users).

For service users, the capacity under which an individual might contact the Commission defines, in broad terms, the type of service that they may use. For example:

- *someone in a **professional capacity** will be making contact for, or on behalf of, their organisation. For example, with regards to information or advice relating to employment, service provision (public or private), policy or research, general information etc.*
- *someone acting in a **personal capacity** would be an individual making contact for, or on behalf of, themselves or similar (family member, friends etc.) for equality information, advice or support – for example legal assistance.*

'Professional' Users

The Commission's services users who may enquire in their professional capacity can be broken into three broad categories, those who may interact in respect to:

- *employment related matters;*
- *service provision related matters; or,*
- *equality framework related matters.*

Those who may use the service of the Commission in a professional capacity in respect to 'equality framework related matters' are currently broken down into 4 main areas: Decision makers; influencers; advocates; and those (potentially) interested. These professionals are considered to largely represent the users of the services provided by the Commission's Policy & Research; Strategic Communications and Information teams.

This report present the findings of a survey of to provide insight into the attitudes and perceptions held by those who engage, or who could engage, with our services in their professional capacity in respect of employment⁷⁷ and / or service provision⁷⁸ related matters.⁷⁹ These service users were considered to largely represent the users of the services provided by the Commission's Advice and Compliance.

The Survey

A detailed questionnaire which was designed to obtain the views of all the service users who took part in the survey on their organisations' attitudes to, and awareness of, equality and anti-discrimination legislation, and further, their awareness and confidence with the Commission. The questionnaire also obtained the views of service users who took part in the survey who also interacted with the Commission, not only in respect to their nature, methods and satisfactions with their interactions, but also the impacts of, or changes made, as result of their interactions with the Commission.

The pilot testing of the questionnaire was undertaken between 25th and 26th May 2016. A total of 13 interviews were completed during the pilot phase across the public and private sectors with a range of different organisational sizes, for both the employment related matters and service provision related matters.

The research was based on a stratified random sample undertaken via a telephone survey of 1220 individual service users who deal with employment and/or service provision related matters, from public, private and third sector organisations, during the period June 2016 to August 2016.

⁷⁷ For example, Human Resources related matters.

⁷⁸ For example, matters to do with an organisation complying with its statutory duties and the provision of goods, facilities and services.

⁷⁹ This includes all of those who engage with the Commission on a professional level i.e. as part of their job role. It does not include those who engage with us on an individual level such as members of the general public or those who seek advice or assistance as a result of experiencing discrimination.

Sampling for the Telephone Survey

In order to sample those eligible for interview the Commission provided Ipsos MORI with contact details for all organisations listed within its databases. The primary database was the database of registered employers for the purposes of the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. This database was enhanced with additional contact details of individual service users who had interacted the Commission for services, goods or facilities matters. The databases supplied to Ipsos MORI contained the following:

- *Name of appropriate person*
- *Title/position*
- *Name of organisation*
- *Telephone number*
- *Type of organisation (public/ private/ third sector)*
- *Size of organisation (i.e., number of employees)*

To identify third sector contacts, the Commission's the database of registered employers was cross referenced with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's registration list.

The breakdown of the universe is as follows:

Table 1: Sample distribution			
Size of Organisation (Number of Employees)	Public Sector	Private Sector	Third Sector
<11	18	n/a	n/a
11-50	30	2,070	212
50-100	13	616	67
>100	77	584	52
Total	138	3,270	331

The quota set for the survey was 1,214; 607 individual service users from the Commission's databases who may interact with the Commission for an employment related matter and a separate 607 individuals who may interact with the Commission for a service

provision related matter. See Table 2 for the proportionate representation that was applied to service users who may interact with the Commission for employment-related matters, and also those who may interact the Commission for service provision-related matters.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to achieve an even distribution across both variations of the survey during the fieldwork period.

Table 2: Proportionate representation				
	Professionals who may interact with the Commission from:			
Size of Organisation (Number of Employees)	Public Sector	Private Sector	Third Sector	Total:
<11	4	-	-	4
11-50	24	218	115	357
51-100	10	65	36	111
>100	46	61	28	135
Total	84	344	179	607

Profile of Respondents

A total of 1,220 interviews were achieved; 617 interviews with individual service users who may interact the Commission for employment-related matters for their organisations, and a separate 603 interviews with other individual service users who may interact the Commission for service provision-related matters for their organisations. Typically, overall sample sizes at this level provide sufficiently robust data for statistical interrogation of sub-groups. The achieved sample is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Achieved Sample									
		Professionals who may interact with the Commission for:							
		Employment related matters, from the:				Service provision related matters, from the:			
		Public Sector	Private Sector	Third Sector	Total	Public Sector	Private Sector	Third Sector	Total
		<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Size of Organisation (No. Employees)	1-10	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
	11-50	24	217	113	354	23	212	116	351
	51-100	10	69	36	115	13	64	32	109
	100+	53	63	30	146	48	68	27	143
	Total	89	349	179	617	84	344	175	603

How We Achieved the Sample

As stated above, the sample was achieved by telephone survey. The contact details of all potential respondents, service users who may deal with employment and/or service provision related matters, from the public, private and third sector organisations, **who** therefore **may interact** with the Commission in respect to employment related and/or service provision related matters, were provided to Ipsos MORI.

The interviewers employed by Ipsos MORI confirmed that the person they were speaking to was responsible for either employment related matters and / or service provision related matters with their organisation. This was assisted by the interviewer reading out, verbatim, definitions of employment related matters, and of service provision related matters, as provided by the Commission.

If confirmation could not be obtained, the interviewer determined that they were not talking to the correct person, they then asked the person they were speaking to be referred to the correct person.

Whereby, the same evaluation of the referred respondent was undertaken.

When confirmation was obtained, that the professional was responsible for employment related matters and / or service provision related matters, the interview would commence. Upon interview, the interviewer asked a few initial questions relating to the professional and their organisation. As well as asking the professional whether their organisation was a public, private or third sector organisation, they asked for the number of paid employees, and the postcode of the main office of the organisation. These were then checked against those in the interviewer contact sheet, typically the information obtained from the Commission’s databases.

Furthermore, the professionals were asked to ‘*best describe their roles*’ within the organisation; if they deal with ‘service provision related matters’, ‘employment related matter’s or if they deal with ‘both service provision and employment related matters’, as well as allowing them to specify ‘other’.

Initial contact determined the most appropriate person to interview and provided the basis for the achieved sample (Table 3). However, the ‘*best describe their roles*’ question determined that the majority of the respondents (n=830) dealt with both service provision and employment related matters, indicating that many professionals surveyed have a dual work function encompassing both areas (see Table 4).

Table 4. Which of the following best describes your role?	Frequency	Percent
I deal with service provision related matters	87	7.1
I deal with employment provision related matters	296	24.3
I deal with both service provision and employment related matters	830	68.0
Other (specify)	7	.6
Total	1220	100.0

Statistical Significance

Table 5 below shows the statistical reliability (at the 95% confidence level) for a range of total sample sizes, including those for this survey at an overall and sub-group level, with the tolerances for the desired sample highlighted in yellow.

Table 5: Sampling tolerances applicable to results at or near these percentages (based on 95% confidence level)			
Sample size	10/90%	30/70%	50%
	±%	±%	±%
1,220	1	2	2
1,000	2	3	3
625	2	3	4
500	3	4	5
300	3	5	6

For the purposes of the current study, if the results for the professionals **who may interact** with the Commission for employment related matters showed that 90% of organisations held a particular view the range within which the true figure would lie, would be +/- 2 points (i.e. somewhere between 88% and 92%), 95 times out of 100. In fact, the “true” figure is more likely to lie at the mid-point of the range, rather than at either extreme.

Reporting Differences

Differences between sectors reported in the text are tested as being significant at the 95% confidence interval or greater. Where no differences between sectors are reported, the reader may assume that no significant differences were found.

Please note that while reporting is at the 95% confidence level, as indicated, tables in Appendix 2, may also indicate where findings meet a higher confidence interval, for example:

* Statistically significant at or greater than the 95% confidence interval;

** Statistically significant at or greater than the 99% confidence interval; and,

*** Statistically significant at or greater than the 99.9% confidence interval.