Education Inequalities in Northern Ireland

Final report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

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Executive Summary

Background to the research

The School of Education at Queen's University Belfast was commissioned to carry out research on education inequalities in Northern Ireland on behalf of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is working towards an update of its 2007 'Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland'; this statement identified education as one of six broad areas where inequalities existed and needed to be addressed, noting that education plays a key role in determining a person's life chances and opportunities in terms of social and economic mobility.

To inform the development of the Commission's planned update of its 'Statement on Key Inequalities', this research investigates current educational inequalities in Northern Ireland - giving consideration to the levels of educational access, attainment, progression and destination across the nine equality grounds (gender, disability, age, dependant status, sexual orientation, racial group, marital status, religious belief and political opinion) as well as other grounds wherein inequalities in education have been observed, such as whether a child has been in care; children at risk of poverty; and children who attend schools of different types and sectors. The research findings should assist in understanding the contributory factors and manifestation of educational inequalities for different groups, and thus provide feedback and recommendations for policies and actions aimed at improving educational opportunities for those affected.

Methodology

The main data sources for this investigation were from the Department of Education (DE) and the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) Northern Ireland, for the years 2007/08 to 2011/12. Supplementary data on job-related training and highest qualifications were sourced from the Department of Finance and Personnel's (DFP) Labour Force Survey for the time period 2008-2012, the most recent five-year period available. Other supplementary data on highest qualifications were obtained from the Census 2001, and, where possible, the Census 2011, as well as the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey from 2008-2012. In parallel to this, a literature review was carried out to identify trend information in relation to barriers and enablers of educational success for the different equality groups, including studies and reports from Northern Ireland, Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. Interviews, focus groups, and a half-day engagement event with key stakeholders were required to fill data gaps as identified by

the quantitative analyses. Interviews were also conducted with representatives from the statutory sector to contextualise the data within the policy framework.

Overview of Findings by Equality Grounds

a) Gender

An attainment gap between males and females was found to begin very early in education, to the detriment of males. It was clearly evident by Key Stage 2 (ages 8-11 years), and it increased after the transition to post-primary school to Key Stage 3 and beyond. The attainment gap only widened through the following steps in the education journey. This inequality remained persistent since 2007/08. Examination of the literature and qualitative data revealed that factors in the educational system such a lack of male role models in primary schools, a "one size fits all curriculum", poor teacher / pupil relationships, a lack of preparedness for transitional stages during adolescence and the de-centralisation of schools can present barriers to the attainment of young males. In addition, personal and environmental factors such as bullying and violence, alienation, frustration and lack of engagement may all impact on the attainment of young males.

The literature indicated that social disadvantage (as measured by free school meals entitlement) can also impact on type of school attended, with socially disadvantaged children less likely to attend grammar schools[1]. The present study found that the type of school was a strong predictor of attainment (and destination after leaving school).

Lower attainment impacts on males' and females' proportions of entry to higher education – females were much more likely than males to enter higher education, and the gender gap here is reflective of the gap in attainment between males and females at GCSE and A Level. These trends are persistent, and are reflective of the broader situation in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

Recent research has indicated that the gender differential in subject choice in higher education is of concern as the greatest proportion of current employment opportunities are in the STEM subject area[2] of 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology', which was predominately made up of

[1] See Atkinson A., Gregg, P. and McConnell, B. (2006). *The Result of 11+ Selection: An Investigation into Opportunities and Outcomes for Pupils in Selective LEAs*, CMPO Working Paper No. 06/150. Bristol: Centre for Market and Public Organisation, University of Bristol.

[2] Mason. N. (2013). Realising Potential: Widening participation in Science and Technology. Presentation at the Northern Ireland Assembly

male enrolees. In addition the literature indicated that gender stereotyping of subject choice at A Level may be a contributory factor in this gender imbalance. These differing destinations have wide implications for the future economy and makeup of the Northern Irish workforce, and could also be considered inequalities.

Qualitative data revealed the barriers to education equality faced by young transgender people in schools in Northern Ireland as there was no quantitative data available to analyse. These barriers included: gender stereotyping in schools; they are more likely to miss school time due to self-exclusion or from having to change schools due to inflexible school rules; and the lack of awareness about transgender issues in schools together with the lack of central policy on supporting young transgender people in education. Enablers to redress the inequalities faced by transgender people included: more central directives from government departments on how educational institutions should support transgender young people; more staff training; joined-up policymaking on the issues; and more monitoring of the experiences of transgender young people.

b) Age

Findings for the equality ground of age are in keeping with findings highlighted in the literature review in that participation in further and higher education declines with age. The data on accredited courses shows just how steep the decline is after the age of 25 years in further education. This is a persistent inequality. Most participants on employment and job training programmes were under 25 years. Furthermore, as the age of participants increased, they were less likely to find and sustain employment after job training programmes.

In higher education, from 2007/08 to 2011/12, younger people (20 years and under) comprised the majority of undergraduate and full-time places, but the vast majority of postgraduate and part-time students were over the age of 25 – these are persistent trends. Younger students (under 25 years) were, however, much less likely to be in full-time employment after leaving higher education than older age groups (25 years and older).

From qualitative data, barriers to educational equality for different age groups reflected findings from the literature review with past negative education experience identified as a major factor in participation in further/higher education and training. The qualitative research also identified the impact of intergenerational disadvantage on present and future generations of learners, in that, negative past educational experiences can create negative perceptions of education that can be passed onto the next generation thus creating 'poverty of aspiration'.

Barriers to education inequality were similar to those stated in the literature review with access barriers, including location of courses and caring responsibilities identified along with psychological barriers, such as lack of confidence and a perception that education is for 'young people'. In addition, the use of traditional teaching methods, which don't engage older people, can act as a barrier to the participation and retention of older learners. Potential enablers to education equality mirrored the literature review with the provision of adult friendly environments and practices, including community based learning; family learning initiatives; and flexible frameworks for delivery of courses identified as enablers to encouraging participation, retention and achievement in education, particularly amongst older people.

c) Religious Belief

In terms of access, Protestant enrolment in Catholic maintained primary and secondary schools and Catholic managed voluntary grammar schools has consistently remained under 1% since 2007/08. The literature review acknowledged that with the existing level of provision considered unsustainable and given the high level of segregation identified, closure of certain schools may impact on access to Catholic maintained schools or controlled schools in certain areas, particularly in rural areas[3].

The persistent and overarching trend in terms of educational attainment of schools leavers is that a greater proportion of Catholics achieved the education targets than Protestants and 'Other'[4] groups across all three categories (A Levels; GCSEs; GCSEs incl. English and Maths) throughout the time period, and the gap between Catholics and the other groups widened between 2007/08 and 2011/12 in all three categories. Examination of the literature identified cultural and community factors which may impact on how Protestant families perceive education and participation in schools[5].

Larger differences emerged when looking at the destinations of school leavers – Catholics were persistently more likely to enter higher education and less likely to enter further education than other groups; Protestants were persistently more likely than the other groups to enter job training.

[3] Lundy, L., Emerson, L., Lloyd, K., Byrne, B., & Yohanis, J. (2013). *Education Reform in Northern Ireland: A Human Rights Review.* Belfast: Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission/Centre for Children's Rights, Queen's University Belfast.

[4] 'Other' refers to those all those who do not identify as Protestant or Catholic and therefore could include those of other/unknown religions and those of no religion.

[5] http://www.nicva.org/sites/default/files/A-Call-to-Action-FINAL-March2011_0.pdf

In further education courses, Catholics represented a greater share of enrolees than Protestants, however Protestants had larger shares of retention and successful completion than the other groups[6]. Catholics and those of 'Other' religions had lesser degrees of success with obtaining employment after leaving the Steps to Work programme than Protestants.

Within higher education, Catholics were over-represented in both undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments. There has been a trend of slightly increasing shares of enrolment for Catholics, stagnant shares of enrolment for Protestants, and an increasing share of enrolment from those of 'Other' religions – this has resulted in a small widening of the gap between Protestants and Catholics in higher education.

The qualitative data collected for this equality ground revealed the need for a further disaggregation of the 'Other' religious group category in official statistics[7], in order to understand more about the student experience of those of different religions, to accommodate their needs and to ensure their equal participation.

d) Political Opinion

Two key issues were identified regarding educational equality between people of different political opinions: one is a lack of data or inconsistent data, and the other is fear and a lack of openness about political opinion. Firstly, while there is a lack of available quantitative data on education outcomes for this equality ground, the quantitative data showed that unionists appeared to be doing less well than nationalists and neither in terms of highest qualification – this is perhaps reflective of the patterns of highest qualification by religion. This reflects the findings from the literature review and qualitative research, wherein, addressing Protestant achievement was perceived to be an enabler to greater equality of access to higher education by political opinion. Secondly, it was felt that an overemphasis on political neutrality in school and further and higher education was perceived to be a barrier to politically active students expressing and debating their views.

The qualitative data showed that knowing more about the student experiences (especially at third level education) of people of different political backgrounds through monitoring and asking about political opinion in student surveys may help to combat access issues vis-à-vis

[6] Given the high percentage of those of unknown religion in accredited courses, Essential Skills and non-accredited courses, care must be taken when interpreting these results as some of these 'unknowns' may be Protestant, Catholic, of a non-Christian religion or of no religion.
[7] This data is currently collected but remains suppressed due to low numbers

perceptions of 'cold houses', but also attainment issues, if it is found that students felt discriminated against in their coursework or in essays because of political opinion.

e) Ethnicity and Race

Overall, a key finding from the review of quantitative data and literature review was the limited available data and/or research on key ethnic groups in Northern Ireland and the need for more detailed reporting of ethnicity within education[8].

In support of findings from the literature review, minority ethnic and Newcomer[9] children were more likely to attend non-grammar secondary schools and represent a greater share of children within the integrated sector (see pages 37-38 for definition of integrated). It is important to note that data for both ethnic minority and Newcomer pupils were subject to low sample size. A range of factors that represented barriers to accessing grammar education was identified in the literature and qualitative research including the use of tests to determine admission and lack of knowledge of the educational system.

The findings on the attainment of school leavers showed that although high proportions of minority ethnic school leavers achieved attainment targets at GCSE and A Level, their attainment in 2011/12 was slightly lower than the attainment of white pupils. This is a reversal in trends that were observed in 2007/08. These attainment trends have therefore revealed emergent inequalities which may need further exploration to determine the reasons for them. A persistent inequality identified in the literature and quantitative analysis was the low attainment of Irish Traveller children as they had much higher rates of non-achievement than any other groups. The literature highlighted the work that has been undertaken recently with respect to Irish Traveller education and has highlighted recommendations made on improving access, attendance and attainment of Irish Traveller children[10].

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[8] Although a more detailed breakdown of ethnic minorities is currently collected by the institutions, it is not reported due to small numbers.

[9] The term 'Newcomer' pupils refers to a child or young person who has enrolled in a school but who does not have satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum and does not have a language in common with the teacher.

[10] e.g. See:

- www.deni.gov.uk/taskforce_on_traveller_education_-_report_of_the_taskforce_to_the_department_of_education.pdf
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. (2008). *Mainstreaming Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations for Traveller children in schools*. Belfast: ECNI;
- http://www.selb.org/equality/Documents/AuditofInequalities2ndEditionJune2012.pdf;
- Hamilton et al. (2007). *The Adequacy and Effectiveness of Educational Provision for Traveller Children and Young People in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: ECNI/NICCY;
- http://www.equalityni.org/Footer-Links/News/Delivering-Equality/Recommendations-to-achieve-racial-equality

In terms of the destinations of school leavers, minority ethnic students were slightly more likely to enter higher education. However while the proportion of minority ethnic students going on to higher education decreased from 2007/08 to 2011/12, the proportion of white pupils entering higher education increased slightly. The ethnicity gap therefore narrowed to the detriment of minority ethnic students.

Minority ethnic representation in further education courses and on the job training, apprenticeships and employment programmes is approximately in proportion with their representation in the Northern Ireland population as a whole. However, minority ethnic students had lower retention and achievement on accredited courses in further education than white students. However, in contrast to the situation four years ago, minority ethnic students in 2011/12 were proportionally more likely to find employment or sustain 13 weeks employment after leaving the Steps to Work programme than white students.

In higher education, minority ethnic students were slightly underrepresented in undergraduate enrolments, but overrepresented in postgraduate enrolments. However, in terms of destinations after higher education, white students were more likely to find any type of employment (full or part-time) after leaving higher education than minority ethnic students. This is a persistent inequality. Examination of Census data on the highest level of qualification by ethnicity and country of birth has revealed inequalities in attainment between different ethnic groups. In keeping with the analysis of the attainment of Irish Traveller children, Irish Travellers were more likely to have no qualifications and less likely to have higher qualifications than any other ethnic group in 2011, highlighting the persistent low attainment of this particular group. In addition, another emergent inequality is that people from EU Accession countries were more likely to have 'other qualifications' than any other group. This is of particular concern, given that research[11] has suggested that migrant workers may find it difficult to improve their position in the labour market due to the lack of recognition of 'other' overseas qualifications –potentially leading to underemployment of migrant workers.

From qualitative data, a lack of recognition of diversity in the needs of Newcomer children and a lack of understanding of the Northern Ireland education system by Newcomer parents may present a barrier to educational equality. Furthermore, the funding available to support Newcomer children and the attitudes of schools towards Newcomer children may present both

[11] e.g. Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (2012): Bayanihan: the Filipino community in Northern Ireland. NICEM:NI; Wallace A, McAreavey R and Atkin K (2013) Poverty and Ethnicity in Northern Ireland: An Evidence Review. JRF: York.

a barrier and enabler to educational inequality. Finally, unrecognised multiple inequalities, particularly in relation to disability and special educational needs, may present an additional barrier to educational equality for Newcomer and minority ethnic children.

f) Disability and Special Educational Needs

In terms of access, within nursery schools, secondary schools and grammar schools the shares of children and young people with special educational needs has increased from 2007/08 to 2011/12. The literature review noted issues surrounding identifying pupils with special education needs and statementing where there have been serious delays in the process. A number of sources recommended an overhaul of the current assessment and statementing process.

In terms of the attainment of school leavers[12], while there were increases in the proportion of school leavers with any SEN or a disability achieving 2+ A Levels (A*-E) and 5+ GCSES (A*-C), their attainment proportions are still substantially below the attainment proportion for pupils who do not have a special educational need or a disability. This is a persistent inequality. For each category of attainment and across each SEN group, females outperformed their male counterparts. This is reflective of the literature review which highlighted concerns that the existing provisions in mainstreams schools, to meet the needs of pupils with disabilities, were lacking.

School leavers with no SEN were nearly five times more likely than those with SEN Stage 5 to enter higher education, over twice as likely as those with SEN Stages 1-4, and more than twice as likely as those with a disability, to enter higher education. This is a persistent inequality, and reflects findings in the literature review which also noted that students without a disability were more likely to enrol in higher education than those with a disability. While school leavers with any SEN or disability were more likely to enter further education or job training than school leavers without a disability, on several further education courses and job training programmes the shares of enrolees with a self-reported disability were lower than the share of people in Northern Ireland with a self-reported disability or illness.

Leavers from the Steps to Work programme in further education who had no self-reported disability were more likely to have either moved into employment or sustained 13 weeks of employment than participants who reported a disability. This is a persistent inequality.

[12] Attainment data presented in this report only covers SEN pupils in mainstream schools. There is no data available on attainment of pupils in special schools.

In higher education, students with a disability were underrepresented in postgraduate and 'part-time/other' enrolments given the older age composition of students in those pathways. This is a persistent inequality. By 2010/11, leavers from higher education who did not have a disability were more likely to enter full-time work than leavers with a disability, and leavers with a disability were more likely to do enter part-time work. These are also persistent inequalities.

Amongst the general population, the Labour Force Survey and Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey statistics supported the findings from the DEL data, that people without a disability were more likely to hold a higher qualification than people with a disability.

In terms of barriers to educational equality for people with SEN or a disability, the qualitative data highlighted the following: a lack of funding and low expectations; the transition between primary and secondary levels of education; delays in statementing; a lack of support for hidden disabilities and chronic illnesses; physical access difficulties; and the need to consider SEN as separate from disability. Potential enablers to educational equality included: raising expectations; capacity building; further research; and targeting of resources.

g) Sexual Orientation

The findings of the literature review, the quantitative data, and the qualitative data collected reveal a coherent picture in terms of the barriers and enablers to educational equality for people of different sexual orientations. Firstly, homophobic bullying in schools is a persistent and major issue, and is occurring regularly in Northern Irish schools. This negatively impacts students' mental health and well-being, and as a result, has a very detrimental impact on students' engagement with school, their levels of attainment, their educational progression, and the destinations that they go to after education.

Furthermore, a lack of available data on the experiences of LGB students throughout the education process (from primary school to further and higher education), and their educational outcomes (e.g. attainment levels), makes the exact extent of these disadvantages difficult to gauge. The limited quantitative data available demonstrated that young people who reported same sex attraction were much more likely to be bullied in school than their peers who reported opposite sex attraction only. This reflects findings in both the literature review and the qualitative data.

The qualitative research and literature have shown that if schools and colleges are able to create an ethos of openness, support and acknowledgement of LGB issues via the curriculum and 'hidden' curriculum (that is, the classroom materials that are used, the way teachers handle instances of homophobic bullying, the language that is used in a school to discuss these issues, the presence or absence of student support groups/helpline posters and so on), major strides will be made towards achieving educational equality for LGB young people. The qualitative data in particular revealed that these steps need to be underpinned by changes to educational and equality strategies and legislation if long-term and meaningful improvements are to be realised in all schools in Northern Ireland, not just a few.

h) Marital Status

Married/co-habiting/in a civil partnership, separated/divorced, and widowed groups were consistently underrepresented in further and higher education enrolments compared to their shares of the population revealed in the Census 2011. Widowed people had the lowest achievement rate out of all other marital status groups in professional and technical courses in further education, and this is a persistent inequality. Separated/divorced people had the lowest retention rate in professional and technical courses in further education; this is also a persistent inequality. In regard to destinations, within the Steps to Work programme those from the separated/divorced category were the group least likely to move to employment or sustain 13 weeks employment after leaving.

In terms of higher education destinations, those from the single group were considerably less likely to move into full-time work than those from the married/co-habiting/in a civil partnership group, and more likely to be assumed to be unemployed (numbers for other groups were too small to comment on). There has been a decrease in full-time employment over the time period for both groups, but there has been a bigger decrease for the single group. This is an emergent inequality. Furthermore, the literature review highlighted that married students graduated faster single students.

Some of the stated barriers to educational equality for people of different marital status groups were related to those mentioned in the age category, and reflected those described in the literature review. Barriers included the provision of support or lack thereof (i.e. financial and for caring responsibilities) and the time and costs needed to enter higher education. Potential enablers included flexibility in the delivery of courses, and family-friendly policies and practices.

i) Dependency Status

Those who have dependants were consistently underrepresented in further education enrolments compared to their shares of the population revealed in the Census 2011. This is likely a reflection of the age composition of the student intake on some of these courses – for example, on professional and technical courses and Steps to Work, the majority of students are under 25 and are therefore less likely to have dependants. However, on professional and technical (accredited) courses, non-professional and technical (non-accredited) courses, and in Training for Success, the share of enrolees with dependants has decreased over the time period examined. This is an emergent inequality.

On professional and technical courses in further education, those who had dependants were more likely to complete their course successfully. However, those who had dependants on the Steps to Work programme were less likely to move into employment or sustain 13 weeks of employment than those who had no dependants.

While the majority of undergraduates and postgraduates in higher education had no dependants, the shares of enrolment of those groups with dependants increased between 2007/08 and 2011/12. Groups with dependants were better represented in postgraduate courses than undergraduate courses, and better represented in part-time courses than full-time courses – potentially due to age make-up of those courses.

While the proportions of all dependency status groups entering employment after leaving higher education have decreased since 2007/08, the group with no dependants suffered a bigger decrease over time period. There has been a corresponding increase in part-time work as a destination for leavers with no dependants. As highlighted in the literature review, financial implications can often be a barrier to education for those with dependents. The finding in the quantitative data, that those with dependents were more likely to go on to employment following higher education, than those without dependents, correlates with the literature review as moving into employment is a necessity for those with dependants, rather than an option.

Qualitative data from engagement and interviews with stakeholders revealed that there are particular barriers to entering further or higher education for those who care for someone who is sick or disabled, and that this is especially the case for young carers. Barriers include: the unpredictability of caring; financial pressures; the way that 'carers' are defined and how educational outcomes are monitored for people with caring responsibilities; the difficulties with

transitioning between child and adult support services; and a lack of awareness about the support available for carers to enter adult education. Enablers include: disaggregating statistics to illuminate the barriers for different types of carers; targeting young carers through widening participation programmes; enhanced provision of daycare, respite and support for carers attending further and higher education, and greater awareness around what is already available; flexible delivery of courses; the provision of 'taster' and short courses to develop new interests; and better marketing of further and higher education courses to carers.

j) Looked After Children

In regard to pre-school access, less than 5 Looked After Children were in any type of integrated school during the time period examined. Furthermore, there were no Looked After Children in any preparatory schools throughout the time period.

The proportion of non-Looked After pupils achieving 2+ A Levels at A*-E in 2011/12 was nearly four times the proportion of Looked After young people achieving the same grades. This gap did not close over the time period 2007/08 to 2011/12. The attainment of non-Looked After pupils achieving five or more GCSES at A*-C was also notably higher than those who have been Looked After. These attainment differences are persistent inequalities. In regard to destinations after leaving school, Looked After Children were more likely to go on to further education and less likely to go on to higher education than children who had not been in care.

From the qualitative element of the research, current barriers to educational equality for Looked After children included: the impact of multiple placements; delays in the system; and transitions to adulthood. Potential enablers to educational equality included: the SEN statementing of Looked After Children who need it to attract more resources to support a child; a child-centred approach to placements; more joined-up policy and practice; and support for vulnerable parents. These are additional to the barriers and enablers outlined in the literature review.

k) Multiple Inequalities – Gender x Religion x Free School Meals Entitlement

Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, young people who were FSM entitled had lower attainment than non-FSM young people; males of either FSM category did less well than females; and Catholics of either FSM category or gender did better than Protestants or 'Others'[13]. Therefore, the best achievement rates were observed for non-FSM Catholic females. In contrast, FSM-entitled Protestant males had the lowest achievement rates out of all of the group categories, with consistently lower attainment proportions at GCSE and A Level than all other groups. This is a persistent inequality.

The data analysed showed that FSM entitlement was a stronger predictor of attainment (and destination after leaving school) than gender. The literature review also identified the impact that social deprivation has on achievement, compounding the negative effects of other inequalities including those identified for religion too (not just gender).
Within the FSM-entitled category, Catholic females were more likely than any other group to go on to higher education. FSM-entitled Protestant males were least likely to go into higher education of all groups. This is therefore a persistent inequality for FSM-entitled Protestant males.

From the qualitative element of the research, current barriers to educational equality for children from different gender x religion x free school meals categories included: a lack of political will to put joined-up strategies in place; a cultural legacy, particularly amongst Protestants, not to claim for FSM and low community expectations; a need to increase access to education for children from other types of disadvantaged backgrounds; greater understanding of the complexity and interactions between the variables of gender, religion, and free school meals entitlement; the religious divisions within the Northern Ireland educational system; and restricted access to individual private tuition, which impacts on the likelihood of children receiving FSM who enter the grammar school system. Enablers to educational equality included: greater provision of collaborative programs between schools, linked to raising attainment levels; greater allocation of funding to schools that cater for high proportions of FSM-receiving pupils: and the targeting of pupils from areas of high deprivation for widening participation activities in higher education.

[13] 'Other' refers to those all those who do not identify as Protestant or Catholic and therefore could include those of other/unknown religions and those of no religion.

Chapter 1. Introduction

The School of Education at Queen's University Belfast was commissioned to carry out research on education inequalities in Northern Ireland on behalf of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (hereafter referred to as the ECNI). The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is working towards an update of its 2007 'Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland'; this statement identified education as one of six broad areas where inequalities existed and needed to be addressed, noting that education plays a key role in determining a person's life chances and opportunities in terms of social and economic mobility.

To inform the development of the ECNI's planned update of its 'Statement on Key Inequalities', this research investigates current educational inequalities in Northern Ireland - giving consideration to the levels of educational access, attainment, progression and destination across the nine equality grounds contained within Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, 1998[14] (gender, age, religious belief, political opinion, racial group, disability, sexual orientation, marital status and dependant status) as well as other grounds wherein inequalities in education have been observed, such as whether a child has been in care; children at risk of poverty; and children who attend schools of different types and sectors. The research findings should assist in understanding the contributory factors and manifestation of educational inequalities for different groups, and thus provide feedback and recommendations for policies and actions aimed at improving educational opportunities for those affected.

Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of the research is:

> **To provide an up-to-date evidence base leading to the robust identification of new and/or persistent key inequalities in education in Northern Ireland as a whole, and individually for each of the nine equality grounds.**

[14] Section 75, Northern Ireland Act 1998: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75

The specific objectives are to:

1. for each equality ground identified by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998[15], provide a comprehensive and updated picture (data permitting) of any inequalities evident in patterns and trends in educational access, attainment, progression and destination in Northern Ireland;
2. for each equality ground, provide an overview of current barriers and enablers to educational access, attainment, progression and destination, including an assessment of any changing dynamics;
3. distil, from the above ground by ground consideration, the most substantive overarching key education inequalities in Northern Ireland;
4. refine the emerging draft recommendations, by involving relevant stakeholders via an expert seminar to explore emerging findings of the research, with a view to informing the draft final report and associated recommendations; and,
5. provide a summary of any relevant wider observations noted during the project - including any views regarding data; analysis or policy relevant issues that emerge through the course of the research.

Achieving the Aims and Objectives

The main data sources for this investigation were from the Department of Education (DENI) and the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) Northern Ireland; data covered the period 2007 to 2012, which was the most up-to-date data available at that time. From DENI, data were obtained on pre-school, primary and post-primary enrolments and achievement, and on school leavers' qualifications and destinations. From DEL, data were obtained for both the further and higher education sectors. In regard to further education, data included: accredited course enrolments; accredited course performance statistics (retention and achievement rates); non-accredited courses enrolments; Essential Skills enrolments and qualifications; Training for Success starters and leavers data; ApprenticeshipsNI starters and leavers data; Steps to Work starters and leavers destinations. In regard to higher education, data included (for people attending higher education in Northern Ireland institutions): undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments and qualifications; full-time and part-time enrolments and qualifications; subject area enrolments and qualifications; non-continuation data; and leavers' destinations. Again, all data were sourced for the 2007-2012 period in order to track trends over time and to give the most updated picture of existing inequalities.

[15] Section 75, Northern Ireland Act 1998: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75

Supplementary data on job-related training and highest qualifications were sourced from the Department of Finance and Personnel's (DFP) Labour Force Survey (LFS) for the time period 2008-2012, the most recent five-year period available. Other supplementary data on highest qualifications were obtained from the Census 2001, and, where possible, the Census 2011, as well as the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILTS) from 2008-2012. Data from the NILTS and the Young Life and Times Survey (YLT) were also used to cross-reference particular variables from the main governmental datasets and to provide some information where little or no official data is recorded (such as political opinion and sexual orientation).

In parallel to this, a literature review was carried out to identify trend information in relation to barriers and enablers of educational success for the different equality groups, including studies and reports from Northern Ireland, Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. The advantage of this method is not only that it enables a comparative analysis and facilitates the identification of trends relevant to educational inequalities, but it also serves to triangulate the quantitative data analyses and the perspectives of the key stakeholders (see below), which helps to validate the eventual research findings and thus provides quality assurance.

Interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders were required to fill data gaps as identified by the quantitative analyses (see Appendix A). For instance, it was clear from the summary of quantitative datasets outlined above that little quantitative data was available for exploring educational inequalities on the grounds of political opinion and sexual orientation – for these grounds, qualitative data provided additional information where gaps were evident. Interviews were also conducted with representatives from the statutory sector to contextualise the data within the policy framework, and with staff who deal with equality issues from the further and higher education institutions in Northern Ireland.

Interim findings were presented to stakeholders, participants and experts via a seminar/workshop on 20th January 2014 in Riddel Hall at Queen's University, Belfast for the purpose of obtaining specific commentary on key emergent issues. The stakeholders had the opportunity to give feedback on the key inequalities for each ground, and highlight the factors that they thought might explain them, as well as any further barriers and enablers to educational access, attainment, progression and destinations that they were aware of. This feedback has been treated as qualitative data and has been incorporated into each chapter as it pertains to the different equality grounds.

Methods

Quantitative data

All nine equality groups, i.e. gender, age, religious belief, political opinion, racial group, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, and dependent status were investigated, although there was a paucity of data on political opinion and sexual orientation. Rates of enrolments, achievements, and so on across the 2007-2012 period are presented for each group in order to highlight the most current picture of existing inequalities, as well as to highlight whether these inequalities have emerged within the past five years or whether they have been persistent since 2007.

Further technical details can be found in the accompanying Technical Tables.

Qualitative data

Qualitative data was analysed and presented thematically in order to illustrate the barriers and enablers that stakeholders identified for the different equality grounds. Quotations are included as examples of overarching themes.

Literature review

In conducting the literature review, academic databases and Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and UK Government sources and charitable and voluntary-sector webpages were examined. The focus was on literature that was concerned with the inequalities in education facing the nine equality grounds; the relative difficulties faced by equality groups in accessing different levels of education; the barriers to achievement faced within education; and difficulties with progressing through education and destinations after education.

Where possible, literature focusing specifically on Northern Ireland was sought. However, the review also included literature from Great Britain, and some comparative studies from other EU and OECD member states. The literature collected has been synthesised and presented in separate chapters for each equality ground.

Stakeholder consultation

Ten interviews and focus groups were carried out with key stakeholders who represented organisations with an insight into the education inequalities facing one or more of the groups of interest, and/or who also could provide an insight into methods of tackling these inequalities. The list of groups and organisations which participated in this research appears in Appendix A.1 of this report. Each individual participant was briefed on the purpose of the study and their informed consent was received. They were each interviewed face to face by a researcher for 30-60 minutes.

Interviews were semi-structured in nature, which allowed for the coverage of common topics across all interviews, but also gave space for any unexpected findings to emerge. The interviews and focus groups covered two key areas:

1) Education inequalities and barriers for the group(s) of interest, from primary to post-primary to post-compulsory education, the reasons for these, and ways that education access, achievement and progression could be enabled for these groups;

2) How inequality is assessed and whether/how monitoring could be improved.

Interviews sought to obtain the stakeholders' perspectives on these issues, based on their experience (e.g. being a member of a group, providing a service, policymaking, etc). Note that some equality groups received greater attention than others in the qualitative data collection process, due to the dearth of information on education inequalities from quantitative data sources.

Interim findings were presented to a wider range of key stakeholders (see Appendix A.2) at a seminar/workshop on 20th January 2014 at Queen's University, Belfast for the purpose of obtaining specific commentary on emergent key issues. The stakeholders had the opportunity to highlight the factors they thought could explain the trends and key inequalities found for each ground. The discussions also covered the barriers and enablers to educational access, attainment, progression and destinations for the different equality grounds, and the key issues participants thought should be brought forward for policymakers as a result of the findings. The feedback from the stakeholder engagement workshop has been treated as qualitative data and is included in the chapters for each equality ground as it pertains to them.

Report Structure

An overview of education in Northern Ireland to contextualise and define what has been analysed for this report will be presented in Chapter 2. Each chapter thereafter will deal with the individual equality grounds; for example, Gender Inequalities in Education; Age Inequalities in Education, and so on. The chapter structure will repeat for each equality ground, and will include: an introduction to each equality ground, to define and contextualise the equality ground as exists in Northern Ireland; an overview of the quantitative data analysed for each equality ground, to include data for access, attainment, progression and destination (as available) in education; findings of qualitative research (from interviews/focus groups conducted and feedback from key stakeholders on interim findings); and a summary and conclusions regarding the inequalities for each equality ground. A final chapter will provide an overall summary and conclusion and will list the key inequalities in Northern Ireland across all equality grounds.

Chapter 2. Education in Northern Ireland

Structure and Management

According to the Department of Education, Northern Ireland[16], there are approximately one-third of a million children in government grant-aided and independent schools and pre-school placements in Northern Ireland (this figure increased each year from 330,974 in 2011/12 to 333,430 in 2012/13 and 335,325 in the 2013/14 school year) [17].

In 2011/12[18], over 98% of pupils (98.4%) attended grant-aided schools (not including special schools), while 1.4% attended special schools (schools catering specifically for pupils with moderate or severe learning disabilities; this includes hospital schools) and 0.2% attended independent schools. This breakdown remained stable in 2013/14[19], where 98.3% attended grant-aided schools (not including special schools), while 1.5% attended special schools (schools catering specifically for pupils with moderate or severe learning disabilities; this includes hospital schools) and 0.2% attended independent schools.

Department of Education funded education starts at pre-school stage (ages 3-4 years). In 2011/12 the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme (PSEEP) comprised 22,671 children in nursery schools, nursery classes in primary schools, and Department of Education funded pre-school places in voluntary and private pre-school settings; this figure increased to 23,164 in 2013/14. Of those funded places, 4,917 and 5,566 places, respectively were for children whose parents were in receipt of Income Support or Income based Jobseeker's Allowance[20].

A nursery school is a school which is mainly used for the purpose of providing education to children of pre-school age who would normally be aged 3 years. A nursery class is similar but within a primary school. As part of the PSEEP, funded Department of Education pre-school places are available in voluntary and private pre-school settings. Admission to a nursery school, nursery class in a primary school, or a Department of Education funded place in a voluntary/private setting is through the admission arrangements for pre-school.

[16] www.deni.gov.uk/
[17] DENI (2014). Schools and pupils in Northern Ireland 1991/92 to 2013/14. Available at: www.deni.gov.uk/
[18] 2011/12 figures are taken from: DENI. (2012). Enrolments at schools and in funded pre-school education in Northern Ireland 2011/12 (revised). Statistical Press Release 29 May 2012. Available at www.deni.gov.uk/
[19] 2013/14 figures are taken from: DENI. (2014). Enrolments at schools and in funded pre-school education in Northern Ireland 2013/14 (revised). Statistical Press Release 20 March 2014. Available at www.deni.gov.uk/
[20] Figures quoted do not include Reception classes in a primary school.

Reception classes are in primary schools; admission to a reception class is via the admission arrangements for primary schools. Legislation currently enables children who have reached their 4th birthday, but are below the compulsory school age, to apply for a reception place where available. An aim of the PSEEP is the replacement of existing reception provision (at the time of the PSEEP's conception: 1998/99) with suitable alternative provision. The Department of Education has not approved new reception provision since 1998/99. In primary schools which were already offering reception classes, the schools are required to give priority to children of compulsory school age. Unfilled places then become available for children below compulsory school age (in reception). Only 444 and 343 children were enrolled in reception classes in 2011/12 and 2013/14, respectively.

For many children, reception provision represents less than a full year. The Education and Training Inspectorate have reported that the quality of provision for these children remains variable especially when they are enrolled in a composite class with children from at least one other year group. In some classes, pre-school children are being taught with children up to Year 4. A key action within Learning to Learn – A framework for Early Years Education and Learning – is legislating to remove the ability of primary schools to admit under aged children to reception classes.

Compulsory education extends from age 4 to 16 years, covering 12 years of schooling. This period of schooling is broken into phases, known as Key Stages, as follows:

Primary education:

- Foundation Stage – Years 1 and 2 (ages 4-6 years)
- Key Stage 1 – Years 3 and 4 (ages 6-8 years)
- Key Stage 2 – Years 5-7 (ages 8-11 years)

Post-primary education:

- Key Stage 3 – Years 8-10 (ages 11-14 years)
- Key Stage 4 – Years 11 and 12 (ages 14-16 years).
    - At the end of Year 12 pupils normally sit their General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exams.
- Post-16[21] provision (Key Stage 5) – Years 13 and 14 (ages 16-18 years).
    - Halfway through Key Stage 5, students sit the GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Level examinations, and at the end of Key Stage 5, they sit the A2 Level (otherwise known as 'A Level') examinations.

At the end of pupils' primary education, parents of Year 7 children can choose to allow them to sit unregulated tests which focus on English and Maths. While the majority of post-primary schools do not use academic admissions criteria, many schools which were traditionally academically selective (largely but not exclusively grammar schools) still admit their pupils based on the results of these tests. Forty-three per cent of pupils attend grammar schools; the majority (57%) attend non-selective schools (or in a small number of cases, partially selective schools)[22].

Schools are further defined by different types of school management. Controlled schools include nursery, primary, special, secondary and grammar schools, and these schools are managed and funded by Education and Library Boards (ELBs)[23] through Boards of Governors. The controlled sector also includes a small number of controlled integrated and controlled Irish-medium schools. The majority of Protestant children in Northern Ireland are educated within controlled schools.

Integrated schools are schools which aim to educate Catholic and Protestant children together, by striving to achieve an intake which is 40% Catholic, 40% Protestant, and 20% children from other religions or no religious background.[24]

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[21] Non-compulsory
[22] See DENI's *Country Background Report for Northern Ireland*, December 2013 (available at http://www.deni.gov.uk/oecd_country_background_report_ni_december_2013.pdf)
[23] *www.belb.org.uk; www.seelb.org.uk;* www.neelb.org.uk*;* www.selb.org*; www.welbni.org*
[24] See *Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education Statement of Principles* (available at http://www.nicie.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Statement-of-Principles1.pdf)

Maintained schools (mostly Catholic maintained) are managed by Boards of Governors and are funded through the ELBs for their running costs and directly by the Department of Education in relation to capital building works. For Catholic maintained schools, the Employing Authority is the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)[25].

Voluntary non-maintained schools are mainly voluntary grammar schools, which are again managed by Boards of Governors. These Boards consist of persons appointed as provided in each school's scheme of management (usually trustees or foundation governors) along with representatives of parents and teachers and, in most cases, members appointed by the Department of Education or ELBs. Currently, voluntary grammar schools are funded directly by the Department of Education.

Lastly, grant maintained integrated schools have the same aims as controlled integrated schools, but are managed by Boards of Governors and funded directly by the Department of Education. The way schools are funded and managed is, however, likely to change in Northern Ireland in the near future: in line with the 2011-15 Programme for Government[26], the five existing Education and Library Boards and their Staff Commission will soon be replaced by a single body.[27]

Further Education in Northern Ireland

The Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland is responsible for the policy, strategic development and financing of the statutory further education sector. DEL is also responsible for curriculum and qualifications below degree level, with a key focus on the development of adult literacy. The strategic objectives of the further education sector are:

- To support regional economic development and, in particular, to provide the skills necessary for the knowledge-based economy;
- To increase participation and widen access to those previously under-represented in the sector; and

[25] *www.ccmsschools.com*
[26] See http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/pfg-2011-2015-final-report.pdf
[27] See the NI Education Minister's statement from 9th September 2014: http://www.deni.gov.uk/news/news-de-090914-education-minister-welcomes.htm

- To improve the quality of provision and enhance standards of performance.[28]

Further education colleges comprise six free-standing incorporated bodies: Belfast Metropolitan College[29]; Northern Regional College[30]; North West Regional College[31]; South Eastern Regional College[32]; Southern Regional College[33]; and South West College[34]. All six regional colleges have several campuses throughout the regions they serve, and deliver community education through a range of community outreach locations and in partnership with local communities. The colleges offer a range of full-time and part-time education and training options from entry level to postgraduate level: GCSEs, A Level, and BTEC courses; Essential Skills (numeracy, literacy, ICT); apprenticeships; accredited courses (professional and technical courses); higher education degrees (Two-year Foundation Degrees and National and Higher National Diplomas and Certificates), as well as non-accredited courses. Students can therefore develop progression pathways from entry level through to under- and postgraduate level. Each college currently works in partnership with a large number of local schools in the delivery of the Entitlement Framework[35], and all six regional colleges offer a range of courses for adult learners to support returners to education, to provide up-skilling and re-skilling opportunities and to facilitate progress to further study.

Job Training Programmes in Northern Ireland

The further education colleges are also the main providers of government-funded, work-based training programmes in Northern Ireland. 'ApprenticeshipsNI'[36] is a Northern Ireland based programme, designed to meet the needs of local employers, that provides the opportunity for students to participate in a Level 2 or Level 3 apprenticeship. There is no upper age limit for participation in the programme, however all participants must be in employment from day one.

[28] See *The Role of the Statutory Further Education Sector*, available at: http://www.delni.gov.uk/stat_role_fe_sector_consult301002.pdf
[29] *www.belfastmet.ac.uk*
[30] *www.nrc.ac.uk*
[31] *www.nwrc.ac.uk*
[32] *www.serc.ac.uk*
[33] *www.src.ac.uk*
[34] *www.swc.ac.uk*
[35] The Entitlement Framework is the post 14 curriculum which puts the needs of pupils first. It aims to provide access for pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum to enable them to reach their full potential no matter which school they attend or where they live.
[36] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/apprentices

'Training for Success' (TfS)[37] is designed for young people aged 16 – 17 years (up to 24 years for those who qualify under extended eligibility) and provides training to give them the tools and skills they need to get a job. The TfS programme provides training for learners who have not yet found full-time employment and are not participating in a Programme-Led Apprenticeship. It is designed to enable learners to progress to higher level training, further education, or employment by providing training to address personal and social development needs, develop occupational skills, employability skills and, where necessary, Essential Skills training. Programme-Led Apprenticeships[38] is a Department for Employment and Learning-funded initiative. It provides young people who are unable to find employment as an apprentice with the opportunity to gain an industry-approved Level 2 apprenticeship qualification in their chosen skill area.

The 'Steps to Work'[39] programme offers a number of different choices to participants around work-related activities that can be fitted to suit their individual needs. It is delivered in a three-step process: Step One includes one-to-one support and guidance from an adviser which is aimed at helping participants to find work as soon as possible. This includes a range of short courses to build confidence and motivation, and accredited courses to help participants find work. Step Two includes a wider range of long-term support in order to meet participants' training and work experience needs. This can last from three weeks to 52 weeks. Step Three provides additional support and advice from advisers for up to six weeks to help participants find a job. Participation on Steps to Work is a mandatory requirement for all Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants (including National Insurance Credits Only cases) who are between 18 and 24 years who have been claiming JSA for 6 months or more; and for those aged 25 years and over who have been claiming for 18 months or more.

Higher Education in Northern Ireland

Higher education in Northern Ireland includes four types of qualifications: foundation degrees; Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas; bachelor's degrees; and postgraduate qualifications. Foundation degrees are offered in the further education regional colleges, combining academic and work related learning as a route into employment; Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) are work-related courses

[37] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/education-and-learning/14-19/its-your-choice-options-after-16/trainingforsuccess/information-for-you-on-training-for-success.htm
[38] http://www.delni.gov.uk/2222p_del_prog_led_app_lr_final.pdf
[39] http://www.delni.gov.uk/stepstowork

available in a wide range of subjects, and are provided by higher education colleges and further education colleges. Bachelor's degrees are offered at universities, higher education colleges and via distance learning[40], and are available in a wide range of subjects in Northern Ireland. The entrance requirements usually include at least two A Levels at grade E or above (or equivalent grades in other qualifications). Lastly, there are four types of postgraduate qualifications offered in Northern Ireland (in subject areas often linked to a specific profession): postgraduate certificates; postgraduate diplomas; master's degrees; and doctorates. Normally, to study for a postgraduate qualification, the entrance requirements include having a bachelor's degree with a grade of lower second (2:2) or above. Only the universities in Northern Ireland that have research components offer doctorate-level qualifications.

Curriculum and Assessment

There is a statutory curriculum in place for all grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland, which was revised in 2007. This curriculum has three key aims, underpinned by their emphases on equality:

1. To ensure that the core curriculum delivered in all grant-aided schools was relevant to the needs, aspirations and career prospects of **all young people**;
2. To promote a greater focus on skills and their application as well as knowledge and on connecting learning across the curriculum; and,
3. To reduce the prescription that had applied since 1989 and to give teachers much more flexibility to exercise their professional judgement in planning and delivering lessons that were connected, relevant, enjoyable and **supported pupils in achieving their full educational potential** (*emphases added).*[41]

In primary school, the curriculum includes religious education; language and literacy; mathematics and numeracy; the arts; the world around us; personal development and mutual understanding; and physical education. Standards of pupil competency in literacy and numeracy are assessed - at the end of Key Stage 1 (age 8 years) and at the end of Key Stage 2 (age 11 years - the point at which children transfer to post-primary school). Targets are set in relation to the expected Levels of attainment that pupils reach in these first two Key Stages: at age 8 years (Key Stage 1) they are expected to reach Level 2; and at age 11 years (Key Stage 2) they are expected

[40] Higher education in Northern Ireland is delivered through three universities and two higher education colleges; the two colleges are colleges of Queen's University Belfast and provide Initial Teacher Education in Northern Ireland.
[41] See DENI's *Country Background Report for Northern Ireland*, December 2013 (available at http://www.deni.gov.uk/oecd_country_background_report_ni_december_2013.pdf)

to reach Level 4, which, according to targets, 83% of children were expected to achieve in Communication in English and 84% in Maths by 2011/12 (the targets set for 2014/15 are 86% for both)[42].

Post-primary education consists of 5 years of compulsory education (from Year 8 to 12) and a further 2 years if students wish to remain in school to pursue post GCSE /Level 2 courses to Level 3 courses (AS/A Level courses). As in the primary phase, post-primary students have a legal entitlement to a common curriculum, which includes eight Areas of Learning:

1. Languages;
2. Environment and society;
3. Science and technology;
4. Learning for life and work;
5. Language and literacy;
6. Mathematics and numeracy;
7. The arts; and,
8. Physical education.

At Key Stage 3, (age 14 years) literacy and numeracy attainment is again assessed, following on from the primary level. This reflects the central importance of literacy and numeracy and the place that such data can have in informing policy, benchmarking performance, and accounting for progress. The expected target at Key Stage 3 is Level 5, which 81% of children were expected to achieve in Communication in English, and 80% in Maths by 2011/12 (the targets for 2014/15 are 83% and 82%, respectively)[43]. There is thus a clear expectation that individual pupils should progress at least one level between each Key Stage. This allows for progression to be shown and ensures that there is a clear focus not simply on achievement at or above the expected levels but also, importantly, on measuring the progress made by pupils bearing in mind their different starting points.

At Key Stage 4 (Years 11-12), pupils are entitled to access a broad and balanced curriculum to meet their needs, interests and aspirations, no matter which type of school they attend or its geographical location (also known as the 'Entitlement Framework'). Courses offered must have clear progression pathways to further or higher education, employment or training. Pupils must have access to, but do not necessarily have to take, a qualification in each of the eight Areas of

[42] DENI (2010) Count Read Succeed: A strategy to improve outcomes in literacy and numeracy. DENI: NI. http://www.deni.gov.uk/count_read_succeed_a_strategy_to_improve_outcomes_in_literacy_and_numeracy.pdf
[43] Ibid

Learning. The Department of Education expects that all pupils will follow a GCSE course in Mathematics and English unless there are exceptional and justifiable reasons why this would not be appropriate. While studying a science subject after the age of 14 years is not compulsory, in recent years, particular effort has also been made to promote the benefits of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) related subjects and to encourage their uptake.

At Key Stage 4, the main measure of performance used is achievement of at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics. The Programme for Government in Northern Ireland includes a key commitment to increase the overall proportion of young people who achieve this measure[44]. The target for school leavers attaining this goal was set at 61% for 2011/12 by the Department of Education (although specific targets were 65% for females and 56% for males)[45]. The target for 2020 has been set at 70%[46].

Reflecting the overarching goal in the Programme for Government of 'closing the gap, increasing access and equality', system targets are also set for the percentage of school leavers entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) – the indicator used to determine social deprivation - expected to achieve at least 5 GCSEs A*-C passes including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics. In 2011/12, 34.1% of FSM school leavers achieved this level (the target is 65% by 2020)[47].

Other Local Governmental Policies, Equality Law and International Standards in Relation to Educational Equality

The Department of Education's corporate plan sets out its key priorities and objectives during the period from 2012 to 2015[48]. The corporate plan outlines the strategic direction for the Department and the wider education service. The two overarching goals are (again, with emphases added to highlight the focus on equality):

[44] See the Northern Ireland Executive's *Programme for Government 2011-15*, available at http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/pfg-2011-2015-final-report.pdf
[45] DENI (2010) Count Read Succeed: A strategy to improve outcomes in literacy and numeracy. DENI: NI. (http://www.deni.gov.uk/count_read_succeed_a_strategy_to_improve_outcomes_in_literacy_and_numeracy.pdf
[46] Ibid
[47] DENI (2013). *Country Background Report for Northern Ireland*, which gives a more in-depth view of the education system in Northern Ireland. (Available at http://www.deni.gov.uk/oecd_country_background_report_ni_december_2013.pdf)
[48] http://www.deni.gov.uk/de_corporate_plan_2012_english.pdf

1. **Raising standards for all** – through high quality teaching and learning, ensuring that all young people enjoy and do well in their education and that their progress is assessed and their attainment recognised, including through qualifications.
2. **Closing the performance gap, increasing access and equality** – addressing the underachievement that exists in our education system; ensuring that young people who face barriers or are at risk of social exclusion are supported to achieve to their full potential; and ensuring that our education service is planned effectively on an area basis to provide pupils with full access to the curriculum and Entitlement Framework.

A central element of the policy is schools' self-evaluation and the use of system level data for benchmarking purposes. Long term targets are set out in the Department of Education's strategy to improve outcomes in literacy and numeracy (Count, Read: Succeed – A Strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy, published in March 2011). The strategy aims to raise overall standards in literacy and numeracy and to close the gaps in achievement between the highest and lowest achieving pupils and schools, between the most and least disadvantaged and between males and females. The Department of Education's public commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for all children in schools is also evidenced by the document 'Every School A Good School – a Policy for School Improvement' (DE, April 2009).

Another government strategy relevant to educational equality is 'Improving Children's Life Chances – The Child Poverty Strategy.'[49] It sets out the actions proposed by the Northern Ireland Executive to address the issue of child poverty, and it recognises that there are two strands of work relevant to breaking the cyclical nature of poverty: supporting parents into better paid work, and increasing future prospects for the child. Education is one of the strategy's priority policy areas; specific strategic priorities include 'ensur[ing], as far as possible, that poverty in childhood does not translate into poor outcomes for children as they move into adult life', and 'ensur[ing] that the child's environment supports them to thrive.'[50]

In Northern Ireland, equality law provides protection against discrimination in education (schools, colleges and other educational establishments) and vocational training on the grounds

[49] See http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/final_child_poverty_strategy_-_agreed_by_executive_-_22_march_2011.pdf
[50] Ibid; p. 13

of sex[51], religion and political opinion[52], race[53], disability[54] and sexual orientation[55] and against discrimination in vocational training and further and higher education on the grounds of age[56]. In addition, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (Northern Ireland) 2005[57] and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (Northern Ireland) 2005 (amendment) (Further and Higher Education) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006[58] increased the rights of children and young people with special educational needs[59] (SEN) in schools and further and higher education establishments.

The Northern Ireland Act of 1998[60] outlines the positive equality duties on public authorities throughout Northern Ireland. Section 75 of the Act states that all public authorities, including all education bodies (such as the Department of Education and the Education and Library Boards – not individual schools), have a statutory duty in the promotion of equality between people on a number of grounds. This includes:

a) between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;

b) between men and women generally;

c) between persons with a disability and persons without; and

d) between persons with dependants and persons without.

In education, promoting equality therefore entails the prevention of discrimination against people on the basis of these equality grounds, and the promotion of measures that facilitate equality of access, attainment, progression and destinations in education for all.

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[51] as contained within the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 (the SDO), as amended by the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1988; see http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1976/1042/contents

[52] as contained within the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998; see http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1998/3162/contents/made

[53] as contained within the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (the RRO), as amended by the Race Relations Order (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003; see http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1997/869/contents/made

[54] as contained within the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; see http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/50/contents

[55] as contained within the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006; see http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2006/439/contents/made; and Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2003; see http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2003/497/contents/made

[56] as contained within the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 (the Age Regulations); see http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2006/261/contents/made

[57] see http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2005/1117/contents/made

[58] see http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2006/332/contents/made

[59] A child has 'special educational needs' (SEN) if he/she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her. Not all children with SEN have a disability and not all children with a disability have SEN.

[60] *www.legislation.gov.uk*

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)[61], which the United Kingdom has ratified, includes two articles that particularly relate to education equality for all children. Article 28 states that all children have the right to a primary education, and that young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education of which they are capable (this however is dependent upon other significant Articles being realised by State parties). Article 29 outlines the goals of education, stating that children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. The UK has also ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)[62], which is based on the principles of (amongst others): full and effective participation and inclusion in society; equality of opportunity; accessibility; and equality between men and women. Article 24 of the Convention specifically relates to education: 'States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels', and that they should ensure that 'Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability' and that 'persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education'. Lastly, Article 24 states that 'States Parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community.'

However, when the UK Government ratified the UNCRPD in June 2009 it decided to place a number of restrictions on its UNCRPD obligations. The first restriction was an Interpretative Declaration which clarifies the UK Government's definition of a 'general education system'. The UK Government also placed a Reservation against Article 24 which states that: 'the United Kingdom reserves the right for disabled children to be educated outside their local community where more appropriate education provision is available elsewhere. Nevertheless, parents of disabled children have the same opportunity as other parents to state a preference for the school at which they wish their child to be educated.'[63]

[61] http://www.ohchr.org/

[62] The UK Government has placed a Reservation against Article 24 which states that: Reservation: Education – Convention Article 24 Clause 2 (a) and 2 (b) The United Kingdom reserves the right for disabled children to be educated outside their local community where more appropriate education provision is available elsewhere. Nevertheless, parents of disabled children have the same opportunity as other parents to state a preference for the school at which they wish their child to be educated.

[63] http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CRPD/Future/DefExMainstreamersGroup_UK_CRPDFuture.doc

Key Education Data in Northern Ireland

This section will provide some contextual data regarding educational access and attainment in Northern Ireland before the main data analysis, focusing on data from 2007/08 to 2011/12 is presented in the forthcoming chapters. Appendix B of this report presents three tables that show enrolments by school type in 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14.

The educational standards achieved by all school leavers have improved over the last five years. Considering educational outcomes targets, figures for the 2011/12 school year show that some key milestones are being met. The attainment proportion for all pupils sitting Key Stage 2 Assessments in 2011/12 in Communication in English was 82.8% (target 83%); the attainment proportion for Key Stage 2 Mathematics was 83.7% (target 84%). However, attainment proportions at Key Stage 3 are slightly below the target for 2011/12 – in Communication in English, 79.4% were at the expected level (target 81%), and in Mathematics, 77.3% were at the expected level (target 80%). At GCSE level (5+ GCSEs at A*-C including English and Mathematics), the percentage of females achieving the expected level was 67.8%, more than the target of 65%; the percentage of males achieving the expected level was 56.3%, just slightly more than the target of 56% for males. Fifty per cent of pupils now leave school with 2+ A*-E grades at A Level or equivalent qualifications. The proportion of students leaving school with no formal qualifications has been reduced from 27% in 1980 to 2% in 2012.

Comparisons with other OECD countries via the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2012) show that in Northern Ireland, 15 year olds perform at the OECD average in mathematics, reading and science.[64] However, the results also showed that Northern Ireland has a higher proportion of students at the lowest level of mathematical proficiency compared to the average. While no statistically significant gender difference was found for performance in mathematics or science, girls significantly outperformed boys in reading (as was the case for all OECD countries). Results from the recent Trends in International Maths and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) for 2011[65] show that primary school pupils in Northern Ireland are performing significantly above the international average in both literacy and numeracy. The results show that 19% of children in

[64] http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news-de-031213-publication-of-pisa?WT.mc_id=rss-news

[65] https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/PRTI01/PRTI01_home.cfm?publicationID=854&title=%20PIRLS%20and%20TIMSS%202011%20in%20Northern%20Ireland

reading and 24% in mathematics are performing at the advanced international benchmark – the highest level possible. This compares with international averages of 8% and 4% respectively.

Overall population: Highest Level of Qualification

Data from the Census 2011 provides information on the highest qualification levels of all people within Northern Ireland who are aged 16 or over (1,431,540 people). The proportion who had no qualifications was 29.1%; the proportion who had Level 1 qualifications[66] was 11.5%; the proportion who had Level 2 qualifications[67] was 14.9%; the proportion who had Level 3 qualifications[68] was 12.3%; and the proportion who had Level 4 qualifications[69] was 23.7%, the greatest proportion out of all the qualification level categories. A further 4.2% of the population had an apprenticeship as their highest qualification, and 4.3% had other types of qualifications.

The following chapters will examine the current status of access to education and attainment of educational targets as outlined in Chapter 1. Educational inequalities in each of the nine equality grounds will be identified using both qualitative and quantitative data.

[66] Level 1 Qualifications: 1-4 O Levels/CSE/GCSEs (any grades), Entry Level, Foundation Diploma, NVQ level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic/Essential Skills qualifications
[67] Level 2 Qualifications: 5+ O Level (Passes)/CSEs (Grade 1)/GCSEs (Grades A*-C), School Certificate, 1 A Level/ 2-3 AS Levels/VCEs, Intermediate/Higher Diploma, Intermediate Diploma, NVQ level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First/General Diploma, RSA Diploma
[68] Level 3 Qualifications: 2+ A Levels/VCEs, 4+ AS Levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression/Advanced Diploma, NVQ Level 3; Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma
[69] Level 4 Qualifications: a Degree, Higher Degree (for example MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher level, Foundation degree, or Professional

Chapter 3: Gender Inequalities in Education

Introduction

The equality ground of gender is covered by several legislative requirements pertaining to equality and anti-discrimination within Northern Ireland. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998[70] places a statutory duty on public authorities including educational bodies (but not including schools) to carry out their functions with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between men and women generally, in relation to education and training. In addition, the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 (the SDO)[71], as amended by the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1988, makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the grounds of his or her sex. Furthermore, the Gender Reassignment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999[72] amends the SDO to make it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of gender reassignment (sex change) in employment and training.

Schools, colleges and other educational establishments cannot discriminate on grounds of sex. It is unlawful for the body responsible for an educational establishment to discriminate:

- as regards terms of admission to the establishment;
- by refusing or deliberately omitting to accept an application for admission;
- in the way it affords a pupil whom it has admitted to the establishment access to any benefits, facilities of services, or by refusing or deliberately omitting to afford such access; or
- by excluding such a pupil from the establishment or treating such a pupil unfavourably in any other way.

The SDO places a general duty on bodies responsible for educational establishments in the public sector to ensure that facilities are provided without sex discrimination. An exception is made for admissions to single-sex schools and admissions to single sex boarding accommodation in co-educational schools. Single-sex teaching groups in co-educational schools are also lawful, provided the provision to boys and girls is equal.

According to the Northern Ireland Census 2011, the populace (usual residents) is 49.0% male and 51.0% female.

[70] Section 75, Northern Ireland Act 1998: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75
[71] The Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1976/1042/contents
[72] Gender Reassignment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/1999/311/contents/made

Literature Review

In recent years a number of key public bodies and government departments in Northern Ireland have published audits and research reports on inequalities in education, in recognition of the fact that education plays a major role in not only determining the opportunities that one is presented with through life, but also personal fulfilment and transformation.

The Equality Commission Northern Ireland (hereafter referred to as ECNI) identified education as one of six broad areas where key inequalities exist in its publication 'Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland'[73]. Subsequently, the ECNI's report 'Inequalities in Education: Facts and Trends 1998-2008' included data drawn from key government sources to highlight some of the main inequalities that emerged in that period. Gender was one of the areas where key inequalities were found to exist. For example, the gap in the educational attainment of males and females had widened over the ten-year period covered by the report, and by 2007/08 males were less likely than females to go on to third level education.

The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) Northern Ireland has published its 'Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan 2011-2015'[74]. This report outlines key inequalities in further and higher education and government training programmes (as well as other areas of employment), and lists action measures to redress them. One of the key concerns in that report is the fact that occupancy in higher education is approximately 60% female and 40% male in Northern Ireland. The Department of Education (DE) Northern Ireland has also published its 'Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan 2012 – 2015'[75], which, similar to the DEL report, outlines key inequalities which the Department intends to address and the measures it plans to put in place to redress these. Again, the wide gap in achievement between males and females was one of the pressing issues that it identified.

The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) in Northern Ireland together published their own updated Audit of Inequalities in June 2012[76], and in addition to the above mentioned concerns about the gender attainment gap, added concerns regarding gender-stereotyping in education. For example, this relates to subject choices in education – 'in 2007, 97% of students studying Home Economics were female compared to only 35% of those studying Economics' (p. 29). The

[73] Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. (2008a). *Inequalities in Education – Facts and Trends 1998-2008*. Belfast: ECNI.
[74] Department of Employment and Learning. (2011). *Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan 2011-2015*. Belfast: DEL.
[75] Department of Education Northern Ireland. (2012). *Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan 2012 – 2015*. Bangor: DENI.
[76] http://www.selb.org/equality/Documents/AuditofInequalities2ndEditionJune2012.pdf

report also states that anecdotal experiences indicate the need to identify specific strategies for addressing the needs of transgender young people in a school and youth work setting. Lastly, the report highlights that more males than females are registered as having special educational needs – this is particularly evident with children whose primary difficulty is social, emotional and behavioural, where 70% plus of children at Stage 3 and 80% at Stage 5 were male.

Recent statistics released by DE on the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)[77] revealed that females significantly outperformed males in reading, but no statistically significant difference was found between males' and females' scores in science or mathematics (this is in contrast to most other participating countries – of the other 64 countries, 41 had a difference in performance in mathematics by gender and this tended to be in favour of boys, and in science the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average saw a statistically significant gender difference in favour of boys by one score point). In the Republic of Ireland, similar gender differences have been found for PISA scores – in 2012, females had an average reading score of 538, whereas males had an average reading score of 509[78]. A gender gap in subjects also exists between males and females in the later years of schooling in the Republic of Ireland – Higher Leaving Certificate[79] scores from 2010 show that a higher proportion of female candidates got A or B grades in all language subjects than males, and also that females also earned a higher proportion of A and B grades in all the Sciences – Biology, Physics, Chemistry and Agricultural Science.

Similar patterns of gender inequality have been found throughout the UK and the Republic of Ireland[80]. Through conducting an analysis of boys' and girls' achievement proportions at GCSE level in the United Kingdom, Gorard et al (2001)[81] found that overall, the gender difference had stabilised at around 10 percentage points. Furthermore, Arnot et al (1998)[82] found that while some subject areas were male-dominated and others were female-dominated, females had achieved sizeable improvements in subjects that would have been considered male-dominated, particularly science and mathematics subjects. More recent research in England[83] found that the

[77] http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news-de-031213-publication-of-pisa?WT.mc_id=rss-news
[78] See http://www.oecd.org/statistics/
[79] http://www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/explore-your-options/entry-requirements/tariff-tables/IrishCert
[80] See for example, Younger, M. & Warrington, M. (2005). *Raising Boys' Achievement*. Cambridge: Department for Education and Skills; Ford, C., Kane, J., Condie, R., McPhee, A., & Head, G. (2006). *Strategies to Address Gender Inequalities in Scottish Schools: A Review of the Literature*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government.
[81] Gorard, S., Rees, G., & Salisbury, J. (2001). Investigating the Pattern of Differential Achievement of Boys and Girls at School. *British Educational Research Journal*, *27*, 125-39.
[82] Arnot, M., Gray, J., James, M., Rudduck, J., with Duveen, G. (1998). Recent Research on Gender and Educational Performance, The Stationery Office.
[83] *Gender and Education: the Evidence on Pupils in England*. (Department for Education and Skills, 2007). Available: http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RTP01-07.pdf [16 March, 2009]

gender gap in subject areas is still wide, particularly in English and other subjects that are literacy based, with, on average, girls far outperforming boys throughout compulsory education, with the gap being largest at Key Stages 3 and 4. The report also found that girls slightly outperformed boys in maths throughout compulsory education, and in the science subjects.

A research report from the DEL[84] on Northern Ireland-domiciled higher education applicants 2008-09 revealed several key differences between males and females accessing higher education. Females accounted for a greater percentage of applicants accepted to UK universities (57%), and females also accounted for a proportionately greater percentage of those who obtained their preferred choice of university in Northern Ireland (58%). Furthermore, the average tariff score on Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS) forms for females accepted at UK institutions was 316, compared to 307 for males. However, a comparison of the average tariff scores between 2003/04 and 2008/09 showed that the average score held by males and females had increased, both for those who were accepted into university and for those who were not accepted. This suggests that for both sexes, the higher education application process has become increasingly competitive.

A qualitative study carried out in Northern Ireland[85] on the attitudes of pupils mainly from grammar schools found that there were substantial differences between girls and boys in terms of their attitudes to continuing in education and in their intention to seek entry to further or higher education - girls were significantly more likely to want and to plan to go on to further and higher education. The report also highlighted differences in gender attitudes by school type - many boys from controlled schools did not see any advantage in investing in post-compulsory education if it meant getting into substantial debt. Furthermore, a small number of boys in controlled schools claimed they were labelled as 'thick' by teachers who told them they had no chance of progressing to further or higher education. All participants in the study felt that job opportunities for girls were fewer at 16 years and that this partly underpinned girls' desire to stay on in education, but also that girls were 'just more serious at studying' at school.

Looking at the broader picture, OECD figures for 2009[86] showed that the proportion of women in both the Republic of Ireland and UK who earned a university-level qualification was higher than the proportion of men – in the Republic of Ireland it was 60% (the OECD average in 2009

[84] Department of Employment and Learning. (2010). Research Report: Northern Ireland Domiciled Higher Education Applicants: An Analysis of UCAS Data - 2008/09 Academic Year. Belfast: DEL
[85] Osborne, B., Smith, A., & Hayes, A. (2006). Higher Education in Northern Ireland: A report on factors associated with participation and migration. Jordanstown: Social & Policy Research Institute, UU.
[86] OECD (2012) Education Indicators in Focus: How are girls doing in school – and women doing in employment – around the world?

was 59%). However, on average men were more likely to earn doctorate degrees (54%) than women (46%) across participating OECD countries (including the Republic of Ireland and the UK)[87]. There are notable gender differences in the percentage of university degrees awarded by field of education. In the Republic of Ireland and the UK in 2008, only about one-fifth of degrees in the fields of engineering, manufacturing or construction were obtained by women; approximately two-fifths of Science degrees were awarded to women; in the Republic of Ireland, almost 85% of degrees in health and welfare were awarded to women (the figure in the UK was around 75%); and in both the Republic of Ireland and the UK, approximately three-quarters of degrees in Education were obtained by women[88].

This raises the issue of why such wide gender differences are occurring in higher education. A report on higher education in England[89] suggested that part of the explanation for the longer-term increase in the presence of women in higher education was due to the changing nature of higher education courses, such as the switch to a graduate profession in nursing - a subject where nearly 90% of the students are female. That said, the report also outlined that the main driver of growth in female student numbers is due to their rising examination performance and increased staying-on rates in secondary education. The report therefore recommended that efforts to reduce the gender gap in participation should predominantly be aimed at increasing the relative attainment of young men prior to entry to higher education. However, the very low rates of female participation in STEM subjects[90] in further and higher education are a concern for many. Research by Mason (2013)[91] reveals that in the UK and Northern Ireland, only 13% of the STEM workforce are female, with the gender imbalance starting at subject choices for A Level. A report by the Institute of Physics[92] suggests that single-sex schools are significantly better then co-educational schools at countering gender imbalances in progression in these subjects. Other positive initiatives may include outreach programmes by further education and higher education colleges, whereby role models could encourage students to apply to STEM

[87] Ibid
[88] Ibid
[89] Higher Education Funding Council for England, (2009). *Higher Education in England: Achievements, Challenges and Prospects*. (Available: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2009/09_06)
[90] STEM is an acronym of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. According to the Department of Employment and Learning, STEM related qualifications include qualifications in the following subject areas; Medicine & Dentistry, Subjects allied to Medicine, Biological Sciences, Veterinary Sciences, Agriculture & related subjects, Physical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science, Engineering & Technology and Architecture, Building & Planning. See http://www.delni.gov.uk/2857p_stem_booklet_v5.pdf.
[91] Mason, N. (2013). Realising Potential: Widening Participation in Science and Technology. Presentation at the Northern Ireland Assembly.
[92] Institute of Physics (2012). It's Different for Girls. See http://www.iop.org/publications/iop/2012/page_58292.html

courses, as well as increasing career opportunities for women, such as making returns after a career break more attractive or sitting on the Boards of STEM industries.

In an attempt to explain why gender differences in education occur (and occur at an early stage in the educational journey), Sukhnandan et al (1999)[93] identify two broad themes from the academic literature:

- girls and boys are noted as having developed different styles of learning, which need different styles of teaching;
- girls and boys seem to relate differently to schooling and learning, and girls find it easier to succeed in school settings.

Most of the research literature is less focused on biological explanations for the gender differences which, it is argued, may imply that such inequalities are a 'natural' and unchangeable consequence of being born male or female; instead, most emphasise the gender-normative nature of the school experience. The ECNI report, 'Gender Equality in Action'[94] reports on gender-stereotyping in schools and recommends a series of steps that teachers and careers advisors can take to challenge gender stereotyping. These steps include, for example: ensuring a focus on gender issues in industry or business insight days and any other activity designed to inform pupils about the world of work; doing group work with pupils/students to challenge and discuss attitudes to jobs and the influence of friends, parents and community, and using gender neutral language when referring to occupations and job titles; and, running single-sex workshops to encourage young people to consider non-traditional choices, to build confidence and to promote discussion that might be stifled in mixed-sex groups.

A report by Eurydice at the National Foundation for Educational Research (2010)[95] on combating gender differences also advocates challenging gender stereotypes across the curriculum and adapting traditionally 'male' or 'female' subjects to make them more inclusive of the other sex. This includes the careful selection of educational texts and materials. The report also recommends working with pupils to develop school policies to promote an atmosphere free of intimidation and sexist bullying, and exploring gender stereotyping in the curriculum.

[93] Sukhnandan, L. (1999). An Investigation into Gender Differences in Achievement Phase 1: A review of recent research and LEA information on provision. Slough: NFER
[94] http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/geneqteach.pdf
[95] Eurydice at NFER (2010). Gender differences in educational outcome. NFER: UK

The 'Gender Equality Duty and Schools: Guidance for Public Authorities in England'[96] report also highlights the role of parents in the careers advice process, and recommends that parents help to challenge any stereotypical views in their child's environment which may stifle their child's interest in certain subjects or career paths. The Eurydice report[97] also stresses the importance of male primary teachers as role models for boys. This point links to other research which has shown that in certain contexts, teachers can encourage rather than discourage male disaffection (see Arnott et al, 1998)[98]. Certain stereotypes or images of masculinity may be promoted in a school through the hidden curriculum and through teachers' interactions with boys. A recent report carried out by Harland and McCready (2012)[99] in Northern Ireland explored boys' experiences of school life and the barriers to learning from the boys' point of view. These barriers included:

- falling behind in school and feeling like they could not catch up;
- the lack of literacy and numeracy skills that are being carried forward from primary school and are not being attended to early on in post-primary school, and a more general lack of preparedness for key transitional stages during adolescence, such as the move to post-primary school, Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4, school to college/university/work, and so on;
- becoming bored easily, frustrated and tired due to the formal nature of the classroom;
- poor teacher/pupil relationships, which impacted on how boys engaged with lessons and influenced their expectations as to how well they would do in subjects;
- a lack of connection between the content of lessons and boys' everyday lives;
- a lack of belief that success in school would actually lead to a job and fears of debt if they go to university;
- boys feeling alienated within their communities and disconnected from the world of adults; and,
- incidents of bullying and violence (or the threat of it) being perceived as part of everyday life.

[96] Equal Opportunities Commission. (2007). *The Gender Equality Duty and Schools: Guidance for Public Authorities in England (* Available: http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-duties/information-for-public-authorities/sectoral-guidance/

[97] Eurydice at NFER (2010). Gender differences in educational outcome. NFER: UK

[98] Arnot, M., Gray, J., James, M. & Rudduck, J. (l998) *A Review of Recent Research on Gender and Educational Performance*, *OFSTED research series*, London: The Stationery Office.

[99] Harland, K. & McCready, S. (2012). *Taking Boys Seriously – A Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Male School-Life Experiences in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Department of Justice/Department of Education.

Transgender young people and inequalities in education

A recently commissioned report by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in Northern Ireland (OFMDFM)[100] investigated the experiences of young people who experience gender distress and/or identify as transgender (aged 25 and under), and highlighted the challenges that they face in terms of their education. The report revealed that issues of gender identity, gender dysphoria and transgender issues are absent from Northern Ireland's revised curriculum. As a result, it is argued that not only does this lead to a lack of awareness in Northern Ireland as a whole about trans issues, it also 'disempowers young trans people from having the necessary awareness to understand their gender identity.'[101] The strict uniform rules that most schools set may also have negative impacts on the educational experiences of young trans people. The report states that 'being forced to wear a school uniform that did not match a young trans person's gender identity caused stress, anxiety and discomfort for the young person. In turn, it can encourage truancy.' Missing school time is negatively correlated with educational attainment. Furthermore, some young people reported that they had heard their teachers expressing prejudiced views, or that their schools had reacted with disbelief and insensitivity to their situation. Transphobic bullying was also found to be a problem in school settings, which can lead to trans young people feeling isolated to the extent that they suffer poor mental health, which again has a negative influence on their learning. Teachers may lack the awareness to deal with such bullying, or see the young person being bullied as the problem. All of these issues may combine to lead to educational inequalities via the hindrance of trans young people's personal, social and emotional development.

In the UK more broadly, research by Whittle, Turner and Al-Alami (2007)[102] on transgender and transsexual people's experiences of inequality and discrimination looked at the school experience as one arena in which inequality for trans people occurs. They found that 64% of young trans men and 44% of young trans women experience harassment or bullying at school, not just from their fellow pupils but also from school staff including teachers. In regard to educational attainment, the report found large differences between achievement levels in the trans population compared to the UK average; while many trans people leave school after completing Level 2, 34% obtain a degree or higher degree (later in life), compared to the UK national average of only 27%. The Equality Challenge Unit (2010)[103] has published guidance on

[100] McBride, R-S. (2013). Grasping the Nettle: The Experiences of Gender Variant Children and Transgender Youth Living in Northern Ireland. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research.
[101] Ibid; p.4.
[102] Whittle, S., Turner, L., & Al-Alami, M. (2007). *Engendered Penalties: Transgender and Transsexual People's Experiences of Inequality and Discrimination.* The Equalities Review.
[103] Pugh, E. (2010). *Trans staff and students in Higher Education*. Equality Challenge Unit.

the promotion of trans equality within higher education institutions. The steps include ensuring awareness of gender identity issues and developing proactive policies and procedures that are inclusive of trans people, for example in considerations of: accommodation and single-sex facilities; confidentiality; criminal record checks; the wording and process of awarding degree certificates; dress codes; the wording of forms and questionnaires; all records; recruitment; sports; and support groups.

The report also recommends that policies should protect the rights of trans people to dignity at work and in their studies, and that any decision to monitor gender identity, while potentially useful in analysing patterns of inequality and identifying ways to support trans staff and students, should be taken in consultation with them in order to gauge support for doing so; the report claims that if most trans people are opposed to monitoring, this may suggest that more work needs to be done to make equality policies effective and to raise levels of confidence.

The next section of this chapter will present the key findings from existing datasets with regard to proportions and shares of enrolments, achievements, progression and destination across the 2007-2012 period for gender, in order to highlight the most current picture of existing inequalities, as well as to highlight whether these inequalities have emerged within the past five years or whether they have been persistent since 2007.

Findings from Quantitative Data

Primary and Post-primary Level (Source: DENI)

Access:

In 2011/12 there was a greater share of males than females in the pre-school, primary and post-primary school sectors (see Table 3.1) reflecting the greater proportion of males (51.1%) to females (48.8%) between the ages of 3-18 years in the Northern Ireland population[104]. In terms of the post-primary sector, in 2011/12 there was a slightly greater share of females (50.3%) than males (49.7%) overall; however, differences emerged when examining the different school management types in this sector. In 2011/12, the share of females was greater than males in controlled grammar schools (58.2% vs. 41.8%), Catholic maintained non-grammar schools (52.1% vs. 47.9%), and other maintained non-grammar schools (52.5% vs. 47.5%) (see Table 3.1; Technical Tables 3.1-3.3).

A persistent trend between the 2007/08 and 2011/12 school years has been the greater share of males in special school enrolments by a ratio of approximately two to one (see Technical Table 3.4). In 2011/12, the male share of special school enrolments was 68.9% compared to 31.1% for females (see Table 3.1). This is partly a reflection of the higher incidence of disability amongst young males in the Northern Ireland population. According to Census 2011, 62.2% of those aged 5-19 years old that have a limiting long-term illness or disability that affects their day-to-day activities a little or a lot are male, compared to 37.8% that are female.

No other notable differences were found for gender with respect to the other pre-school, primary and post-primary school types.

[104] Census 2011

Table 3.1: Share of enrolees for each school management type within the pre-school, primary and post-primary sectors by gender, 2011/12

School Sector	School Management Type	Number of Males (n)	Male share (%) of enrolment	Number of females (n)	Female share (%) of enrolment
PRE-SCHOOL					
Nursery Schools	Controlled	2,136	51.7	1,998	48.3
	Catholic Maintained	908	51.1	869	48.9
	Total within nursery schools	*3,044*	*51.5*	*2,867*	*48.5*
Nursery Class and reception	Controlled	2,241	51.2	2,134	48.8
	Catholic Maintained	1,921	49.2	1,984	50.8
	Other Maintained	128	49.6	130	50.4
	Controlled Integrated	47	50.0	47	50.0
	Grant Maintained Integrated	218	51.9	202	48.1
	Total within nursery class/reception	*4,555*	*50.3*	*4,497*	*49.7*
TOTAL PRE-SCHOOL		**7,599**	**50.8**	**7,364**	**49.2**
PRIMARY	Controlled	36,466	51.2	34,758	48.8
	Catholic Maintained	36,567	51.1	35,036	48.9
	Other Maintained	1,173	49.1	1,215	50.9
	Controlled Integrated	1,621	50.5	1,588	49.5
	Grant Maintained Integrated	2,694	50.7	2,622	49.3
	Grammar school preparatory departments	1,006	51.5	948	48.5
TOTAL PRIMARY		**79,527**	**51.1**	**76,167**	**48.9**
POST-PRIMARY					
Non-Grammar	Controlled	15,739	51.8	14,619	48.2
	Catholic Maintained	19,700	47.9	21,454	52.1
	Other Maintained	261	47.5	289	52.5
	Controlled Integrated	1,476	54.4	1,237	45.6
	Grant Maintained Integrated	4,938	52.4	4,480	47.6
	Total within non-grammar	*42,114*	*50.0*	*42,079*	*50.0*
Grammar	Controlled	6,344	41.8	8,841	58.2
	Catholic Managed	13,920	51.4	13,177	48.6
	Other Managed	10,587	52.2	9,685	47.8
	Total within grammar	*30,851*	*49.3*	*31,703*	*50.7*
TOTAL POST-PRIMARY		**72,965**	**49.7**	**73,782**	**50.3**
OTHER	**Special**	3,133	68.9	1,416	31.1
TOTAL ENROLMENTS		**163,224**	**50.7**	**158,729**	**49.3**

Attainment:

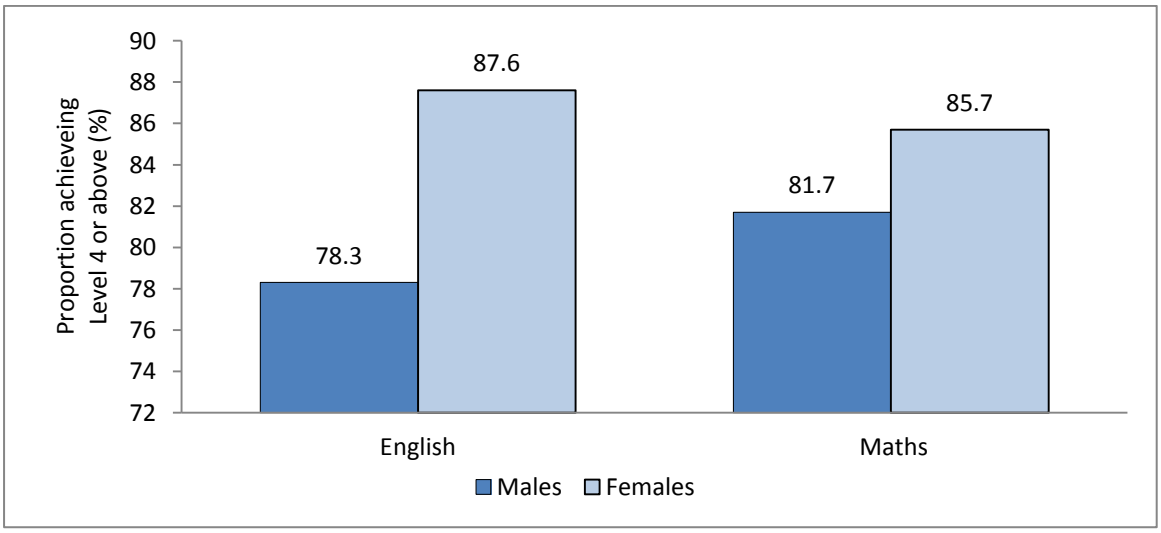
For both males and females, there has been an upward trend in all proportions of attainment since 2007/08, but large gender gaps remain (with females outperforming males). Overall, females have higher levels of attainment at all levels in primary and post-primary education:

- **Key Stage 2**[105]

  In 2011/12, 87.6% of females achieved Level 4 or above in English, compared to 78.3% of males (see Figure 3.1). Since 2007/08 there has been approximately a 9 percentage point attainment gap between males and females, although the overall proportions of pupils attaining Level 4 or above in English has increased for both sexes (see Technical Table 3.5).

  In 2011/12, 85.7% of females achieved Level 4 or above in Maths, compared to 81.7% of males. There has been a persistent 3-4 percentage point attainment gap (see Technical Table 3.5), although again the overall proportions of pupils attaining Level 4 or above in Maths have increased for both sexes (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Proportion achieving Level 4 or above in Key Stage 2 English and Maths by gender, 2011/12



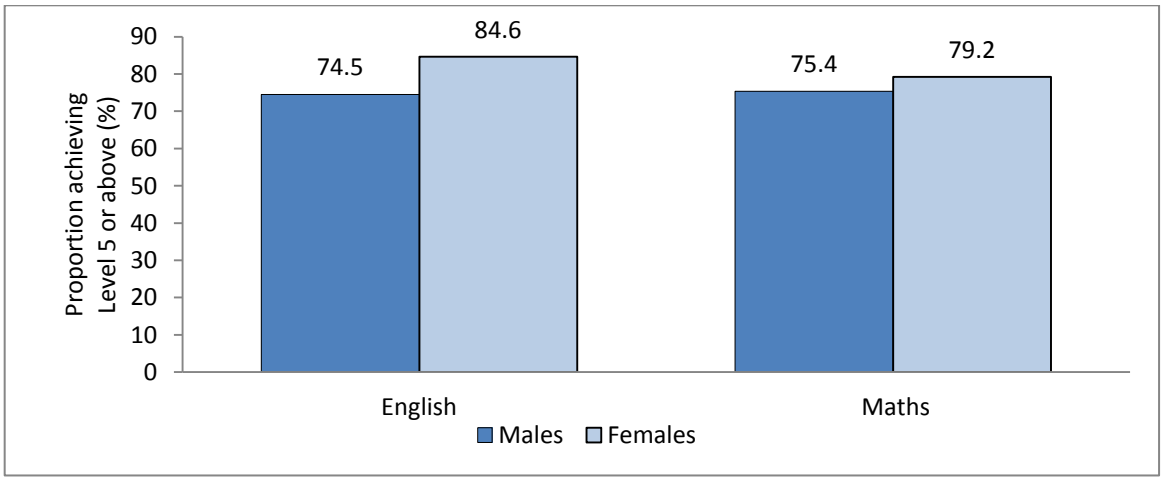
- **Key Stage 3**

  In 2011/12, 84.6% of females achieved Level 5 or above in English, compared to 74.5% of males (see Figure 3.2). Key Stage 3 results for English have remained fairly consistent for both sexes between 2007/08 and 2011/12, but females outperformed males by a 10-13 percentage point difference each year (see Technical Table 3.6).

[105] Key Stage 2 and 3 data were only available for analysis by gender.

In 2011/12, 79.2% of females achieved Level 5 or above in Maths, compared to 75.4% of males (see Figure 3.2). These results have also remained fairly consistent for both sexes since 2008/09, but females outperformed males by a 4-5 percentage point difference (see Technical Table 3.6).

Figure 3.2: Proportion achieving Level 5 or above in Key Stage 3 English and Maths by gender, 2011/12



<u>Progression:</u>

Results from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 also give an indication as to how males and females are performing in regard to their progression from primary to post-primary school. Firstly, the results show that proportionally less males than females reach the target levels (Level 4) in English and Maths at Key Stage 2 (see Figure 3.1). This gap widens further for attainment of Key Stage 3 target levels (Level 5) (see Figure 3.2). Secondly, given the slightly higher percentage point differences in attainment levels between males and females for each subject from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3, the results also indicate that the gender gap in attainment increased after the transition to post-primary school. This has been a persistent trend in the data since 2007/08 (see Technical Table 3.5-3.6).

- **GCSE level**

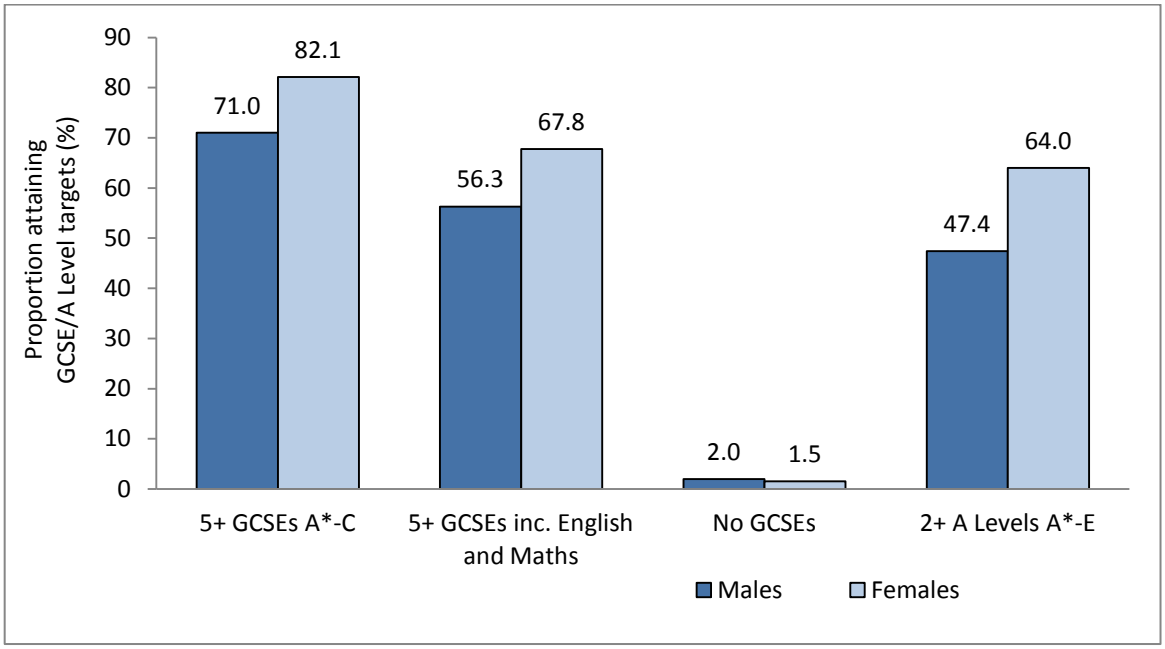
  At GCSE level, 82.1% of females achieved 5+ GCSEs at A*-C in 2011/12 compared to 71.0% of males (see Figure 3.3). The percentages of pupils who achieved 5+ GCSEs at A*-C (including equivalents) increased by approximately 10 percentage points for both sexes between 2007/08 and 2011/12, but females were more than 10 percentage points ahead of males in regard to their achievement level – for males, the proportion increased from 60.0%

in 2007/08 to 71.0% in 2011/12, and for females the proportion increased from 73.9% in 2007/08 to 82.1% in 2011/12 (see Technical Table 3.7).

- **GCSEs including Maths and English**

  Females also outperformed males at GCSE when Maths and English subjects were included in attainment proportions. In 2011/12, 67.8% of females achieved 5+ GCSEs at A*-C including Maths and English compared to 56.3% of males (see Figure 3.3). The percentage of females who achieved 5+ GCSEs at A*-C including Maths and English rose from 62.6% in 2007/08, and for males, the proportion rose from 50.2%. While the attainment of both sexes improved by approximately 5 percentage points, the gender gap remained wide at approximately 9-12 percentage points (see Technical Table 3.7).

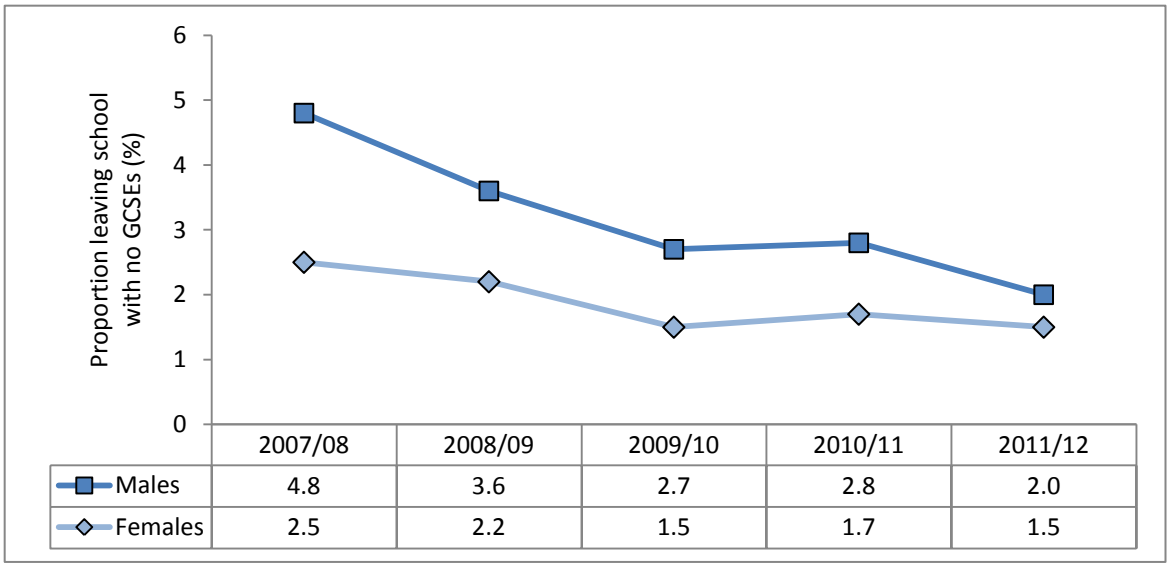
Figure 3.3: Proportion attaining GCSE and A Level targets by gender, 2011/12



- **No GCSEs**

  In 2011/12 females were less likely to leave schools with no GCSEs (1.5%) than males (2.0%) (see Figure 3.3). The percentage of pupils who left school with no GCSEs decreased for both sexes between 2007/08 and 2011/12 – for males, the proportion reduced from 4.8% to 2.0%, and for females the proportion reduced from 2.5% to 1.5%, indicating a narrowing of the gender gap in the proportion of males and females leaving school with no GCSEs (see Figure 3.4; Technical Table 3.7).

Figure 3.4: Proportion leaving school with no GCSEs by gender, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Males	4.8	3.6	2.7	2.8	2.0
Females	2.5	2.2	1.5	1.7	1.5

- **A Level**

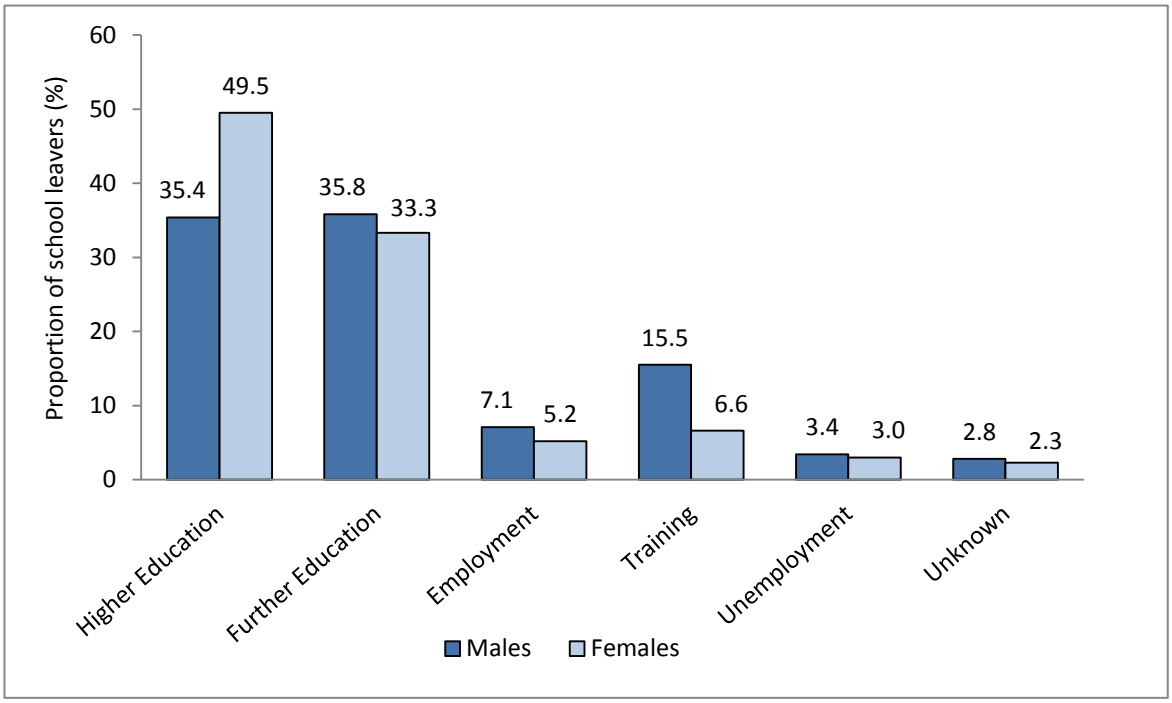
  In 2011/12, 64.0% of females achieved 2+ A Levels at A*-E compared to 47.4% of males (see Figure 3.3). The percentage of pupils who achieved 2+ A Levels at A*-E increased by nearly 10 percentage points for both sexes between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (see Technical Table 3.7). However there was a persistent attainment gap of more than 15 percentage points between males and females. Male attainment proportions have increased from 37.7% in 2007/08 to 47.4% in 2011/12, while female attainment proportion increased from 55.2% in 2007/08 to 64.0% in 2011/12 (see Technical Table 3.7).

<u>Destinations:</u>

- **Higher education**

  Females were more likely to enter higher education on leaving school than males. For males, the proportion entering higher education in 2011/12 was 35.4%; for females, the proportion was much higher, at 49.5% (see Figure 3.5). For both sexes, there were no notable changes in the proportions of school leavers entering higher education since 2007/08; however, there was a considerable gender gap in the proportions for each year, of approximately 12-14 percentage points in favour of females (see Technical Table 3.8).

Figure 3.5: Proportion of school leavers' destinations by gender 2011/12



- **Further education**

  About a third of school leavers, of both genders, entered further education in 2011/12, following a slight increase since 2007/08. There were no notable differences between males and females (see Technical Table 3.8).

- **All other destinations**

  In 2011/12, males were more likely to enter employment (7.1%) and training[106] (15.5%) after school than females (5.2% and 6.6% respectively, see Figure 3.5); this gender gap was persistent between 2007/08 and 2011/12 for both those entering employment (approximately 2 percentage points) and those entering job training (approximately 9 percentage points) (see Technical Table 3.8). Overall, employment and training proportions for both sexes have decreased between 2007/08 and 2011/12 – in regard to employment, the proportion for males decreased from 11.5% in 2007/08 to 7.1% in 2011/12, and for females the proportion also decreased from 9.0% to 5.2% (see Technical Table 3.8). With respect to job training, the proportion for males decreased from 20.8% in 2007/08 to 15.5% in 2011/12, and for females the proportion decreased from 8.8% to 6.6% (see Technical Table 3.8).

[106] Numbers entering training include those entering the Training for Success programme, operated by the Department for Employment and Learning. Training on Training for Success is delivered by a range of training providers, including Further Education Colleges. Training for Success trainees who receive training at Further Education Colleges are recorded as being in training and not in Further Education. This convention avoids double counting of Training for Success trainees.

Further Education (Source: DEL)

This section will explore data related to those courses which result in a qualification – accredited courses and Essential Skills courses – and those which do not lead to a qualification – non-accredited courses.

Accredited (Professional and Technical) Courses[107] – Access, Progression and Attainment:

Since 2007/08, the female share of enrolments has been consistently greater than that of male enrolments on accredited (professional and technical) courses in further education. However, this gap has decreased from 14.6 percentage points in 2007/08 to 10.6 percentage points in 2011/12. In 2011/12, 55.3% of enrolees were female; 44.7% were male (see Technical Table 3.9).

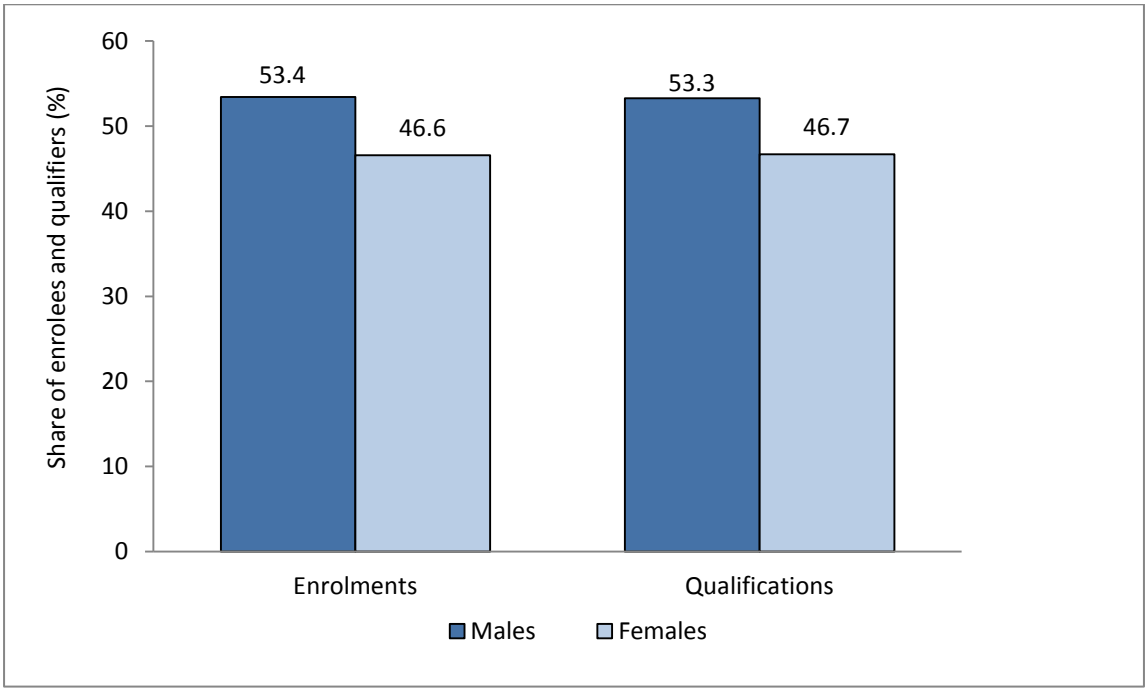
When final year students in 2011/12 were considered, the shares of males and females with regard to retention and achievement were very similar to that for enrolments (see Technical Table 3.10), with females making up the majority of final year enrolees, completers and qualifiers. However, when the proportions within the gender group are considered, males are slightly more likely to complete their final year[108] (92.0% in 2011/12) than females (91.0% in 2011/12). Furthermore, the achievement proportion[109] for males and females was very similar (84.7% and 85.3% respectively in 2011/12) (see Technical Table 3.10).

Essential Skills – Access and Attainment:

In 2011/12, the male shares of enrolees (53.4%) and qualifiers (53.3%) from Essential Skills courses was greater than the females share of enrolees (46.6%) and qualifiers (46.7%) (see Figure 3.7). Consistently over the five-year period between 2007/08 and 2011/12, over half of all enrolees and qualifiers on Essential Skills courses were male (see Technical Table 3.11).

[107] Includes a range of assessed full-time and part-time education and training options from entry level to postgraduate level.
[108] Retention proportion (%) = final year completers / final year enrolees (where final year completers are defined as final year enrolments which do not have a student status of withdrawn or transferred.)
[109] Achievement proportion (%) = final year achievers / final year completer (where achievement is defined as full and partial achievements within outcome for those classed as final year completers.)

Figure 3.7: Share of enrolees and qualifiers from Essential Skills courses by gender, 2011/12



<u>Non-accredited (Non-professional and Technical) Courses:</u>

Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the female share of enrolments on non-accredited courses was consistently greater than the male share; the gap at both time points was 31.4 percentages points in favour of females (see Technical Table 3.9). In 2011/12, 65.7% of enrolees were female; 34.3% were male.

Training, Apprenticeships, and Employment Programmes (Source: DEL)

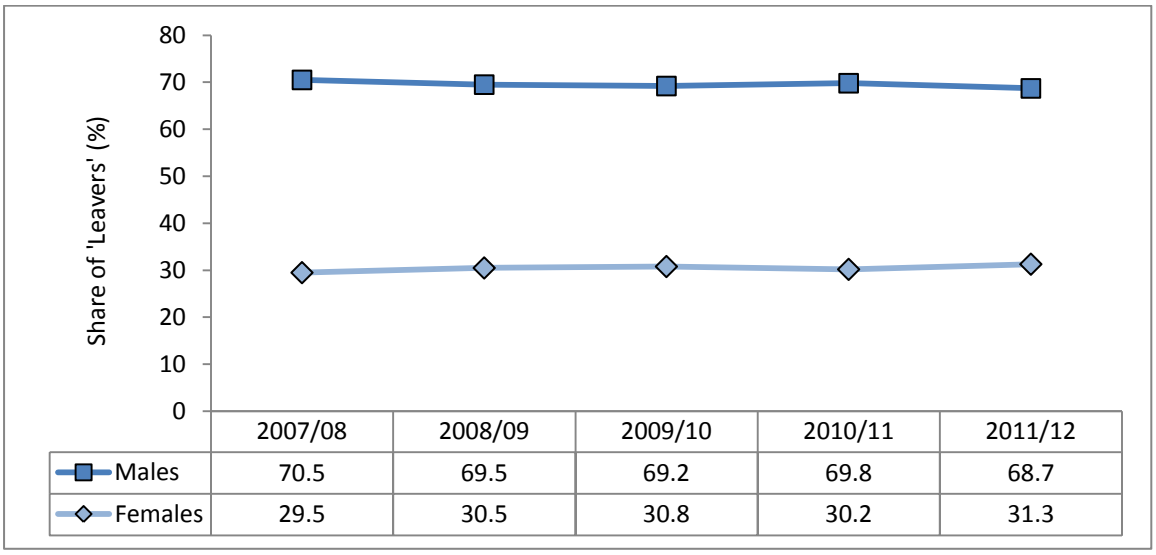
'Training for Success'[110] is designed for young people aged 16 - 17 (up to 24 years for those who qualify under extended eligibility[111]) and provides training to give them the tools and skills they need to get a job. It is designed to enable learners to progress to higher level training, further education, or employment by providing training to address personal and social development needs, develop occupational skills, employability skills and, where necessary, Essential Skills training. 'ApprenticeshipsNI'[112] provides the opportunity for students to participate in a Level 2 or Level 3 apprenticeship. There is no upper age limit for participation in the programme, however all participants must be in employment from day one. The 'Steps to Work'[113] programme supports participants to find work through a combination of one to one guidance and support from an advisor and access to training courses, qualifications provision, and work experience.

Training for Success Programme – Access and Progression:

Males consistently outnumbered females by a ratio of approximately two to one as 'Starts' and 'Leavers' on the Training for Success programme from 2007/08 to 2011/12 (see Figure 3.8; Technical Table 3.12). In 2011/12, 67.0% of 'Starts'[114] on the programme were male and 33.0% were female, however, from 2010/11 the female share of 'Starts' increased slightly (see Technical Table 3.12). In terms of 'Leavers'[115] , in 2011/12, 68.7% were male and 31.3% were female. However, the female share of 'Leavers' from the programme has increased since 2007/08 (see Figure 3.8; Technical Table 3.12).

[110] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-for-you-on-training-for-success
[111] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-for-you-on-training-for-success - *'Who can take part in the Training for Success programme?'*
[112] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsni
[113] http://www.delni.gov.uk/stepstowork
[114] 'Starts' refers to participants starting a programme.
[115] 'Leavers' refers to participants that complete the programme.

Figure 3.8: Share of 'Leavers' on Training for Success by gender, 2007/08 – 2011/12

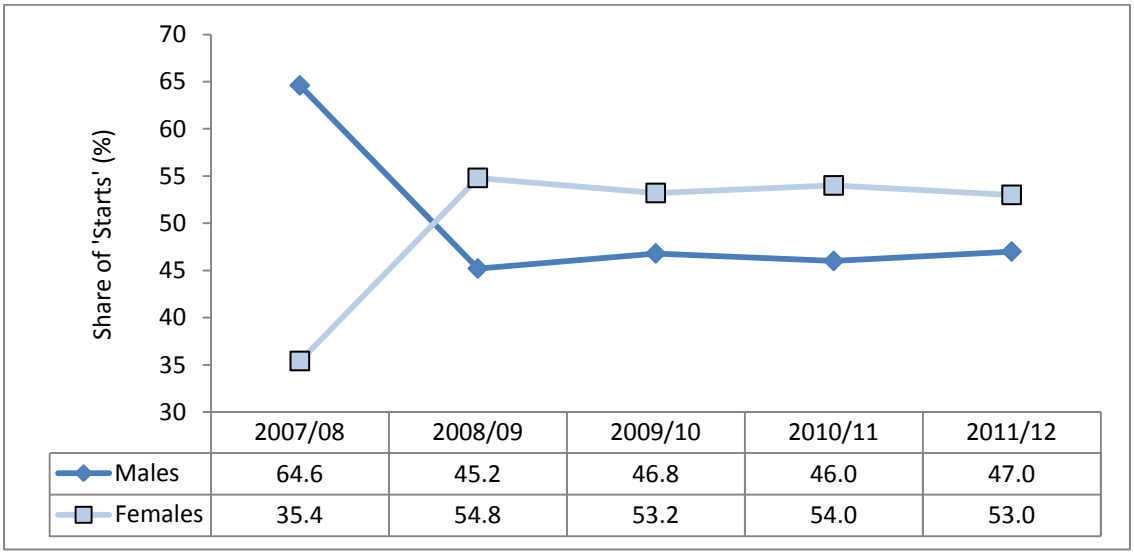


	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Males	70.5	69.5	69.2	69.8	68.7
Females	29.5	30.5	30.8	30.2	31.3

<u>ApprenticeshipsNI Programme – Access and Progression:</u>

In 2011/12 females represented a greater share of 'Starts' (53.0%) on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme than males (47.0%) (see Figure 3.9), and this proportion was slightly higher than the proportion of females (51%) to males (49%) in the Northern Ireland population[116]. Between 2007/08 and 2008/09 the female share of 'Starts' increased substantially from 35.4% to 54.8% but has remained relatively unchanged from 2008/09 to 2011/12 (see Figure 3.9). In 2011/12 the share of females 'Leavers' (51.6%) was greater than the share of males (48.4%). Between 2007/08 and 2008/09, trends for the female share of 'Leavers' reflected trends for 'Starts' (see Technical Table 3.13).

Figure 3.9: Share of 'Starts' on ApprenticeshipsNI by gender, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Males	64.6	45.2	46.8	46.0	47.0
Females	35.4	54.8	53.2	54.0	53.0

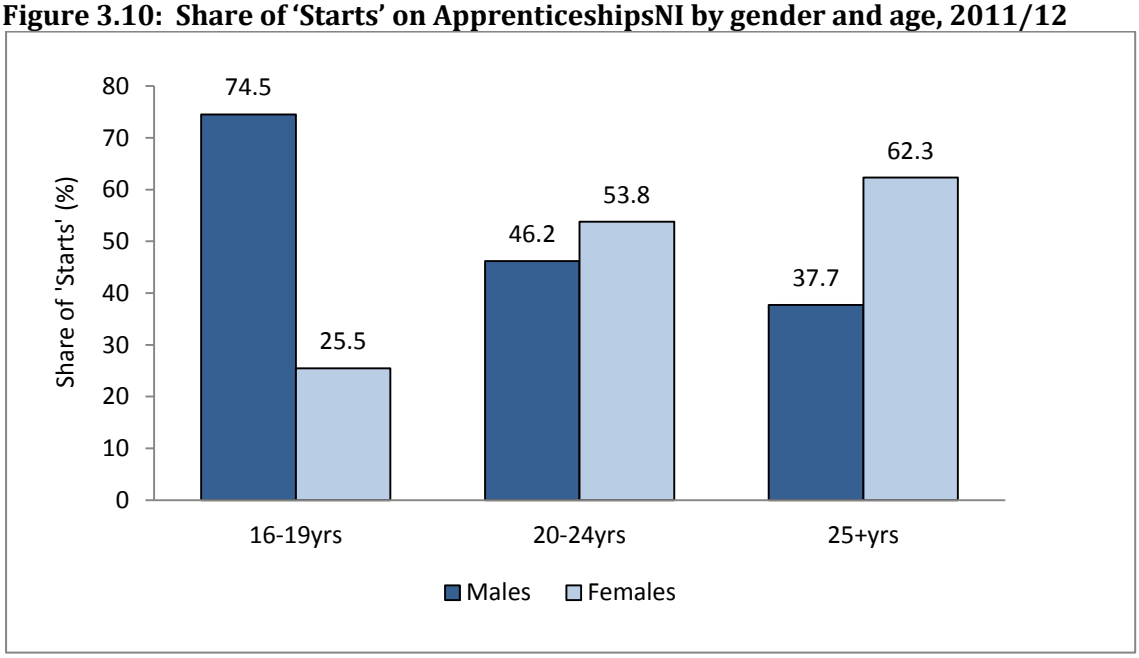
[116] Census 2011

- **Gender and age**

Further analyses showed that there were consistent and considerable gender differences within the age groups of those who 'Start', and 'Leave' the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. Males comprised almost three-quarters (74.5%) of the youngest 'Starts' of the programme (16-19 years age group) in 2011/12, whereas females comprised the majority of the 20-24 year age group 'Starts' (53.8%), and 'Starts' who were over 25 years old (62.3%) (see Figure 3.10).

Additionally, when looking at the age groups, the share of male and female 'Leavers' in 2011/12 was similar to the share of male and female 'Starts' on the programme: males comprised 73.6% of 'Leavers' in the 16-19 years age group; females comprised 53.3% of 'Leavers' in the 20-24 years age group; and females comprised 60.9% of 'Leavers' in the 25+ years age group (see Technical Table 3.14). The female share of those aged 25+ years old completing ApprenticeshipsNI has consistently decreased from 100% in 2007/08 to 60.9% in 2011/12. The female share of those aged 20-24 years old has also decreased from 2008/09 to 2011/12 for both 'Starts' and 'Leavers' (see Technical Table 3.14).

Figure 3.10: Share of 'Starts' on ApprenticeshipsNI by gender and age, 2011/12



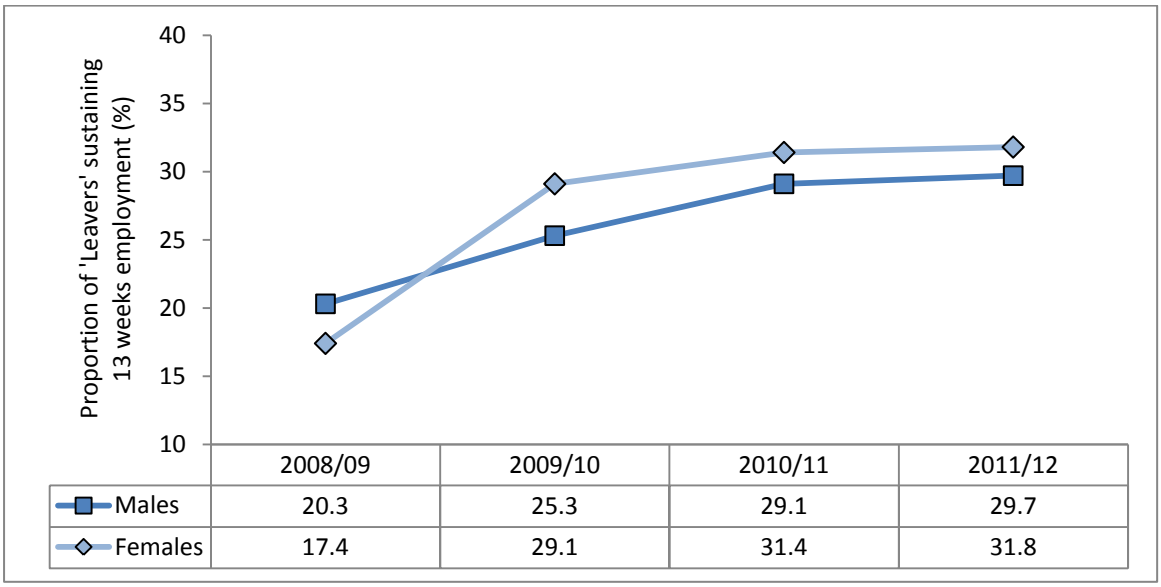
Steps to Work Programme – Access, Progression and Destinations:

DEL figures for the Steps to Work programme from the 2008/09- 2011/12 period[117] show that males represented a greater share of 'Starts' on the programme (see Technical Table 3.15). In 2011/12, just under three-quarters (71.9%) of Steps to Work 'Starts' were male.

It should be noted that only those over 18 years old who claim Jobseeker's Allowance benefit (JSA), lone parents who work less than 16 hours a week, or those who are not working and not claiming benefit are eligible to apply for the Steps to Work. Since 72% of Jobseekers Allowance claimants in November 2011 were male[118], this gender differential is not unexpected.

In 2011/12, females were slightly more likely to have moved into employment after completing the Steps to Work programme and to have sustained 13 weeks employment - this has been a consistent pattern since 2009/10 (see Figure 3.11; Technical Table 3.15).

Figure 3.11: Proportion of 'Leavers' from Steps to Work sustaining 13 weeks employment by gender, 2008/09 – 2011/12



	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Males	20.3	25.3	29.1	29.7
Females	17.4	29.1	31.4	31.8

[117] The four year period for which data were available

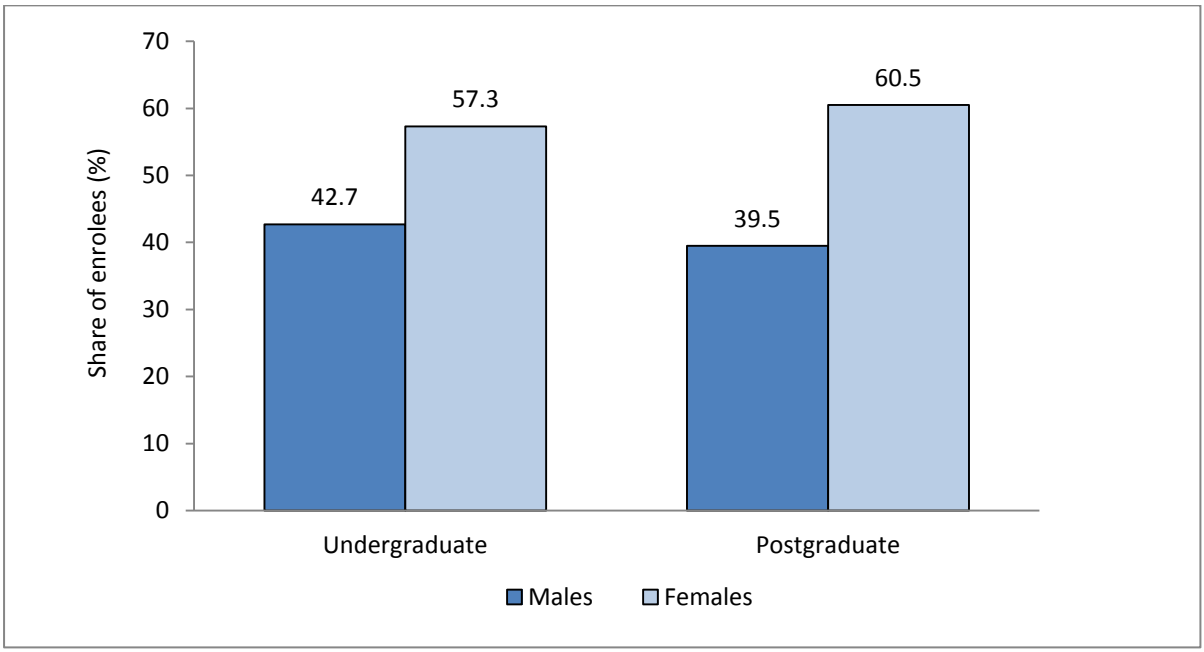
[118] Figure provided by Department for Social Development – see http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/stats_and_research/benefit_publications.htm

Higher Education (Source: DEL)

Undergraduate/Postgraduate Status – Access and Attainment:

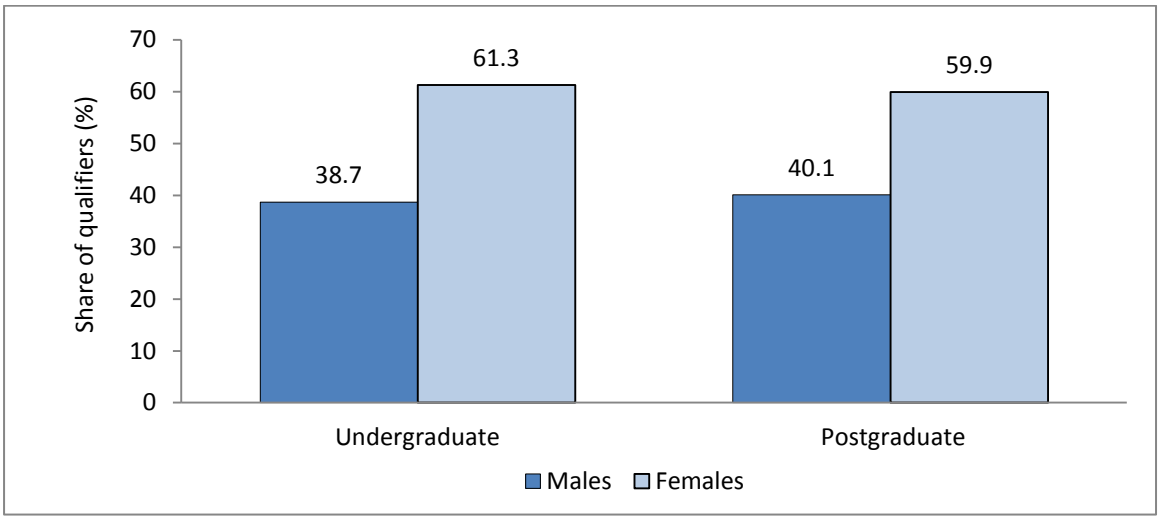
A persistent trend between the years 2007/08 and 2011/12 is that females represented a greater share of both undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments than males (by a ratio of approximately three to two) at university. In 2011/12, 57.3% of undergraduate enrolees were female and 42.7% were male; 60.5% of postgraduate enrolees were female and 39.5% were male (see Figure 3.12). The share of male undergraduate enrolments has increased slightly from 39.4% in 2007/08, while the share of male and female postgraduate enrolments has remained relatively unchanged (see Technical Table 3.16).

Figure 3.12: Share of undergraduate and postgraduate enrolees by gender, 2011/12



This gender gap was also apparent when analysing data for students who received undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications. In 2011/12, 61.3% of all undergraduate qualifications were awarded to females and 38.7% were awarded to males, while 59.9% of all postgraduate qualifications were awarded to females and 40.1% were awarded to males (see Figure 3.13). Since 2007/08, the share of males qualifying from undergraduate courses has increased slightly by over 3 percentage points. The share of males qualifying from postgraduate courses has fluctuated, however there has been relatively little overall change between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (see Technical Table 3.16).

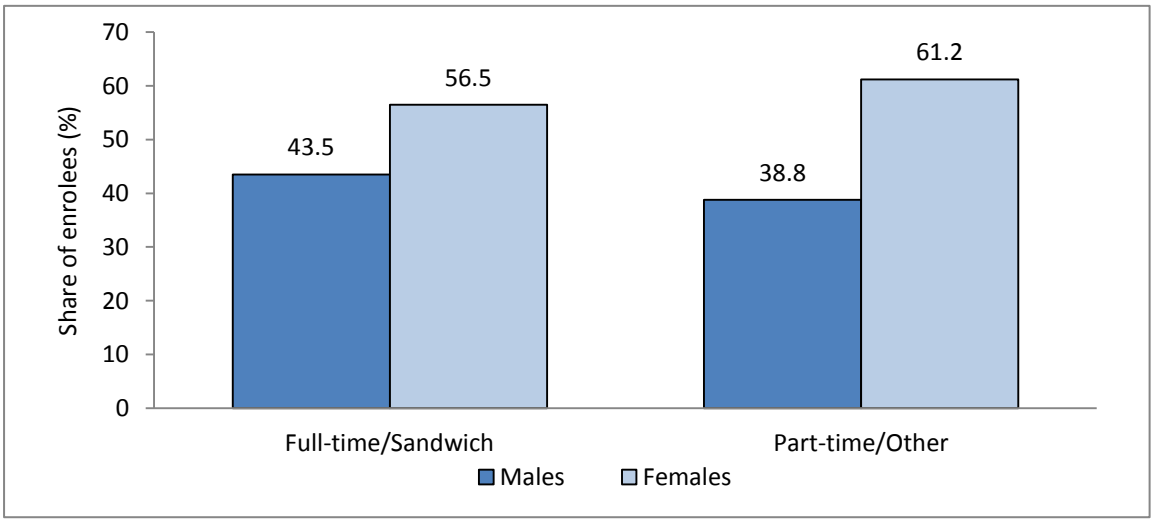
Figure 3.13: Share of undergraduate and postgraduate qualifiers by gender, 2011/12



<u>Full-time/Part-time Status – Access and Attainment:</u>

The majority of 'part-time/other'[119] students and 'full-time/sandwich'[120] enrolments at university were female over the period 2007/08 to 2011/12. In 2011/12, 61.2% of 'part-time/other' enrolees were female and 38.8% were male; 56.5% of 'full-time/sandwich' enrolees were female and 43.5% were male (see Figure 3.14). The shares of male enrolees have increased slightly since 2007/08, from 40.8% for 'full-time/sandwich' courses, and from 35.9% for 'part-time/other' courses (see Technical Table 3.17).

Figure 3.14: Share of full-time and part-time enrolees by gender, 2011/12



[119] *Part-time* students are those recorded as studying part-time, or studying full-time on courses lasting less than 24 weeks, on block release, or studying during the evenings only.

[120] *Full-time* students are those normally required to attend an Institution for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the year of study, on thick or thin sandwich courses, and those on a study-related year out of their institution. During that time students are normally expected to undertake periods of study, tuition or work experience which amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week.

The gender gap is reflected in the qualifications awarded to part- or full-time students: in 2011/12, 64.5% of all part-time qualifications were awarded to females and 35.5% were awarded to males; in the same year, 59.3% of all full-time qualifications were awarded to females and 39.9% were awarded to males (see Technical Table 3.17). The share of male and female qualifiers has fluctuated over the period 2007/08 to 2011/12, however, the share of male qualifiers from part-time courses has increased slightly overall from 32.6% in 2007/08.

Subject Choice – Access and Attainment:

Consistently over the five year period from 2007/08 to 2011/12, females represented a greater share of enrolments and qualifiers in all areas of higher education study except 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology' subjects (see Table 3.2). Overall, the male share of enrolments in all subject areas increased slightly over the five year period analysed from 2007/08 to 2011/12, representing a narrowing of the gender gap (Technical Tables 3.18 and 3.19).

Females consistently represented a much greater share of enrolments in the STEM[121] area of 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine' than males over the five year period from 2007/08 to 2011/12 (see Table 3.2). In 2011/12, 79.0% of all enrolees in the STEM subject area of 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine' were female; 21.0% were male (see Table 3.2).

The gender gap in the subject area of 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine' was even greater in terms of the share of female (81.8%) and male (18.2%) qualifiers from these subjects in the 2011/12 year. Between 2007/08 and 2011/12 the share of male enrolees and qualifiers increased from 18.6% and 14.3% in 2007/08 respectively, representing a slight narrowing of the gender gap (see Technical Tables 3.18 and 3.19).

Males consistently represented a greater share of enrolees than females in the STEM subjects of 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology'; this gender gap has widened since 2007/08. In 2007/08, just under three-quarters of enrolees on these subjects were male (74.6%, compared to 25.4% female), but by 2011/12, more than three-quarters of enrolees were male (77.3%, compared to 22.7% female) (see Technical Table 3.18).

The gender gap was slightly smaller in terms of qualifiers from 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology' in 2011/12, with 75.3% of all qualifiers male and 24.7% female (see Technical Table 3.19).

[121] STEM is an acronym of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. According to the Department of Employment and Learning, STEM related qualifications include qualifications in the following subject areas: STEM related qualifications include qualifications in the following subject areas; Medicine & Dentistry, Subjects allied to Medicine, Biological Sciences, Veterinary Sciences, Agriculture & related subjects, Physical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science, Engineering & Technology and Architecture, Building & Planning. See http://www.delni.gov.uk/2857p_stem_booklet_v5.pdf.

Table 3.2: Share of subject enrolments and qualifiers in higher education by gender, 2007/08 – 2011/12

			Medicine, Dentistry & Subjects Allied to Medicine	Biological, Veterinary, Agricultural & Physical Sciences	Maths, IT, Engineering & Technology	Social Studies & Law	Business, Administration, Mass Communication & Documentation	Other Disciplines
Enrolments	**Year**		**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
	2007/08	**Males**	18.6	38.0	74.6	34.0	40.5	42.0
		Females	81.4	62.0	25.4	66.0	59.5	58.0
	2011/12	**Males**	21.0	41.5	77.3	36.7	45.1	41.8
		Females	79.0	58.5	22.7	63.3	54.9	58.2
Qualifiers	**Year**		**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
	2007/08	**Males**	14.3	39.4	76.0	31.8	38.2	41.9
		Females	85.7	60.6	24.0	68.2	61.8	58.1
	2011/12	**Males**	18.2	38.4	75.3	32.5	43.8	41.3
		Females	81.8	61.6	24.7	67.5	56.2	58.7

Higher Education – Progression:

Consistently throughout the period 2007/08 – 2011/12, females and males made up approximately 50% each of those who did not continue with their course, with a variance of less than 5 percentage points. There was no trend in terms of increasing or decreasing shares between the genders (see Technical Table 3.20).

Higher Education Leavers – Destinations:

Table 3.3 shows that in 2010/11[122], a slightly greater proportion of female than male leavers from higher education entered full-time work (51.9% vs. 50.5%) and part-time work (17.6% vs. 12.7%) (see Technical Table 3.21). Male leavers were more likely than females to go on to do further study only (13.3% vs. 9.6%) or were more likely to be assumed to be unemployed (10.1% vs. 7.0%) (see Table 3.3).

Between 2007/08 and 2010/11, the proportion of males continuing on to further study only increased from 11.2% in 2007/08 to 13.3% in 2010/11 (see Table 3.3; Technical Table 3.21). There were no further notable differential trends for males and females. However, while the proportions of both male and female leavers entering full-time work decreased, the proportions of both male and female leavers entering part-time work, and work and further study, increased between 2007/08 and 2010/11 (see Table 3.3; Technical Table 3.21).

There was a steady increase from 2007/08 to 2010/11 in the proportion of females that were assumed to be unemployed after further study. The proportion of females assumed to be unemployed increased by 2.2 percentage points over the time period (which represents a 46.8% increase in raw numbers), whereas the proportion of males assumed to be unemployed only increased by 1.3 percentage points from 2007/08 to 2010/11 (which represents a small 10.9% increase in raw numbers).

[122] The most recent period for which data was available.

Table 3.3: Proportion of leavers' destinations by gender, 2007/08 and 2010/11

		Full-time paid work only		Part-time paid work only		Work and further study		Further study only		Assumed to be unemployed		Not available for employment	
Year		***N***	**%**	***N***	**%**	***N***	**%**	***N***	**%**	***N***	**%**	***N***	**%**
2007/08	**Males**	1,900	61.0	245	7.9	195	6.3	350	11.2	275	8.8	120	3.8
	Females	2,990	60.1	650	13.0	360	7.3	505	10.1	235	4.8	170	3.4
	Total	**4,890**		**895**		**555**		**855**		**510**		**290**	
2010/11	**Males**	1,540	50.5	390	12.7	280	9.2	405	13.3	305	10.1	90	2.9
	Females	2,570	51.9	870	17.6	455	9.2	475	9.6	345	7.0	165	3.3
	Total	**4,110**		**1,260**		**735**		**880**		**655**		**255**	

Overall Population (Source: Census)

Highest Qualification Attainment:

Census 2011 data revealed that females from 16-74 years old were slightly more likely than males to have a qualification. However, the new categories of 'apprenticeships' and 'other qualifications' listed in 2011 revealed that males were much more likely than females to have an apprenticeship as their highest qualification. The proportion of people who had no qualifications reduced considerably between 2001 and 2011 (see Table 3.4), but the decrease was greater for males (15.2 percentage points) than females (10.0 percentage points). The proportion of both males and females who had lower level qualifications decreased slightly. There was also an increase for both genders in regard to the proportion that had higher level qualifications, but the increase was larger for females (10.4 percentage points) than males (5.1 percentage points).

Table 3.4: Highest qualification proportions by gender in the Northern Ireland population

	Census 2001 (age 16-74)		Census 2011 (age 16 and over)	
	Males	**Females**	**Males**	**Females**
No qualifications	43.9%	39.5%	28.7%	29.5%
Lower level qualifications*	39.6%	45.3%	36.8%	40.5%
Higher level qualifications**	16.4%	15.2%	21.5%	25.6%
Level 1	17.2%	17.2%	11.5%	11.5%
Level 2	14.2%	18.4%	13.1%	16.6%
Level 3	8.2%	9.7%	12.2%	12.4%
Level 4-5	16.4%	15.2%	21.5%	25.6%
Apprenticeships	-	-	8.1%	0.6%
Other qualifications	-	-	4.7%	3.8%

*Lower qualifications include Levels 1-3

**Higher level qualifications include Levels 4-5

Gender X School Type

As outlined in Chapter 2, post-primary schools in Northern Ireland are divided into grammar and non-grammar school types. Furthermore, prior research has found that children who are entitled to free school meals (FSM) with the same Key Stage 2 scores as children from more affluent families are far less likely to be selected for grammar schools.[123] The next section will therefore consider education inequalities by gender and the type of school that pupils attend.

Post-primary Level (Source: DENI)

Attainment:

- **Key Stage 3**

  Tables 3.5 and 3.6 reveal that while gender has some influence on a child's attainment in Key Stage 3 assessments, the type of school that they attend is a very strong predictor of attainment. Overall, in 2011/12 males and females from grammar schools had higher attainment at Key Stage 3 than males and females from non-grammar schools. In 2011/12 the difference between the proportion of males from non-grammar schools and males from grammar schools achieving Key Stage 3 Level 5 or above was 39.1 percentage points for English and 36.8 percentage points for Maths, both in favour of grammar schools. The difference between females from non-grammar school and females from grammar schools achieving Key Stage 3 Level 5 or above was 23.8 percentage points for English and 31.6 percentage points for Maths, both in favour of grammar schools (see Tables 3.5 and 3.6; Technical Table 3.22).

  In addition, females in grammar schools and non-grammar schools were more likely to achieve Level 5 or above in Key Stage 3 Maths and English than their male counterparts from grammar and non-grammar schools (see Tables 3.5 and 3.6; Technical Table 3.22). However, the gender gap in attainment at Key Stage 3 Maths and English was greater between males and females in non-grammar schools (16.3 percentage points for English; 6.3 percentage points for Maths) compared to males and females in grammar schools (1.0 percentage points for English; 1.1 percentage points for Maths). In 2011/12, females in

[123] See Atkinson A., Gregg, P. and McConnell, B. (2006). *The Result of 11+ Selection: An Investigation into Opportunities and Outcomes for Pupils in Selective LEAs*, CMPO Working Paper No. 06/150. Bristol: Centre for Market and Public Organisation, University of Bristol.

grammar schools were the most likely to achieve Level 5 or above in Key Stage 3 Maths (99.3%) and English (99.6%), whilst males from non-grammar schools were least likely to achieve Level 5 or above in Key Stage 3 Maths (61.4%) and English (59.5%).

These differentials in attainment have been consistent between 2007/08 and 2011/12. The attainment proportions for Maths for males and females in non-grammar schools increased by over 5 percentage points between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (see Table 3.6; Technical Table 3.22). However, there have been no notable trends in attainment at Key Stage 3 English between 2007/08 and 2011/12.

Table 3.5: Proportion attaining Level 5 or above in Key Stage 3 English by gender and school type, 2007/08 and 2011/12

Gender	School Type	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Males	Non-grammar (%)	56.7	57.3	57.9	57.9	59.5
	Grammar (%)	99.6	98.7	99.2	98.8	98.6
Females	Non-grammar (%)	77.4	75.8	76.7	77.4	75.8
	Grammar (%)	100.0	99.7	100.0	100.0	99.6

Table 3.6: Proportion attaining Level 5 or above in Key Stage 3 Maths by gender and school type, 2007/08 and 2011/12

Gender	School Type	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Males	Non-grammar (%)	55.6	60.6	60.1	60.6	61.4
	Grammar (%)	99.7	99.3	99.3	99.4	98.2
Females	Non-grammar (%)	62.3	66.9	65.3	68.3	67.7
	Grammar (%)	99.7	99.0	99.7	99.7	99.3

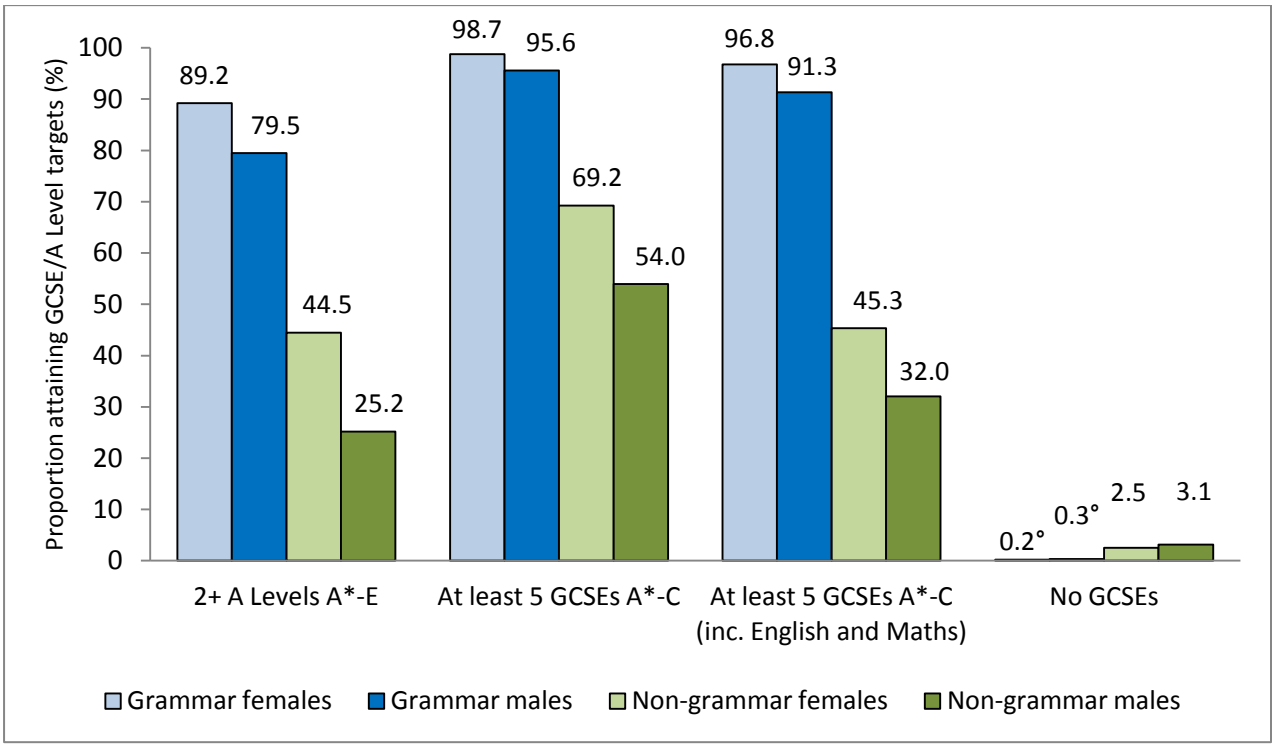
- **GCSE and A Level**

  Overall, in 2011/12, students from grammar schools had higher attainment at A Level and GCSE level than those from non-grammar schools. In addition, females in grammar schools and non-grammar schools had higher levels of attainment at GCSE and A Level than their male counterparts. In 2011/12, females from grammar schools had the highest attainment at A Level and GCSE level, while males from non-grammar schools had the lowest attainment (see Figure 3.15; Technical Table 3.23).

- **GCSE level**

  At GCSE level a greater proportion of females at grammar school achieved 5+ GCSEs at A*-C (98.7% in 2011/12) than any other group, (males at grammar school, 95.6%; females at non-grammar school, 69.2%; males at non-grammar school, 54.0%). Females at grammar school were also the most likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs including Maths and English (96.8% in 2011/12) than all other groups (males at grammar school, 91.3%; females at non-grammar school, 45.3%; and, males at non-grammar school, 32.0%). Throughout the time period, males at non-grammar school were more likely to leave school with no GCSEs (3.1% in 2011/12), than any other group (females at non-grammar school, 2.5%; males at grammar school, 0.3%; females at grammar school, 0.2%, who were least likely to leave school with no GCSEs) (see Figure 3.15; Technical Table 3.23).

Figure 3.15: Proportion attaining GCSE/A Level targets by gender and school type, 2011/12



° Note that the number is less than 40

- **A Level**

  In 2011/12, females leaving grammar schools were the most likely to achieve 2+ A Levels at A*-E (89.2%), followed by: males at grammar school (79.5%); females at non-grammar school (44.5%); and males at non-grammar school (25.2%) (see Figure 3.15; Technical Table 3.23).

There has been an overall positive trend for both males and females attending non-grammar schools between 2007/08 and 2011/12 – proportions of attainment of 2+ A Levels, 5+ GCSEs at A*-C, or 5+ GCSEs at A*-C including Maths and English increased, and proportions of school leavers (male or female) leaving non-grammar schools without any GCSEs decreased. All proportions of attainment for males and females who attended grammar schools remained similar over the five year period (see Technical Table 3.23).

Destinations:

The destinations of male and female school leavers by the school type they attended were analysed for the years 2007/08 to 2011/12.

- **Higher education**
  In 2011/12, females at grammar school were the most likely enter higher education (79.0%), followed by: males at grammar school (66.1%); females at non-grammar school (26.6%); and males at non-grammar school (14.1%). Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the proportions of males and females from non-grammar schools entering higher education increased from 23.8% in 2007/08 for non-grammar females and 10.9% for non-grammar males (see Table 3.7, Technical Table 3.24).

- **Further education**
  In 2011/12, females at non-grammar school were more likely to go to further education after leaving school (47.5%), followed by: males at non-grammar school (44.6%); males at grammar school (23.1%); and females at grammar school (15.1%). The proportions of both males and females from any school type entering further education increased between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (see Table 3.7, Technical Table 3.24).

- **Employment**
  In 2011/12 males at non-grammar school were more likely to enter employment (8.7%) than any other group (females at non-grammar school, 7.1%; males at grammar school, 4.8%; and, females at grammar school, 2.9%). The proportions of all groups entering employment in 2011/12 were much reduced from the proportions that entered employment in 2007/08, but particularly so for males (from 14.6% in 2007/08 to 8.7% in 2011/12) and females (from 12.4% in 2007/08 to 7.1% in 2011/12) in non-grammar schools (see Table 3.7, Technical Table 3.24).

- **Training**

  In 2011/12, males at non-grammar school were the most likely to enter job training (24.5%), followed by: females at non-grammar school (11.4%); males at grammar school (2.6%); and, females at grammar school (0.5%). The proportion of non-grammar school leavers entering training decreased over the five year period from 2007/08 and 2011/12, particularly for males where the proportion of those entering training decreased from 31.1% in 2007/08 to 24.5% in 2011/12. This decline in training may be the result of increases in the proportion of males from non-grammar schools entering further and higher education during the same time period. (see Table 3.7, Technical Table 3.24).

- **Unemployment**

  In 2011/12, males and females at non-grammar school had similar proportions entering unemployment after school (4.5% and 4.3% respectively), followed by: males at grammar school (1.8%); and females at grammar school (1.3%). Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the proportion of both males and females from non-grammar schools entering unemployment decreased by 1 percentage point, but the proportion of both males and females from grammar schools entering unemployment has increased by approximately 1 percentage point (see Table 3.7, Technical Table 3.24).

Table 3.7: School Leavers' destinations by gender and school type, 2007/08 and 2011/12

	Grammar				Non-Grammar			
	Females (%)		Males (%)		Females (%)		Males (%)	
	2007/08	*2011/12*	*2007/08*	*2011/12*	*2007/08*	*2011/12*	*2007/08*	*2011/12*
Higher Education	81.2	79.0	68.1	66.1	23.8	26.6	10.9	14.1
Further Education	13.0	15.1	19.3	23.1	41.5	47.5	35.3	44.6
Employment	3.9	2.9	6.4	4.8	12.4	7.1	14.6	8.7
Training	0.3°	0.5°	3.9	2.6	14.6	11.4	31.1	24.5
Unemployment	0.7°	1.3	0.8	1.8	5.1	4.3	5.4	4.5

° Note that the number is less than 40

The next section of this chapter will present the findings from the qualitative element of the research (focus groups, interviews, and a stakeholder engagement event), in order to thematically illustrate the barriers and enablers that stakeholders identified for gender.

Findings from Qualitative Data

Stakeholders representing different groups from the gender equality ground were involved in an expert seminar to discuss the preliminary findings of the research and identify barriers and enablers to educational equality on the grounds of gender.

Gender-related barriers to education equality

1. Access to mainstream education for males with SEN

Stakeholders raised questions about why males are so over-represented in special school enrolments in Northern Ireland.

2. Barriers to male attainment – school curriculum and school structures

Potential explanations for the lower attainment proportions of males included: a 'one-size fits all' curriculum which is not engaging males to the same extent that it engages females; the prevalence of traditional teaching methods, which leads to a high degree of inflexibility in how the curriculum is delivered; the lack of male role models in schools; the prevalence of single gender schools at the post-primary level; and the de-centralisation of schools – schools are fairly independent in Northern Ireland, but in countries where there is more central control from governmental departments of education there is more equality.

3. Caring and adult education

A representative from a carer's support organisation reported on a particular barrier for older women from entering adult education. 'Sandwich' carers are women in their fifties who are caring for one or two elderly parents as well as their children –they may never have had a chance to go back to education as they have always had to help out at home.

Education Inequalities for Transgender People

No quantitative data is currently available on transgender people as transgender is not monitored as a category in schools or further/higher education establishments.

The next section of this chapter will present the findings from the qualitative element of the research (focus groups, interviews, and a stakeholder engagement event), in order to thematically illustrate the barriers and enablers that stakeholders identified for transgender people.

Findings from Qualitative Data

Stakeholders from further and higher education colleges and representatives of the transgender community also outlined several particular barriers that gender variant children or transgender people experience in their educational journeys:

At primary school and post-primary school:

1. Gender Stereotyping

Parents of gender variant children reported that the gender binary and gender stereotyping that exists in schools can make children feel like they do not belong in their school and therefore contribute to disengagement:

"In nursery school, the things you need to look at are the dress up boxes, where if a boy comes out in a princess dress, other kids will say something e.g. 'Simon dressed up as a girl today'. Even things like stickers for hanging your coat – it will be a fire engine for guys, a fairy for girls. Even practical things would help – let the young person select their own sticker."

"At primary school, that is when the whole idea is really forced home, the gendered play. The boys run off and chase each other, the girls stand and talk to each other. That is really enforced."

2. Lack of awareness and understanding of trans issues

There is also a general lack of understanding in educational institutions of what transgender issues are and what they can mean for different people, which can mean that sensitive issues are not dealt with properly:

"It's often viewed as 'just part of their development – they'll grow out of it'."

"Trans people do not come 'out' – they 'are'. They are individuals. They are a success if they can transition and re-enter society without anyone knowing, and get on with their lives. They are not 'sexual deviants'. There is a lack of knowledge even among medical students of the basic terminology – what it is to be transgender, a transvestite, and so on."

"There is really very little training for teachers as to how they are to foster a positive climate in schools. How to deal with those issues as they arise. Because there are some teachers who think it is 'good' for someone who presents as a boy to be reinforced in that male role, and the same for females as well. The lack of understanding there amongst male teachers is a real problem. If they can't recognise it, then they can't deal with it."

3. Lack of central guidance and policy

The decentralisation of policy in education and the lack of any central guidance for schools as to how they can provide support to gender variant children was another key barrier as it can add to the marginalisation of individual pupils:

"The likelihood is that they are going to be presented with a gender variant child, at some point. That will inform the reaction to what happens. It is reactive, and not proactive, because then, whenever it does happen, it becomes about that person – it's not about the general issue, it is very personalised on one person."

"In our experience the school will find that it's the one child that is the issue, and not the collection of bullies or whatever. It's easier to deal with 1 child than 10 or 20 bullies. We know of a lot of children who have not been availing of school, who have been out of school, who don't have access to education under the age of 16, and in one case when the child did withdraw from school, the education welfare officer wasn't even contacted. So there is no attempt to reengage the child with school."

This marginalisation can also have a direct impact on learning:

"Because there are no guidelines, it's the teacher's personal feelings and opinion on it. And if you're not lucky enough to get someone who knows or understands or is open-minded, then the child suffers. We have had cases where a teacher has not been supportive, and is insisting on using former names, the wrong pronoun, and is insistent on that. And then the child's learning starts to be affected by that because they don't want to go to school because of the distress it causes."

However, there was recognition amongst representatives and stakeholders that even supportive schools and teachers are in a difficult position when there is no guidance:

"Teachers can also be fearful. They said to me it is the lack of guidance – there may be a child presenting to them, and no matter what they feel about it, the governors and the senior management at the school don't have a policy on it, and there's no policy on it from the Board, so the teachers themselves are caught between a rock and a hard place. They don't know the positive benefits of treating the child as who they are against the trouble that they may get into for doing that. There is a lot of fear. Not just for parents, but a supportive teacher can be very fearful of what to do. The lack of guidelines is a big hole."
"The head teachers we were talking to want so much to know how to deal with these things. They wanted the Department [of Education] to tell them what is our policy supposed to look like, how do we enforce these and what training can we access."

"Teachers are also afraid of legal action, because there is no policy. They don't know what to say to young people, so they just didn't say anything at all."

One parent of a transgender young person stated that school counsellors also need more guidance in how to help and support trans young people:

"My child is seeing a counsellor now, and the counsellor will not go into anything about transgender. They want to go into past family life, daddy issues, all that, but they won't go into transgender because it's something that she's not trained in – but that's what my child needs, because I don't know. But she needs someone who has training and has experience to talk to. That's where the difficulty is."

4. Exclusion

Another major barrier to transgender people's attainment and enjoyment of school is exclusion. This was reported as taking the form of self-exclusion from certain classes or from school altogether due to feelings of not being accepted, and also taking the form of having to move schools because of bullying or a lack of support and inflexible school rules:

"What you find then is that the children exclude themselves from things that other children take for granted. You'll find that many gender variant children don't do PE. And then there's all the facts about mental health and wellbeing being related to exercise. Then you also have the issue of school trips, and overnights. A gender variant child will tend not to go on the school trip."

"The girls always excluded {name} – she was always with the boys. If only I'd known, or if only a teacher had have known, then the child could have been helped from P6. Instead, I had to move her schools. Things like that – it would have been so much easier."

"I would say most of the children whose parents have contacted us, they have had to move school. I can't think of too many examples where the child has stayed at the same school."

"When my child is at PE, she is left standing in the corridor for an hour. {Name} won't even go to RE now, so that's another class she's skipped. It is compulsory, but she hangs about in the corridors for half an hour. And nobody will notice either – that's the thing – nobody notices. She texts me during the day – 'I'm standing here'. There's an issue there that the school aren't providing an alternative to that – some study time or something."

It was reported that gender variant young people will often wait until they can leave school to start their transition – no matter how unhappy this makes them and how much stress this adds to their lives - just to try to get through school without being bullied or excluded:

"Often a parent will make a decision – the child will just go to school as this other gender – for the sake of not being bullied, just to not rock the boat; just to get them through their GCSEs or A Levels or whatever, and get them out the other side. Then what you'll find is, they'll go to a Tech, and then they'll change."

"{Name of child} has Facebook, and she put on it gender: male, and I said, please, don't add anybody on Facebook from where we live, because I know what people are like. And that is why I won't let her transition while at school – there is no way on this earth I would. No way. It would make her life a living hell."

"It's a very difficult decision to make as a person, and you don't want your child's head to be used as the wrecking ball to break down the wall. Your love for your child against what is right. But…usually kids are alright. Usually the kids aren't too bad. I mean, not always, but the reaction by other children isn't as bad as people think. In our experience it tends to be fear of the teachers that is guiding things."

"We can tinker around with toilets, badges and all that, but this is fundamentally what we are talking about. You cannot transition in school. The timing is not right, and society is not right. Until

we change that, forget about your toilets, your changing rooms. You cannot transition in school – you must move your child. Never mind your teachers – you can have very supportive teachers, but when another child goes home and tells their parent, and then that is spread around the area, your child can never be the man or woman that they want to be."

5. Inflexibility in school rules

Strict school rules (along with a lack of central guidance on dealing with transgender issues) can place further hurdles in front of gender variant young people such as social exclusion and school exclusion:

"If you are dealing with this as a person on your own – there are so many rules about what classes you take, what uniform you wear, where you get changed, what toilets you use – it is a minefield. It is one person trying to pick their way through a minefield that at any moment could go horrendously wrong."

"My child is in an all-girls school, rocking about in a pair of trousers, looking totally like a boy, but I haven't told the principal of that school because I know the principal is really, really religious, and that's why I'm scared – I know through my experience of telling a lot of people , depending on what church they go to or what chapel they go to, what their opinion is – 'oh, that's a choice' – 'she has just decided to do this' – or 'she has just been born this way' – I am scared that if I say, my child is a boy, they will say 'well, this is a girls school – get her out.'"

Parents also reported that both they and schools were afraid of the media attention that could be placed on a child who has transitioned while at school:

"The school think, if this gets out, it's going to affect us – the press will be camped outside the school, and like the case of Lucy Meadows in England, although that was a teacher transitioning. Last week there was a case on the front page of the Sun – they gave the child's name, the name of the sibling, the town, the school – everything was named in the Sun article. And I think the child was 6 or 7. So I mean, there are so many issues with that. Even if the child chooses not to transition, that has happened – and also to the sibling. And if they do transition, their right to a private life is gone. So there is fear. And I guess that's why many parents decide not to transition their child while at school. Because if there is an unsupportive parent or teacher within the school environment who may run off to the press, then your right to live a private life is gone."

At the post-compulsory level/third level education:

1. Enrolment processes

If identification is required to enrol on a particular course, this can pose a barrier for people who are in the process of transitioning and have not yet received identification that states their new gender.

2. Moving away from home

Some parents reported that their children were very keen to move away after compulsory education, because of the 'fresh start' they hoped this would give them:

"That's all she would talk about, is getting away from everything that is her life now. She's talking about living in America, and she just wants to escape everything that is to do with her life now. Where nobody knows her as a girl. She was looking at London to go to college."

"The young people I work with do have aspirations of going away – forget this old life and move into a new life, but a lot of them aren't talking about London or America – they are talking about a lot more secluded towns and cities to move to, where they don't have the whole hustle and bustle."
"It's leaving your support structure. Leaving your parents who are usually the bedrock for any young person."

3. University facilities

Universities and colleges may have single-gender halls of residence or inadequate facilities which can place barriers on those who have plans to go on to further study:

"Quite a few do go away, but again, we have one comment from a young trans person who did go away, and they were in female halls, and found that experience very negative. So on the one hand you want to go and start afresh and that, but it can be a very negative experience as well. That person ended up leaving after two weeks and coming home. But then it's about questions around passing, you know. It depends on the college or uni, and whether they have the right facilities or whatever. Again it's the luck of the draw – you can go away and have a really positive experience, or have a horrendous one."

One representative discussed the finding from Whittle et al's[124] research, that transgender people have higher rates of entry to third level education than the general population. A reason given to explain this trend is that the university setting offers a more safe space than other options post-compulsory schooling – it was stated that employers often find reasons for sacking transgender people.

Potential gender-related enablers to education equality

1. Central directives and joined-up departmental working

Representatives of the transgender community believed that schools should be required to include measures to address transphobic and homophobic bullying in their anti-bullying policies – the current legislation (from The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 was deemed to be too vague. Furthermore, they would like to see better mechanisms of feedback to parents when bullying occurs:

"Schools should be required to monitor and report the different forms of bullying that pupils report, and that should be available to parents so that they can see how things are progressing. Rather than parents constantly trying to ring the school and say 'how is that going? I last spoke to you 6 months ago and waiting for a response back.'"

"ETI should be tasked on inspecting schools on the inclusivity of their policies, because at the minute schools can have whatever they want in it – as long as they have a policy, they will get a pass from ETI."

Another representative stated that curriculum reform and the designation of school under Section 75 equality legislation would help to raise awareness of transgender issues:

"Why is it that the only time gender is raised in a school is when it is raised by a child, rather than pupils being educated about what it means to be trans or gender variant? Section 75 applying to schools and the curriculum would really help that."

A coordinated approach between not only government departments but also between child and adult services was also viewed as a strategy which would help support children who are still at school:

[124] Whittle, S., Turner, L., & Al-Alami, M. (2007). Engendered Penalties: Transgender and Transsexual People's Experiences of Inequality and Discrimination. The Equalities Review

"I think there needs to be better link up between child and adult services. At the minute you hear when they are finished with the CAMHS [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services] team, they are sort of dropped, and then expected to engage with the adult services from the start. We're talking about what do we put in place at that crossover – by that stage it is too late. We need to put something in place a lot sooner, something in place in schools where young gender variant children are supported. It's not good enough to say, what do we do when they turn 18 – by that stage the person has already been bullied, already lived 16/17 years in the wrong gender, been already called (sic)– it's already affected their mental health."

"We also spoke of linking up between the school and the health trust – there is recognition in the Grasping the Nettle document about how there should be a joined up approach. There is lots of research that says that from a mental health perspective, positive affirmation of the child will help. But if the school can communicate with parents and children. If there is a joined up approach between the school and the CAMHS Team, provided the CAMHS team are good, they can help to inform the school. And will enable a beneficial outcome for the child."

2. Training for school staff

Stakeholders spoke of the positive impact of additional training on transgender issues for school staff, as it aids understanding and can give advice for schools on how to support trans young people:

"SAIL did training with the BELB with all the education psychologists in the Board, so they are often the people that the schools are referring to for help, so that was a big thing. Then if a school doesn't know what it's doing and goes to the Board, then there are people within the Board who have at least heard of it or are aware of it."

"Of course training would help for all staff, including administrators, because they are party to some very sensitive information. A lot of the young people I work with have a really good rapport built up with the administrative staff – that's who they'll go and speak to or have a yarn with."

One stakeholder stressed that it is not helpful if schools consistently refer to outside agencies to deal with transgender issues within a school – the capacity to deal with the issues needs to built from within:

"Bringing in statutory services – 'it is out of our hands' – it is maybe not the most appropriate response. This is something that should be done within other school policies and it is really about how the school estate is a safe place for all its services users. Rather than come out and engage this policy, it removes the responsibility for dealing with it."

3. Flexibility in school practices

Some stakeholders cited how certain practical changes and flexibility in school practices can make a young person feel much more accepted and comfortable in school:

"It doesn't have to be massively expensive, or ground-shatteringly new things – these are simple, practical changes that every school can make, that would change the outcomes for so many young people really easily."

"The school we are going to tomorrow – an all-girls school – has two pupils presenting as male. The teachers have all been told to use male names and pronouns, and they are allowed to wear trousers into school."

4. More monitoring of the experiences of transgender young people

Representatives of the transgender community stressed that knowing more about the school experiences of transgender young people was key to knowing what needed to be in place to support them in their education:

"The 'Nature and Extent of Bullying' research should include questions on transphobic bullying, or gender-based bullying. Because at the minute, we don't know – there's no data."

Summary

Analysis of the access, attainment, progression and destination of males and females in education from 2007/08 to 2011/12 has identified a number of areas where gender differentials and/or inequalities were apparent.

In terms of educational access, males were overrepresented in special school enrolments by a ratio of approximately two to one. However, further examination of the population school age males and females in Northern Ireland revealed that this over-representation may be explained by the greater proportion of young males with a long-term illness or disability within the Northern Ireland population.

An attainment gap between males and females was found to begin very early in education in favour of females. This was clearly evident by Key Stage 2, (i.e., by the 7th year of schooling), and it increased after the transition to post-primary school to Key Stage 3 and beyond. The attainment gap only gets wider as the years go on – by GCSE, the gap was 10 percentage points in favour of females and by A Level, the gap was 15 percentage points. This inequality remained persistent since 2007/08. Examination of the literature and qualitative data has revealed that factors in the educational system such as a lack of male role models in primary schools, a "one size fits all curriculum", poor teacher/pupil relationships, a lack of preparedness for transitional stages during adolescence and the de-centralisation of schools can present barriers to the attainment of young males. In addition, personal and environmental factors such as bullying and violence, alienation, frustration and lack of engagement may all impact on the attainment of young males.

The literature indicated that social disadvantage (as measured by free school meals entitlement) can also impact on type of school attended, with socially disadvantaged children less likely to attend grammar schools[125]. The present study found that the type of school was a strong predictor of attainment (and destination after leaving school) with males who attended non-grammar schools least likely to do well at GCSE and A Level and less likely to go onto higher education than all other groups.

[125] See Atkinson A., Gregg, P. and McConnell, B. (2006). *The Result of 11+ Selection: An Investigation into Opportunities and Outcomes for Pupils in Selective LEAs*, CMPO Working Paper No. 06/150. Bristol: Centre for Market and Public Organisation, University of Bristol.

Lower attainment impacts on males' and females' proportions of entry to higher education – females were much more likely than males to enter higher education, and the gender gap here is reflective of the gap in attainment between males and females at GCSE and A Level. This trend was persistent, and is reflective of the broader situation in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

Upon leaving school, males were persistently underrepresented in accredited and non-accredited further education courses and in all subject areas in higher education (except the STEM subject area of 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology', 'Social studies and Law'). In addition, the gender gap on further education courses widened between 2007/08 and 2011/12 in favour of females. The literature indicated that this may be a reflection of the attainment of males at GCSE and A Level. In addition, since 2009/10, males represented a lesser share than females of the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. This is an emerging inequality.

Females were persistently less likely than males to study the STEM subject area of 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology', 'Social studies and Law' in higher education. Recent research indicated that this gender differential is of concern as the greatest proportion of current employment opportunities are in these STEM subject areas[126]. In addition the literature indicated that gender stereotyping of subject choice at A Level may be a contributory factor in this gender imbalance. These differing destinations have wide implications for the future economy and makeup of the Northern Irish workforce, and could also be considered key inequalities.

Qualitative data revealed the barriers to education equality faced by young transgender people in schools in Northern Ireland as there was no quantitative data available to analyse. These barriers reiterated the barriers outlined from the review of the literature – gender stereotyping in schools contributes to gender variant and trans young people feeling alienated from school; they are more likely to miss school time due to self-exclusion or from having to change schools due to inflexible school rules; and the lack of awareness about transgender issues in schools together with the lack of central policy on supporting young transgender people in school and in further and higher education has led to a situation where their educational needs are not addressed sensitivity, or are not addressed at all.

Other barriers in further and higher education include difficulties with enrolment processes if a young person is undergoing transition, and leaving the support structures of friends of families,

[126] Mason. N. (2013). Realising Potential: Widening participation in Science and Technology. Presentation at the Northern Ireland Assembly

especially when university facilities are not adequate. However, post-compulsory education was also considered by some to be a potential refuge for transgender people in the face of unwelcoming workplaces. Enablers to redress the inequalities faced by transgender people included more central directives from government departments on how educational institutions should support transgender young people; more staff training; joined-up policymaking on the issues; and more monitoring of the experiences of transgender young people.

Chapter 4: Age Inequalities in Education

Introduction

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998[127] requires public authorities, including educational bodies (but not including schools), to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different age in carrying out their functions. The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 (the Age Regulations)[128] came into force on 1st October 2006, making it unlawful for employers and others to discriminate on grounds of age in the areas of employment, vocational training and further and higher education. However, these regulations do not extend to the provision of education in schools.

According to the Census 2011 in Northern Ireland, just over one-fifth (20.9%) of the usual resident population (1,810, 863 people) are under 16 years old; under one-fifth (19.4%) are age 16-29 years old; 20.7% are 30-44 years old; 19.2% are 45-59 years old; 13.2% are 60-74 years old; and 6.5% are over 74 years old.

Literature Review

Research has highlighted the steep decline in participation in education after the age of 24 years. An analysis of the age of Northern Ireland-domiciled accepted applicants to higher education[129] revealed that 85% of accepted applicants to UK institutions were aged under 21 years old, with similar proportions accepted to GB (87%) and NI institutions (84%). In 2008/09, 7% of Northern Ireland domiciled applicants accepted to NI institutions were aged 25 years and over, while only 3% of Northern Ireland domiciled applicants accepted to GB institutions were aged 25 years and over. In Great Britain, the Equality and Human Rights Commission Review on Lifelong Learning[130] reported that in 2009, participation in adult learning decreased from around 70% for 18-24 year olds, to around 50% for 25-44 year olds before further declining to 15% for 65-74 year olds.

[127] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75
[128] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2006/261/contents/made
[129] Department for Employment and Learning (2010). Research Report: Northern Ireland domiciled Higher Education applicants: An analysis of UCAS data - 2008/09 academic year. Belfast: DEL.
[130] Jones, P. (2010). Equality and Human Rights Commission Triennial Review: education (Lifelong Learning). Southampton: University of Southampton.

The report concludes that the nature of the employment and life-course trajectories of older people are closely related to participation in adult learning - there are diminishing opportunities for older people in part because of the age-profile of the employed, unemployed, part-time and full-time employed, economically inactive and so on. As a result, the lack of training opportunities for the over 55 year olds or the provision of learning opportunities beyond work are important explanatory factors for the decline in participation in adult learning. The report also states that the participation of the 75+ year old age group has particular gender dimensions given the far higher proportion of women in this age group and the fact that this generation of women benefited the least from education and adult learning opportunities. The 'Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan 2011-2015'[131] published by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) Northern Ireland has specifically highlighted the issue of inequality in regard to older people facing discrimination in training and development as one of the key areas to be addressed in the years up to 2015.

It has also been found that adult participation is closely related to prior educational achievement. In 2009, NIACE[132] found that it was those who left formal education earliest who were least likely to participate in adult learning, and those with higher education who were most likely to participate. However, Mason (2010)[133] found that although better-qualified people are still more likely than low-qualified people to engage in adult learning, the probability of engaging in such learning has also declined for all qualification groups at NVQ2[134] and above in recent years. Mason also found that training for older age groups differed by location: in some city-regions of the UK, job-related training proportions for 25-59 year olds were three times higher than in other areas. A more recent report by Aldridge for NIACE (2012)[135] revealed that adults in work are more likely than those outside the workplace to take part in learning. Nearly four-fifths of learners (78%) said that they started learning for work-related reasons. Many adults learners are learning on the job (13%) or through a course funded (10%) or provided by their employer (18%). One in five adults said that they would be more likely to learn if they received help from their employer and 18% agree that being able to gain a qualification that employers recognise would make learning more attractive.

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[131] Department of Employment and Learning. (2011). *Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan 2011-2015*. Belfast: DEL.
[132] National Institute of Adult Continuing Education. (2009). Making A Difference for Adult Learners. Leicester: NIACE.
[133] Mason, G. (2010). Adult Learning in Decline? Recent Evidence at UK National and City region Level. National Institute of Economic and Social Research, London, and Centre for Learning and Life-Chances in Knowledge Economies and Societies (LLAKES)
[134] http://www.cityandguilds.com/qualifications-and-apprenticeships/qualifications-explained
[135] Aldridge, F. (2012). Do Inequalities in Adult Learning Matter? Adults Learning, Autumn 2012. NIACE

Research commissioned by DEL on adult perceptions and attitudes to participation in further education[136] revealed that while there is a strong awareness of further education provision and a positive attitude towards learning in general – the majority of people viewed learning as life-long and as an important factor in increasing employability – there were significant perceived barriers to entry. The cost of courses was perceived as a barrier to entry to a large extent by non-vocational survey participants – 56% cited it as a barrier. Work and family commitments were perceived as the main barriers for those who had not undertaken any learning in the past three years but had considered it. Of those who had dropped out of a course, common reasons given for this were: perceived poor standards of teaching (12%); work commitments (12%); health reasons (7%); and childcare issues (6%). Early leavers, who said they were unlikely to continue with their learning, cited this was because they had had enough of learning, had been put off by a bad experience, or because of a lack of time to work.

An earlier research report conducted by Collins et al (2000) for DEL[137] explored the needs of adult learners in some more depth. The research found that class tutors played a significant part in adult students' perceptions and experiences of further education. Class tutors' styles of teaching which were considered to have impacted positively were described as supportive, helpful, guiding and encouraging and where flexible and varied methods of delivery were utilised in the learning environment. This was especially so in the context of the existence of common concerns of adult learners about their study skills, time management and fear of failure. Students who participated in the research commented on their lengthy absences from education, and their fears that this would lead to them experiencing difficulties with modern structures of assessment. The study also found that males from non-selective schools reported previous negative school experiences to be the most significant barrier to returning to education[138]. The report subsequently advocates the use of active learning methods which engage the student in their own learning experience in order to reduce the likelihood of confirming expectations that further education is dominated by traditional methods[139].

[136] Department for Employment and Learning (2012). *Removing the Barriers to Learning: Exploring Adult Perceptions and Attitudes to Participation in Further Education.* Part One: Research Report. Belfast: DEL.
[137] Collins, K., McAleavy, G., Adamson, G., Reid, R., Gray, J. (2000). *Addressing the Needs of Adult Learners in the Context of Incorporation of Institutes of Further and Higher Education*. Belfast: Department for Employment and Learning.
[138] Ibid
[139] Ibid

The same report[140] also explored the importance of the social component of learning to adult learners. The learners who took part in the research said that their fellow students offered encouragement, support and the motivation to continue with the course. In relation to this, learning outcomes were not measured solely in terms of qualification by adult students; they also emphasised 'the opportunity to experience accomplishment, build on self-esteem, help one's family, provide a focus in life and create choices'. The participants also had recommendations for improving education provision for older learners. These included[141]: more one-to-one tutoring; improved childcare provision; imaginative career guidance; supervised Information Computer Technology training; widened funding opportunities beyond Adult Basic Education[142] and special needs courses, with greater attention being paid to the importance of physical space by having an adult friendly environment. Community type provision was described as synonymous with an adult-friendly environment – this was described as a 'safe' space that is comfortable, friendly, local and informal, with flexible, motivated and accommodating staff[143]. The report [144]recommends that more adult education offered at a community level could engage learners by introducing education through taster courses, which eventually might lead them to re-entering mainstream education pathways.

The next section of this chapter will present the key findings from existing datasets with regard to proportions and shares of enrolments, achievements, progression and destination across the 2007/08 – 2011/12 period for age, in order to highlight the most current picture of existing inequalities, as well as to highlight whether these inequalities have emerged within the past five years or whether they have been persistent since 2007/08.

[140] Collins, K., McAleavy, G., Adamson, G., Reid, R., Gray, J. (2000). *Addressing the Needs of Adult Learners in the Context of Incorporation of Institutes of Further and Higher Education*. Belfast: Department for Employment and Learning.
[141] Ibid
[142] 'Adult Basic Education' refers to basic English comprehension and vocabulary courses.
[143] Ibid
[144] Ibid

Findings from Quantitative Data

Further Education (Source: DEL)

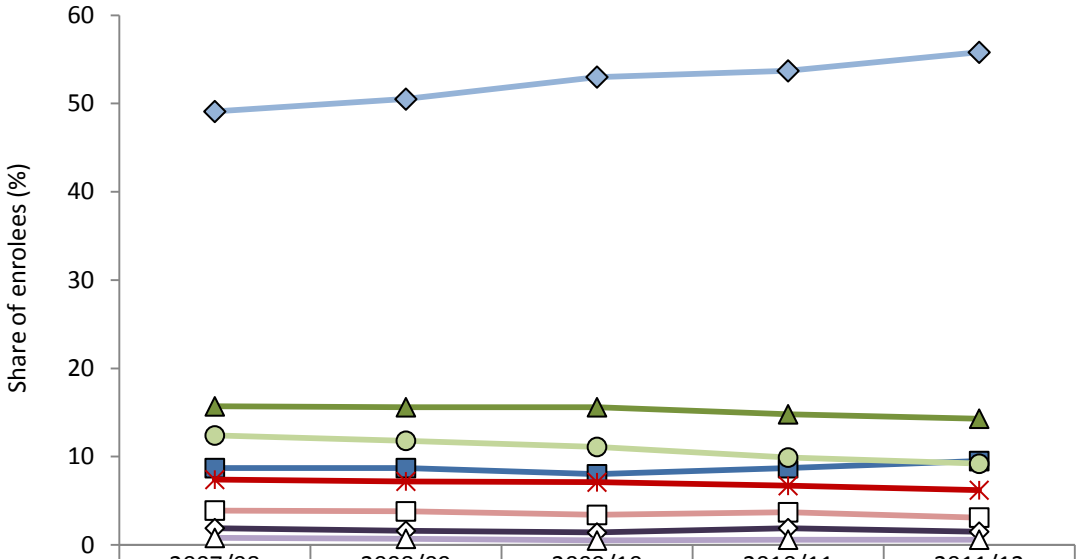
This section will explore data related to those courses which result in a qualification – accredited courses and Essential Skills courses – and those which do not lead to a qualification – non-accredited courses.

Accredited (Professional and Technical) Courses[145] – Access, Progression and Attainment:
A persistent trend from 2007/08 to 2011/12 is that people who are 25 years and under represented a greater share of enrolments on accredited (professional and technical) courses than any other age groups. The share of enrolments sharply decreases after the age of 25 years (see Figure 4.1; Technical Table 4.1). In 2011/12, 9.5% of all enrolees were under 16 years old; 55.8% were 16-25 years; 14.3% were 26-35 years; 9.2% were 36-45 years; 6.2% were 46-55 years; 3.1% were 56-65 years; 1.5% were 66-75 years; and 0.6% were 76 years or older.

Figure 4.1 indicates that the shares of enrolment increased for the 16-25 year old age group from 49.1% of all enrolees in 2007/08 to 55.8% in 2011/12. Conversely, the shares of enrolment declined for all other age groups with the greatest decline apparent for the 36-45 years old age group (from 12.4% in 2007/08 to 9.2% in 2011/12) (see Figure 4.1) . This suggests a widening of the age gap in enrolment between 2007/08 and 2011/12.

[145] Includes a range of assessed full-time and part-time education and training options from entry level to postgraduate level.

Figure 4.1: Share of enrolees on accredited courses by age, 2007/08 – 2011/12



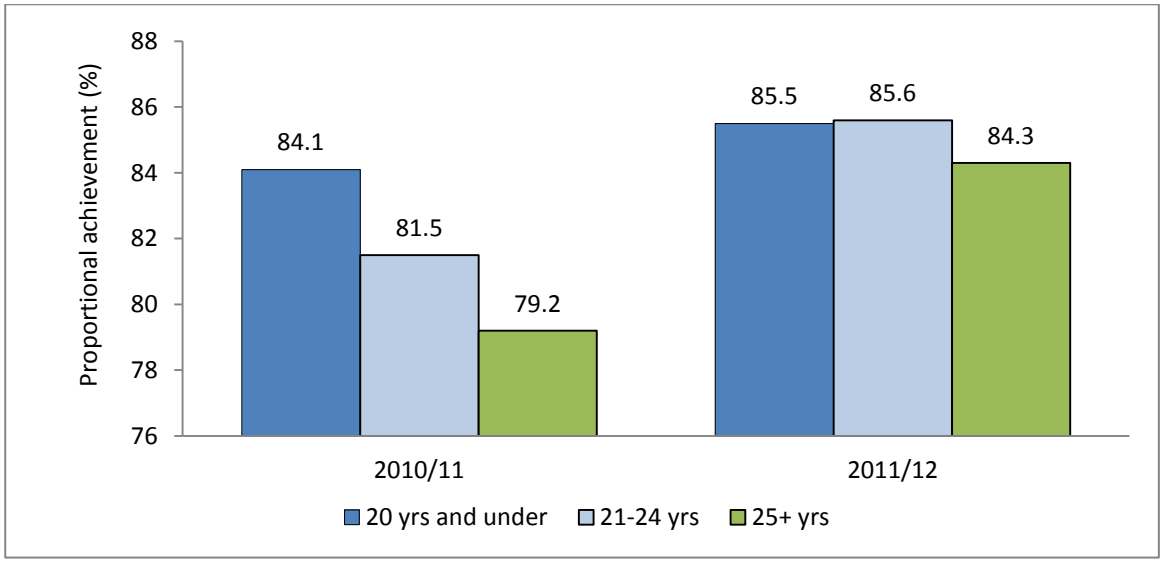
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Under 16 yrs	8.7	8.7	8.0	8.7	9.5
16-25 yrs	49.1	50.5	53.0	53.7	55.8
26-35 yrs	15.7	15.6	15.6	14.8	14.3
36-45 yrs	12.4	11.8	11.1	9.9	9.2
46-55 yrs	7.4	7.2	7.1	6.7	6.2
56-65 yrs	3.9	3.8	3.4	3.7	3.1
66-75 yrs	1.9	1.6	1.4	1.9	1.5
76+ yrs	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.6

* Unknown not charted as numbers for all years are less than 40

There were no differences in relation to the retention[146] of students from the different age groups, however in 2011/12 under 21 year olds were just as likely to obtain an achievement[147] (qualify) (85.5%) as those who were 21-24 years (85.6%), while those who were aged 25 years and older were least likely to obtain an achievement (84.3%). Retention and achievement have increased between 2010/11 to 2011/12[148] for all age groups (see Technical Table 4.2), however, the gap in achievement between under 21 year olds and those 21 years old and over (21-24 years and 25+ years) closed by 2011/12 (see Figure 4.2; Technical Table 4.2).

[146] Retention rate (%) = final year completers / final year enrolees (where final year completers are defined as final year enrolments which do not have a student status of withdrawn or transferred).
[147] Achievement rate (%) = final year achievers / final years completers (where achievement is defined as full and partial achievements within outcome for those classed as final year completers.)
[148] The period for which data is available

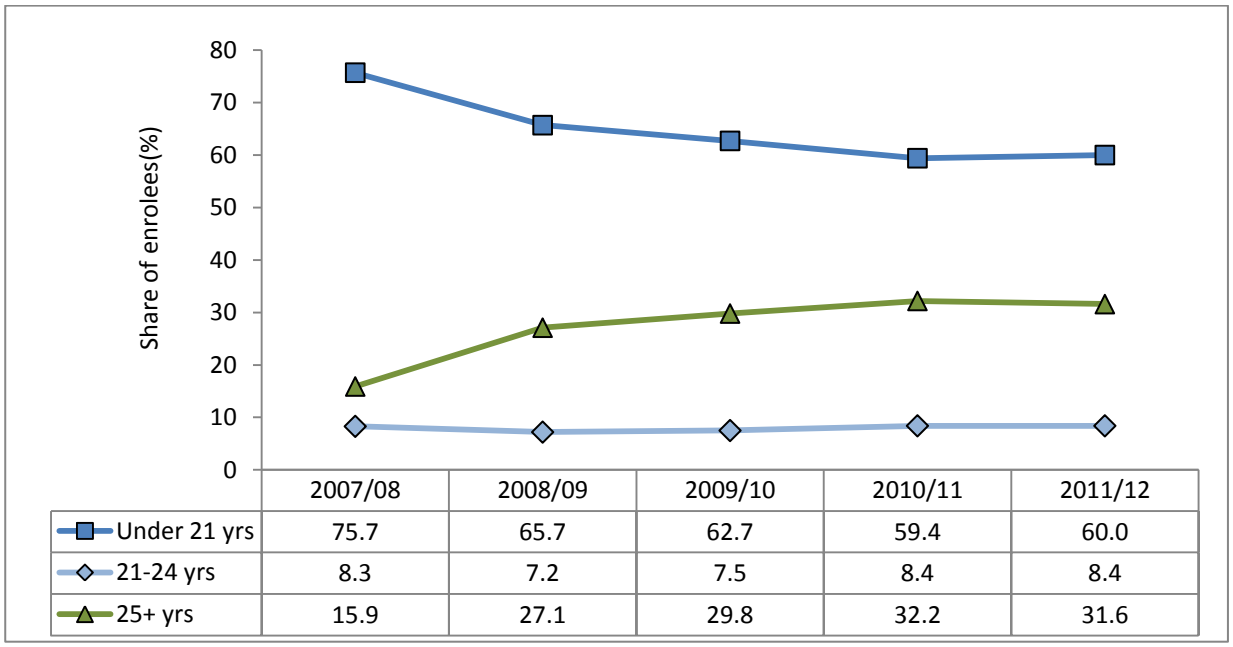
Figure 4.2: Proportional achievement of final year completers on accredited courses by age, 2010/11 and 2011/12



<u>Essential Skills – Access and Attainment:</u>

Over the five-year period between 2007/08 and 2011/12, an increasing share of enrolees on Essential Skills courses were 25 years and older (15.9% in 2007/08, rising to 31.6% in 2011/12), whilst the share of enrolees under 21 years old fell from 75.7% in 2007/08 to 60.0% in 2011/12 (see Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Share of enrolees on Essential Skills courses by age, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Under 21 yrs	75.7	65.7	62.7	59.4	60.0
21-24 yrs	8.3	7.2	7.5	8.4	8.4
25+ yrs	15.9	27.1	29.8	32.2	31.6

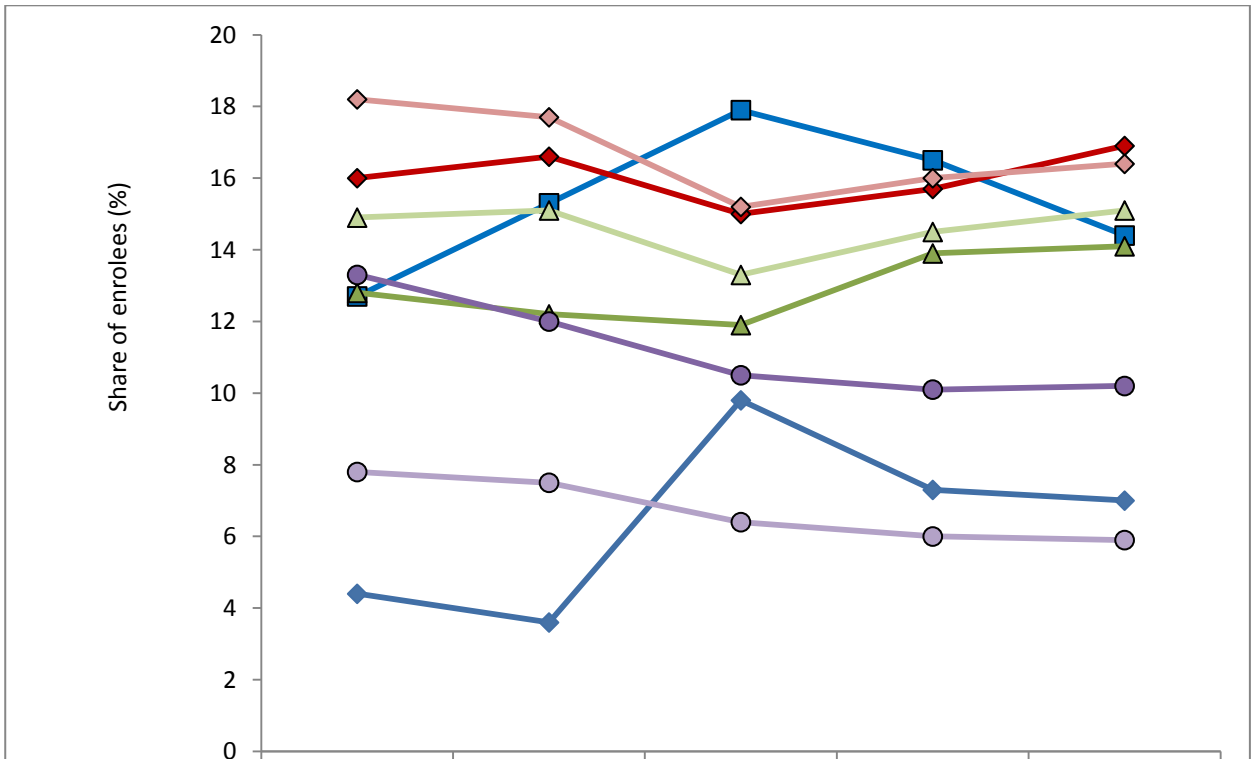
* Unknown not charted as numbers for all years are less than 40

Those in the 25+ years age bracket also accounted for an increasingly larger share of qualifiers (23.5% in 2007/08, rising to 32.3% in 2011/12) reflecting trends in enrolment figures (see Technical Table 4.3).

Non-accredited (Non-professional and Technical) Courses – Access:

In 2011/12, the 46-55 years age group had the largest share of student enrolments on non-accredited courses (16.9%), while those who were 76 years and over had the lowest share of enrolments (5.9%)(see Technical Table 4.1). While the share of enrolees between the ages of 16-65 years fluctuated between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the share of enrolees for those 66 years and over has decreased in this period (see Figure 4.4; Technical Table 4.1).

Figure 4.4: Share of enrolees on non-accredited courses by age, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Under 16 yrs	4.4	3.6	9.8	7.3	7.0
16-25 yrs	12.7	15.3	17.9	16.5	14.4
26-35 yrs	12.8	12.2	11.9	13.9	14.1
36-45 yrs	14.9	15.1	13.3	14.5	15.1
46-55 yrs	16.0	16.6	15.0	15.7	16.9
56-65 yrs	18.2	17.7	15.2	16.0	16.4
66-75 yrs	13.3	12.0	10.5	10.1	10.2
75+ yrs	7.8	7.5	6.4	6.0	5.9

Training, Apprenticeships, and Employment Programmes (Source: DEL)

'Training for Success'[149] is designed for young people aged 16 - 17 years (up to 24 years for those who qualify under extended eligibility[150]) and provides training to give them the tools and skills they need to get a job. It is designed to enable learners to progress to higher level training, further education, or employment by providing training to address personal and social development needs, develop occupational skills, employability skills and, where necessary, Essential Skills training. 'ApprenticeshipsNI'[151] provides the opportunity for students to participate in a Level 2 or Level 3 apprenticeship. There is no upper age limit for participation in the programme, however all participants must be in employment from day one. The 'Steps to Work'[152] programme supports participants to find work through a combination of one to one guidance and support from an advisor and access to training courses, qualifications provision, and work experience.

Training for Success Programme – Access and Progression:

The aim of the Training for Success programme is to equip young people with relevant qualifications and relevant personal and behavioural skills to progress into work. Therefore, the vast majority of 'Starts'[153] and 'Leavers'[154] in this programme between the years 2007/08 and 2011/12 were 16-18 years old (96.8% and 97.0% respectively in 2011/12) (see Technical Table 4.4).

ApprenticeshipsNI Programme – Access and Progression:

In 2008, the ApprenticeshipsNI programme was extended to those age 25 years and older. Therefore, of all 'Starts' in 2007/08, 99.6% were 24 years and under, but by 2011/12, 45.0% of all 'Starts' were 24 years and under, and 55.0% were 25 years and over (see Technical Table 4.5). In 2011/12, the majority of 'Leavers' were 25 years and older (54.1%), 24.2% were 20-24 years old and 21.6% were 16-19 years old. The share of those completing the ApprenticeshipsNI programme has changed for all age groups since 2007/08 – that year, 72.1% of all 'Leavers' were 16-19 years old (not unexpected, given the eligibility rules of the programme changed after the data was obtained for the year 2007/08); data for the other age groups were suppressed due to low numbers (see Technical Table 4.5).

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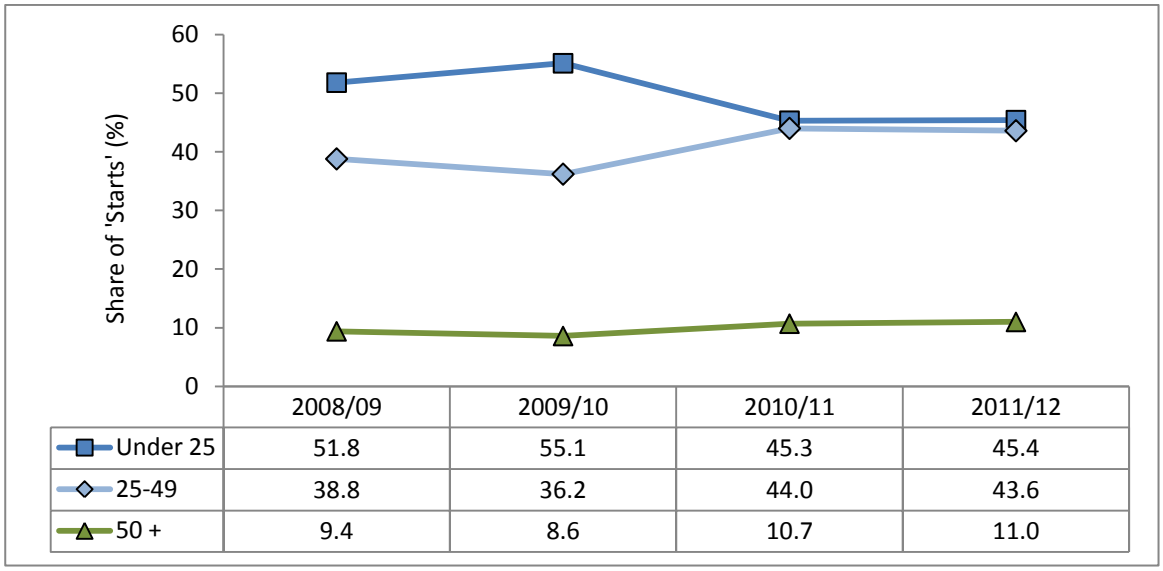
[149] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-for-you-on-training-for-success
[150] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-for-you-on-training-for-success - *'Who can take part in the Training for Success programme?'*
[151] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsni
[152] http://www.delni.gov.uk/stepstowork
[153] Starts' refers to participants starting a programme
[154] 'Leavers' refers to participants completing the programme

Steps to Work Programme – Access, Progression and Destinations:

DEL figures for the 2008/09-2011/12 period[155] from the Steps to Work programme show a decreasing share of 'Starts' in the under-25 years age group, and an increasing share of 'Starts' in the 25-49 year old age group (see Figure 4.5; Technical Table 4.6). It should be noted that only those over 18 who claim Jobseeker's Allowance benefit (JSA), lone parents who work less than 16 hours a week, and those who are economically inactive and not claiming benefit are eligible to apply for the Steps to Work programme.

Figure 4.5: Share of 'Starts' on the Steps to Work by age, 2008/09 – 2011/12

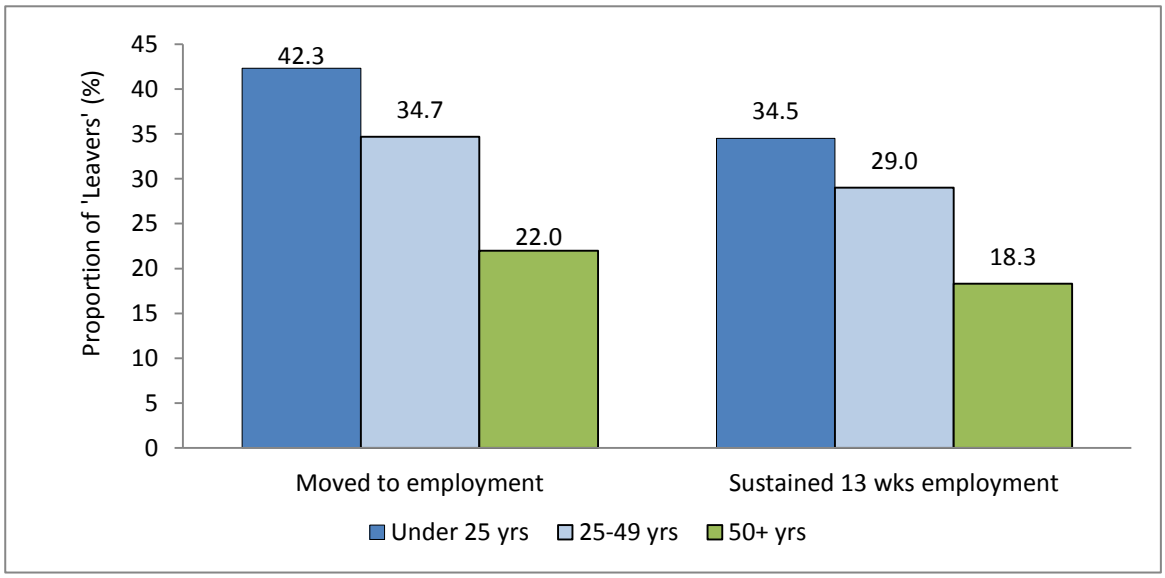


	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Under 25	51.8	55.1	45.3	45.4
25-49	38.8	36.2	44.0	43.6
50 +	9.4	8.6	10.7	11.0

In 2011/12, 42.3% of all 'Leavers' aged under 25 years moved to employment and 34.5% sustained 13 weeks of employment; 34.7% of the 25-49 years age group moved to employment and 29.0% sustained 13 weeks of employment; and 22.0% of the 50+ years age group moved to employment and 18.3% sustained 13 weeks of employment (see Figure 4.6 and Technical Table 4.6).

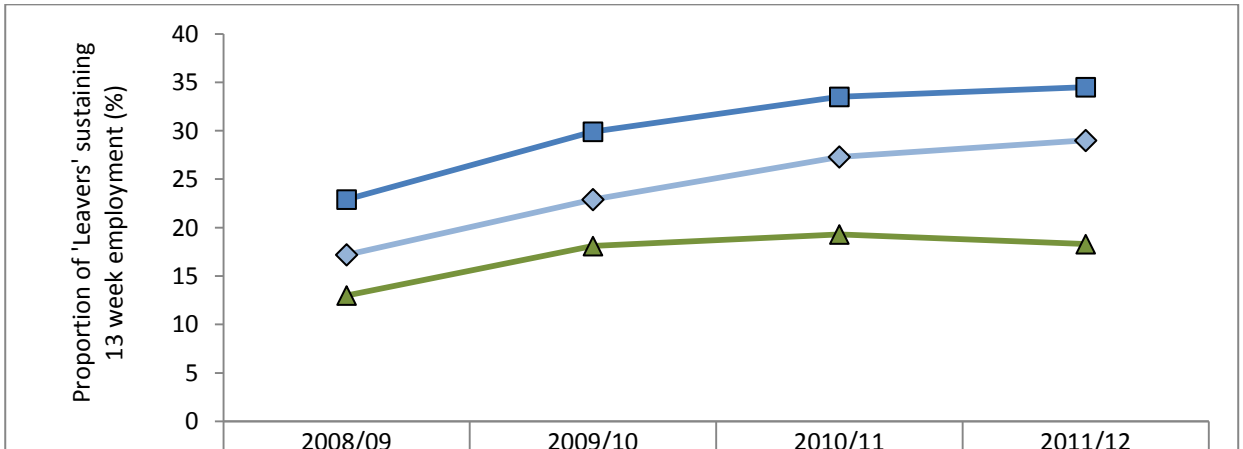
[155] The most recent four year period available for analysis

Figure 4.6: Proportion of 'Leavers' from Steps to Work who moved to employment and 'Leavers' who sustained 13 weeks employment by age, 2011/12



While the proportion of 'Leavers', from all age groups, entering employment and sustaining employment after the programme increased between 2008/09 and 2011/12, a higher proportion of the youngest age group (under 25 years) moved into employment and sustained 13 weeks of employment after leaving the Steps to Work programme; this was a consistent pattern over the five year period (see Technical Table 46). However, the proportion of those aged 25-49 years sustaining 13 weeks employment increased at a higher rate between 2008/09 and 2011/12 than for those aged under 25 years and the 50+ years age group (see Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7: Proportion of 'Leavers' from Steps to Work sustaining 13 weeks employment by age, 2008/09 – 2011/12



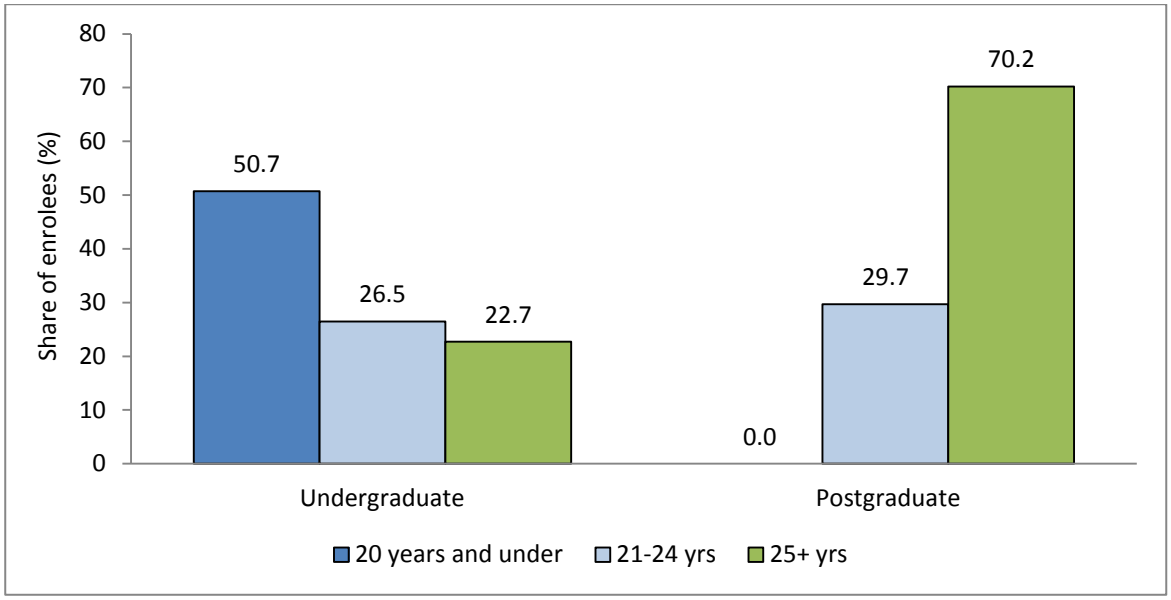
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Under 25	22.9	29.9	33.5	34.5
25-49	17.2	22.9	27.3	29.0
50 +	13.0	18.1	19.3	18.3

Higher Education (Source: DEL)

Undergraduate/Postgraduate Status – Access and Attainment:

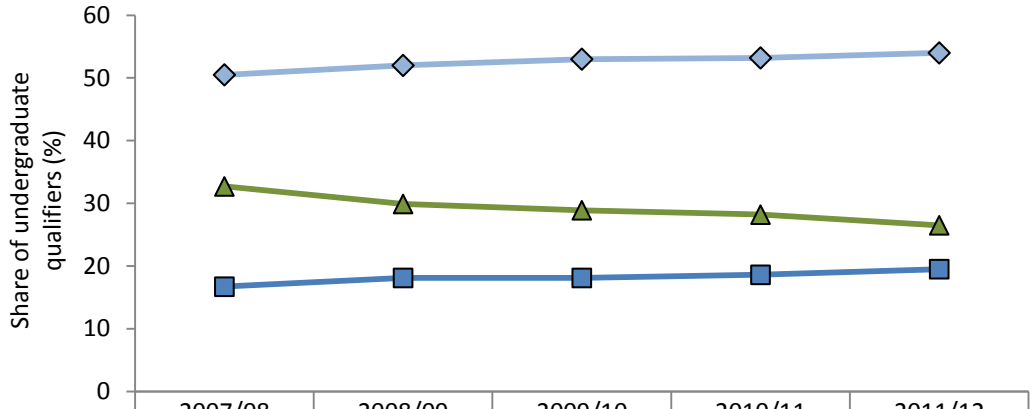
A persistent trend between the years 2007/08 and 2011/12 is that approximately half of all undergraduate enrolees were 20 years and under, and over two-thirds of postgraduate enrolees were 25 years and over (see Technical Table 4.8). Of all undergraduate enrolees in 2011/12, 50.7% were 20 years and under; 26.5% were 21-24 years old; and 22.7% were 25 years and over. In the same year, 0.0% of postgraduates were 20 years and under; 29.7% were 21-24 years old; and 70.2% were 25 years and over (see Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8: Share of undergraduate and postgraduate enrolees by age, 2011/12



Given that undergraduate courses usually take three years to complete and most students commence their undergraduate course at the age of 18 years, the share of students 20 years and under, who received an undergraduate qualification in 2011/12 was understandably low (19.5%), and no one in this age group received a postgraduate qualification. In the same year, just over half of all undergraduate qualifications were awarded to the 21-24 years age group (54.0%, an increase from 50.5% in 2007/08) and just over a quarter (26.5%) were awarded to the 25+ years age group (a decrease from 32.7% in 2007/08) (see Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9: Share of undergraduate qualifiers by age, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
20 years and under	16.7	18.1	18.1	18.6	19.5
21-24 yrs	50.5	52.0	53.0	53.2	54.0
25+ yrs	32.7	29.9	28.9	28.2	26.5

In relation to postgraduate qualifications, in 2011/12 the majority were awarded to those in the 25+ years age group (66.1%, down from 69.6% in 2007/08) and 33.9% were awarded to those in the 21-24 years age group (an increase from 30.1% in 2007/08) (see Technical Table 4.8).

Full-time/Part-time Status – Access and Attainment:

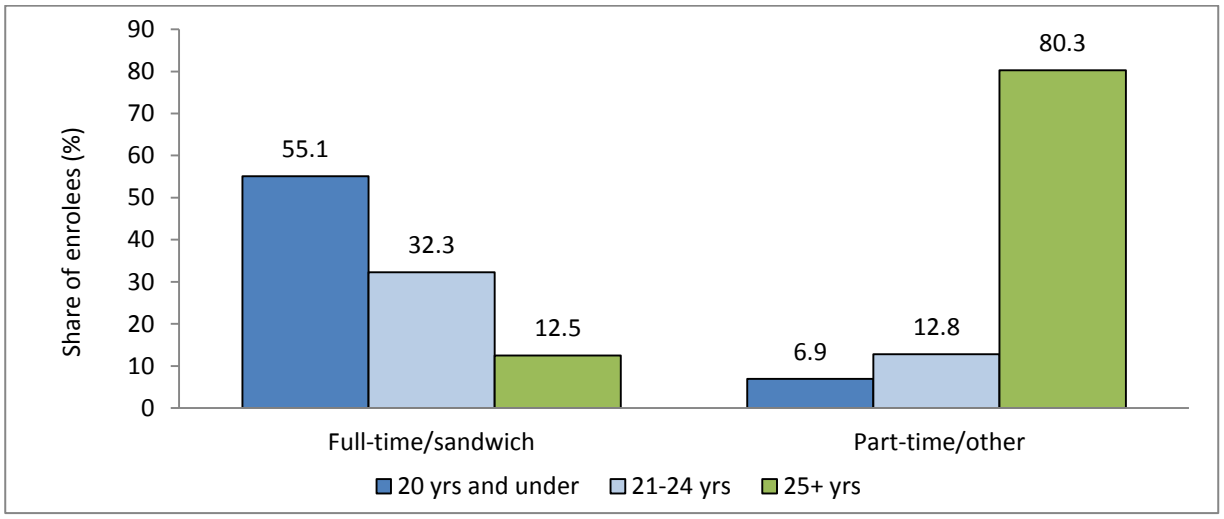
Another persistent trend in higher education is that the vast majority (80.3%) of 'part-time/other'[156] enrolees were in the 25+ years age group, and just over half of all 'full-time/sandwich'[157] enrolments (55.1%) were 20 years and under. The shares of enrolment have not changed in any notable way since 2007/08 (see Technical Table 4.9).

In 2011/12, 80.3% of 'part-time/other' enrolees were 25 years or over, 12.8% were 21-24 years, and 6.9% were 20 years and under. In contrast, 55.1% of 'full-time/sandwich' enrolees were 20 years and under, 32.3% were 21-24 years old, and 12.5% were 25 years and over.

[156] *Part-time* students are those recorded as studying part-time, or studying full-time on courses lasting less than 24 weeks, on block release, or studying during the evenings only.

[157] *Full-time* students are those normally required to attend an Institution for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the year of study, on thick or thin sandwich courses, and those on a study-related year out of their institution. During that time students are normally expected to undertake periods of study, tuition or work experience which amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week.

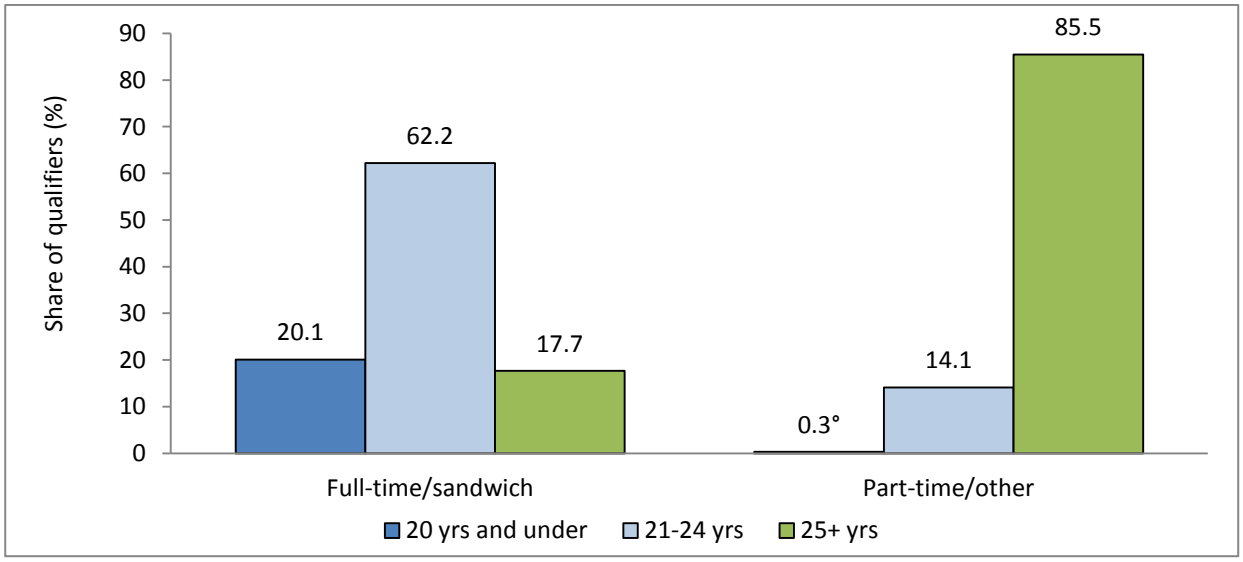
Figure 4.10: Share of full-time and part-time enrolees by age, 2011/12



This pattern is reflected in the qualifications awarded to part- or full-time students, and has been consistent between 2007/08 and 2011/12. In 2011/12, 85.5% of all 'part-time/other' qualifications were awarded to those in the 25+ years age group, 14.1% were awarded to the 21-24 years age group, and 0.3% were awarded to those who were 20 years and under (see Figure 4.11).

The pattern of 'full-time/sandwich' qualifications awarded reflects both the age of enrolees when beginning a full-time course and the period of time that the courses take to complete. In 2011/12, the majority of full-time qualifications were awarded to those in the 21-24 year age group (62.2%), followed by those who were 20 years and under (20.1%) and those who were 25 years and older (17.7%) (see Figure 4.11; Technical Table 4.9).

Figure 4.11: Share of full-time and part-time qualifiers by age, 2011/12



° Note that the number is less than 40

Subject Choice – Access and Attainment:

In 2011/12 those who were 25 years and older represented the greatest share of those enrolled in 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine' and 'Other Disciplines,' whilst the younger age groups (i.e. 20 years and under and 21-24 years) represented a greater share of those enrolled in 'Biological, Veterinary, Agricultural and Physical Sciences', 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology', 'Social studies and Law' and 'Business, Administration, Mass Communication and Documentation'. The share of those who qualified may be influenced by the length of course for 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine' with the share of qualifiers in the 20 years and under age group predictably low (see Technical Table 4.10).

From 2007/08 to 2011/12, those from the oldest age group (25 years and older) represented a greater share of enrolments than younger groups in 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine'. In 2011/12, 37.2% of those enrolled in the STEM[158] subject area of 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine' were 25 years or older, compared with 27.8% from the 21-24 years age group and 35.0% from the 20 years and under age group. However, the share of enrolments from the oldest age band has declined between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (see Table 4.1; Technical Table 4.10). In terms of qualifiers, in 2011/12, half of all qualifiers from 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine' were 25 years or older (50.0%), 43.0% were 21-24 years old, and 6.9% were 20 years and under. The share of qualifiers who were 25 years or older declined between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (see Table 4.1; Technical Table 4.11).

In addition, in 2011/12 older students (25 years and over) represented a greater share of those enrolled in 'Other Disciplines' than younger age groups (40.5%), compared with 35.6% from the 20 years and under age group and 23.9% of those from the 21-24 years age group. Between 2007/08 and 2011/12 the share of enrolments from the oldest age band (25 years or older) has increased (see Table 4.1; Technical Table 4.10). The majority of qualifiers from 'Other Disciplines' in 2011/12 were 21-24 years (49.2%); 37.8% were 25 years and over and 13.0% were 20 years and under. Between 2007/08 and 2011/12 the share of qualifiers who were 25 years and over has decreased overall (see Table 4.1; Technical Table 4.11).

[158] STEM is an acronym of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. According to the Department of Employment and Learning, STEM related qualifications include qualifications in the following subject areas; Medicine & Dentistry, Subjects allied to Medicine, Biological Sciences, Veterinary Sciences, Agriculture & related subjects, Physical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science, Engineering & Technology and Architecture, Building & Planning. See http://www.delni.gov.uk/2857p_stem_booklet_v5.pdf.

Table 4.1: Share of subject enrolments and qualifiers in higher education by age, 2007/08 and 2011/12

			Medicine, Dentistry & Subjects Allied to Medicine	Biological, Veterinary, Agricultural & Physical Sciences	Maths, IT, Engineering & Technology	Social Studies & Law	Business, Administration, Mass Communication & Documentation	Other Disciplines
Enrolments	**Year**		**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
	2007/08	**20 and under**	33.1	56.9	54.7	43.9	44.7	38.7
		21-24	25.1	25.9	33.8	24.1	27.0	24.5
		25 and over	41.6	17.2	11.4	31.9	28.2	36.8
	2011/12	**20 and under**	35.0	53.4	56.4	41.5	44.5	35.6
		21-24	27.8	28.0	31.5	25.7	29.0	23.9
		25 and over	37.2	18.6	12.0	32.8	26.5	40.5
Qualifiers	**Year**		**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
	2007/08	**20 and under**	3.4	31.7	11.1	22.8	13.2	12.2
		21-24	37.7	47.0	72.1	38.1	49.1	47.8
		25 and over	58.7	21.3	16.7	38.9	37.5	40.0
	2011/12	**20 and under**	6.9	26.4	9.9	21.5	15.4	13.0
		21-24	43.0	50.1	70.8	39.5	51.9	49.2
		25 and over	50.0	23.6	19.3	39.0	32.8	37.8

In 2011/12, those in the youngest age group (20 years and under) represented a greater share of enrolees than all other age groups in the following subjects areas: 'Biological, Veterinary, Agriculture and Physical Sciences subjects' (53.4%, 20 years and under; 28.0%, 21-24 years; 18.6% 25+ years), the STEM subject areas of 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology' (56.4%, 20 years and under; 31.5%, 21-24 years; 12.0%, 25+years), 'Social Studies and Law' (41.5%, 20 years and under; 25.7%, 21-24 years; 32.8%, 25+ years) and 'Business, Administration, Mass Communication and Documentation' (44.5%, 20 years and under; 29.0%, 21-24 years; 26.5%, 25+ years). Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the shares of enrolees in subjects areas 'Biological, Veterinary, Agriculture and Physical Sciences' subjects and 'Social Studies and Law' have decreased for those 20 years and under, while the share of enrolees in 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology' has increased for those 20 years and under (see Table 4.1; Technical Table 4.10).

In 2011/12, the majority of qualifiers were from the 21-24 years age group in: 'Biological, Veterinary, Agriculture and Physical Sciences' subjects (50.1%, 21-24 years; 26.4%, 20 years and under; 23.6%, 25+ years;, the STEM subject areas of 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology' (70.8%, 21-24 years; 19.3%, 25+yrs; 9.9%, 20 years and under); 'Social Studies and Law' (39.5%, 21-24 years; 39.0% 25+ years; 21.5% 20 years and under); and, 'Business, Administration, Mass Communication and Documentation' (51.9% 21-24 years; 32.8% 25+ years; 15.4% 20 years and under) (see Table 4.1). This reflects the greater share of younger enrolees (20 years and under) in these subject areas and the length of time it takes to complete these courses. The share of qualifiers who are 21-24 years has increased between 2007/08 and 2011/12 for the subject areas of 'Biological, Veterinary, Agriculture and Physical Sciences' subjects, 'Business Administration, Mass Communication and Documentation', and 'Social Studies and Law' (see Table 4.1; Technical Table 4.11).

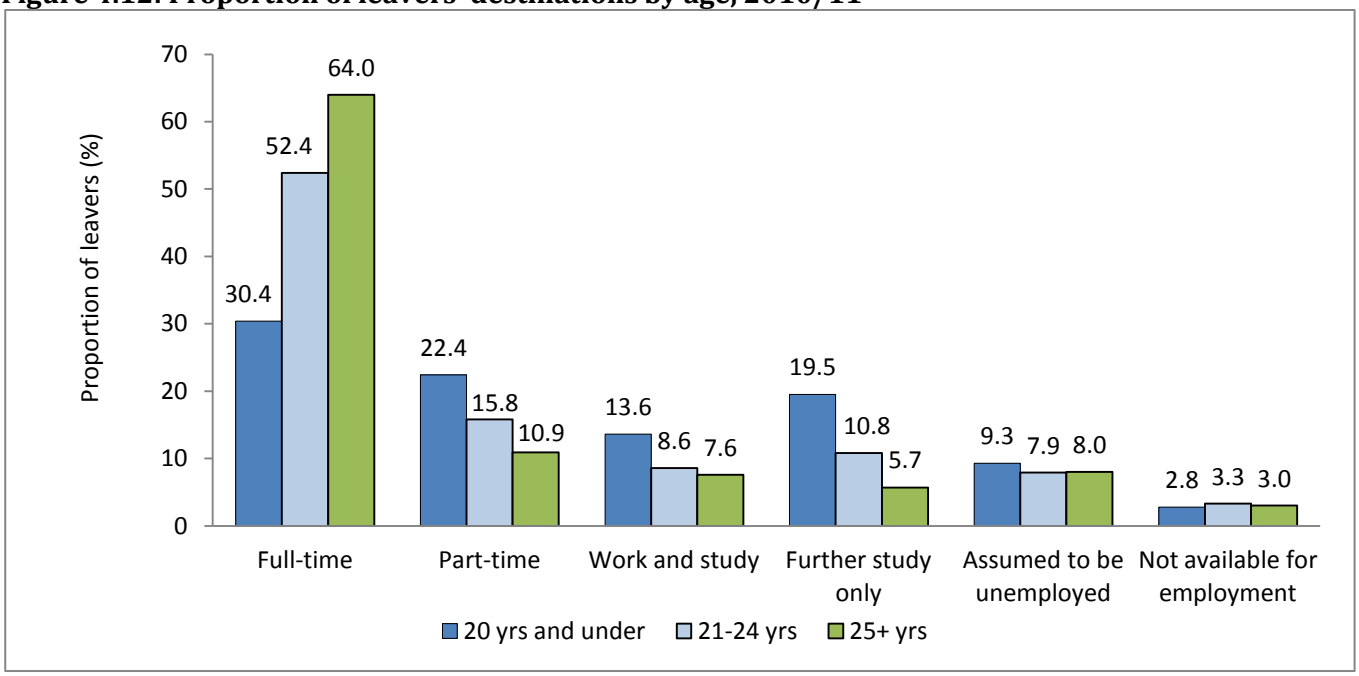
Higher Education – Progression:

Consistently, throughout the five-year time period from 2007/08 to 2011/12, those who were 20 years old and under represented a greater share of those who did not continue with their course than any other age group. In 2011/12, those were under 20 years constituted over three quarters (75.3%) of those who did not continue with their course (compared to 14.8% who were 21-24 years and 9.9% who were 25+ years) (see Technical Table 4.12). Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the share of those who did not continue with their course has increased for the 21-24 years age group from 10.9% in 2007/08 to 14.8% in 2011/12. However, the share of those who did not continue with their course has decreased for the 25+ years age group from 13.1% in 2007/08 to 9.9% in 2011/12 (see Technical Table 4.12).

Higher Education Leavers – Destinations:

This section will analyse the destinations of higher education leavers from each of the three age groups for the 2007/08–2010/11 academic years[159]. In 2010/2011 those who were 25 years or older were more likely to enter full time employment (64.0%) than those aged 21-24 years (52.4%), or those who were 20 years or under (30.4%) (see Figure 4.12). Qualifiers aged 20 years and under were more likely to enter part-time work (22.4%), embark on work and further study (13.6%), or further study only (19.5%) than those who were 21-24 years (15.8% part-time; 8.6% work and study and10.8% further study only) or 25 years and over (10.9% part-time; 7.6% work and study; and 5.7% further study only) (see Figure 4.12).

Figure 4.12: Proportion of leavers' destinations by age, 2010/11



For all age groups (but particularly for those 20 years and under), the proportion of higher education leavers entering full-time paid work decreased substantially during this time period – from 39.0% in 2007/08 to 30.4% in 2010/11 for leavers aged 20 years and under; from 60.4% in 2007/08 to 52.4% in 2010/11 for leavers aged 21-24 years; and from 73.1% in 2007/08 to 64.0% in 2010/11 for leavers aged 25 years and over (see Technical Table 4.13). Conversely, the proportions of higher education leavers from all age bands entering part-time employment have increased over the period, particularly for the youngest age group – from 14.0% in 2007/08 to 22.4% in 2010/11 for leavers aged 20 years and under; from 10.9% in 2007/08 to 15.8% in 2010/11 for leavers aged 21-24 years; and from 9.7% in 2007/08, to 10.9% in 2010/11 for leavers aged 25 years and over (see Technical Table 4.13).

[159] The most recent time period available

Younger leavers were also increasingly likely to both work and embark on further study: for the under 20 years old age group, the proportion of higher education leavers combining work and further study increased from 11.4% in 2007/08 to 13.6% in 2010/11, and for the 21-24 years age group, the proportion increased from 6.1% in 2007/08 to 8.6% in 2010/11 (see Technical Table 4.13). However, the proportion of leavers from the youngest age group who embarked on further study only decreased substantially over the four years, from 23.1% in 2007/08 to 19.5% in 2010/11. The proportions of leavers assumed to be unemployed from the youngest and oldest age bands increased from 7.3% in 2007/08 to 9.3% in 2010/11 for the under 20 years age band, and from 3.9% in 2007/08 to 8.0% in 2010/11 for the 25 years and over age band (see Technical Table 4. 13).

Table 4.2: Proportion of leavers' destinations by age, 2007/08 – 2010/11

		Full-time work only		Part-time work only		Work and further study		Further study only		Assumed to be unemployed		Not available for employment	
Year		***N***	**%**	***N***	**%**	***N***	**%**	***N***	**%**	***N***	**%**	***N***	**%**
2007/08	**20 and under**	530	39.0	190	14.0	155	11.4	315	23.1	100	7.3	50	3.7
	21-24	2,665	60.4	480	10.9	270	6.1	450	10.2	320	7.3	185	4.1
	25 and over	1,685	73.1	225	9.7	135	5.8	90	3.9	90	3.9	55	2.5
2008/09	**20 and under**	365	28.4	260	20.3	190	14.7	310	24.1	95	7.4	40	3.1
	21-24	2,235	52.9	580	13.7	370	8.8	540	12.8	340	8.0	120	2.8
	25 and over	1,195	65.2	195	10.5	170	9.3	105	5.8	100	5.4	45	2.5
2009/10	**20 and under**	410	29.0	280	19.8	185	13.0	355	25.0	120	8.5	40	3.0
	21-24	2,225	51.0	665	15.2	370	8.5	520	11.9	410	9.4	130	3.0
	25 and over	1,325	64.8	250	12.1	150	7.4	95	4.6	140	6.9	60	2.9
2010/11	**20 and under**	440	30.4	325	22.4	195	13.6	280	19.5	135	9.3	40	2.8
	21-24	2,370	52.4	715	15.8	385	8.6	485	10.8	355	7.9	150	3.3
	25 and over	1,300	64.0	220	10.9	155	7.6	115	5.7	160	8.0	60	3.0

Overall Population (Source: Labour Force Survey; Census)

Job-Related Training[160] – Access:

Consistently, between 2008 and 2012, those who were in the younger age category of 16-34 years were slightly more likely to receive job-related training in any one year than 35-59/64 year olds. In 2012, 9.1% of 16-34 year olds received job-related training compared to 8.2% of 35-59/64 year olds.

Highest Qualification Attainment:

Analysis of the highest level of qualification of the Northern Ireland population revealed differences in the level of qualification attained across all age groups between Census 2001 and Census 2011.

Table 4.3 shows positive changes for all age groups in regard to highest qualifications. The proportions of people who had no qualifications decreased for every age group, but particularly for those who were aged 45 years and older (Table 4.3). In addition, the proportions of people who had lower level qualifications as their highest qualification decreased for younger age groups (under 45 years), but increased for those who were aged 45 years and older (Table 4.3). The proportions of people who had higher level qualifications increased for all age groups, but especially for those who were 25 years and older (see Table 4.3).

[160] Source: Labour Force Survey Quarterly Supplements from October-December 2008 to October-December 2012

Table 4.3: Highest qualification proportions by age in the Northern Ireland population

		Census 2001 (%)	Census 2011* (%)
Age 16-24	No qualifications	17.4	14.8
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	72.8	67.8
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	9.8	12.4
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	5.1
Age 25-34	No qualifications	20.3	10.3
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	54.4	44.8
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	25.3	37.0
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	7.8
Age 35-44	No qualifications	35.1	16.8
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	46.3	44.0
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	18.5	31.1
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	8.1
Age 45-54	No qualifications	53.5	27.0
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	30.0	38.7
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	16.6	24.8
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	9.5
Age 55-59	No qualifications	68.7	36.5
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	19.9	28.8
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	11.4	23.9
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	10.8
Age 60-64	No qualifications	73.8	46.6
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	16.9	21.9
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	9.3	20.1
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	11.4
Age 65-74	No qualifications	80.2	58.6
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	12.0	15.5
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	7.8	15.6
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	10.4

*Census 2001 did not record Apprenticeships and 'Other qualifications categories

The next section of this chapter will present the findings from the qualitative element of the research (focus groups, interviews, and a stakeholder engagement event), in order to thematically illustrate the barriers and enablers to educational equality that stakeholders identified for age.

Findings from Qualitative Data

Engagement with key stakeholders in an expert seminar regarding the factors that might explain the key inequalities between people of different age groups reinforced many of the barriers and enablers to educational equality that were stated in the literature review.

Age-related barriers to education equality

The reported barriers included:

1. ***Past education experience***

Education participation may be influenced by initial educational engagement in terms of whether this was a good/bad experience.

2. ***Intergenerational disadvantage***

Possibility of 'intergenerational disadvantage' e.g. if an adult believes they derived no benefit or value from education themselves, they may pass this belief onto their children, therefore perpetuating a cycle of educational disadvantage and 'poverty of aspiration'.

3. ***Access to education***

With increased age come increased barriers, including: access and location of courses; a perception that educational establishments, such as universities, are for 'smart', 'young people' – and therefore not for me; and caring responsibilities. This may impact upon the participation of older people.

4. ***Teaching Methods***

Traditional approaches to bringing older people back into education are not working (particularly if linked to a previous bad experience).

Potential age-related enablers to education equality

In terms of *enablers,* stakeholders again reiterated findings from the literature review:

1. Adult-friendly practices

Adult friendly and accommodating educational establishments; for example, Essential Skills (ES) is often built into the courses if someone doesn't have English or Maths GCSE – this can be part of encouraging people back. ES is pushed within communities too – making it more accessible for older people, especially if it is delivered at their local community or women's group. However, one representative from a further education college had a criticism of the current set-up for this: *"There is a problem with meeting the demand because they can't get enough ES lecturers. DEL put in a requirement that people needed degree-level qualifications to teach ES – which is making it more inaccessible, ironically. What you need is a teacher who is able to communicate effectively at people's own levels, rather than having a degree. 50% of your degree has to be maths-based in order to be able to teach ES maths. So we are finding it difficult to get ES numeracy covered, more so than literacy."*

2. Initiatives

Specific initiatives and awareness raising, such as family learning initiatives – where adults have shared interests with their children e.g. football, as a way of re-entering adult education –if parents already have a relationship with the school.

3. Flexible frameworks for delivery

Adult returners can be encouraged back to education via flexible frameworks of delivery – for example, short accredited learning courses and open access resources. These things help to build their confidence and desire and self-belief to enter further or higher education – it's not just about delivering courses flexibly to fit their lifestyles.

Summary

Analysis of the access, attainment, progression and destination of people of different age groups in education from 2007/08 to 2011/12 has identified a number of areas where age differentials and/or inequalities were apparent.

Quantitative findings for the equality ground of age are in keeping with findings highlighted in the literature review in that participation in further and higher education declines with age. The data on accredited courses shows just how steep the decline is after the age of 25 years in further education. This is a persistent inequality. In contrast, the vast majority of enrolees on non-accredited further education courses were over the age of 25 years. Non-accredited courses may be associated with community type provision and a more adult friendly environment which have been described in the literature and qualitative research as an enabler to participation. However, participation of the older age groups (56+ years) decreased on non-accredited courses whilst participation for younger groups (16-25 years) slightly increased between 2007/08 and 2011/12. This is an emergent inequality.

Most participants on employment and job training programmes were under 25 years. Younger 'Leavers' from the Steps to Work programme (aged under 25 years) were persistently more likely to gain employment and sustain employment after completing their course. Another persistent inequality is, therefore, the disadvantage that older groups face in finding employment and sustaining employment after job training programmes compared to younger age groups.

In higher education, from 2007/08 to 2011/12, younger people (20 years and under) comprised the majority of undergraduate and full-time places, but the vast majority of postgraduate and part-time students were over the age of 25 – these are persistent trends. Certain subject areas were more likely to enrol people from the older age group (25 years and older) than others – the largest shares in 'Medicine, Dentistry and Subjects Allied to Medicine' and 'Other Disciplines' were made up by students aged 25 years and above. However, the other STEM subject areas ('Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology') had a larger share of younger students (aged under 25 years). Younger students (20 years and under) were, however, much less likely to be in full-time employment after leaving higher education than older age groups (25+ years) and while the proportion of leavers entering full-time paid work has decreased for all age groups between 2007/08 to 2010/11, the rate of decrease was higher for the youngest group of leavers.

From qualitative data, barriers to educational equality for different age groups reflected findings from the literature review with past negative education experience identified as a major factor in participation in further / higher education and training. The qualitative research also identified the impact of intergenerational disadvantage on present and future generations of learners, in that, negative past educational experiences can create negative perceptions of education that can be passed onto the next generation thus creating 'poverty of aspiration'.

Barriers to educational inequality were similar to those stated in the literature review with access barriers, including location of courses and caring responsibilities identified along with psychological barriers, such as lack of confidence and a perception that education is for 'young people'. In addition, the use of traditional teaching methods, which don't engage older people, can act as a barrier to the participation and retention of older learners. Potential enablers to educational equality mirrored the literature review with the provision of adult friendly environments and practices, including community based learning; family learning initiatives; and flexible frameworks for delivery of courses identified as enablers to encouraging participation, retention and achievement in education, particularly amongst older people.

Chapter 5: Religious Belief Inequalities in Education

Introduction

The equality ground of religious belief is protected by a number of legislative statutes covering equality and anti-discrimination in Northern Ireland. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998[161] requires public authorities, including educational bodies (but not including schools) in carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief. In addition, the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998[162] prohibits discrimination and harassment in employment and in the provision of goods, facilities and services on the grounds of religious belief and political opinion. This statute applies to educational bodies including government departments and their sponsor bodies, institutes of further and higher education and schools[163].

In Northern Ireland, the majority of the population consider themselves as belonging to one of two major branches of Christianity: Catholic[164] and Protestant[165]. According to the Census 2011, in Northern Ireland 40.8% of the population are Catholic; 41.6% are Protestant or Other Christian; 0.8% are 'Other' religions; 10.1% are of no religion; and 6.8% did not state their religion. The proportion of the population who consider themselves Catholic has remained fairly constant since the 2001 Census (40.3% in 2001); the proportion who consider themselves Protestant or Other Christian has decreased (45.6% in 2001); the proportion of people from 'Other' religions has increased (0.3% in 2001); and the proportion of those of no religion or who did not state a religion has increased (13.9% in 2001). However, the Census 2011 figures show a much higher proportion of Catholics who are under 25: 49.2% are Catholic, 40.7% are Protestant, 0.8% are from 'Other' religions, and 9.3% have no religion/did not state a religion.

[161] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75
[162] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1998/3162/contents/made
[163] There is an exception in relation to the recruitment, selection and promotion of school teachers under FETO. However, all other aspects of a teacher's employment are covered under FETO.
[164] This refers to those who listed a religion or religious background as 'Catholic' or 'Roman Catholic'
[165] This refers to those who listed a religion or religious background as 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)'

Literature Review

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (hereafter referred to as ECNI) identified education as one of six broad areas where key inequalities exist in its publication 'Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland'[166]. Subsequently, the ECNI's report 'Inequalities in Education: Facts and Trends 1998-2008' included data drawn from key government sources to highlight some of the main inequalities that emerged in that period. The report found that, with respect to community background, a gap in the highest level of educational attainment had emerged between Catholics and Protestants – the proportion of students leaving school with 2 or more A Levels had increased at a lower rate for Protestants (10 percentage points) than for Catholics (15 percentage points). Furthermore, a lower proportion of Protestants than Catholics were enrolled in further or higher education. The 'Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan 2011-2015'[167] released by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) Northern Ireland has also highlighted the persistently higher proportion of Protestant working class boys failing at education than any other group, and the most recent Audit of Inequalities released by the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) in Northern Ireland[168] points to, not only the underachievement of Protestant working class males, but also their lower pre-school uptake and lower school attendance rates.

A recent report on education reform in Northern Ireland (Lundy et al, 2013)[169] addresses the issue of access to particular school types, by the community background of parents and children. Most people in Northern Ireland have good access to Catholic maintained and controlled primary and secondary schools, based on the way that the education system is currently structured. However, with the existing level of provision considered unsustainable, the closure of certain schools will inevitably have an impact on access in certain areas to either Catholic maintained schools or controlled schools, but particularly so for those who live in rural areas. In addition, there is a high level of oversubscription of places within integrated schools. The key concerns these issues raise with respect to equality are the maintenance of equality of opportunity and access to school places for those who wish their child to receive a Catholic education, an education in a controlled school, an Irish-medium school experience, or integrated education.

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[166] Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. (2008a). *Inequalities in Education – Facts and Trends 1998-2008*. Belfast: ECNI.
[167] Department of Employment and Learning. (2011). *Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan 2011-2015*. Belfast: DEL.
[168] http://www.selb.org/equality/Documents/AuditofInequalities2ndEditionJune2012.pdf
[169] Lundy, L., Emerson, L., Lloyd, K., Byrne, B., & Yohanis, J. (2013). *Education Reform in Northern Ireland: A Human Rights Review*. Belfast: Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission/Centre for Children's Rights, Queen's University Belfast.

A review of educational disadvantage in the Protestant community was issued by Dawn Purvis and the Working Group on Educational Disadvantage and the Protestant Working Class, and was published in 2011[170]. It stated that there are some cultural and community factors that impact upon how Protestant families perceive education and participation in schools. Firstly, the Working Group argued that generations of working class Protestants were heavily involved in manufacturing industry and viewed getting a trade as the main form of educational requirement, rather than attainment through schools, colleges or universities. The collapse in this labour market and the movement towards a consumerist, service driven economy has, to a degree, left elements of the Protestant working class stranded with redundant skills-sets and abilities. For many families left only with low wage, insecure, casual work or benefit dependency, there is an intergenerational problem regarding the undervaluing of education. The problem is exacerbated by the loss of positive community role models, community instability, and the rise of organised criminal groups that may offer short term 'kudos and profit' through illegal activity. Another factor which the report suggests impacts upon the problem is the special geography of urban Protestant communities. There are some 'pockets of deprivation' surrounded by more affluent areas rather than concentrated areas of disadvantage, which can lead to a weaker community infrastructure than in Catholic districts. The report recommends elevating initiatives that promote 'bonding' social capital (to build strong intra-community relationships and trust) as well as 'bridging' social capital (reaching out across communities to redress intercommunal division).

Research by Osborne et al (2006)[171] on the factors associated with participation in higher education echoed many of these issues. The authors found that there seemed to be more emphasis from Catholic parents than Protestant parents on the need to go on and enter higher education if at all possible. Catholics, probably because of past experiences in the labour market, were far more likely to see securing educational qualifications as the route to securing a job and a job with goods prospects. Both focus group and survey evidence within the report suggested that parents were more likely to be very supportive towards continuing in further and higher education for girls and boys in maintained schools, whereas this seemed to be less apparent amongst children in controlled schools, particularly boys in controlled schools. The authors[172] also argued that there are two structural elements behind Protestant underachievement. The first element is that Catholic maintained secondary schools have better educational outcomes

[170] http://www.nicva.org/sites/default/files/A-Call-to-Action-FINAL-March2011_0.pdf
[171] Osborne, B., Smith, A., and Hayes, A. (2006). *Higher Education in Northern Ireland: A Report on Factors Associated with Participation and Migration*. Belfast: University of Ulster.
[172] ibid

for students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds than controlled secondary schools. In addition to this, grammar schools adjacent to Protestant working class areas were highlighted as sometimes being 'unhelpful' in responding to pupils from poorer backgrounds, even if they had secured a good transfer grade. The second element is the apparent greater availability of post 16 provision in Catholic maintained schools than controlled schools. The authors[173] contended that having significant post 16 provision potentially leads to raising expectations of progressing into further, and especially higher, education.

This is related to another contributing factor behind the underrepresentation of Protestants in higher education; widening access schemes in universities often target those in post 16 provision in schools. Given the apparent lower levels of post 16 provision in the controlled sector, these schemes are likely engaging with higher numbers of Catholic pupils than Protestant pupils. The study[174] also raised the issue of the interplay of geography and sectarianism in Northern Ireland. If a particular further education college or campus was deemed to be located in an 'unsafe' area because of the religious makeup of the area, then pupils were less likely to attend it, even if it was the closest college to them, preferring instead to spend extra resources to attend somewhere they feel comfortable. The authors[175] recommended that those involved with policy in the further and higher education sector respond to these sectarian 'chill factors' in relation to the ways that they may impact upon access.

Another report carried out by the Employment Research Institute at Napier University for the ECNI[176] found that Protestants comprise a disproportionate amount of those leaving Northern Ireland to study in Great Britain. Statistics from the Department of Education (DE) Northern Ireland quoted in the report revealed that in 2005/06, 29% of NI domiciled under-graduate students migrated to Great Britain to study, with the ratio of Protestants to Roman Catholics leaving Northern Ireland being around 1.5 to 1. In other words, 34% of Protestants left compared to 23% of Roman Catholics and 49% of 'Others'. The report stressed that due to a lack of monitoring data on religion from Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) on graduates and their destinations, it is difficult to quantify the impact of both graduate migration and rates of non-return by community background, but it has been argued that that the outflow of Protestants is having an impact on the community composition of the graduate labour market in Northern Ireland with Protestants comprising a decreasing share of those in graduate level positions.

[173] ibid
[174] ibid
[175] ibid
[176] http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/EducMigratFinalReportECNI090608.pdf

In regards to other religious groups, there is a lack of Northern Ireland specific literature. A report carried out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (for Great Britain) on Lifelong Learning found that within the UK more generally, the data on religious denomination and adult learning are undercut by ethnic differences, meaning that ethno-religious identity constitutes a more compelling way to investigate the data particularly for the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities. The report gives the example that according to the Census 2001, 74% of Muslims were Asian, with 43% Pakistani, 16% Bangladeshi, 8% Indian and 6% Other Asian. Purdam et al. (2007)[177] found that 'almost a third (31%) of Muslims of working age in Great Britain had no qualifications – the highest proportion for any population' (Purdam et al., 2007, p. 159). In addition, Muslims were least likely to have degrees (or equivalent qualifications) although there was evidence of a generational change involving Muslims born in the UK. Purdam et al. also explored the educational experiences of different religious groups and the barriers they faced. They found that Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus reported the highest levels of discrimination of any of the religious groups. The authors suggested that this is experienced both in terms of process (discrimination based on religious background, religious holidays, and dietary requirements), and in outright bullying (physical and verbal abuse), but that it is difficult to know the exact extent of these experiences for particular religious groups.

The next section of this chapter will present the key findings from existing datasets with regard to proportions and shares of enrolments, achievements, progression and destination across the 2007/08 – 2011/12 period for religious groups, in order to highlight the most current picture of existing inequalities, as well as to highlight whether these inequalities have emerged within the past five years or whether they have been persistent since 2007/08.

[177] Purdam, K., Afkhami, R., Crockett, A. and Olsen, W. (2007). Religion in the UK: An Overview of Equality Statistics and Evidence Gaps, *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, *22*, *2*, 147-168.

Findings from Quantitative Data

Pre-school, Primary, and Post-primary Level (Source: DENI)

Access:

Table 5.1 shows that since 2007/08, there were decreases in the overall shares of children and young people at nursery schools, primary schools, and secondary schools who are registered as Protestant, and increases in the shares of those who are registered as 'Other'[178]. This is particularly notable for controlled nursery schools, controlled and other maintained primary schools, prep schools, and controlled secondary schools (Technical Tables 5.1-5.3).

The Protestant shares of those enrolled in Catholic maintained primary and secondary schools and Catholic managed voluntary grammar schools have consistently remained under 1% since 2007/08, but the Catholic share of those enrolled in controlled schools has slightly increased over the past five years (see Table 5.1; Technical Tables 5.2 and 5.3). This may reflect the younger age profile of the Catholic population in the Northern Ireland[179].

[178] 'Other' refers to those all those who do not identify as Protestant or Catholic and therefore could include those of other/unknown religions and those of no religion.
[179] Russell, R (2013). *Census 2011: Detailed Characteristics of Religion, National Identity and Health at Northern Ireland level. Northern Ireland Assembly.* Research and Information Service Research Paper. NIAR 397-13. NIAS: Stormont.

Table 5.1: Enrolments (%) by school management type and religious group within the pre-school, primary and post-primary sectors in 2007/8 and 2011/12

		Catholic (%)		Protestant (%)		'Other' (%)	
		2007/08	2011/12	2007/08	2011/12	2007/08	2011/12
Nursery Schools	Controlled	26.3	26.4	57.3	49.3	16.4	24.3
	Catholic Maintained	89.6	88.2	3.3	3.4	7.1	8.4
Nursery and Reception Classes[180]	Controlled	11.2	11.1	58.1	56.6	30.7	32.4
	Catholic Maintained	95.0	93.5	2.3	2.2	2.6	4.3
	Other Maintained	67.0	83.3	26.6°	8.1°	6.4°	8.5°
	Controlled Integrated	56.0°	29.8°	26.0°	36.2°	18.0°	34.0°
	Maintained Integrated	37.7	41.9	33.1	29.3	29.3	28.8
Primary Schools	Controlled	4.8	5.4	76.1	72.3	19.1	22.3
	Catholic Maintained	98.4	97.4	0.5	0.6	1.1	2.0
	Other Maintained	79.8	80.3	15.8	11.8	4.4	7.9
	Controlled Integrated	28.4	27.1	45.6	45.6	26.0	27.4
	Maintained Integrated	42.5	43.6	34.9	33.6	22.7	22.8
Preparatory Schools	Controlled	5.4°	6.9°	75.0	65.9	19.6	27.2
	Voluntary	11.4	10.9	54.0	47.0	34.6	42.0
Secondary Schools	Controlled	1.5	2.1	84.8	82.4	13.7	15.4
	Catholic Maintained	98.8	98.1	0.6	0.8	0.6	1.1
	Other Maintained	92.3	92.7	0.0	0.0	7.7	7.3
	Controlled Integrated	21.3	16.2	60.3	66.7	18.4	17.1
	Maintained Integrated	44.7	42.0	39.8	42.4	15.5	15.5
Grammar Schools	Controlled	6.6	7.7	76.5	76.8	16.9	15.4
	Catholic Managed	98.4	97.9	0.9	0.9	0.7	1.2
	Other Managed	9.8	11.1	68.1	67.1	22.1	21.8

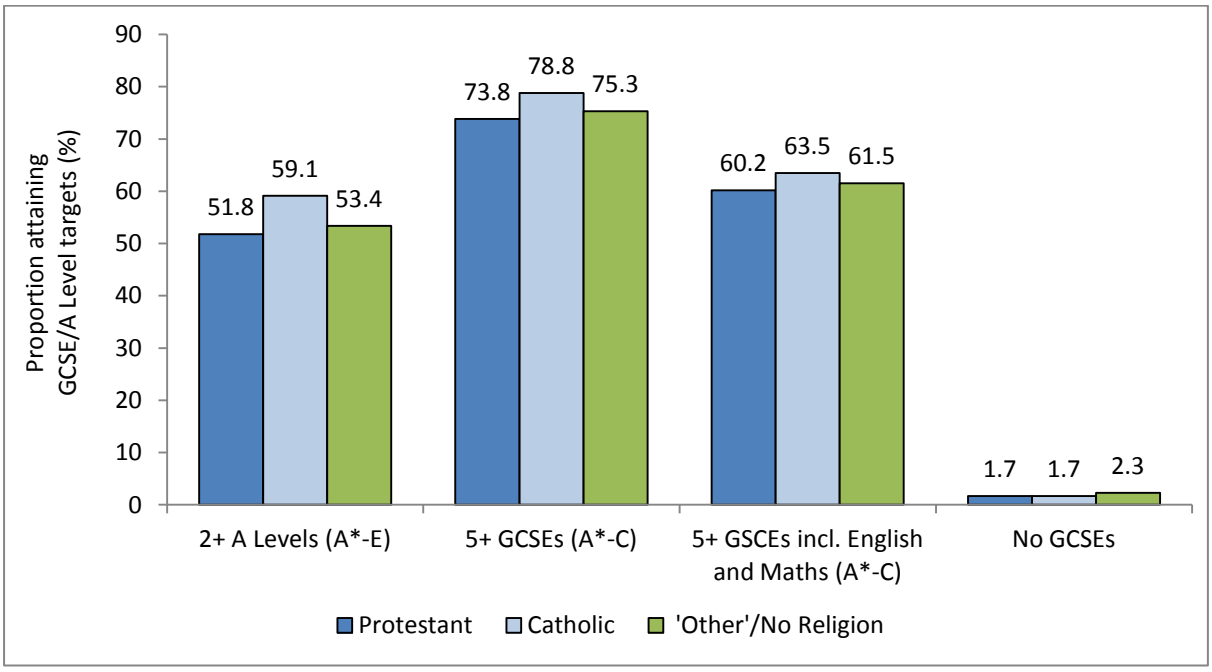
° Note that the number is less than 40

Attainment:

A number of differences were noted in the attainment of school leavers of different religions in Northern Ireland. The main, overarching trend is that a greater proportion of Catholics achieved the education targets than Protestants and 'Other' across all three categories (2+ A Levels A*-E; 5+ GCSEs A*-C; 5+ GCSEs A*-C incl. English and Maths) throughout the time period, and the gap between Catholics and the other groups widened between 2007/08 and 2011/12 in all three categories (see Figure 5.1). All groups experienced an increase in attainment rates over the time period in all categories (see Technical Table 5.5).

[180] Nursery and reception classes represent pre-school provision within primary / preparatory schools, whereas nursery schools are self-contained units with a focus on pre-school provision.

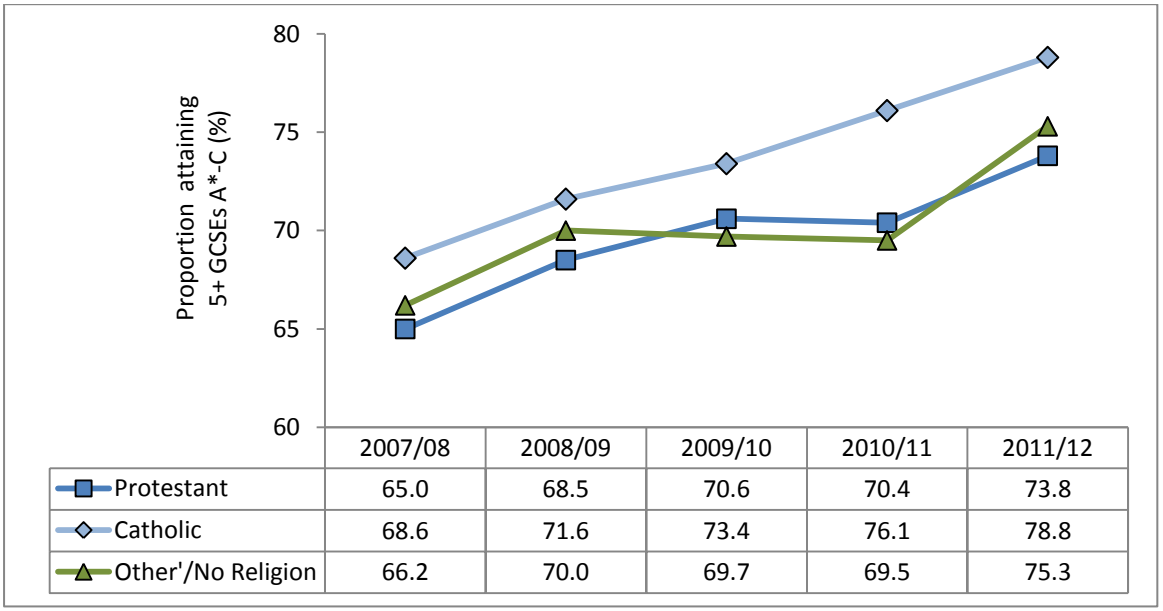
Figure 5.1: Proportion attaining GCSE and A Level targets by religion, 2011/12



- **GCSE level**

  The proportion of Catholics achieving 5+ GCSES at A*-C increased between 2007/08 to 2011/12 from 68.6% to 78.8%. While there was a smaller rise in the proportion of Protestant school leavers achieving 5+ GCSES at A*-C during the same time period, from 65.0% to 73.8%, the gap in attainment widened between Catholics, and Protestants and 'Others' since 2007/08 (see Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2.: Proportion attaining 5+ GCSEs (A*-C) by religion, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Protestant	65.0	68.5	70.6	70.4	73.8
Catholic	68.6	71.6	73.4	76.1	78.8
Other'/No Religion	66.2	70.0	69.7	69.5	75.3

- **GCSE including Maths and English**

  In 2011/12, Catholics were more likely to achieve 5+ GCSES at A*-C including Maths and English (63.5%) than Protestants (60.2%) and 'Others' (61.5%) (see Figure 5.1). The proportion of Catholics achieving 5+ GCSES at A*-C including Maths and English increased from 57.6% in 2007/08 to 63.5% in 2011/12. There was also an increase in the proportion of Protestant school leavers achieving 5+ GCSES at A*-C including Maths and English; the proportion rose from 54.8% in 2007/08 to 60.2% in 2011/12 during the same period. The proportion of 'Other' school leavers achieving 5+GCSEs at A*-C including Maths and English increased from 56.4% in 2007/08 to 61.5% in 2011/12 (see Technical Table 5.5).

- **No GCSEs**

  In 2011/12, equal proportions of Catholic and Protestant pupils left school with no GCSES (see Figure 5.1). The proportion of Catholics and Protestants leaving school with no GCSEs reduced by more than half between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (from 3.7% to 1.7% for Protestant school leavers, and from 3.4% to 1.7% for Catholic school leavers). In 2011/12, 'Other' pupils were the most likely to leave school with no GCSEs (2.3%, see Figure 5.1), but this proportion also reduced by half from 4.6% in 2007/08 (see Technical Table 5.5).

- **A Level**

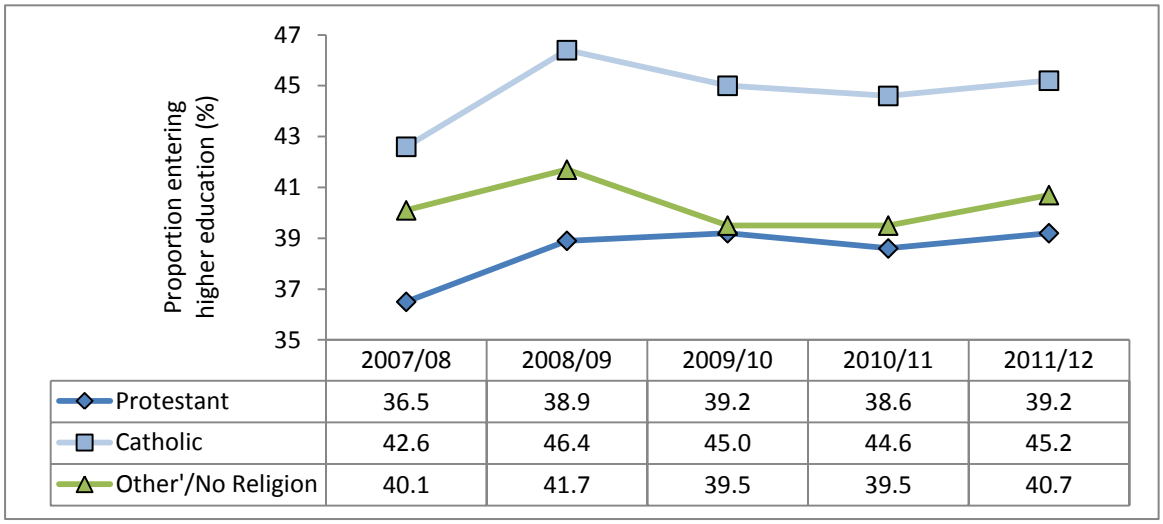
  While the percentage of Protestant school leavers achieving 2+ A Levels at A*-E increased between 2007/08 to 2011/12, from 42.7% to 51.8%, the percentage of Catholic school leavers achieving 2+ A Levels at A*-E saw a bigger increase (from 49.5% in 2007/08 to 59.1% in 2011/12), with the gap between Catholics and Protestant school leavers increasing by 0.5 percentage points from 2007/08 to 2011/12. The attainment proportion for 'Other' school leavers at A Level increased slightly less during the same time period, from 45.6% in 2007/08 to 53.4% in 2011/12 (see Technical Table 5.5).

Destinations:

- **Higher education**

  In 2011/12 Catholics were more likely to go onto higher education (HE) (45.2%) than 'Others' (40.7%) and Protestants (39.2%, see Figure 5.4). The percentage of Catholic and Protestant school leavers entering higher education increased between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (from 42.6% for Catholics and from 36.5% for Protestants), but 'Other' school leavers experienced a much smaller increase of 0.6 percentage points from 40.1% in 2007/08 (see Figure 5.3; Technical Table 5.6).

Figure 5.3: Proportion of school leavers entering higher education by religion, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Protestant	36.5	38.9	39.2	38.6	39.2
Catholic	42.6	46.4	45.0	44.6	45.2
Other'/No Religion	40.1	41.7	39.5	39.5	40.7

- **Further education**

  In 2011/12, Protestants were more likely to enter further education (37.7%) than 'Others' (37.1%) and Catholics (31.7%, see Figure 5.4). Across the period 2007/08 to 2011/12, the number of school leavers entering further education has slightly increased from 32.9% in 2007/08 for Protestant school leavers; from 26.2% for Catholic school leavers; and from 32.3% for 'Other' school leavers (see Technical Table 5.6).

- **Employment**

  In 2011/12, 'Other' pupils (7.3%) were more likely to enter employment after leaving school than Protestants (6.5%) and Catholics (5.7%, see Figure 5.4). The proportion of all pupils entering employment after school decreased across the 2007/08 to 2011/12 time period by approximately 4.0 percentage points. For Protestant and 'Other' school leavers, the proportion fell from 10.8% in 2007/08, while for Catholic school leavers, the proportion fell from 9.7%.

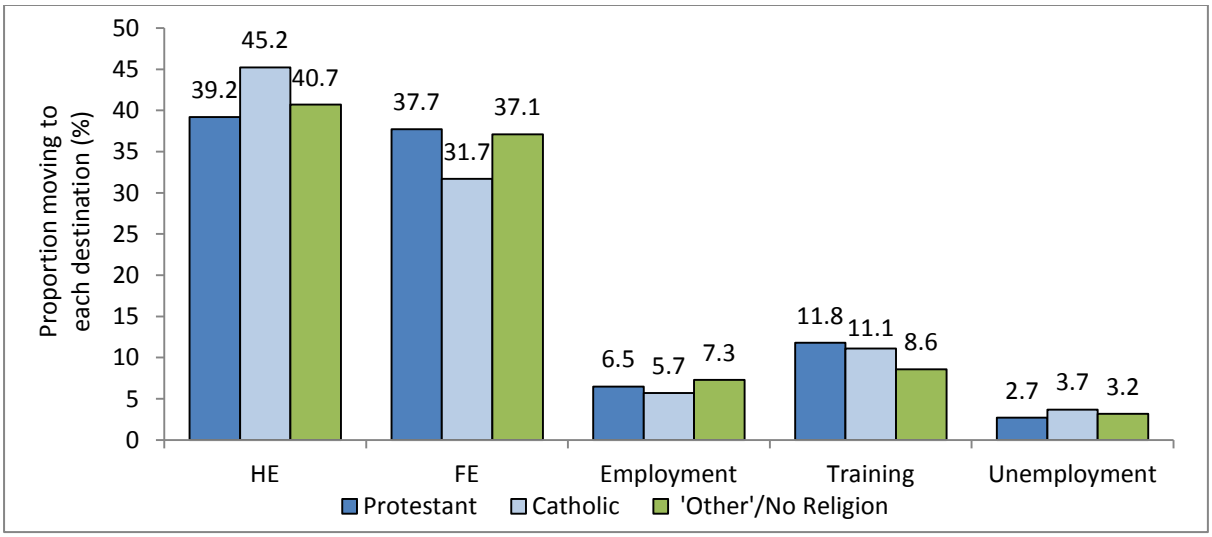
- **Training**

  In 2011/12, Protestant pupils were more likely to enter training[181] as a destination after school (11.8%) than Catholics (11.1%) or 'Others' (8.6%, see Figure 5.4). The proportion of school leavers entering training decreased for all groups from 2007/08 to 2011/12; for Protestant school leavers, the proportion fell from 14.3% in 2007/08; for Catholic school leavers, the proportion fell from 16.0%; and for 'Other' school leavers, the proportion fell from 11.0% (see Technical Table 5.6).

- **Unemployment**

  In 2011/12, Protestants were less likely to be unemployed after leaving school (2.7%) than Catholics (3.7%) and 'Others' (3.2%, see Figure 5.4). Furthermore, the proportion of school leavers entering unemployment decreased slightly for Protestant school leavers (from 3.9% in 2007/08), and to a lesser extent for 'Others' (from 3.5%); conversely, the proportion of Catholic school leavers entering unemployment increased slightly by 0.5 percentage points from 3.2% in 2007/08 (see Technical Table 5.6).

Figure 5.4: Proportion of school leavers' destinations by religion, 2011/12



[181] Numbers entering training include those entering the Training for Success programme, operated by the Department for Employment and Learning. Training on Training for Success is delivered by a range of training providers, including Further Education Colleges. Training for Success trainees who receive training at Further Education Colleges are recorded as being in training and not in Further Education. This convention avoids double counting of Training for Success trainees.

Further Education (Source: DEL)

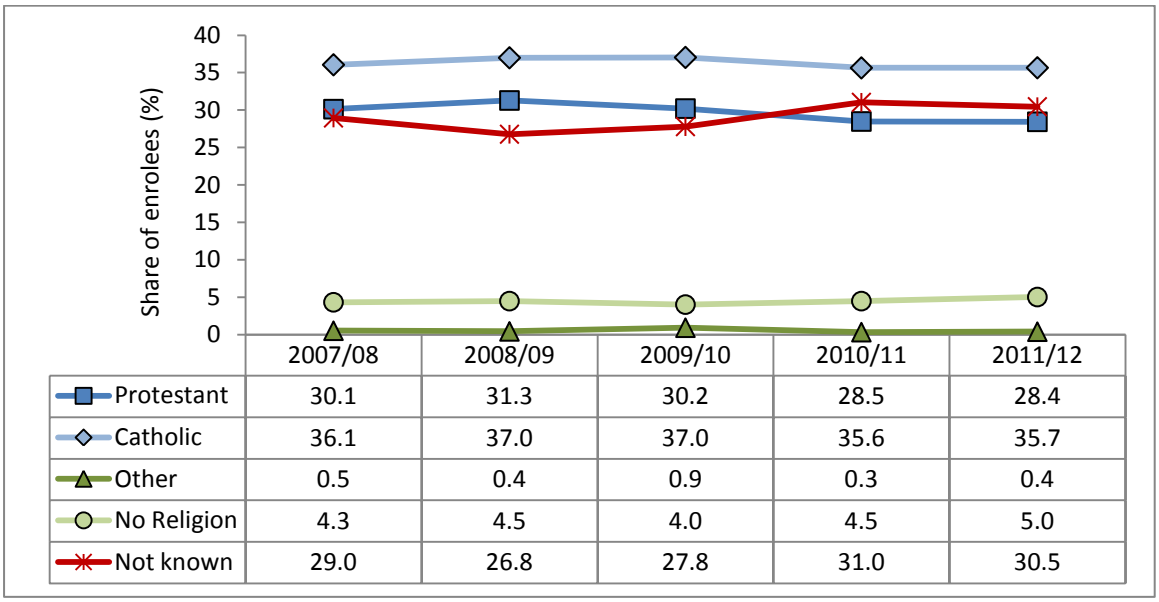
This section will explore data related to those courses which result in a qualification – accredited courses and Essential Skills courses – and those which do not lead to a qualification – non-accredited courses.

Accredited (professional and technical) courses[182] – Access, Progression and Attainment:
In 2011/12, those who identified as Catholic (35.7%) made up the largest share of enrolees on accredited courses. This was followed by those whose religion was not known (30.5%) and those who identified as Protestant (28.4%). The smallest share was made up by those of no religion (5.0%) and 'Other' religions (0.4%). This marks a slight change from 2007/08; although Catholics still had the largest share of enrolees (36.1%), Protestants had the second largest share (30.1%), followed by 'Not Known' (29.0%), no religion (4.3%) and 'Other' religions (0.5%) (see Figure 5.5; Technical Table 5.7). Given that most enrolees in accredited courses are 16-25 years old and that there are more Catholics in this age group (i.e. 16-24 years) than Protestants (48.9% and 42.5% respectively according to the Census 2011), the finding that the largest share of enrolees on these courses were Catholic is not unexpected.

A slightly higher proportion of Protestant final year enrolees (92.1%) completed the course, than Catholics and people from 'Other' or no religious groups (89.8% for Catholics; 88.3% for 'Other' religion; and, 88.7% for no religion), demonstrating that Protestants were most likely to continue with their courses. In 2011/12 Protestants were more likely to obtain an achievement (qualify) on their courses (87.0%) than Catholics or people from other or no religious groups (84.9% for Catholics; 81.9% for those of no religion; and, 80.9% for 'Other' religions) (see Technical Table 5.8).

[182] Includes a range of assessed full-time and part-time education and training options from entry level to postgraduate level.

Figure 5.5: Share of enrolees in accredited courses by religion, 2007/08 – 2011/12

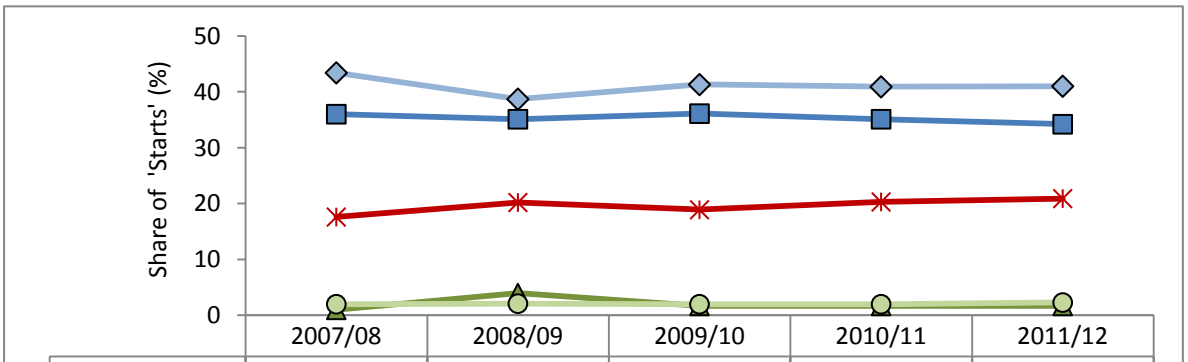


	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Protestant	30.1	31.3	30.2	28.5	28.4
Catholic	36.1	37.0	37.0	35.6	35.7
Other	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.3	0.4
No Religion	4.3	4.5	4.0	4.5	5.0
Not known	29.0	26.8	27.8	31.0	30.5

<u>Essential Skills – Access:</u>

On Essential Skills courses, the largest share of enrolees in 2011/12 identified as Catholic (41.0%); 34.2% were Protestant; the share of those from 'Other' religions was 1.7%; and the share of those with 'no religion' or of 'unknown religion' was 2.3% and 20.9% respectively. The Catholic and Protestant shares of enrolees in Essential Skills courses in 2011/12 were slightly lower than their shares in 2007/08 (43.4% for Catholics and 36.0% for Protestants), but the share of those enrolling from 'Other' religions and 'no religion' and 'unknown religions' increased from 2007/08 (from 1.0%, 2.0% and 17.6% respectively) to 2011/12 (see Figure 5.6; Technical Table 5.9).

Figure 5.6: Share of enrolees on 'Essential Skills' courses by religion, 2007/08 – 2011/12

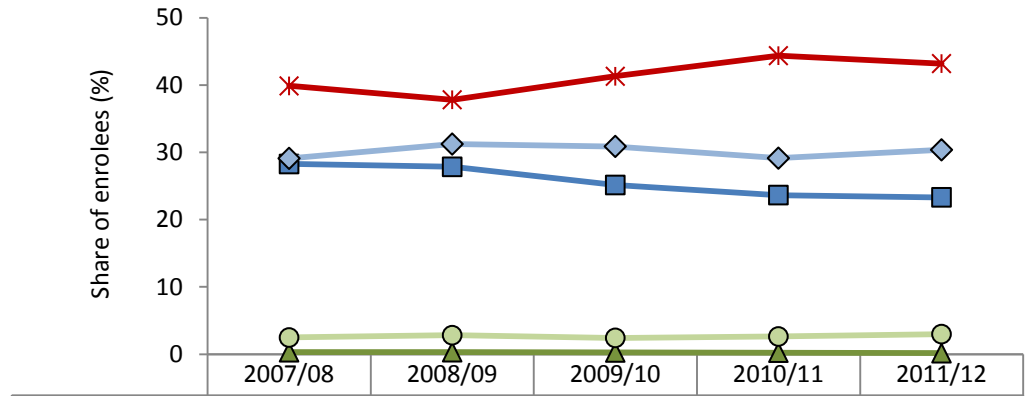


	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Protestant	36.0	35.1	36.1	35.1	34.2
Catholic	43.4	38.7	41.3	40.9	41.0
Other	1.0	4.0	1.7	1.7	1.7
No Religion	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.3
Not Known	17.6	20.2	18.9	20.3	20.9

Non-accredited (Non-professional and Technical) Courses – Access:

For non-accredited courses in 2011/12, those whose religion was not known made up the largest share of enrolees (43.2%). Catholics made up the second largest share (30.4%), followed by Protestants (23.3%) and those of no religion (3.0%). Enrolees of 'Other' religions had a consistent share of 0.1-0.3% from 2007/08 – 2011/12. Both those whose religion was not known and Catholics saw an increase in their share from 2007/08 to 2011/12 (39.9% and 29.1% respectively in 2007/08), whereas the share of Protestants fell from 28.3% in 2007/08. Those of no religion made up 2.5% of enrolees in 2007/08 (see Figure 5.7; Technical Table 5.7).

Figure 5.7: Share of enrolees in non-accredited courses by religion, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Protestant	28.3	27.8	25.1	23.6	23.3
Catholic	29.1	31.2	30.9	29.1	30.4
Other	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1
No Religion	2.5	2.8	2.4	2.6	3.0
Not Known	39.9	37.8	41.3	44.4	43.2

Training, Apprenticeships, and Employment Programmes (Source: DEL)

'Training for Success'[183] is designed for young people aged 16 – 17 years (up to 24 years for those who qualify under extended eligibility[184]) and provides training to give them the tools and skills they need to get a job. It is designed to enable learners to progress to higher level training, further education, or employment by providing training to address personal and social development needs, develop occupational skills, employability skills and, where necessary, Essential Skills training. 'ApprenticeshipsNI'[185] provides the opportunity for students to participate in a Level 2 or Level 3 apprenticeship. There is no upper age limit for participation in the programme, however all participants must be in employment from day one. The 'Steps to Work'[186] programme supports participants to find work through a combination of one to one guidance and support from an advisor and access to training courses, qualifications provision, and work experience.

Training for Success Programme – Access and Progression:

In 2011/12, Catholics made up a larger share of 'Starts'[187] (45.1%) in the Training for Success Programme than Protestants (36.9%), those whose religion was not known (16.2%), and those from 'Other' religions (1.9%). This finding may be reflective of the fact that there are more Catholics in the 16-24 years old age group than Protestants, and Training for Success mainly enrols those who are 16-17 years old. Over the five year period between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the Catholic share of 'Starts' decreased from 48.3%[188]. The share of Protestant 'Starts' increased from 33.2% over the five years from 2007/08. The share of 'Starts' from 'Other' religions in 2011/12 was similar to the share in 2007/08 (1.7%). The share of 'Starts' of those whose religion was not known was also similar between 2007/08 (16.8%) and 2011/12. The shares of 'Leavers'[189] were very similar to shares of 'Starts' over the five year period examined. In 2011/12, the shares of 'Leavers' were: 45.2% Catholic; 36.5% Protestant; 1.8% 'Other'; and 16.6% whose religion was not known (see Figure 5.7; Technical Table 5.10).

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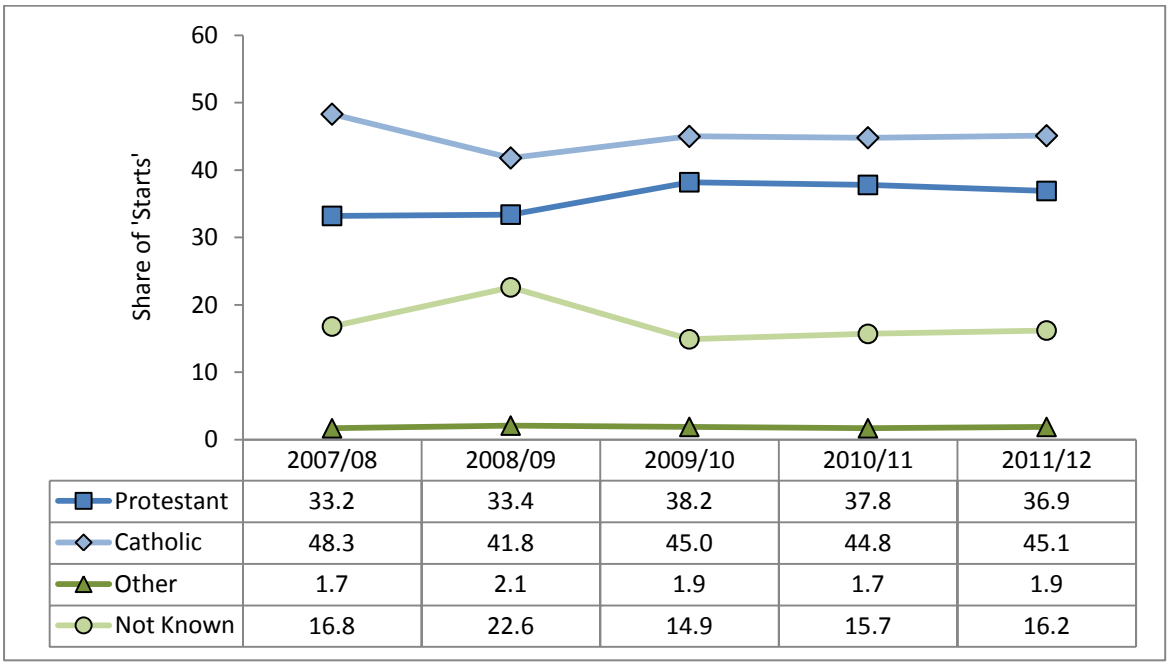
[183] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-for-you-on-training-for-success
[184] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-for-you-on-training-for-success - *'Who can take part in the Training for Success programme?'*
[185] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsni
[186] http://www.delni.gov.uk/stepstowork
[187] Starts' refers to participants starting a programme
[188] This is still a greater proportion than the overall proportion of Catholics in the population according to the Census 2011
[189] 'Leavers' refers to the number of participants completing a programme.

Figure 5.7: Share of 'Starts' in Training for Success by religion, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Protestant	33.2	33.4	38.2	37.8	36.9
Catholic	48.3	41.8	45.0	44.8	45.1
Other	1.7	2.1	1.9	1.7	1.9
Not Known	16.8	22.6	14.9	15.7	16.2

<u>ApprenticeshipsNI Programme – Access and Progression:</u>

In regard to ApprenticeshipsNI, the share of 'Starts' of 'Other' religions on the programme has increased from 2007/08 (2.7%) to 2011/12 (4.2%). The share of Protestant 'Starts', and 'Starts' whose religion was not known have remained similar between 2007/08 (36.1% and 21.5% respectively) and 2011/12 (36.0% and 22.7% respectively). The share of Catholic 'Starts' on the programme decreased from 39.7% in 2007/08 to 37.1% in 2011/12 (see Technical Table 5.11).

In 2011/12, 'Leavers' from the programme were: 38.9% Catholic; 36.6% Protestant; 20.0% of unknown religion; and 4.5% of 'Other' religions. The proportion of 'Leavers' decreased for Catholics and Protestants from 2007/08 to 2011/12 (from 42.1% and 37.4% respectively) and increased for those of religion not known or 'Other' religions within the same time period (from 16.7% and 3.8% respectively) (see Technical Table 5.11).

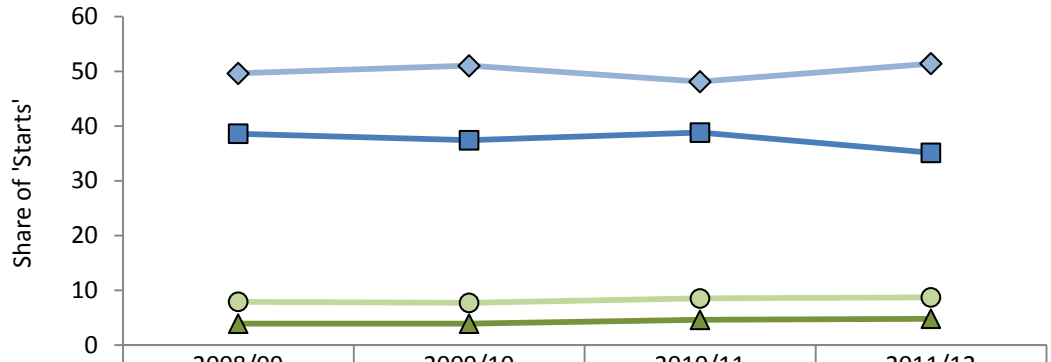
<u>Steps to Work Programme – Access, Progression and Destinations:</u>

DEL figures for the Steps to Work programme from the latest four year period available, 2008/09 – 2011/12, show that in 2011/12, Catholics represented a greater share of 'Starts' (51.4%) than Protestants (35.1%), those from 'Other' religions (4.8%)[190] and those whose religion was not known (8.7%) (see Figure 5.8). However, these shares are likely to be reflective of the fact that 'Starts' in Steps to Work are Job Seekers Allowance claimants – the majority of

claimants are between the ages of 18-24 years old[191], and there are more Catholics in this age group than those of other religious groups.

The share of Steps to Work 'Starts' who were Protestant decreased from 2008/09 (38.6%) to 2011/12, while the share of Catholic 'Starts' on the programme increased (from 49.6%). The share of participants from 'Other' religions on the programme increased from 3.9% in 2008/09 (see Figure 5.8; Technical Table 5.12).

Figure 5.8: Share of 'Starts' in Steps to Work by religion, 2008/09 – 2011/12



	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Protestant	38.6	37.4	38.8	35.1
Catholic	49.6	51.0	48.1	51.4
Other	3.9	3.9	4.6	4.8
Not Known	7.9	7.7	8.5	8.7

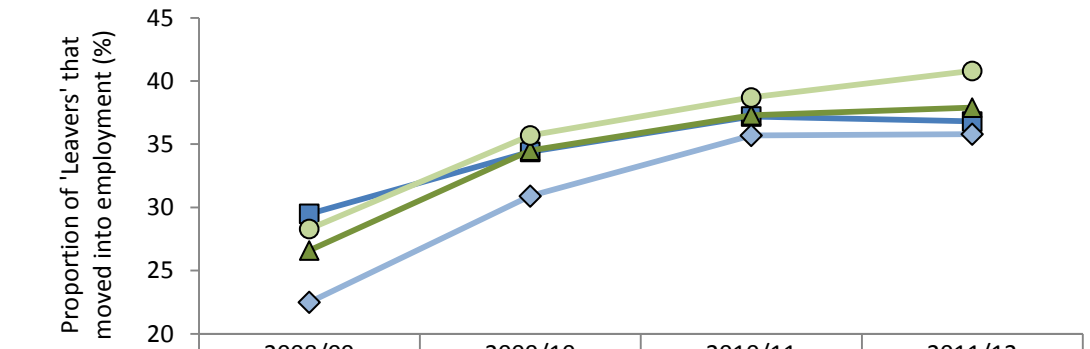
In 2011/12, the proportion of those whose religion was not known who moved into employment (40.8%) or sustained 13 weeks employment (34.7%) upon leaving the programme was greater than the proportion of Protestants (36.8% and 30.1% respectively), those of 'Other' religions (37.9% and 30.2% respectively) and Catholics (35.8% and 29.6% respectively) (see Figures 5.9 and 5.10; Technical Table 5.12).

The proportion of those moving into employment or sustaining 13 weeks of employment increased for all groups from 2008/09 to 2011/12 (see Figure 5.9 and 5.10). The proportion of those whose religion was not known who moved into employment or sustained 13 weeks employment increased from 28.3% and 23.5% respectively in 2008/09. The proportion of Protestants moving into employment or sustaining 13 weeks of employment increased from 29.5% and 23.0% respectively in 2008/09. Proportions also increased over the same time period for participants from 'Other' religions – in 2008/09, 26.6% moved to employment and

[191] See http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/jobseekers_allowance

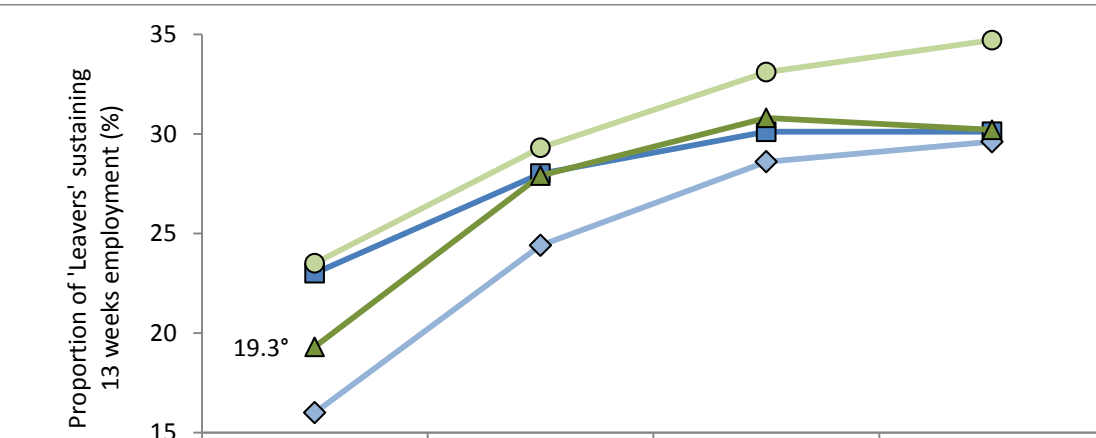
19.3% sustained employment. For Catholic participants, in 2008/09, 22.5% moved into employment and 16.0% sustained employment. While the proportions increased at a higher rate for Catholics, by 2011/12 the proportions for Catholics were still lower than the proportions for all other groups (see Figures 5.9 and 5.10; Technical Table 5.12).

Figure 5.9: Proportion of 'Leavers' from Steps to Work who moved into employment by religion, 2008/09 – 2011/12



	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Protestant	29.5	34.4	37.2	36.8
Catholic	22.5	30.9	35.7	35.8
'Other'	26.6	34.5	37.3	37.9
Not Known	28.3	35.7	38.7	40.8

Figure 5.10: Proportion of 'Leavers' from Steps to Work who sustained 13 weeks of employment by religion, 2008/09 – 2011/12



	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Protestant	23.0	28.0	30.1	30.1
Catholic	16.0	24.4	28.6	29.6
'Other'	19.3	27.9	30.8	30.2
Not Known	23.5	29.3	33.1	34.7

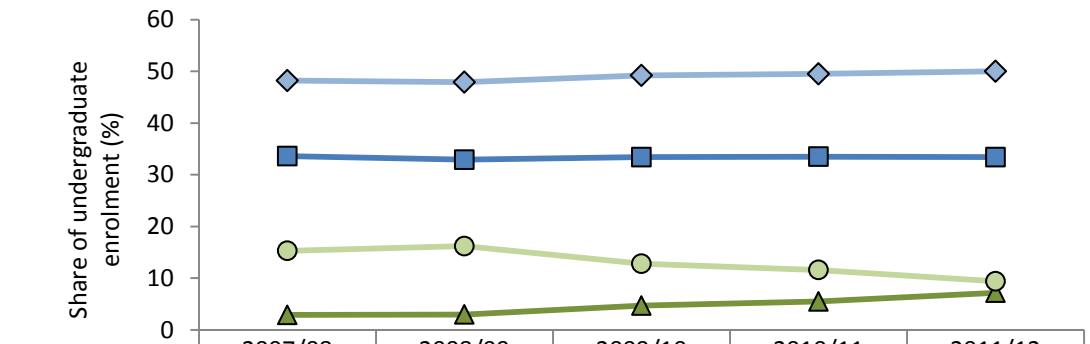
° Note that the number is less than 40

Higher Education (Source: DEL)

Undergraduate/Postgraduate Status – Access and Attainment:

A persistent trend between the years 2007/08 and 2011/12 is that Catholics made up the largest share of all undergraduate enrolments (50.0% in 2011/12, a slight increase from 48.2% in 2007/08)[192] (see Figure 5.11). Catholics also accounted for the largest share of postgraduate enrolments (40.8% in 2007/08, 45.2% in 2011/12) (see Figure 5.12). The shares of undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments for those of 'Other' religions increased over the five years – from 2.9% in 2007/08 to 7.2% in 2011/12 at undergraduate level, and from 5.1% to 12.4% at postgraduate level (see Technical Table 5.13). The Protestant shares of undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments remained relatively stable from 2007/08 (33.6% and 34.3% respectively) to 2011/12 (33.4% and 34.2% respectively). This has resulted in a widening of the gap in undergraduate and postgraduate enrolment in higher education between Protestants and Catholics (see Figures 5.11 and 5.12). The proportions of enrolees for those whose religion was not known decreased from 2007/08 to 2011/12 for both undergraduate (from 15.3% to 9.4%) and postgraduate (from 19.8% to 8.3%) levels (see Technical Table 5.13).

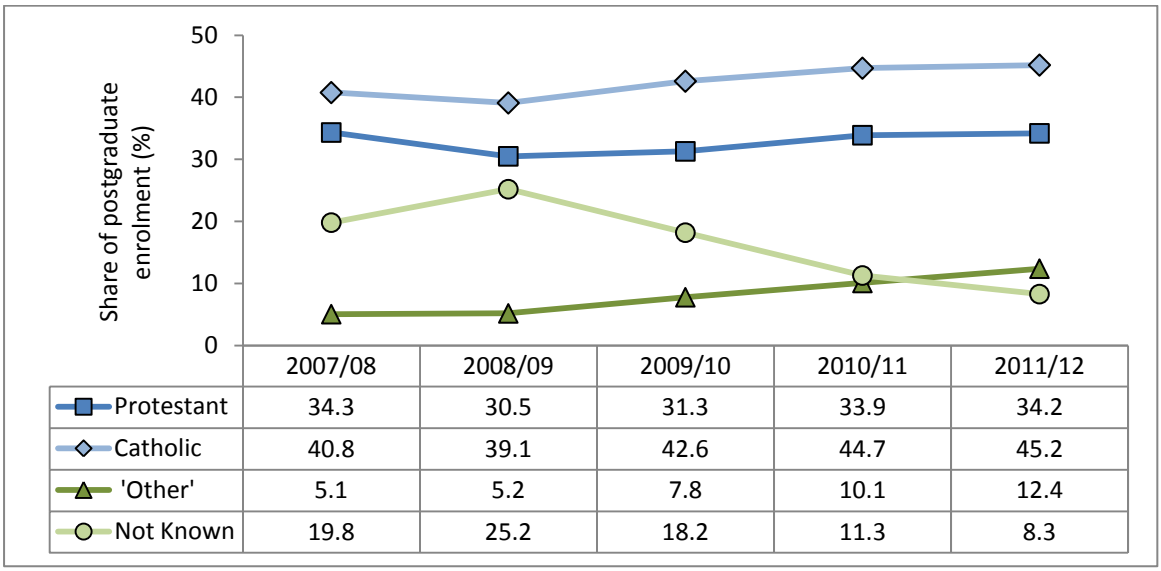
Figure 5.11: Share of undergraduate enrolees by religion, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Protestant	33.6	32.9	33.4	33.5	33.4
Catholic	48.2	47.9	49.2	49.5	50.0
'Other'	2.9	3.0	4.7	5.5	7.2
Not Known	15.3	16.2	12.8	11.6	9.4

[192] This finding is likely influenced by the fact that 77.2% of undergraduate students are 24 years of age or younger and that 49.2% of people in the age bracket of 16-25 in the general population are Catholic.

Figure 5.12: Share of postgraduate enrolees by religion, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Protestant	34.3	30.5	31.3	33.9	34.2
Catholic	40.8	39.1	42.6	44.7	45.2
'Other'	5.1	5.2	7.8	10.1	12.4
Not Known	19.8	25.2	18.2	11.3	8.3

The shares of students receiving undergraduate qualifications for each religious group between 2007/08 and 2011/12 reflected the shares of undergraduates enrolling by religion, with Catholics representing the majority of undergraduate qualifiers (51.9% in 2011/12, an increase from 45.7% in 2007/08). The Protestants share of undergraduate qualifiers was 36.9% (an increase from 34.3% in 2007/08), while the share of those of those of 'Other' religions was 5.7% (an increase from 2.7% in 2007/08). The share of those whose religion was not known was 5.5% in 2011/12, a decrease from 17.3% in 2007/08 (see Technical Table 5.13).

The shares of students receiving postgraduate qualifications for each religious group between 2007/08 and 2011/12 reflected the shares of postgraduates enrolling for Catholics (45.4% in 2011/12, up from 42.6% in 2007/08), those of 'Other' religion (9.4% in 2011/12, up from 4.0% in 2007/8) and those whose religion was not known (10.3% in 2011/12, down from 15.5% in 2007/08). The share of those receiving postgraduate qualifications who stated they were Protestant did not, however, reflect the share of enrolments, with the share of Protestant postgraduate qualifiers decreasing from 37.9% in 2007/08 to 34.9% in 2011/12 (see Technical Table 5.13). This has resulted in a widening of the gap in undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in higher education between Protestants and Catholics (see Technical Table 5.13).

Full-time/Part-time Status – Access and Attainment:

In 2011/12 Catholics made up a larger share of 'full-time/sandwich'[193] (52.6%) and 'part-time/other'[194] (40.0%) enrolments in higher education than Protestants (35.4% full-time; 28.5% part-time), those from 'Other' religions (8.0% full-time; 8.3% part-time) and those whose religion was not known (4.0% full-time, 23.2% part-time) (see Figures 5.13 and 5.14). Between the years 2007/08 and 2011/12, Catholic full-time and part-time enrolments decreased slightly (52.8% and 32.6% in 2007/08 respectively).

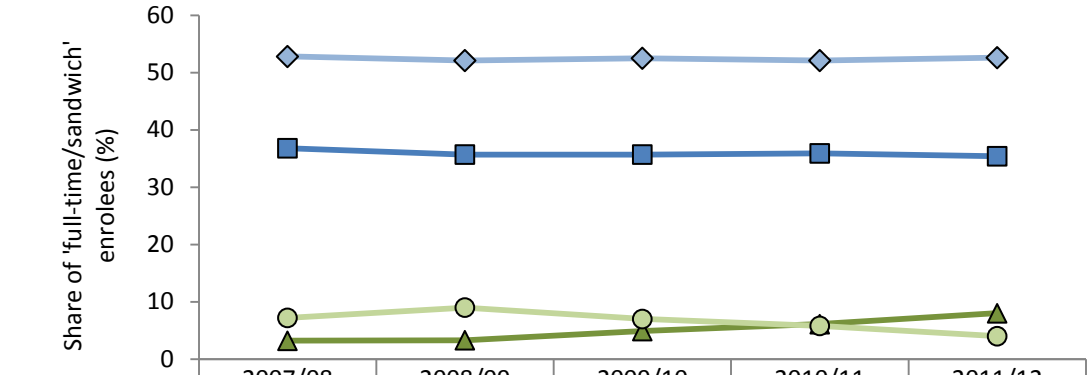
The shares of full-time and part-time enrolments for those of 'Other' religions increased over the five year period: from 3.2% in 2007/08 for 'full-time/sandwich' enrolments; and from 3.1% in 2007/08 for 'part-time/other' enrolments. The Protestant shares of full-time and part-time enrolment decreased for 'full-time/sandwich' enrolments from 36.8% in 2007/08, and increased from 25.9% in 2007/08 for 'part-time/other' enrolments. The shares of full-time and part-time enrolments for those whose religion was not known decreased: from 7.2% in 2007/08 for 'full-time/sandwich' enrolments; and from 38.4% in 2007/08 for 'part-time/other' enrolments (see Figures 5.13 and 5.14; Technical Table 5.14).

The trend of decreasing shares of 'full-time/sandwich' enrolments has been greater for Protestants than for Catholics and the trend of increasing shares for 'part-time/other' enrolments has also been greater for Catholics. This has resulted in a widening of the gap in full-time and part-time enrolments in higher education between Protestants and Catholics (see Figures 5.13 and 5.14; Technical Table 5.14).

[193] *Full-time* students are those normally required to attend an Institution for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the year of study, on thick or thin sandwich courses, and those on a study-related year out of their institution. During that time students are normally expected to undertake periods of study, tuition or work experience which amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week.

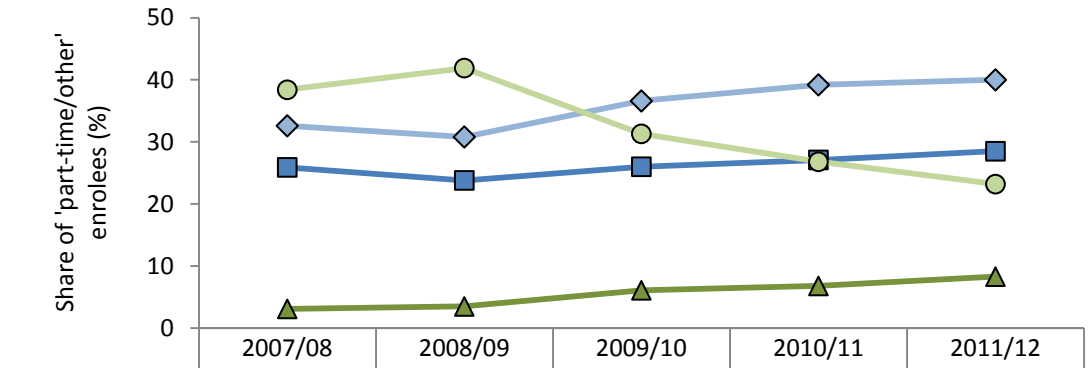
[194] *Part-time* students are those recorded as studying part-time, or studying full-time on courses lasting less than 24 weeks, on block release, or studying during the evenings only.

Figure 5.13: Share of full-time and sandwich enrolees by religion, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Protestant	36.8	35.7	35.7	35.9	35.4
Catholic	52.8	52.1	52.5	52.1	52.6
'Other'	3.2	3.3	4.9	6.1	8.0
Not Known	7.2	9.0	7.0	5.8	4.0

Figure 5.14: Share of part-time and other enrolees by religion, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Protestant	25.9	23.8	26.0	27.1	28.5
Catholic	32.6	30.8	36.6	39.2	40.0
'Other'	3.1	3.5	6.1	6.8	8.3
Not Known	38.4	41.9	31.3	26.8	23.2

Between 2007/08 and 2011/12 the shares of students receiving 'full-time/sandwich' and 'part-time/other' qualifications for each religious group broadly reflected the shares of 'full-time sandwich' and 'part-time/other' students enrolling by religion. Catholics represented the greatest shares of full-time and part-time qualifiers (51.7% in 2011/12 for full-time qualifiers, similar to 51.3% in 2007/08; 46.5% for part-time qualifiers, an increase from 32.8% in 2007/08). Trends in the shares of 'full-time/sandwich' and 'part-time/other' qualifications were similar to 'full-time/sandwich' and 'part-time/other' enrolments for Protestants, those of 'Other' religions and those whose religion was not known (see Technical Table 5.14)

Subject Choice – Access and Attainment:

Figures from DEL revealed differences in regard to the types of higher education subjects that students of different religions enrolled in and qualified from.

Consistently over the five year period from 2007/08 to 2011/12, Catholic students represented the largest shares of enrolees in all subject areas. Throughout the time period 2007/08 – 2011/12, the shares of Catholic enrolments were lowest in 'Other Disciplines' (42.6% in 2011/12) followed by 'Biological, Veterinary, Agricultural and Physical Sciences' (46.0% in 2011/12) (see Technical Table 5.15). Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the shares of Protestant enrolments were lowest in 'Social Studies and Law' (27.6% in 2011/12), followed by 'Other Disciplines' (29.7% in 2011/12) (see Table 5.2).

The shares of students from 'Other' religions were lowest in 'Business, Administration, Mass Communication and Other Documentation' subjects (1.4%) in 2007/08. However, this had changed by 2011/12 when the share of students from 'Other' religions was lowest in 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine' (6.5%). In 2007/08, the shares of enrolments from students whose religion was not known were lowest in 'Biological, Veterinary, Agricultural and Physical Sciences' (6.5%). However, this had changed by 2011/12 when the shares of students whose religion was not known were lowest in 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine' (3.9%) (see Table 5.2; Technical Table 5.15).

Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the shares of student qualifiers in each subject area by religion broadly reflected the shares of student enrolments, with Catholics representing the greatest share of qualifiers in all subject areas (see Table 5.2). Within their religious grouping, all groups were consistently most likely to qualify from 'Other Disciplines' over the period 2007/08 to 2011/12, followed by the STEM[195] area of 'Medicine, Dentistry and Subjects Allied to Medicine'; again, reflecting enrolments in these subject areas (see Technical Table 5.16).

[195] STEM is an acronym of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. According to the Department of Employment and Learning, STEM related qualifications include qualifications in the following subject areas; 'Medicine & Dentistry, Subjects allied to Medicine', 'Biological Sciences, Veterinary Sciences, Agriculture' & related subjects, 'Physical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science, Engineering & Technology' and 'Architecture, Building & Planning'. See http://www.delni.gov.uk/2857p_stem_booklet_v5.pdf.

Table 5.2: Share of subject enrolments and qualifiers in higher education by religion, 2007/08 – 2011/12

			Medicine, Dentistry & Subjects Allied to Medicine	Biological, Veterinary, Agricultural & Physical Sciences	Maths, IT, Engineering & Technology	Social Studies & Law	Business, Administration, Mass Communication & Documentation	Other Disciplines
Enrolments	**Year**		**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
	2007/08	**Protestant**	33.4	41.2	39.0	29.6	32.7	31.7
		Catholic	42.9	48.0	50.1	56.0	51.7	42.0
		Other	3.2	4.3	3.5	3.4	1.4	3.7
		Not Known	20.5	6.5	7.4	11.0	14.2	22.5
	2011/12	**Protestant**	39.0	38.5	36.6	27.6	33.7	29.7
		Catholic	50.7	46.0	48.4	58.4	53.8	42.6
		Other	6.5	10.4	10.2	8.0	7.8	7.8
		Not Known	3.9	5.0	4.9	6.0	4.7	20.0
Qualifiers	**Year**							
	2007/08	**Protestant**	34.6	44.4	44.5	28.8	30.7	34.6
		Catholic	41.4	47.4	45.9	53.2	49.9	40.6
		Other	3.8	3.7	3.0°	2.6	1.5°	3.0
		Not Known	20.2	4.4	6.5	15.4	17.9	21.8
	2011/12	**Protestant**	40.2	42.0	39.9	29.2	34.2	36.6
		Catholic	48.0	43.7	46.4	57.8	52.6	49.3
		Other	6.1	7.4	6.4	5.8	6.2	7.6
		Not Known	5.7	6.9	7.3	7.3	7.0	6.6

° Note that the number is less than 40

Higher Education – Progression:

There were inconsistent patterns of non-continuation over the years 2007/08 to 2011/12 for students of different religions. However, the Catholic share of non-continuation was consistently higher than the share of Protestants throughout the time period (see Technical Table 5.17). In 2011/12, the Catholic share of non-continuation was 62.5%; the share of Protestants was 25.9%; the share for those of 'Other' religions was 8.8%; and the share for those whose religion was not known was 2.7% (see Technical Table 5.17).

Higher Education Leavers – Destinations:

There were some differences between the religious groups in regard to their destination after leaving higher education. In 2010/11[196], a large proportion of Protestants (51.5%), Catholics (50.8%) and those whose religion was not known (56.6%) moved into full-time work. Those from 'Other' religions were least likely to move into full-time work (46.5%). The proportion of Protestants who moved into 'work and further study' (10.1%) was greater than for all other groups (9.2% Catholics; 7.0% Other; 6.8% unknown/no religion) and those of 'Other' religions were more likely to move into further study only (16.4%) than all other groups (11.1% Protestants; 11.0% Catholics; 8.7% unknown religion). A greater proportion of those from 'Other' religions, however, were assumed to be unemployed (11.2% compared to 7.6% Protestants; 8.3% Catholics; 8.2% whose religion was not known) (see Table 5.3; Technical Table 5.18).

The proportion of students entering full-time employment after higher education decreased for all groups from 2007/08 to 2010/11, and the proportion entering part-time employment increased for all groups (see Table 5.3). All groups were more likely to enter work and further study in 2010/11 than in 2007/08, however, all groups were less likely to continue on to further study alone in 2011/12 than in 2007/08 and were more likely to be assumed to be unemployed (see Table 5.3; Technical Table 5.18).

[196] The most recent year for which data is available

Table 5.3: Proportion (%) destination of higher education leavers by religion, 2007/08 to 2010/11

		Full-time paid work only	Part-time paid work only	Work and further study	Further study only	Assumed to be unemployed	Not available for employment
Year		**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
2007/08	**Protestant**	57.7	12.9	8.1	11.4	5.6	2.9
	Catholic	57.7	10.9	6.8	11.4	7.5	4.6
	Other	53.8	11.0°	6.2°	19.0	4.8°	3.8°
	Not Known	78.2	6.7	4.1	3.7	4.4	2.2°
2010/11	**Protestant**	51.5	15.6	10.1	11.1	7.6	2.5
	Catholic	50.8	15.8	9.2	11.0	8.3	4.0
	Other	46.5	15.8	7.0°	16.4	11.2°	2.1°
	Not Known	56.6	16.2	6.8	8.7	8.2	1.7°

° Note that the number is less than 40

Overall Population (Sources: Census and Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey)

Highest Qualification Attainment:

The Census data in Table 5.4 show large decreases between 2001 and 2011, of at least 25%, in the proportions of people from all religious categories that had no qualifications. The proportions of those with Levels 1-3 qualifications remained relatively unchanged between 2001 and 2011 for all groups, with a variance of less than 3 percentage points (with the exception of those from 'Other' religions who experienced a variance of 4.2%). The proportion of those obtaining Levels 4+ qualifications increased for all categories, except those from 'Other' religions. This increase was most notable for Protestants and Catholics, where the proportion of those with Level 4+ qualifications increased by over 50%. Although those from 'Other' religions experienced a decrease in the proportion of those with Level 4+ qualifications (from 40.2% in 2001 to 37.2% in 2011), they were still the most likely of all groups to have Level 4+ qualifications. In 2011, the overall proportions of Catholics and Protestants who had Levels 1-3 (40.4% and 42.0% respectively), Levels 4+ (24.8% and 24.3% respectively), and other (8.6% and 8.1% respectively) qualifications are very similar. In 2011, those who were from 'Other' religions and no religion were less likely to have no qualifications (18.0% and 18.2% respectively) and more likely to have higher level qualifications than the other two communities. Those from 'Other' religions were most likely to have Level 4+ qualifications (37.2%) and those of no religion were most likely to have Levels 1-3 qualifications (46.8%).

Table 5.4: Highest qualification proportions by religion in the Northern Ireland population

		Catholic	Protestant*	Other	None	TOTAL
Year		**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
2001	**No qualifications**	41.3	42.6	24.5	27.5	**41.6**
	Levels 1-3	42.7	42.3	35.3	49.6	**42.6**
	Levels 4+	16.1	15.1	40.2	22.8	**15.8**
2011	**No qualifications**	26.2	25.6	18.0	18.2	**25.4**
	Levels 1-3	40.4	42.0	31.1	46.8	**41.4**
	Levels 4+	24.8	24.3	37.2	25.3	**24.7**
	Other qualifications (incl. apprenticeships)	8.6	8.1	13.7	9.7	**8.5**

*including Christian-related

The NILT datasets from 2008 – 2012 (no survey was conducted in 2011) were also analysed to check for differences between the highest qualification level of respondents from different religious categories.

In 2012, both Catholics and Protestants were more likely to have no qualifications (25.4% and 26.1% respectively) than any other qualification category; this trend was constant throughout the period 2008-2012. Consistently from 2008-2012, a larger proportion of Catholics than Protestant had 'Degree level or higher' as their highest qualification (18.9% and 16.3% respectively in 2012). Those with no religion were most likely to have a 'Degree level or higher' qualification as their highest qualification (26.8%); the trend for this group cannot be analysed as the numbers for this group were below 40 in most categories from 2008-2012.

Stakeholders representing different groups with an interest in the religious belief equality ground were involved in interviews and an expert seminar to discuss the preliminary findings of the research and identify barriers and enablers to educational equality on the grounds of gender.

Findings from Qualitative Data

During engagement with key stakeholders about the research, some representatives from further and higher education had additional comments to make regarding achieving educational equality for those of different religions.

1. Geographical location

Firstly, the further education colleges were reported as being very different in terms of religious make-up because of their geographical locations; they are reflective of the local community where the college is physically located. However, the Belfast Metropolitan College in the Titanic Quarter was reported as being approximately 50/50 Catholic/Protestant, as well having as a high number of Muslim students. Facilities to accommodate Muslim students' needs have been added – for example, there is a prayer room for them in the building. In terms of being able to understand more about the student experience for those of different religions and to ensure their equal participation, one representative recommended that all different religions are listed and stated on all monitoring forms, rather than the category of 'Other' to cover anything other than Protestant and Catholic:

"For example, it is hard to know exactly how many Sikhs or Muslims there are, which then makes it difficult for us to cater for their needs, for example, in terms of food available on site or prayer facilities."

2. Underachievement of disadvantaged Protestants

Secondly, in regard to higher education, a representative from a widening participation programme reported that there is recognition of the need to specifically target Protestant boys from areas of higher deprivation in their activities, in order to start to redress the inequality of their under-representation in higher education.

Summary

Analysis of access, attainment, progression and destination in education by religion from 2007/08 to 2011/12 has identified a number of areas where differentials by religion and/or inequalities were apparent.

In terms of access, there were decreases in the overall intake of children and young people at nursery schools, primary schools, and secondary schools who are registered as Protestant, and increases in the proportions of those who are registered as 'Other'. Protestant enrolment in Catholic maintained primary and secondary schools and Catholic managed voluntary grammar schools persistently remained under 1% since 2007/08. The literature review acknowledged that with the existing level of provision considered unsustainable and given the high level of segregation identified, closure of certain schools may impact on access to Catholic maintained schools or controlled schools in certain areas, particularly in rural areas[197].

The persistent and overarching trend in terms of educational attainment of schools leavers is that a greater proportion of Catholics achieved the education targets than Protestants and 'Other' students across all three categories (A Levels; GCSEs; GCSEs incl. English and Maths) throughout the time period, and the gap between Catholics and the other groups widened between 2007/08 and 2011/12 in all three categories. Examination of the literature identified cultural and community factors which may impact on how Protestant families perceive education and participation in schools[198]. These include the past cultural association of Protestant working class families in industry leading to an undervaluation of education, the loss of positive community role models, community instability and weaker community infrastructure in Protestant working class communities. The literature and qualitative research identified a need to further understand and address Protestant underachievement.

Larger differences emerge when looking at the destinations of school leavers – Catholics were persistently more likely to enter higher education and less likely to enter further education than other groups; Protestants were persistently more likely than the other groups to enter job training.

[197] Lundy, L., Emerson, L., Lloyd, K., Byrne, B., & Yohanis, J. (2013). *Education Reform in Northern Ireland: A Human Rights Review*. Belfast: Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission/Centre for Children's Rights, Queen's University Belfast.
[198] http://www.nicva.org/sites/default/files/A-Call-to-Action-FINAL-March2011_0.pdf

In further education courses, Catholics represented a greater share of enrolees than Protestants, however Protestants had larger shares of retention and successful completion than the other groups[199]. The larger share of Catholics on accredited courses and in the Training for Success and Steps to Work programmes may, however, be reflective of the fact that there are more Catholics in the 16-24 age group in the population, and that the majority of enrolees on these courses and programmes are in that age bracket. Catholics and those of 'Other' religions had lesser degrees of success with obtaining employment after leaving the Steps to Work programme than Protestants.

Within higher education, Catholics were over-represented in both undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments. There was a trend of slightly increasing shares of enrolment for Catholics, stagnant shares of enrolment for Protestants, and an increasing share of enrolment from those of 'Other' religions – this resulted in a small widening of the gap between Protestants and Catholics in higher education. All religious groups were consistently most likely to enrol in 'Other Disciplines', followed by the STEM area of 'Medicine, Dentistry and Subjects Allied to Medicine'.

The qualitative data collected for this equality ground revealed the need for a further disaggregation of the 'Other' religious group category in official statistics[200], in order to understand more about the student experience of those of different religions, to accommodate their needs and to ensure their equal participation.

[199] Given the high percentage of those of unknown religion in accredited courses, Essential Skills and non-accredited courses, care must be taken when interpreting these results as some of these 'unknowns' may be Protestant, Catholic, of a non-Christian religion or of no religion.
[200] This data is currently collected but remains suppressed due to low numbers

Chapter 6: Political Opinion Inequalities in Education

Introduction

Legislative statutes covering equality and anti-discrimination on the grounds of political opinion in Northern Ireland are similar to those covering the equality ground of religious belief outlined in Chapter 5. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998[201] requires public authorities, including educational bodies (but not including schools), in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different political opinion. In addition, the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998[202] prohibits discrimination and harassment in employment and in the provision of goods, facilities and services on the grounds of religious belief and political opinion. This statute applies to educational bodies including government departments and their sponsor bodies, institutes of further and higher education and schools[203].

In terms of local Northern Irish politics, four of the most prominent political beliefs or ideologies are unionist and loyalist (that is, those who wish for Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom), and nationalist and republican (those who wish to see Northern Ireland united with the Republic of Ireland). These political beliefs also tend to correlate with individuals' religious identities[204] – unionists / loyalists are predominantly Protestant, and nationalists / republicans are predominantly Catholic; but not all Protestants support unionism or loyalism, nor do all Catholics support nationalism or republicanism. The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) is the largest unionist political party in Northern Ireland, followed by the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP); Sinn Féin is the largest republican party in Northern Ireland, whilst the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) is the largest nationalist party. Several other political parties and elected representatives in Northern Ireland do not base their political stances on the constitutional question, for example, the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland.

It should be noted that political opinion is not asked in the Census; only national identity, but this is a poor proxy for political opinion. According to the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey 2012, 28% of people surveyed in Northern Ireland consider themselves unionist; 23%

[201] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75
[202] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1998/3162/contents/made
[203] There is an exception in relation to the recruitment, selection and promotion of school teachers under FETO. However, all other aspects of a teacher's employment are covered under FETO.
[204] See Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey website for annual results of political opinion – in 2012, 89.4% of Unionists were Protestant and 96.1% of Nationalists were Catholic. (http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/datasets/)

consider themselves nationalist; 47% consider themselves neither; 1% said 'Other'; and 2% didn't know.

Literature Review

Within Northern Ireland, education inequalities by political opinion are difficult to disentangle from education inequalities by religion, given the often overlapping nature of religious background and local political opinions. Furthermore, little or no data exists on educational access, attainment, progression or destination by political opinion as this information is not systematically asked of school leavers nor of students in further or higher education on their enrolment forms. However, minimal information is available from local non-governmental data sources and publications.

Hayes et al (2006)[205] explored political identities by the type of school that a person attended by combining datasets from the Life and Times survey, the Northern Ireland Social Attitudes Survey, the Northern Ireland Referendum and Election Survey, and the Northern Ireland Election Study. Although the results do not highlight barriers to education by certain types of political opinion, they do highlight how young people of certain political persuasions may feel more 'accepted' or able to attend certain types of schools as opposed to others. Hayes et al found differences among Protestants in terms of their support for the two dominant national and political identities – British and unionist – between those who had attended a formally integrated school and those who had not. Protestants who had attended an integrated school were less likely to endorse either a British or unionist identity (54.3%) than those who had attended either a segregated school (73.2%) or one that was fairly mixed (71.2%). Protestants who had attended an integrated school not only were more likely to choose a Northern Irish identity, but they were also more likely to reject a unionist label in favour of the intermediate 'neither' position (43.2%, compared to 26% of those who went to a segregated school and 28.1% of those who went to a fairly mixed school). Only 2.5% of Protestants who went to an integrated school would consider themselves to be nationalists, but this was still much higher than the proportion of Protestants who attended segregated (0.8%) or fairly mixed schools (0.7%). The political opinions of Protestants from this study[206] were thus overwhelmingly either unionist or neither – no matter which type of school they attended.

[205] Hayes, B., McAllister, I., & Dowds, L. (2006). *In Search of the Middle Ground: Integrated Education and Northern Ireland Politics.* ARK Research Update 42.
[206] Ibid

Catholics who attended segregated or fairly mixed schools were more likely than Protestants who attended segregated or fairly mixed schools to choose the 'neither' category as their political identity (32.6% and 40.5% respectively), and, mirroring the pattern found with Protestants, almost all would consider themselves either nationalists or neither- very small numbers would cross the traditional divide and consider themselves unionist (0.0% of Catholics who went to an integrated school; 1.0% of those who went to segregated schools; and 1.6% of those who went to a fairly mixed school). The research[207] also found that Protestants who had attended an integrated school were less likely to support the constitutional link with Britain and to be undecided. While over 80% of Protestants who had attended either a fairly mixed or segregated school favoured the union with Britain, the equivalent proportion among those who had experienced a formally integrated education was just 65.4%. Furthermore, 4.9% of Protestants who attended integrated schools supported a united Ireland, and 6.2% supported an independent Northern Ireland – higher proportions that those who attended fairly mixed or segregated schools. In a parallel vein, while just over half of Catholics who had attended a segregated school supported Irish re-unification, just over one in three of those who had experienced an integrated education did so. About a quarter of Catholics who attended integrated schools preferred to remain part of the UK, compared to one-fifth of Catholics who attended a segregated school. The Hayes et al research (2006)[208] concludes that both Protestants and Catholics who had attended an integrated school are more likely than those who had not to occupy a neutral position in terms of political identities and constitutional preferences – but that this is particularly the case for Protestants. As stated before, the potential impact of this is that the perceived or actual political identities of the populace within a particular school sector may discourage or encourage young people to apply to them, depending on whether they feel they would 'belong' there.

An issue in regard to equality of access to education has also appeared in Northern Ireland in relation to higher education. The Official Hansard Report for the Northern Ireland Assembly (for 15th November 2011)[209] includes a discussion on entrance to university by religion (and political opinion). The Northern Ireland Assembly Members at this debate raised the issues of Protestant underrepresentation in higher education in Northern Ireland. For some MLAs, particular campuses represented 'cold houses' for Protestants and unionists, due to factors such as the consistently low enrolment numbers of Protestants year after year as well as a certain

[207] Hayes, B., McAllister, I., & Dowds, L. (2006). *In Search of the Middle Ground: Integrated Education and Northern Ireland Politics.* ARK Research Update 42.
[208] Ibid
[209] Official Report (Hansard): Tuesday 15th November 2011, Volume 68, No. 6. Belfast: Parliament Buildings.

fear factor due to the perception of a hostile campus 'culture.'[210] However, a report commissioned by the Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland on school leavers' attitudes towards further and higher education[211] revealed that when asked if there were any 'chill' factors that might discourage them from applying to a particular institution, 63% said there were not and 33% did not answer the question at all, leaving only 4% who said there were factors which would make them uncomfortable about applying to a particular place. Other members quoted in the Hansard Report believed that the imbalance within local university enrolments with respect to Protestants/unionists is more strongly a result of the underachievement of Protestant working class young people while at school, and that if this inequality was addressed, the perceived inequalities within universities would automatically be addressed too.

The next section of this chapter will present the key findings from the Northern Ireland Life and Times datasets with regard to rates of attainment by political opinion.

[210] See pages 324 and 328.
[211] Osborne, R.D., Smith, C.A., and Gallagher, T. (2008). *After School: Attitudes & perceptions of Northern Ireland school leavers towards higher & further education, training & employment*. Belfast: DEL.

Findings from Quantitative Data

Overall Population (Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILT), 2008-2012)

(Please note: DENI/DEL data is not available by political opinion).

Highest Qualification Attainment:

The NILT datasets from 2008 – 2012[212] were analysed to check for differences between the highest qualification level of respondents who stated that they considered themselves to be a unionist, nationalist, or neither.

In 2012, both nationalists and unionists were most likely to have no qualifications (27.1% and 30.2% respectively) while those who identified as neither were most likely to have a 'Degree level or higher' qualification as their highest qualification (23.1%). Consistently throughout the period, a larger proportion of nationalists than unionists had 'Degree level or higher' as their highest qualification (19.0% and 13.5% respectively in 2012).

It is interesting to note that those who considered themselves to be neither nationalist nor unionist made up the largest share of respondents in the survey (approximately 40-45% from 2008-2012).

The next section of this chapter will present the findings from the qualitative element of the research (focus groups, interviews, and a stakeholder engagement event), in order to thematically illustrate the barriers and enablers to educational equality that stakeholders identified for political opinion.

[212] No survey was conducted in 2011

Findings from Qualitative Data

Several key issues were raised during qualitative data collection (focus groups with student political societies and stakeholder engagement) in relation to enablers and barriers to educational access, attainment, progression and destinations for people of different political opinions.

Political opinion-related barriers to education equality

1. Over-emphasis on political neutrality

Students and stakeholders who were interviewed felt that within educational institutions (and more generally in Northern Ireland), there is an over-emphasis on displaying political neutrality – and at times, that not being considered 'neutral' can have a detrimental impact on educational engagement and progression. For young people of any political opinion, it was deemed fine to be interested in political 'issues' in school, but not to join a political party – other students would ask them, '*why are you doing that, why are you canvassing?*' The students spoke of a real fear of being ostracised from peers while at post-primary school. One research group reported that even when studying politics at GCSE or A Level, there was still the expectation that you have to be 'neutral' – this was deemed unrealistic. Other students said that amongst peers, politics was openly talked about, but it was the teachers and the school who didn't know how to react to it – for example, when Gerry Adams came to visit one school, pupils were banned from asking him about his time in politics, and could only ask him about his time at school.

Openness about political persuasions and the resultant impact could also be dependent upon the location of a person's post-primary school. For example, schools that had a lot of ex pupils who were prisoners, hunger strikers and so on were regarded as more open to discussing party politics with students. The social class of an area also had an impact:

"Going to a school that was 99% Protestant, being known as a unionist wasn't an issue – though it might have been had I attended a school closer to Belfast with more of a social mix".

There was a perceived lack of awareness amongst some teachers, especially in schools which are located in more 'middle class' areas, about the issues that people are concerned with, especially if pupils come from areas that were more badly affected by the conflict. It was reported that this can lead to a lack of understanding as to why some pupils want to be active in politics. When teachers mainly came from the same local area as pupils or when the majority of

pupils came from the same local area where the school was located, students felt more able to be open about political involvement and opinions.

Some students reported that they believed their political opinions could impact on how they progress through their courses, especially if they are studying politics or history. Two students spoke about difficulties in writing essays for these courses:

"You have to stay 'neutral'. "I do politics and I have to be very cautious not to be 'biased' – but yet you are told to have original thoughts. I used a quotation from An Phoblacht but it was not considered a credible 'source' for the essay, even though it was a direct quote."

There was also a perception of difficulty in terms of the use of political language in essays:

"We have certain language – in higher education it is 'paramilitiaries' – whereas we say 'ex-combatants'. It puts you off what you are writing, you are afraid – the topics are close to your heart, but you end up choosing essay questions that you don't care as much about – even when being really careful, it is 'biased'."

There was the feeling amongst some students that they couldn't develop their political opinions through their academic work – they believed it is a contradiction to be told to expand your political thinking and interrogate your thoughts, but yet they do not feel free to explore them in marked essays. This situation did not depend on the institution attended - it was deemed to be across the board. Another student stated:

"Lecturers are sometimes more open about their political opinions – but sometimes lecturers use content that would be deemed 'offensive' by us – but it makes you or breaks you. Some lecturers are so heavily opinionated, and you would love to get into the debates via essays and lecture content – but you can't – it is heavily biased, but there's no recourse for debate. It puts me off going to lectures because there is one [who] I just can't listen to any more. It should be open debate for all."

Some believed this a consequence of the conflict – and that the identity of 'Northern Irishness' and neutrality is promoted by the universities – having other political identities are perceived as not 'appropriate'.

2. School system structurally divided by community background

As outlined in Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 of this report, different school management types in Northern Ireland are largely divided along religious lines. With religious identity often closely intertwined with political identity in Northern Ireland, this had led to a school system that is divided by ethno-religious or community background. In addition, given that Catholic maintained schools have better results than controlled or integrated schools, there is the perception amongst unionist students that young unionists are therefore missing out on the best education experiences that Northern Ireland has to offer:

"Even Catholic maintained grammar schools in East Belfast send many more students to higher education than neighbouring state-controlled grammar schools, and the Catholic secondary schools do better than controlled secondary schools. But young unionists wouldn't even consider going to those schools – it would be an alien environment, if not intimidating."

There was also the opinion amongst some unionist students that the funding boost given to the integrated school sector has led to a situation where local controlled and Catholic maintained schools in areas suffer in terms of the resources they can offer students: *"integrated schools bus students in from across other parts of the city, and don't serve local students with highest needs."*

3. Perceptions of 'cold houses'

Student representatives from across the political spectrum felt that several campuses of higher education were unwelcoming to them because of their political beliefs. A nationalist student group said that they would not apply to Stranmillis College for teacher training (which traditionally trains teachers to work in state controlled or integrated schools and has a mainly Protestant intake). However, they also thought that Protestants wouldn't feel comfortable applying to St Mary's Teacher Training College (which trains teachers to work in Catholic maintained schools as well as other schools and has a mainly Catholic intake).

One student from a nationalist background said there would be a perceived historical barriers to entry in certain campuses, but again, that the location where a student has grown up would have an impact on perceptions: "*The historical perception would be that Queen's' is a cold house for nationalism, but especially in Coleraine – I know a lot of nationalists who feel uncomfortable in that environment. It's because of the physical location – it's out of fear of where you have to travel for it. But others who come from more religiously mixed areas felt OK about the possibility of going there."*

Unionist students reported that they felt both Northern Irish universities were 'cold houses' for unionists, but that they would feel more comfortable at Queen's University than the University of Ulster – there was the impression that UU is 'segregated' - for example, they reported seeing large groups of students standing together in GAA tops and find it intimidating. They believed that if there was more openness about political differences when students start, then there wouldn't be the same issues with 'voluntary segregation'. They believed that the Magee campus has the lowest proportion of Protestants attending in comparison to other UU campuses, while Coleraine was viewed as the 'most Protestant' – yet because of the prevalence of Irish language signs on campus, it gave the impression to unionists that English is the second language there, and the presence of the signs was seen by them as a political move – that Irish has been politicised by nationalists and republicans who attend there. The unionist student group reported feeling as if they are almost being forced to go to Great Britain for university and that they shouldn't come back. Furthermore, they felt that as a political society in a university setting, blocks have been put in front of them that aren't in place for other societies e.g. their fundraising efforts were stopped in previous years – and that these barriers are dependent on who is elected to the students union.

Other stakeholders recommended that more research is conducted on the perceptions of cold houses versus the reality of people's experiences: *"If both unionists and nationalists perceive Queen's to be a cold house, who is it warm for?"*

Potential political opinion-related enablers to education equality

1. Monitoring of political opinion in third level education

Some students did question the appropriateness of any formal recording of the political opinions of young people at school:

"*Why would young people have to claim what they are – isn't that unnecessary? "Young people will vote whatever way they want – why does anyone have to know? You go to the voting poll and vote, and people's political opinions are monitored that way."*

Others felt that as long as school leavers' surveys were anonymous, it wouldn't be an issue to ask pupils about their political opinions, and others believed that monitoring political opinion in younger people was potentially useful, since although someone might mark Catholic/Protestant, that doesn't automatically demarcate political views – many Catholics could be unionist,

Protestants could be nationalists – and knowing more about this could break down sectarian divides.

Others were more open to answering questions about political opinion after leaving school, and felt it was important as colleges and universities can be much more political environments with active party presences. However, they recommended that it would not be made compulsory to answer this question on an admissions form or leavers' form.

A representative from a further education college in Belfast reported that their college has not asked students about political opinion before, but are asking it now. However, doubts remained about the usefulness of this for service delivery, but the representative acknowledged that it could be a useful equality ground to monitor in colleges which are located in areas that are still affected by issues related to the conflict:

"We would question why monitoring political opinion is relevant from a college perspective and a business perspective – the barriers that are more useful to monitor in terms of barriers and access to education are coming from a care background, socio-economic background and so on. You kind of get political opinion from religious background anyway. It is not interesting to me from a service delivery point of view. It is linked to the Good Friday Agreement, but that seems so far away now. You have some parties trying to be progressive, but a lot of the older stuff the younger people don't want to hear about any longer. They didn't grow up with that. But it might be very relevant for the young people who still live in the areas that continue to be affected by the conflict, for example, where the rioting is."

Another representative from a university widening participation scheme also reported that before universities make changes to monitoring, the reasons for asking certain questions need to be clear – and if concerns exist, then it is probably worthwhile to do so:

"Before you make the step of asking about political opinion, you need to know why – what would be the benefit, e.g. discrimination, knowing more about the student experience, if someone feels alienated, if they are thinking about leaving their degree early, if they are less likely to achieve a 2:1 because they feel they can't be honest in their coursework/assignments, then it is an issue which could be addressed if more was known about political opinion."

However, another representative from higher education was sceptical of whether universities would ask students about political opinions of their own accord:

"Political opinion being asked would have to be a directive from the Equality Commission – universities wouldn't ask it. It wouldn't be asked on the UCAS form either – it would have to become a requirement."

2. Tackling Protestant underachievement

There was the belief amongst unionists that if the issue of Protestant underachievement and participation was tackled, a lot of the issues regarding political opinion (especially in the field of higher education) would solve themselves. There was also the impression that local universities do not make as much effort to go into schools to attract Protestant students as part of widening participation schemes. Again, the impression this gave was that *"they are only welcome in GB universities. Universities should aim to increase the Protestant quota as a matter of urgency."*

3. Enabling openness about party allegiances

Stakeholders reported that in Northern Ireland, people are generally secretive about any party allegiances and nervous about revealing these, since *'badges and identity are sometimes determined by others rather than focusing on common ground'*, and '*the perception is that if someone holds a particular political opinion that all other views will necessarily flow from that.'* Students who were politically active reported being nervous about how their opinions could impact on the destinations they plan on going to after leaving higher education – for example, many nationalists study law but there was a perception that you cannot have affiliations with a political party and apply for the Bar. Others felt that they would not write about their political involvement on any personal statement forms or CVs – even though it involves skills such as communication, experience of organising events, conferences, and so on. Young people said they are always conscious of it and were wary of how they may be discriminated against if they added it in. One student group was of the opinion that Citizenship classes in schools need to go into more depth about local politics and about the way the Northern Irish political structures work, what councils do, and so on, so that young people feel more empowered to become engaged in politics and to talk openly about their views. Stakeholders also recommended that the impact of the Shared Education Programme on increasing feelings of comfort amongst pupils and their openness to talking to others of different political opinions is considered.

Summary

Two key issues were identified regarding educational equality between people of different political opinions: one is a lack of data or inconsistent data, and the other is fear and a lack of openness about political opinion.

Firstly, while there is a lack of available quantitative data on education outcomes for this equality ground, the quantitative data that was reported from the NILT survey showed an unclear pattern in terms of those who had no qualifications by political opinion, but in terms of higher qualifications, unionists appeared to be doing less well than nationalists and neither – this is perhaps reflective of the patterns of highest qualifications by religion. This reflects the findings from the literature review and qualitative research, wherein, addressing Protestant achievement was perceived to be an enabler to greater equality of access to higher education by political opinion.

Secondly, it was felt that an overemphasis on political neutrality in school and further and higher education was perceived to be a barrier to politically active students expressing and debating their views. Students who are politically active at school are fearful of the social and educational impact association with one party or ideology will have. In addition, students in further and higher education who are politically active are fearful that affiliation to one party or ideology will have a detrimental impact both on the grades they receive and the destinations they go to after leaving further and higher level education. Programmes and initiatives that educate students from different school sectors and backgrounds together may work to not only increase levels of openness about political opinions, but might also increase students' opportunities to avail of as many educational resources as possible, thus removing the educational negative impacts that the divided Northern Irish school system may have, especially for Protestant pupils.

The qualitative data shows that knowing more about the student experiences (especially at third level education) of people of different political backgrounds through monitoring and asking about political opinion in student surveys may help to combat access issues vis-à-vis perceptions of 'cold houses', but also attainment issues, if it is found that students felt discriminated against in their coursework or in essays because of political opinion.

Chapter 7: Ethnicity and Racial Inequalities in Education

Introduction

In Northern Ireland, the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (the RRO)[213], as amended by the Race Relations Order (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003, outlaws discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin in the field of education, amongst other fields. The RRO also provides that segregation on racial grounds constitutes discrimination. The Irish Traveller community is specifically identified in the RRO as a racial group which is protected against unlawful racial discrimination. The RRO prohibits discrimination in education at all levels and in addition places a general duty on educational bodies to ensure that their facilities are provided without racial discrimination. In addition, the RRO permits any actions to allow persons from a particular racial group access to facilities and services to meet the special needs of persons of that group with regard to their education, training or welfare or any ancillary benefits. Furthermore, Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998[214] requires public authorities, including educational bodies (but not including schools), to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different racial group.

In addition the UK government has international obligations with respect to racial discrimination in education. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)[215] provides an international standard for human rights on the grounds of race. The Convention defines what constitutes racial discrimination and sets out a comprehensive framework for ensuring that civil, political, economic and social rights are enjoyed by all, without distinction of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin including rights with respect to education[216].

In educational policy within Northern Ireland, the Department of Education (DE) Northern Ireland's 'Supporting Newcomer Pupils' document aims to 'enable Newcomer children to access the curriculum, and the wider environment, which allows them to feel welcome within and participate fully in the school'[217]. The term 'Newcomer' pupils refers to a child or young person who has enrolled in a school but who does not have satisfactory language skills to participate

[213] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1997/869/contents/made
[214] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75
[215] http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx
[216] ICERD Article 5e(v)
[217] Department of Education Northern Ireland (2009). *Supporting Newcomer Pupils*. p.1

fully in the school curriculum and does not have a language in common with the teacher (previously referred to as children with English as an Additional Language). Newcomer children are recorded as such for three years after they first arrive, or for longer if a school makes a strong case for a pupil being kept on. This policy affirmed the role of the Inclusion and Diversity (IDS) service, which assists schools to meet the pastoral, curricular, linguistic, and intercultural needs of Newcomers.

DE's Circular on the Education of Children and Young People from the Traveller Community[218], aims to provide an inclusive environment within the school community for children and young people from the Traveller community which is positively welcoming, fosters equality of opportunity and good relations, is cognitive of and affirms Traveller cultural diversity, maximises opportunities for fulfilment of potential and encourages parents as educators. In addition, in November 2013, the Department launched the Traveller Child in Education Action Framework in response to the high level strategic recommendations made by the Traveller Taskforce[219] and with the aim of taking additional positive actions to ensure Traveller children and young people are given the opportunity to fulfil their educational potential. As recommended in the Action Framework, the Traveller Education Support Service (TESS) published its first annual delivery plan (2013/14) to address the operational recommendations from the Taskforce report and build on the good practice developed both locally and in other jurisdictions"[220].

In the years after the expansion of the European Union in 2004, with the establishment of relative peace in Northern Ireland and a growing economy until the recession of 2008, Northern Ireland became a more culturally diverse society than ever before. Rates of immigration have increased in the last decade, peaking in 2007, with an estimated 32,000 persons coming to live in Northern Ireland in recent years[221]

As a 2011 report by the Northern Ireland Council on Ethnic Minorities on promoting racial equality in schools states, the school system in Northern Ireland has been 'challenged to adjust to new times and new peoples...with an opportunity to contribute to a more cohesive,

[218] Department of Education Northern Ireland (2010). *The Education of Children and Young People from the Traveller Community*. Circular Number: 2010/15
[219] Department of Education (2012): *Traveller Child in Education Action Framework*. Available at: http://www.deni.gov.uk/english_action_framework.pdf
[220] Ibid, page 8
[221] E.g. Russell, R. (2012) *Migration in Northern Ireland: an update.* (p.9). Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service Research paper: Northern Ireland Assembly: Stormont

harmonious, and equal society'[222], given that it is largely structured according to community background (Catholic/Protestant) and social class.

According to the Census 2011[223], 98.2% of the population are White. The largest minority non-white ethnic group is Chinese (0.4%), followed by Indian (0.3%); Mixed (0.3%); Other Asian (0.3%); and Black African (0.1%) and Other (0.1%). All other categories are under 0.01%. When nationality was considered, residents who were born in Poland account for 1.1% of the population; those who were born in Lithuania account for 0.4% of the population; Slovakian-born people account for 0.2% of the population; Latvian-born people account for 0.1% of the population and Romanian people account for 0.1% of the population. Irish Travellers comprise 0.1% of the Northern Ireland population. There is no category within Census 2011 capable of collecting data on the Roma population.

Education and Library Boards (ELBs) in Northern Ireland collect statistics on the number of 'Newcomer' children in schools[224]. The data reveal that the number of Newcomer primary age children has risen steadily since 2004, from 1,333 in the 2004/2005 school year, to 5,130 children in the 2009/2010 school year. In 2009/10 these children were recorded as speaking 42 different languages, with the top four languages being Polish, Lithuanian, Portuguese and Filipino. The school census figures for the 2011/12 school year show that the number of Newcomer children across all school types continued to rise – during that school year, there were 8,418 Newcomer pupils – 2.6% of the total number of pupils in all schools (excluding independent schools and voluntary and private pre-school centres). This ranges from 1.7% of pupils in post-primaries to 4.1% of nursery school pupils (and 5.4% of pupils attending nursery classes within primary school).[225]

[222] NICEM (2011). *Promoting Racial Equality in Northern Ireland's Post-Primary Schools*. p. 5
[223] The Census 2011 defines ethnicity according to the following categories: White; Chinese; Irish Traveller; Indian; Pakistani; Bangladeshi; Other Asian; Black Caribbean; Black African; Black other and Mixed. No distinction is made for A8 and A2 nationals
[224] See DENI data available at: http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/facts-and-figures-new/education-statistics/32_statistics_and_research-numbersofschoolsandpupils_pg/32_statistics_and_research-northernirelandsummarydata_pg.htm
[225] ibid

Literature Review

Newcomer children

The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) Northern Ireland's Audit of Inequalities 2011-2015[226] and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's (hereafter referred to as ECNI) Racial Equality Policy[227] highlight the educational challenges faced by children and young people from a 'Newcomer' background. Newcomer children may face a number of barriers to educational achievement including, limited English language ability, lack of knowledge of the education system, racist bullying and social exclusion. Other barriers that Newcomer children may face in their learning include[228]: beginning the school year at different points in time; being placed in a class a year below their chronological age, which may mean that they remain in lower ability groups too long; and a lack of staff training and dissemination of best practice amongst schools in relation to addressing Newcomer children's needs. The ECNI's 2014 Racial Equality policy statement[229] highlighted shortcomings in relation to the provision of support for children who face a language barrier, including provision of support to children with gaps in their educational background and difficulties in assessing and tracking the progress of Newcomer pupils[230]

A NICCY (Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People) report[231] (2008) on children's rights reports that a total of 5,665 pupils classified as having English as an additional language were recorded as attending nursery, primary or post-primary education in Northern Ireland in 2007/08 – an increase of 374% from the figure five years before. A review of these children's needs commissioned by DE and published in 2005[232] found that although many pupils (908) were receiving the support they required, almost half as many again (435) were identified as requiring support but not receiving it. The main reason cited for this was a lack of funding. However, it is not known from official data what impact this has had on children's educational outcomes.

Furthermore, in the ECNI's statement, 'Every Child an Equal Child'[233], the ECNI noted that children of new residents and migrant workers face difficulty accessing grammar schools and this has been

[226] Department of Employment and Learning. (2011). *Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan 2011-2015*. Belfast: DEL.
[227] http://www.equalityni.org/Footer-Links/News/Delivering-Equality/Recommendations-to-achieve-racial-equality
[228] NICCY. (2008). *Children's Rights: Rhetoric or Reality*. Belfast: NICCY.
[229] ECNI (Nov 2008): *Every Child an Equal Child – Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland and a strategy for Intervention*. Available at: http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/ECkeyinequalities.pdf
[230] ECNI (2014) *Racial Equality Policy: Priorities and Recommendations*. ECNI: Belfast. http://www.equalityni.org/Footer-Links/News/Delivering-Equality/Recommendations-to-achieve-racial-equality
[231] NICCY. (2008). *Children's Rights: Rhetoric or Reality*. Belfast: NICCY.
[232] http://www.deni.gov.uk/review_of_english_as_an_additional_language_-_november_2005.pdf
[233] ECNI (Nov 2008): Op. Cit., page 19.

evidenced by more recent research [234]. While the reasons for the disparity are unclear, a range of factors which may be at play including the free exercise of parental choice, lack of knowledge of the educational system and how to apply to grammar schools and the use of tests to determine admission[235]. The ECNI recommended that DE take steps to assess the educational needs of Black and Minority Ethnic and Newcomer children; review the effectiveness of current English as an Additional Language support; identify appropriate strategies to support the teaching of Newcomer pupils; and provide accessible information on the education system in Northern Ireland.

Traveller children and inequalities in education

The educational attendance and attainment levels of Traveller children and young people in Northern Ireland are much lower than the rates for non-Traveller children and young people Research and Audits of Inequalities released by the ECNI[236], DE[237], DEL, and the ELBs[238] have all highlighted these issues as key inequalities to be addressed. Attendance statistics reported within the Audit of Inequalities from the ELBs reveal that: there is a low level of pre-school uptake by Traveller children; that the average rate of attendance at primary schools in 2007/08 was 72%; that the average rate of attendance at secondary schools in 2007/08 was 51.8%; and that there was a high rate of dropout of Traveller pupils in Year 8 – in 2007/08, 83 pupils were in attendance in Year 7, but only 39 transferred to secondary school. The Audit also reported evidence of a higher percentage of children from the Traveller community having Special Educational Needs. In 2007-08, 42% of Traveller children had SEN Stages 1-4 compared with 14% of all pupils; 52% had SEN Stages 1-5 compared to 18% of all pupils; and 11% of Traveller pupils held formal statements of need compared with 4% for the wider school community. Lastly, the Audit of Inequalities reported that there was evidence of stereotyping and low expectations of Traveller pupils in schools, as well as evidence of lower levels of 'out of school' activities compared to other minority ethnic groups. In addition, data collected as part of the School Leavers Survey combined years of attainment data for Irish Traveller children (2003/04 to 2008/09) and reported that 62% left school with no GCSEs compared with 3% of all school leavers. [239] Furthermore, the number of Traveller children at preschool, though having risen significantly from 18.3% in 1998/99 to 63.9% in 2004/05, is still

[234] Rooney E and Fitzpatrick B. (2011) Promoting Racial Equality in Northern Ireland's Post-Primary Schools. NICEM: Belfast Only 13.7% of newcomers attend a grammar school compared to 42.5% of non-newcomers.
[235] ECNI (2014) *Racial Equality Policy: Priorities and Recommendations*. ECNI: Belfast. http://www.equalityni.org/Footer-Links/News/Delivering-Equality/Recommendations-to-achieve-racial-equality
[236] Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. (2008a). *Inequalities in Education – Facts and Trends 1998-2008*. Belfast: ECNI.
[237] Department of Education Northern Ireland. (2012). *Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan 2012 – 2015*. Bangor: DENI.
[238] http://www.selb.org/equality/Documents/AuditofInequalities2ndEditionJune2012.pdf
[239] See Lundy et al, 2013.

comparatively low when considered against an enrolment figure of 97.4% for the general pre-school population (NICCY, 2008)[240] .

A DE taskforce on Traveller Education (2011)[241] provided a comprehensive review of the key human rights and equality issues affecting Traveller children in the school system. It acknowledged considerable progress in recent years but identified a series of recommendations to improve access, attendance and attainment among Traveller children. These included: additional advice and information for parents; support with transition; flexibility in the curriculum; monitoring of the reasons for non-attendance and a review of a statutory defence to non-attendance. The ECNI's 2006 report[242] on equality of opportunity for Traveller children also highlighted problems with the existing funding formulas in relation to Traveller children's education. The 2008 ECNI statement on mainstreaming equality of opportunity and good relations for Traveller children in schools[243], the ELBs' Audit of Inequalities[244], and a report by Hamilton et al on educational provision for Traveller children[245] have given several suggestions for beginning to redress the inequalities that Traveller children experience. Some of the proposals included: the gathering of more accurate data on the experiences of Traveller children in schools; better inter-agency working; an appropriate statutory response to the high absenteeism of Traveller children; consistency across ELBs in terms of home to school transport policies; and more relevant curriculum content for the experiences of Traveller children. Furthermore, the ECNI's Racial Equality Policy recommends that the Action Framework and the Traveller Education Support Service (TESS) delivery plan are subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation with progress reported at the Traveller subgroup of the OFMdFM Racial Equality Panel and that Traveller children and parents are closely involved in the development and implementation, to ensure that tangible outcomes are delivered[246].

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[240] NICCY. (2008). *Children's Rights: Rhetoric or Reality*. Belfast: NICCY.
[241] See <www.deni.gov.uk/taskforce_on_traveller_education_-_report_of_the_taskforce__to_the_department_of_education.pdf>
[242] Equality Commission Northern Ireland (2006): Mainstreaming Equality of Opportunity for Travellers in Education: Towards a Strategy, pages 13-14. Each full time pupil designated on the day of the school census as being of the Traveller community will generate an additional allocation for the school equivalent to the 0.5 of the basic Age Weighted Pupil Units (AWPU). This is problematic as Traveller children may not be in school on the day of the school census or may attend another school in the same year. As the money is not ring fenced, it may be appropriated from the general school budget. It is unclear whether the use of this extra funding is monitored and linked to tangible achievements for Travellers.
[243] Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. (2008). *Mainstreaming Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations for Traveller children in schools*. Belfast: ECNI.
[244] http://www.selb.org/equality/Documents/AuditofInequalities2ndEditionJune2012.pdf
[245] Hamilton et al. (2007). *The Adequacy and Effectiveness of Educational Provision for Traveller Children and Young People in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: ECNI/NICCY
[246] ECNI (2014) *Racial Equality Policy: Priorities and Recommendations*. ECNI: Belfast. http://www.equalityni.org/Footer-Links/News/Delivering-Equality/Recommendations-to-achieve-racial-equality

Roma children and educational inequalities

The ECNI's Racial Equality Policy[247] states that while there has been little formal research on the experience of Roma pupils, anecdotal evidence suggests exceptionally high levels of educational disadvantage exacerbated by a low level of English language proficiency, social exclusion and poverty amongst this group. A draft policy paper developed in consultation with Roma children as part of a Bryson House project in Belfast reiterates these claims. The draft paper states that there is little research on the experiences of Roma children in school in Northern Ireland[248]. The research notes that Roma pupils also have low levels of English language proficiency and because of little previous experience of schooling, often have difficulty adapting to school regimes. In addition, there are many negative stereotypes of Roma attitudes to education with many people having the view that Roma social organisation and culture has a negative impact on children's education. However, Roma parents' lack of involvement in their children's education is often due to their difficult financial situation. Roma families, who are often very poor, have difficulty in accessing free school meals and free school transport, for their children. In addition, Roma parents have poor literacy levels themselves which means they are not always aware of the importance of sending their children to school and the investment required. Many Roma parents will often have had a poor experience of the education system themselves, and consider that school education can help them be accepted by society or that it could help them to improve their social situation[249].

Asylum seeking and refugee children

There is little data concerning the experiences of asylum seeking and refugee children in Northern Ireland. However, research by the National Children's Bureau[250] has noted that refugee and asylum seeking children often have very limited language skills and may have experienced trauma, loss and other serious stresses before coming to Northern Ireland. Often these children can feel isolated due to a loss of family networks and friends, with unaccompanied asylum seeking children experiencing acute isolation. In addition, the report notes that accessing second level education can be problematic for those aged almost or over 16 years. The National Children's Bureau has noted that "for such young people it is very difficult to get a school place and sometimes virtually impossible unless the young person had "high exam results from their country of origin" or "exceptionally good spoken English[251]". The ECNI's Racial Equality Policy[252] has recommended that DE identify and address the complex emotional, educational and social needs of asylum seeking and refugee children.

[247] http://www.equalityni.org/Footer-Links/News/Delivering-Equality/Recommendations-to-achieve-racial-equality
[248] Obtained via private correspondence.
[249] Ibid
[250] National Childrens Bureau (2010) New to Northern Ireland: A study of the issues faced by migrant, asylum seeking and refugee children in Northern Ireland. NCB: London.
[251] Childrens Bureau (2010) New to Northern Ireland: A study of the issues faced by migrant, asylum seeking and refugee children in Northern Ireland. NCB: London.

Black and Minority Ethnic children & young people and educational inequalities

In recent years there has been some concern about the potential underachievement of Black and Minority Ethnic[253] (BME) children and young people in Northern Ireland. The ECNI's statement 'Every Child an Equal Child' on key inequalities in education[254] and the ECNI's publication 'Racial Equality in Education: A Good Practice Guide' highlight the day to day difficulties that can be faced by children from minority ethnic backgrounds in schools, for example, the reliance of some children and young people on peers from the same community for English language support.

The ECNI's Good Practice guide also reports from a survey of teachers[255] which revealed that, although total numbers of black and minority ethnic children in schools were small most teachers have had children from different racial groups in their classrooms. However, teachers have had little opportunity, either through initial or in-service teacher training, to become aware of black and minority ethnic children's needs. Furthermore, the ECNI's Racial Equality Policy[256], reports on research carried out by DE, which highlights bullying as a factor that can hinder academic success. The research found that 14% of Year 6 and 7.6% of Year 9 pupils admitted being bullied 'with mean names or comments about my race or colour'[257].

Research has also suggested that 'the response of schools to the issue of racist bullying appears to vary enormously... this was often characterised by not taking the issue seriously by either minimising it or ignoring it altogether'[258] and that '...in the majority of cases, schools tend to lack knowledge of how to effectively confront the issue and in some cases have difficulty acknowledging that a problem exists. In cases where action is taken, the measure is often unsatisfactory'[259]. The ECNI's policy[260] recommends that in order to help combat this barrier, the DE should consider placing a duty on schools to record disaggregated data on incidents of bullying in order to improve their understanding of, and responses to prejudice-based bullying..

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[252] http://www.equalityni.org/Footer-Links/News/Delivering-Equality/Recommendations-to-achieve-racial-equality

[253] Black and Minority Ethnic is the terminology normally used in the UK to describe people of non-white descent. See: http://www.irr.org.uk/research/statistics/definitions/

[254] Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. (2008b). *Every Child An Equal Child: An Equality Commission Statement on Key Inequalities in Education and a Strategy for Intervention*. Belfast: ECNI.

[255] Commission for Racial Equality for Northern Ireland - Racial Equality Bulletin No.1 - education and ethnic minorities in Northern Ireland - a survey of teachers (1999).

[256] http://www.equalityni.org/Footer-Links/News/Delivering-Equality/Recommendations-to-achieve-racial-equality

[257] Department of Education (2011): *Nature and Extent of Pupil Bullying in Schools*. Available at: http://www.deni.gov.uk/rb2_2011.pdf, page 7.

[258] Connolly P. and Keenan M. (2000): *Opportunities for All: Ethnic Minority People's Experience of Education, Training and Employment in Northern Ireland* (NISRA).

[259] NICEM (2011). *Promoting Racial Equality in Northern Ireland's post-primary schools*, page 29. Available at: http://nicem.org.uk/uploads/publications/Education_report_-_Final_PDF.pdf

[260] http://www.equalityni.org/Footer-Links/News/Delivering-Equality/Recommendations-to-achieve-racial-equality

The Audit of Inequalities published by the ELBs in Northern Ireland states that educational achievement of children from minority ethnic communities spans the whole spectrum of educational outcomes. However, a higher percentage of minority ethnic pupils leave school with no qualifications, compared to all pupils[261]. Across the UK, consideration of the factors that account for differences in education outcomes for different racial groups frequently goes hand-in-hand with discussions about the associations between class and achievement. For example, for young people entitled to Free School Meals (FSMs), White British, Black Caribbean and mixed White and Black Caribbean boys have the lowest average attainment of any group identified by gender and ethnicity with the exception of Gypsy and Traveller children (Hills et al., 2010)[262]. However, data from England has found that social class factors do not override the influence of ethnic inequality: when comparing pupils with similar class backgrounds there are still marked inequalities of attainment between different ethnic groups. Research conducted for ATL[263] revealed that Black pupils are doing less well than their peers regardless of class background, and working-class African-Caribbean pupils are falling behind working-class peers from other ethnic backgrounds. African-Caribbean pupils from middle-class groups are not attaining at the same level as other middle-class groups. In other words, social class factors do not override ethnic inequalities for this community. The ATL report quotes other qualitative research (from primary and secondary schools) that has consistently highlighted ways in which Black pupils are stereotyped and face additional barriers to academic success. The ELBs have, however, recommended that a specific barrier which needs to be overcome in order to improve levels of attainment for Black and Minority Ethnic pupils in Northern Ireland is the limited nature of available data - the data currently collected has a very narrow ethnic focus and reflects the data collection system in Great Britain. DE's Inclusion and Diversity Service (IDS) is of the view that a system which reflects data collection systems in the Republic of Ireland may provide more relevant information on the pattern of Newcomer and BME children to Northern Ireland. Furthermore, the IDS wishes to work with schools to increase the number of minority ethnic pupils availing of in-school and after-school literacy and numeracy support. The NICEM report[264] on promoting racial equality in post-primary schools includes further in-depth recommendations for enabling positive school experiences for all Newcomer and BME children, which include:

- designating schools under Section 75 legislation; the introduction of initiatives by the DE to boost access to grammar schools, particularly for BME groups who are eligible for free school meals;

[261] http://www.selb.org/equality/Documents/AuditofInequalities2ndEditionJune2012.pdf
[262] Hills, J., et al. (2010). *An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK. Report of the National Equality Panel*. London: Government Equalities Office.
[263] Clare, H. (ATL, 2005). *Gender in Education 3-19: A Fresh Approach*. ATL
[264] NICEM (2011). *Promoting Racial Equality in Northern Ireland's post-primary schools*, page 29. Available at: http://nicem.org.uk/uploads/publications/Education_report_-_Final_PDF.pdf

- exploring the potential for accreditation in languages other than English;
- the revision of the religious education syllabus by representatives from a broad range of faiths and those of no faith; and,
- the requirement that schools cater to the dietary needs of pupils from different cultural backgrounds.

Turning to higher education, a large government report on the participation of minority ethnic groups in higher education in the UK[265] found that minority ethnic groups represent a higher proportion of the graduate output compared to their share of the working population, but that individual minority ethnic group participation rates vary considerably overall, and their representation varies between universities, subjects, geographic regions, and courses. For example, Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi young people are less likely to go to more prestigious universities. Furthermore, though their higher education initial participation rates are higher, all minority ethnic groups do not do as well in degree performance as White students on average. Even when background and other variables known to affect the class of degree achieved are taken into account, minority ethnic groups still do less well overall. Differences were also observed by subject area studied. There is twice as high a minority ethnic representation in computer science, law and medicine, and also higher than average in business studies, engineering and mathematical sciences degree courses, but below average representation in education and humanities degrees. Minority ethnic students also have slightly higher representation on full-time sub-degree courses, than full-time or part-time degree or part-time sub-degree courses. Within the different minority groups, different trajectories were evident. Indian and Chinese groups are the most likely to take the traditional 'A' level highway' to higher education and are better qualified as higher education entrants. Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups do not gain as high 'A' level qualifications as Indian or Chinese, though do better than Black students. Black groups, and Black Caribbean in particular, are generally older on entry, with a wider range of entry qualifications than the average; more progress to higher education via the further education college and work routes, and more are likely to have vocational entry qualifications.

Research in 2004 highlighted some differences between minority ethnic groups and white students in regard to the influencing factors behind their decisions to enter higher education[266]. Minority ethnic students reported a strong drive from their parents and families to gain qualifications, but particularly in terms of gaining qualifications in the professional and vocational subjects (such as

[265] Connors, H., Tyers, C., Modood, T., & Hillage, J. (2004). *Why the Difference? A Closer Look at Higher Education Minority Ethnic Students and Graduates*. London: Department for Education and Skills.
[266] Connors, H., Tyers, C., Modood, T., & Hillage, J. (2004). *Why the Difference? A Closer Look at Higher Education Minority Ethnic Students and Graduates*. London: Department for Education and Skills.

medicine, law, computer science). Minority ethnic potential students were also more likely than White potential students to hold more positive attitudes about the outcomes and benefits of higher education[267]. Some differences by race were also found for progression through higher education. Minority ethnic degree students are more likely to leave early from degree courses than White students, and Black groups were more likely than Asian groups to leave early. The barriers that hindered progression were related to staff support, feelings of isolation and lack of cultural diversity. The authors of the report also suggest that different patterns of term-time working and the different financial situations of minority ethnic and White students may be affecting their progress in degree study, but that this suggestion requires further investigation.

The next section of this chapter will present the key findings from existing datasets with regard to access, attainment, progression and destination by ethnicity for the 2007-2012 period, in order to identify the most current picture of existing inequalities, as well as highlighting whether these inequalities have emerged within the past five years or whether they have been persistent since 2007/08.

[267] Ibid

Findings from Quantitative Data

Pre-school, Primary and Post-primary Level (Source: DENI)

White and Minority Ethnic Children – Access:

In this section, DE figures for 'minority ethnic' children include Black Caribbean, Black African, Black Other, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Other, Irish Traveller, and Mixed Other. This is because of the often small figures involved. Data was not available for those born in Eastern European countries, which are categorised by DE as part of the 'White' category[268].

- **School enrolments by school management type**
  The minority ethnic share of enrolments increased in the pre-school, primary, post-primary and special school sectors between 2007/08 and 2011/12, however the increase was greater in the pre-school and primary sector than the post-primary sector (see Table 7.1). When the overall numbers of minority ethnic children were considered, in 2011/12 minority ethnic children were proportionately more likely to attend Catholic maintained than controlled primary schools (49.4% and 41.6% respectively) and non-grammar secondary schools (50.7% and 27.5% respectively).

- **Pre-school**
  Within the preschool sector, in 2011/12, minority ethnic children had a greater share of enrolments in Catholic maintained nursery schools (5.3%) than controlled nursery schools (3.8%). The minority ethnic share of enrolments was greatest in controlled integrated nursery/reception classes (22.3%) compared to all other school management types (see Table 7.1; Technical Table 7.1).

- **Primary level**
  Within the primary school sector, minority ethnic pupils had a greater share of enrolments in voluntary/other preparatory schools and controlled integrated primary schools (6.1% and 4.3% respectively in 2011/12) than all other primary school and/or preparatory school management types (see Table 7.1). The minority ethnic share of enrolments rose from 2007/08 to 2011/12 within all primary school management types (see Table 7.1; Technical Table 7.2). When the overall number of minority ethnic pupils in primary schools (5,188) were considered, minority ethnic pupils were proportionately more likely to attend Catholic maintained schools (50.5%).

[268] The Department of Education does not further disaggregate the 'White' category by nationality.

- **Post-primary level**

  Non-grammar schools

  Within the non-grammar sector, minority ethnic pupils had a greater share of enrolments in grant maintained integrated schools (3.3%) than all other non-grammar school management types. The minority ethnic share of enrolments increased slightly between 2007/08 and 2011/12 in controlled schools (from 1.2% to 1.7%), Catholic maintained schools (from 1.3% to 2.3%), and grant maintained integrated schools (from 2.5% to 3.3%) (see Table 7.1; Technical Table 7.3). When the overall number of minority ethnic pupils in non-grammar schools (1,831) were considered, minority ethnic pupils were proportionately more likely to attend Catholic maintained schools (50.7%).

  Grammar schools

  Within grammar schools, minority ethnic pupils had a greater share of enrolments in voluntary/other managed grammar schools (3.9%) than all other grammar school management types. The minority ethnic shares, in all types of grammar school, increased during the period from 2007/08 to 2011/12 (see Table 7.1). When the overall number of minority ethnic pupils in grammar schools in 2011/12 (1,405) were considered, minority ethnic pupils were proportionately more likely to attend voluntary/other managed grammar schools (56.4%).

  Special schools

  Within the special school sector, minority ethnic pupils had a greater share of enrolments in Catholic maintained schools (5.7%) than all other special school management types (see Technical Table 7.4). The minority ethnic share of enrolments in special schools increased from 2007/08 to 2011/12 (see Table 7.1; Technical Table 7.4).

Table 7.1: Share of enrolments by school management type and ethnicity, 2007/08 – 2011/12

School Sector	School Management Type	2007/08 (%)		2011/12 (%)	
		White	Minority Ethnic	White	Minority Ethnic
Nursery Schools	Controlled	97.1	2.9	96.2	3.8
	Catholic Maintained	97.2	2.8	94.7	5.3
Nursery and Reception Classes	Controlled	97.1	2.9	94.3	5.7
	Catholic Maintained	96.9	3.1	93.7	6.3
	Other Maintained	*	*	94.2	5.8°
	Controlled Integrated	*	*	77.7	22.3°
	Grant Maintained Integrated	96.7	3.3°	95.2	4.8°
Primary Schools	Controlled	97.8	2.2	96.9	3.1
	Catholic Maintained	97.6	2.4	96.3	3.7
	Other Maintained	99.0	1.0°	98.4	1.6°
	Controlled Integrated	96.5	3.5	95.7	4.3
	Maintained Integrated	96.6	3.4	96.4	3.6
Preparatory Schools	Controlled	96.7	3.3°	97.2	2.8°
	Voluntary – Other Management	94.8	5.2	93.9	6.1
Secondary (Non-grammar) Schools	Controlled	98.8	1.2	98.3	1.7
	Catholic Maintained	98.7	1.3	97.7	2.3
	Other Maintained	99.0	1.0°	*	*
	Controlled Integrated	97.9	2.1	*	*
	Grant Maintained Integrated	97.5	2.5	96.7	3.3
Grammar Schools	Controlled	98.7	1.3	98.2	1.8
	Catholic Managed	99.3	0.7	98.7	1.3
	Other Managed	96.5	3.5	96.1	3.9
Special Schools^		98.0	2.0	96.8	3.2

^Numbers too small to further disaggregate into school management type
*Denotes numbers too small to report or suppressed due to possible identification of individual pupils
°Note that the number is less than 40

Newcomer Children – Access:

Overall in 2011/12, in the pre-school and primary sectors, the Newcomer shares of enrolments were greatest in Catholic maintained schools (see Table 7.2). At the post-primary level, the Newcomer shares of enrolments in 2011/12 were greater in non-grammar secondary schools than grammar schools. The Newcomer shares of enrolments increased between 2007/08 and 2011/12 in most school management types (see Table 7.2), however the increase was greater in the pre-school and primary sectors than the post-primary sector (see Table 7.2).

- **Pre-school**

  In 2011/12, the Newcomer shares of enrolments were greater for Catholic maintained nursery schools (5.0%) and Catholic maintained nursery and reception classes (6.8%) than any other school management type (see Table 7.2; Technical Table 7.5). The Newcomer share of enrolments in the pre-school sector increased substantially for all school management types (except other maintained which remained unchanged) during the period from 2007/08 to 2011/12. The increase in the minority ethnic share of enrolments was greatest for Catholic maintained nursery schools (from 1.9% in 2007/08 to 5.0% in 2011/12) and controlled integrated nursery and reception classes (see Technical Table 7.5).

  When the overall numbers of Newcomer children in nursery schools (242) and nursery and reception classes (483) where considered, Newcomer children were proportionately more likely to go to controlled nursery schools (63.6%) and Catholic maintained nursery and reception classes (55.3%).

- **Primary level**

  In 2011/12, the Newcomer shares of enrolments were greatest in Catholic maintained primary schools (4.5%) followed by: controlled integrated schools (4.3%); grant maintained integrated schools (3.1%); controlled schools (2.3%); and, other maintained schools (0.8%). The Newcomer shares of enrolments in primary schools have increased during the period from 2007/08 to 2011/12 (see Table 7.2; Technical Table 7.6).

  When the overall number of Newcomer children in primary schools was considered (5,145), Newcomer children were proportionately more likely to attend Catholic maintained schools (62.2%) than any other school management type.

- **Post-primary level**

  Non-grammar schools

  In 2011/12, the Newcomer shares of enrolments in non-grammar secondary schools were greatest in controlled integrated schools (3.9%), followed by: Catholic maintained schools (3.5%); grant maintained integrated schools (2.6%); and controlled schools (1.5%). Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the overall shares of enrolments of Newcomer children in secondary schools increased slightly, with the greatest increase in the Newcomer share of enrolments in Catholic maintained schools (from 2.0% in 2007/08) (see Table 7.2; Technical Table 7.7).

  When the overall number of Newcomer children in non-grammar secondary schools was considered (2,218), in 2011/12 Newcomer children were proportionately more likely to attend Catholic maintained schools (64.1%) than any other school management type (Table 7.2).

  Grammar schools

  In 2011/12, the Newcomer shares of enrolments in grammar schools were greatest in other managed voluntary grammar schools (0.5% of the total enrolment), followed by voluntary Catholic managed grammar schools (0.4%), and controlled grammar schools (0.2%). Between 2007/08 and 2011/12 the Newcomer shares of enrolments decreased slightly in controlled and other managed voluntary grammar school management types (from 0.5% and 1.1% respectively in 2007/08) and increased slightly in 'Catholic managed' grammar schools (from 0.2% in 2007/08, see Table 7.2).

  When the overall number of Newcomer children in grammar secondary schools was considered (264), in 2011/12, Newcomer children were proportionately slightly more likely to attend voluntary Catholic managed schools (45.5%) than any other school management type.

In 2011/12, the vast majority of all Newcomer children attended non-grammar schools (89.4%), with only 10.6% attending grammar schools (see Technical Table 7.8). In addition, as the Newcomer share of enrolments in non-grammar secondary schools increased between 2007/08 and 2011/12, and decreased in grammar schools in the same time period, the gap in the share of enrolments between the non-grammar and grammar sectors increased.

Table 7.2: Share of enrolments by school management type and Newcomer status, 2007/08 – 2011/12

School Sector	School Management Type	Not Newcomer(%)		Newcomer (%)	
		2007/08	2011/12	2007/08	2011/12
Nursery Schools	Controlled	98.1	96.3	1.9	3.7
	Catholic Maintained	98.1	95.0	1.9°	5.0
Nursery and Reception Classes	Controlled	97.3	95.5	2.7	4.5
	Catholic Maintained	96.4	93.2	3.6	6.8
	Other Maintained	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
	Controlled Integrated	*	93.6	*	6.4°
	Grant Maintained Integrated	*	97.1	*	2.9°
Primary Schools	Controlled	98.3	97.7	1.7	2.3
	Catholic Maintained	97.2	95.5	2.8	4.5
	Other Maintained	*	99.2	*	0.8°
	Controlled Integrated	*	95.7	*	4.3
	Grant Maintained Integrated	97.0	96.9	3.0	3.1
Preparatory Schools^		99.2	*	0.8°	*
Non-grammar Schools	Controlled	99.1	98.5	0.9	1.5
	Catholic Maintained	98.0	96.5	2.0	3.5
	Other Maintained	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
	Controlled Integrated	96.4	96.1	3.6	3.9
	Grant Maintained Integrated	98.0	97.4	2.0	2.6
Grammar Schools	Controlled	99.5	99.8	0.5	0.2°
	Catholic Managed	99.8	99.6	0.2	0.4
	Voluntary -Other Managed	98.9	99.5	1.1	0.5
Special Schools^		99.3	98.6	0.7°	1.4

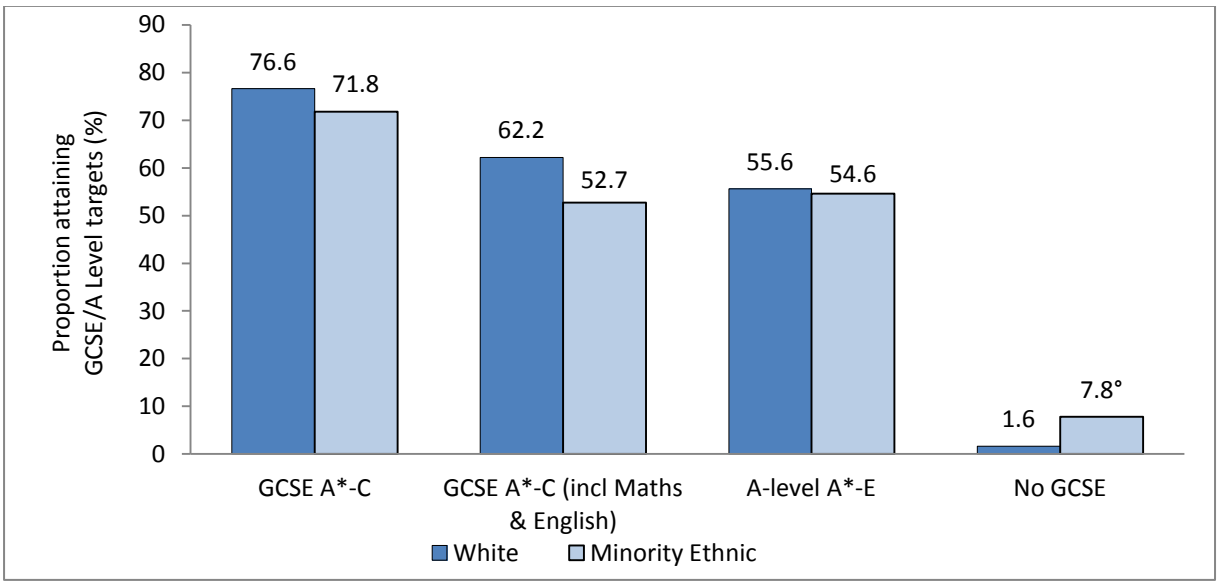
^Numbers too small to further disaggregate into school management type
*Denotes numbers too small to report (<5) or (if =>5) suppressed due to possible identification of individual pupils
°Denotes that the number is less than 40

Attainment data for Newcomer pupils was not available for analysis.

White and Minority Ethnic School Leavers – Attainment:

A number of differences were noted in the attainment of white and minority ethnic school leavers in Northern Ireland between 2007/08 and 2011/12. The overarching finding was that a greater proportion of white school leavers achieved the education targets than minority ethnic school leavers across all three categories (2+ A Levels A*-E; 5+ GCSEs A*-C; 5+ GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths). Patterns of attainment have varied over the five year period. In 2007/08, GCSE and A Level attainment was higher for minority ethnic school leavers than for white school leavers but is now lower. Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, increases in the proportion of white pupils attaining education targets across all three categories resulted in a widening of the gap in attainment between white and minority ethnic pupils at GCSE and a narrowing of the gap in attainment at A Level (see Technical Table 7.11).

Figure 7.1: Proportion attaining GCSE and A Level targets by ethnicity, 2011/12

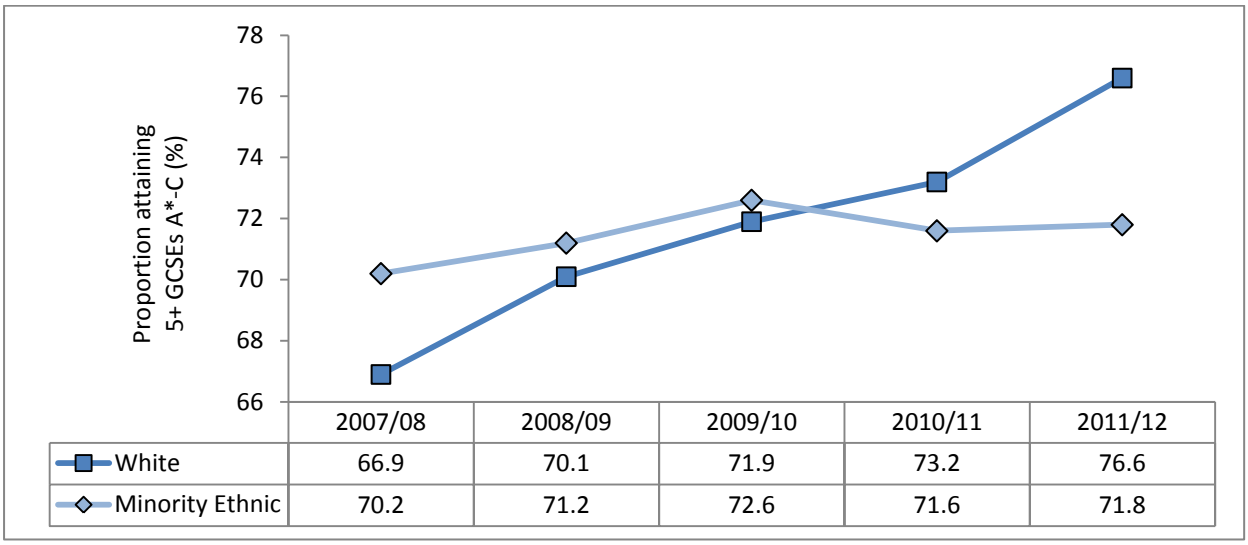


°Denotes that the number is less than 40

- **GCSE level**

  In 2011/12, minority ethnic school leavers were less likely to leave school with 5+ GCSEs at A*-C (71.8%) than white school leavers (76.6%) (see Figure 7.1). The proportion of white pupils achieving the attainment target increased by 9.7 percentage points, from 66.9% in 2007/08 to 76.6% in 2011/12. The proportion of minority ethnic school leavers achieving this attainment target fluctuated and increased only slightly between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (by 1.6 percentage points from 70.2% in 2007/08 to 71.8% in 2011/12). This has resulted in a reversal of patterns in the proportion of minority ethnic and white school leavers achieving attainment targets at GCSE between 2007/08, when minority ethnic students were more likely to achieve the attainment target, and 2011/12.

Figure 7.2: Proportion attaining 5+ GCSEs (A*-C) by ethnicity, 2007/08 – 2011/12

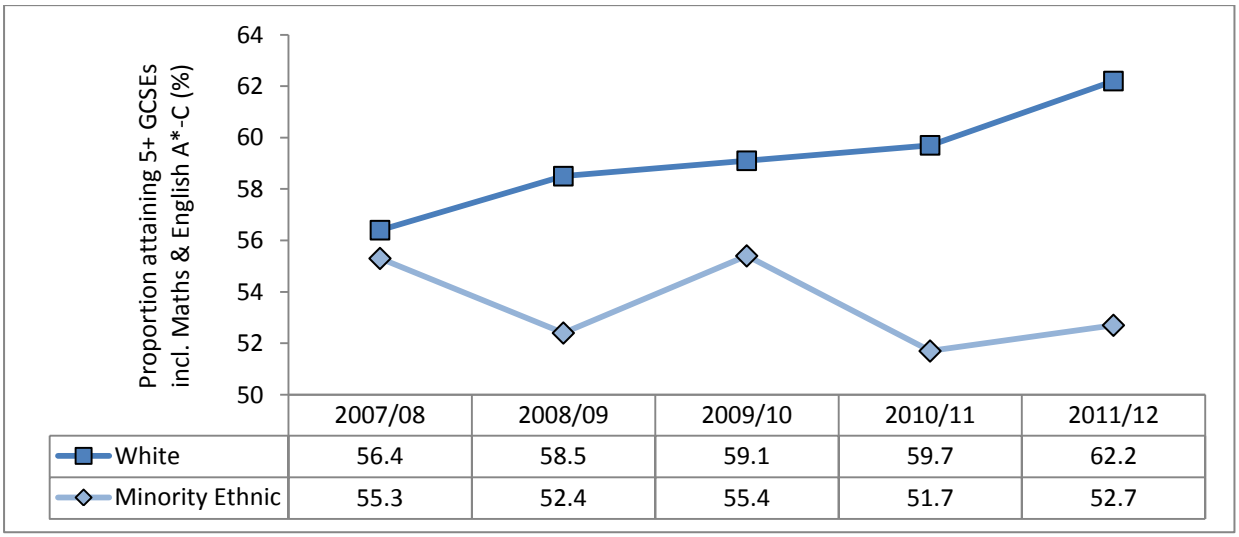


	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
White	66.9	70.1	71.9	73.2	76.6
Minority Ethnic	70.2	71.2	72.6	71.6	71.8

- **GCSEs including Maths and English**

  In 2011/12, white school leavers were more likely to leave school with 5+ GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths (62.2%) than minority ethnic school leavers (52.7%) (see Figure 7.1). Over the five year period from 2007/08-2011/12, differential trends in the proportion of school leavers achieving attainment targets can be observed for white and minority ethnic school leavers. The proportion of school leavers achieving the attainment target of 5+ GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths increased for white pupils, from 56.4% in 2007/08 to 62.2% in 2011/12, while the proportion of minority ethnic pupils attaining this target has fluctuated and decreased overall, from 55.3% in 2007/08 to 52.7% in 2011/12 (see Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3: Proportion attaining 5+ GCSEs including Maths and English (A*-C) by ethnicity, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
White	56.4	58.5	59.1	59.7	62.2
Minority Ethnic	55.3	52.4	55.4	51.7	52.7

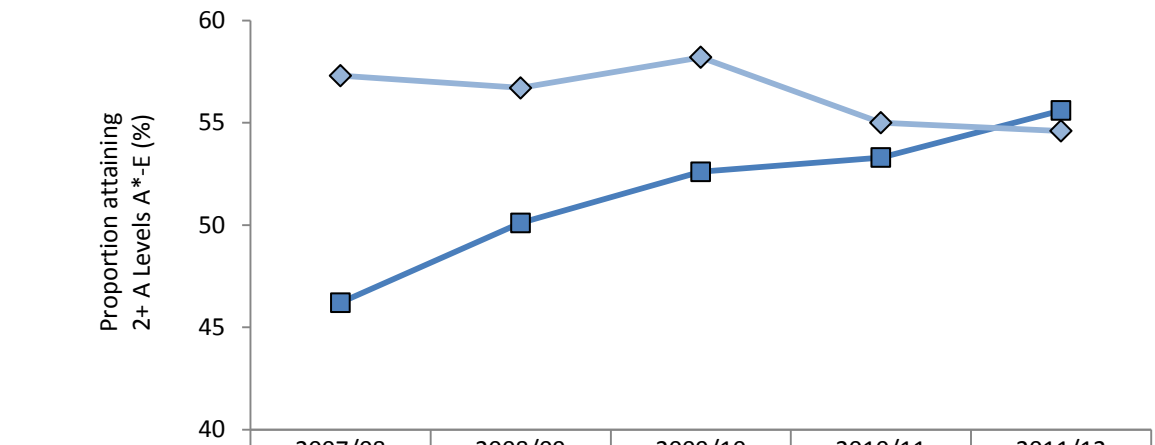
- **No GCSEs**

  In 2011/12, minority ethnic school leavers were more likely to leave school with no GCSEs (7.8%) than white school leavers (1.6%, see Figure 7.1). Due to small sample size between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (<40 individuals), it was not possible to reliably comment on trends in the proportion of minority ethnic school leavers obtaining no GCSEs (see Technical Table 7.11).

- **A Levels**

  In 2011/12, minority ethnic school leavers were slightly less likely to leave school with 2+ A Levels at A*-E (54.6%) than white school leavers (55.6%, see Figure 7.1). Over the five year period from 2007/08-2011/12, differential trends in the proportion of school leavers achieving the attainment target of 2+ A Levels at A*-E can be observed for white and minority ethnic school leavers. While the proportion of minority ethnic school leavers achieving the A Level attainment target has fluctuated and decreased slightly overall from 57.3% in 2007/08 to 54.6% in 2011/12, the proportion of white school leavers achieving the A Level attainment target has increased slightly, from 46.2% in 2007/08 to 55.6% in 2011/12. This has resulted in the reversing of the gap in A Level attainment between minority ethnic and white school leavers between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (see Figure 7.4; Technical Table 7.11).

Figure 7.4: Proportion attaining 2+ A Levels (A*-E) by ethnicity, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
White	46.2	50.1	52.6	53.3	55.6
Minority Ethnic	57.3	56.7	58.2	55.0	54.6

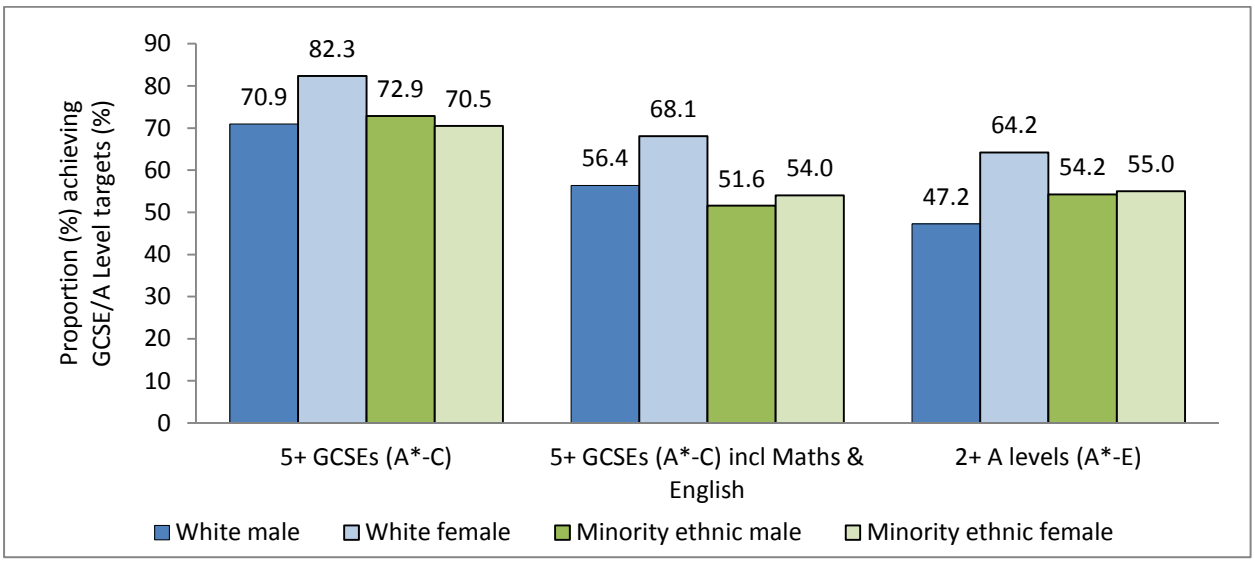
Irish Traveller Children – Attainment:

Some data was available specifically for Irish Traveller school leavers[269]. For the combined years 2008-2012, two-thirds (67.0%) of all Irish Traveller school leavers did not achieve any GCSEs (compared to 1.8% of the general school leaver population in 2011/12). Note that the proportion of Irish Travellers with no GCSEs is higher for females than males, in contrast to the general population where males are more likely to leave school with no GCSEs than females. For the combined years 2008-2012, 67.7% of female Irish Traveller school leavers did not achieve any GCSEs, and 65.9% of male Irish Traveller school leavers did not achieve any GCSEs.

Gender and Ethnic Group – Attainment:

The proportion of school leavers achieving education targets across all three categories (2+ A Levels A*-E; 5+ GCSEs A*-C; 5+ GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths) by ethnicity and gender were analysed for the years 2007/08 - 2011/12. Differences in attainment were apparent between and within the ethnic groupings between 2007/08 and 2011/12. The general pattern of results indicates an interaction between gender and race. While female attainment at GCSE and A Level has increased between 2007/08 and 2011/12 in the general (and mostly white) population, the attainment of minority ethnic females has decreased overall in the last five years (see Technical Table 7.12). It should be noted that the small numbers of school leavers within the minority ethnic category each year may influence trends in attainment. Therefore, where numbers are too small to reliably comment on, analysis of trends has not been undertaken.

Figure 7.5: Proportion attaining GCSE and A Level targets by ethnicity and gender, 2011/12

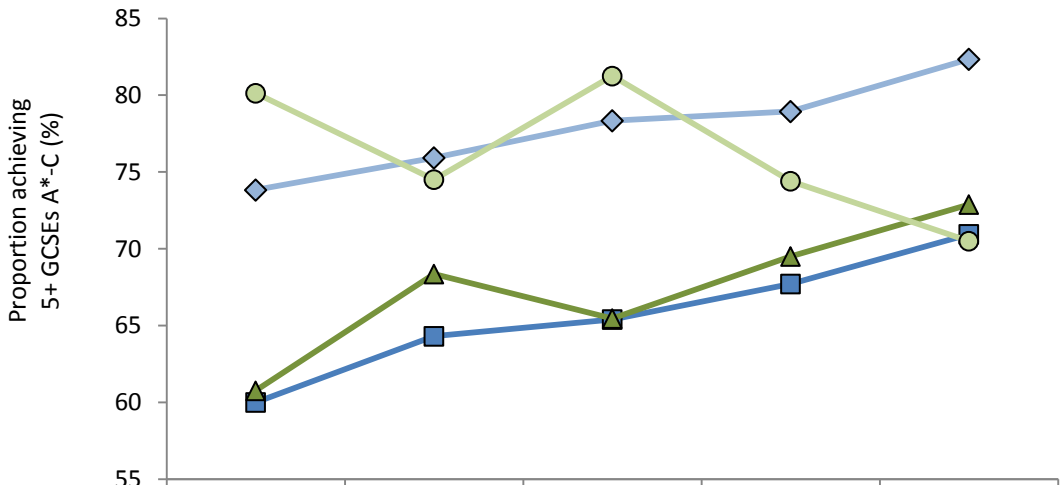


[269] Data had to be suppressed because of small numbers – 73 pupils in total from 2008-2012.

- **GCSE level**

  In 2011/12, white females (82.3%) were most likely to obtain 5+ GCSEs (A*-C). However, minority ethnic males were more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C (72.9%) than white males (70.9%) and minority ethnic females (70.5%) (see Figure 7.5). In 2007/08, minority ethnic females were more likely to obtain 5+ GCSEs A*-C (80.1%) than any other group. However, between 2007/08 and 2011/12 the proportion of minority ethnic females achieving 5+ GCSEs A*-C fluctuated and decreased overall (from 80.1% to 70.5%), while the proportion of minority ethnic males, white males and white females increased overall (see Figure 7.6; Technical Table 7.12).

Figure 7.6: Proportion attaining 5+ GCSEs (A*-C) by ethnicity and gender, 2007/08 – 2011/12



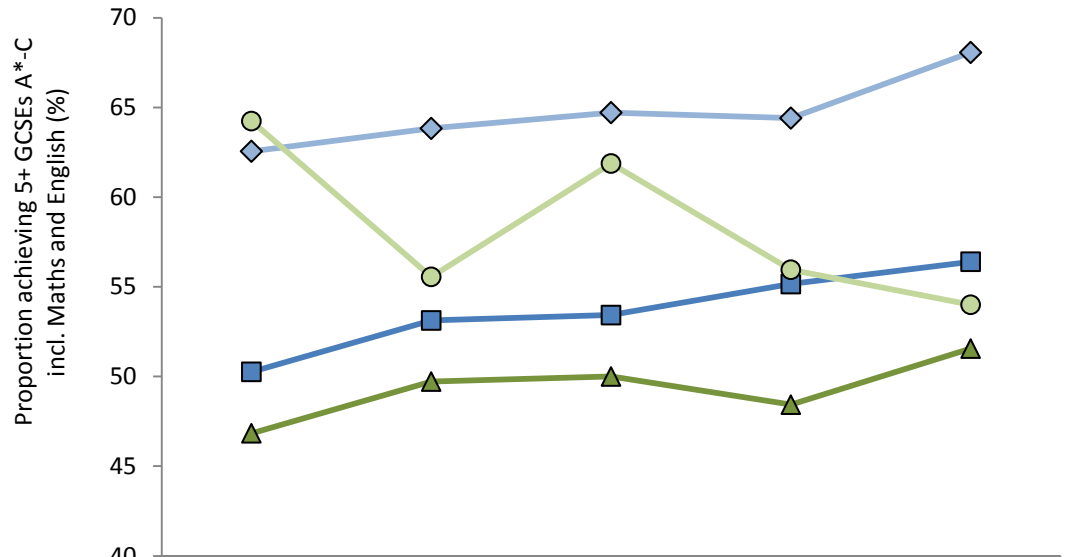
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
White male	60.0	64.3	65.4	67.7	70.9
White female	73.8	75.9	78.3	78.9	82.3
Minority ethnic male	60.8	68.4	65.5	69.5	72.9
Minority ethnic female	80.1	74.5	81.3	74.4	70.5

- **GCSEs including Maths and English**

  In 2011/12, white females were more likely to obtain 5+ GCSEs A*-C including Maths and English (68.1%) than white males (56.4%). Similarly, minority ethnic females were more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C including Maths and English (54.0%) than minority ethnic males (51.6%) (see Figure 7.5). Between 2007/08 and 2011/12 the proportions of school leavers achieving 5+ GCSEs A*-C including Maths and English have increased for white females (from 62.6%), white males (from 50.3%) and minority ethnic males from (from 46.8%) However, GCSE attainment including Maths and English has fluctuated and decreased overall for minority ethnic females from 64.2% in 2007/08 to 54.0% in 2011/12 (see Technical Table 7.12).

The gender gap in the proportion of school leavers attaining 5+ GCSEs A*-C including Maths and English has, therefore narrowed between minority ethnic males and minority ethnic females (from 17.4 percentage points to 2.4 percentage points) over the last five years (see Figure 7.6) . However, the ethnicity gap in the proportion of school leavers attaining 5+ GCSEs A*-C including Maths and English has widened between white females and minority ethnic females (from 1.6 percentage points to 14.1 percentage points) and white males and minority ethnic males (from 3.5 percentage points to 4.8) (see Figure 7.7).

Figure 7.7: Proportion attaining 5+ GCSEs (A*-C) including Maths and English by ethnicity and gender, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
White male	50.3	53.1	53.4	55.2	56.4
White female	62.6	63.8	64.7	64.4	68.1
Minority ethnic male	46.8	49.7	50.0	48.4	51.6
Minority ethnic female	64.2	55.6	61.9	56.0	54.0

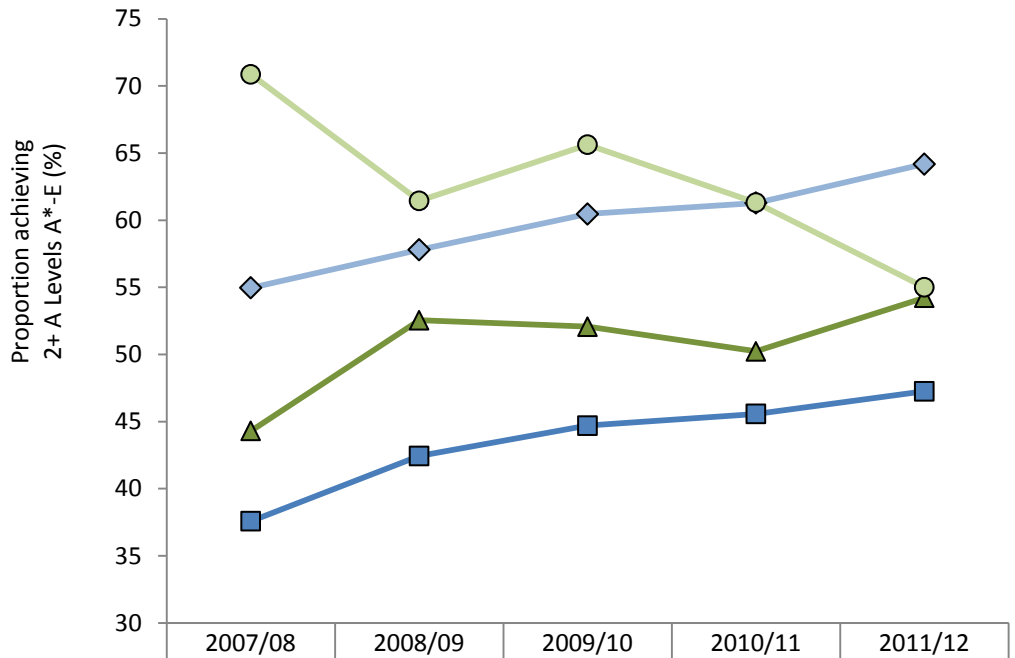
- **No GCSEs**

  In 2011/12, 10.5% of minority ethnic females left school with no GCSEs, compared to: 5.3% of minority ethnic males; 1.9% of white males; and 1.4% of white females. Due to small sample size between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (<40 individuals) it was not possible to reliably comment on trends in the proportion of minority ethnic school leavers obtaining no GCSEs (see Technical Table 7.12).

- **A Levels**

  In 2011/12, white females were most likely to obtain 2+ A Levels A*-E (64.2%), followed by: minority ethnic females (55.0%); minority ethnic males (54.2%); and, white males (47.2%) (see Figure 7.5). However, between 2007/08 and 2011/12 the proportions of school leavers achieving 2+ A Levels A*-E increased for all groups except minority ethnic females, who were most likely to obtain 2+ A Levels A*-E in 2007/08 (70.9% in 2007/08). Therefore, the gender gap in the achievement of minority ethnic females and minority ethnic males has narrowed from 26.6 percentage points in 2007/08 to 0.8 percentage points in 2011/12 (to the detriment of minority ethnic females), while the ethnicity gap between white and minority ethnic females has also narrowed in the same time period (to the detriment of minority ethnic females) from 15.9 percentage points to 9.2 percentage points (see Figure 7.8).

Figure 7.8: Proportion attaining 2+ A Levels (A*-E) by ethnicity and gender, 2007/08 – 2011/12



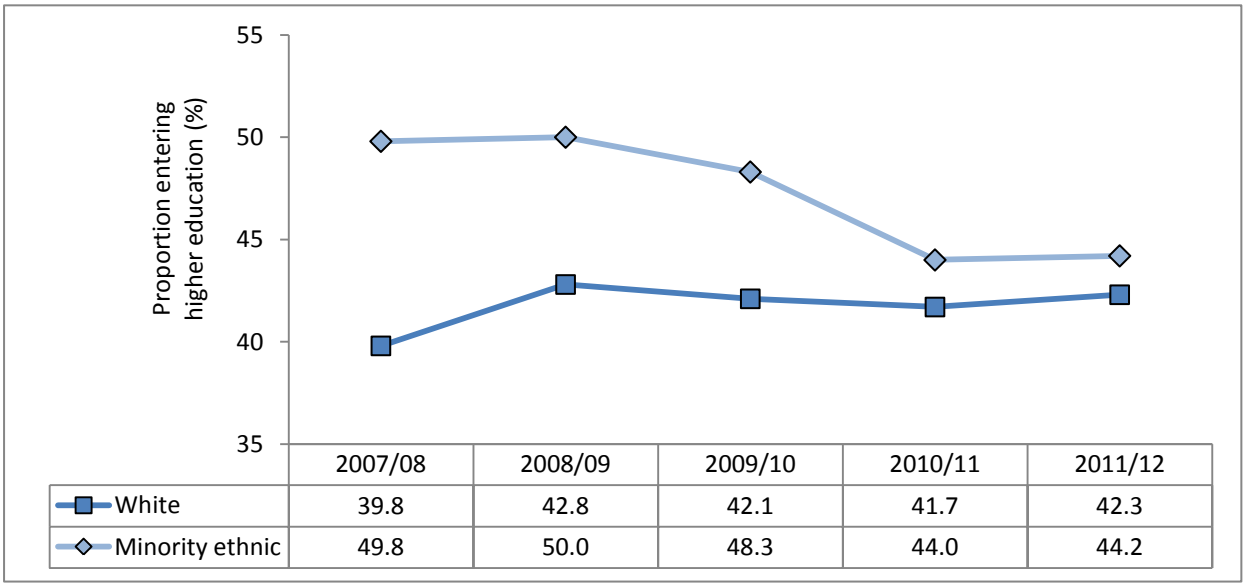
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
White male	37.6	42.4	44.7	45.6	47.2
White female	55.0	57.8	60.5	61.3	64.2
Minority ethnic male	44.3	52.5	52.1	50.2	54.2
Minority ethnic female	70.9	61.4	65.6	61.3	55.0

White and Minority Ethnic School Leavers – Destinations:

- **Higher education**

  In 2011/12, the proportion of minority ethnic pupils entering higher education (44.2%) was slightly higher than the proportion of white pupils entering higher education (42.3%, see Figure 7.9). The proportion of minority ethnic pupils going onto higher education decreased over the five-year period from 49.8% in 2007/08. The proportion of white pupils entering higher education increased slightly over the five year period from 39.8% in 2007/08, indicating that the gap between these groups has narrowed since 2007/08 (see Figure 7.10; Technical Table 7.13).

Figure 7.9: Proportion of school leavers entering higher education by ethnicity, 2011/12

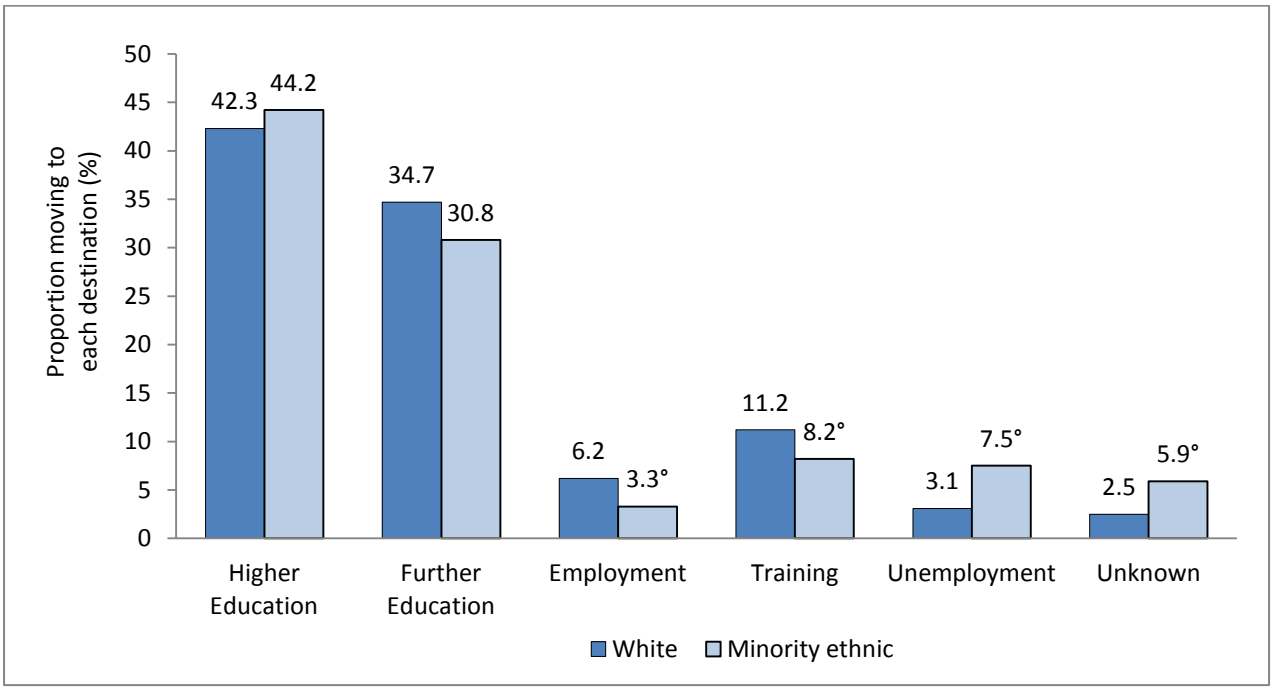


	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
White	39.8	42.8	42.1	41.7	42.3
Minority ethnic	49.8	50.0	48.3	44.0	44.2

- **Further education**

  In 2011/12, the proportion of white students entering further education (34.7%) was higher than the proportion of minority ethnic students entering further education (30.8%, see Figure 7.10). The proportion of school leavers entering further education increased between 2007/08 and 2011/12, by approximately five percentage points for both white and minority ethnic groups.

Figure 7.10: Proportion of school leavers' destinations by ethnicity, 2011/12



°Denotes that the number is less than 40

- **All other destinations**

  All other destinations for minority ethnic groups were subject to low sample size[270]. In 2011/12, the proportion of minority ethic school leavers entering employment (3.3%) was lower than the proportion for white school leavers (6.2%, see Figure 7.10). In 2011/12, the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups entering training after school was 8.2%, lower than the proportion of white pupils entering training (11.2%). In addition, in 2011/12, the proportion of school leavers from minority ethnic groups entering unemployment after school (7.5%) was higher than the proportion of white school leavers (3.1%, see Figure 7.10). Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, it was not possible to reliably comment on trends in the proportion of minority ethnic school leavers entering training, employment and unemployment due to small sample size (<40 individuals).

<u>White and Minority Ethnic School Leavers – Destination by Gender</u>:

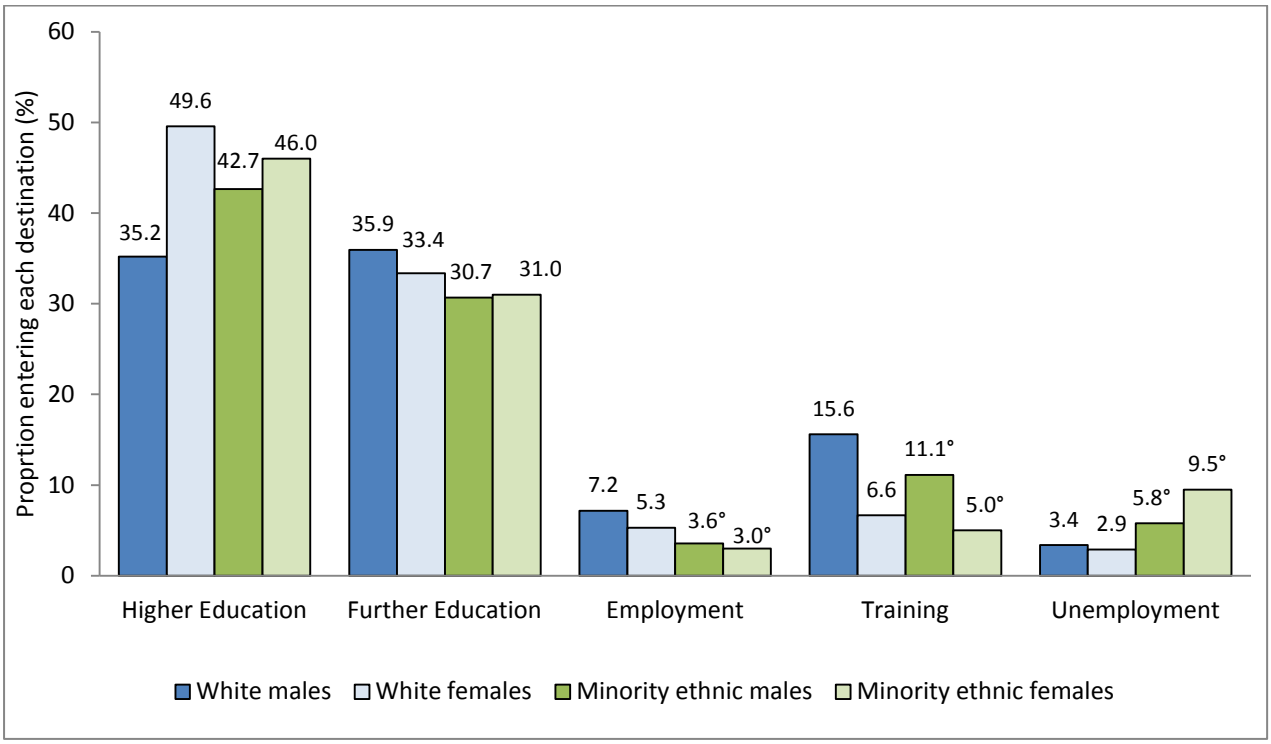
The proportion of male and female white and minority ethnic school leavers entering each destination (higher education, further education, employment, training, unemployment and unknown destination) between 2007/08 and 2011/12 was analysed to identify differentials in destination by ethnic group and sex. .

[270] Sample size <40 individuals

- **Higher education**

  In 2011/12, a higher proportion of both white and minority ethnic females entered higher education than white and minority ethnic males (see Figure 7.11). A higher proportion of white females entered higher education (49.6%) than minority ethnic females (46.0%); however white males were the least likely to enter higher education (35.2%) (see Figure 7.11; Technical Table 7.13).

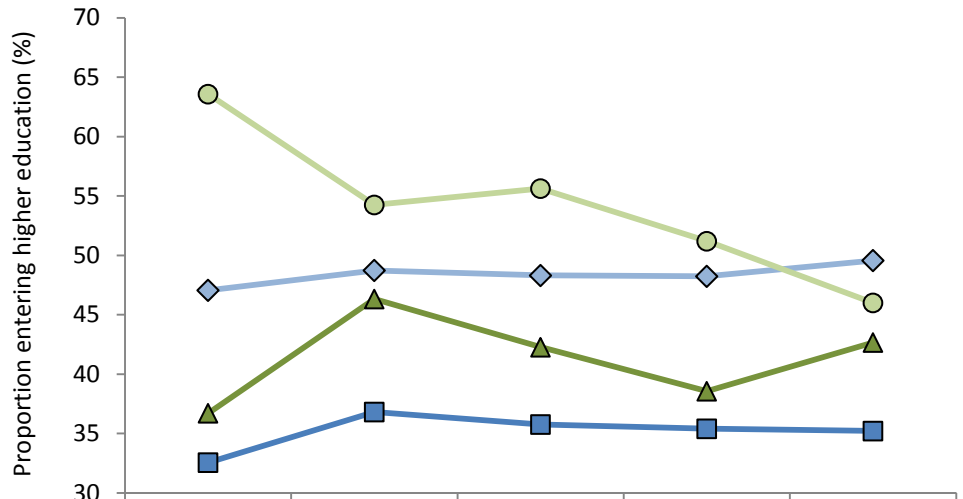
Figure 7.11: Proportion of school leavers' destinations by ethnicity and gender, 2011/12



°Denotes that the number is less than 40

The proportion of minority ethnic females entering higher education decreased from 63.6% in 2007/08. In 2007/08, the proportion of minority ethnic females entering higher education, was higher than any other group (see Figure 7.12). However, by 2011/12, the proportion of white females entering higher education was higher than the other groups. The gender gap in the proportion of minority ethnic females and minority ethnic males entering higher education has narrowed from 26.9 percentage points in 2007/08 to 3.3 percentage points in 2011/12 (to the detriment of minority ethnic females), while the ethnicity gap between white and minority ethnic females has reversed in the same time period (to the detriment of minority ethnic females) from 16.5 percentage points in favour of minority ethnic females to 3.6 percentage points in favour of white females(see Figure 7.12). Caution must be taken when interpreting these trends as numbers for ethnic minorities in all years are below 100 in each gender group.

Figure 7.12: Proportion of school leavers entering higher education by ethnicity and gender, 2007/08 to 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
White Males	32.6	36.8	35.8	35.4	35.2
White females	47.1	48.7	48.3	48.2	49.6
Minority ethnic males	36.7	46.3	42.3	38.6	42.7
Minority ethnic females	63.6	54.2	55.6	51.2	46.0

- **All other destinations**

  All other destinations for minority ethnic groups were subject to low sample size[271]. In 2011/12, the proportion of white male school leavers entering further education was greater (35.9%) than for any other group (33.4% white females; 31.0% minority ethnic females; and, 30.7% minority ethnic males). In addition, a greater proportion of white males entered employment (7.2%) and job training (15.6%) after school than for all other groups (see Figure 7.12). In 2011/12, the proportion of minority ethnic females entering unemployment was higher (9.5%) than for any other group[272] (5.8% minority ethnic males; 3.4% white males; 2.9% white females) (see Figure 7.12). It is not possible to reliably comment on trends between 2007/08 and 2011/12 in the proportion of minority ethnic school leavers entering training[273], employment and unemployment due to small sample size (<40 individuals) (see Technical Table 7.14).

[271] Sample size <40 individuals
[272] Sample size <40 individuals
[273] Numbers entering training include those entering the Training for Success programme, operated by the Department for Employment and Learning. Training on Training for Success is delivered by a range of training providers, including Further Education Colleges. Training for Success trainees who receive training at Further Education Colleges are recorded as being in training and not in Further Education. This convention avoids double counting of Training for Success trainees.

Further Education (Source: DEL)

This section will explore data related to those courses which result in a qualification – accredited courses and 'Essential Skills' courses – and those which do not lead to a qualification – non-accredited courses.

Accredited (Professional and Technical) Courses[274] – Access, Progression and Attainment:

Consistently, between 2007/08 to 2011/12, the vast majority of enrolees on accredited further education courses were white (83.5% in 2011/12) (see Technical Table 7.15). The percentages of white and minority ethnic enrolees reflected the share of these groups within the Northern Ireland population as a whole[275].

When the retention[276] and achievement[277] proportions of final year enrolees in accredited courses were considered, differences between white, minority ethnic, and students of unknown ethnicity were apparent. In 2011/12, final year students of unknown ethnicity were most likely to complete the course (93.3%). However, white final year students were more likely to be complete the course (91.2%) than people from minority ethnic groups (86.5%), a slight increase in retention for all groups on the previous year[278] (91.0% unknown ethnicity; 90.4% white students; 85.8% minority ethnic students in 2010/11) (see Technical Table 7.16).

Differences were also found in achievement for all groups. In 2011/12, white students were more likely to gain an achievement (qualify) (85.7%) than students of unknown ethnicity (82.4%) and students from minority ethnic groups (77.6%). The proportion of students gaining an achievement increased slightly from the previous year for all groups (82.7% white students; 77.7%, unknown students; 72.2% minority ethnic students in 2010/11) (see Technical Table 7.16).

[274] Includes a range of assessed full-time and part-time education and training options from entry level to postgraduate level.
[275] The population is 98.2% white and 1.8% minority ethnic groups, according to the Census 2011.
[276] Retention (%) = final year completers / final year enrolees (where final year completers are defined as final year enrolments which do not have a student status of withdrawn or transferred).
[277] Achievement (%) = final year achievers / final years completers (where achievement is defined as full and partial achievements within outcome for those classed as final year completers.)
[278] Data for 2010/11 and 2011/12 only available

Essential Skills – Access:

Consistently over the five-year period between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the vast majority of all Essential Skills enrolees were white (see Technical Table 7.17). Of all enrolees in 2011/12, the share of white enrolees was 93.1%, while the share of minority ethnic enrolees was 1.7% and the share of those of unknown ethnicity was 5.2%. This broadly reflects the share of minority ethnic people in the Northern Ireland population as a whole (1.8%)[279]. The share of minority ethnic enrolees increased slightly from 2007/08, when 1.5% of enrolees were from minority ethnic groups[280].

Non-accredited (Non-professional and Technical) Courses – Access:

Consistently over the five year period between the 2007/08 and 2011/12, white students accounted for the majority share of all non-accredited course enrolees. In 2011/12, white enrolees represented 77.3% of all enrolees, students of unknown ethnicity accounted for 20.8%, while minority ethnic enrolees accounted for 1.9%, which is approximately the same share of minority ethnic people in the Northern Ireland population as a whole (1.8%[281]). The share of minority ethnic enrolees increased from 1.2% of all enrolments in 2007/08 (see Technical Table 7.15).

[279] Census 2011
[280] No qualifications data from Essential Skills courses were available for ethnicity
[281] Census 2011

Training, Apprenticeships and Employment Programmes (Source: DEL)

'Training for Success' is designed for young people aged 16 - 17 years (up to 24 years for those who qualify under extended eligibility[282]) and provides training to give them the tools and skills they need to get a job. It is designed to enable learners to progress to higher level training, further education, or employment by providing training to address personal and social development needs, develop occupational skills, employability skills and, where necessary, Essential Skills training. 'ApprenticeshipsNI' provides the opportunity for students to participate in a Level 2 or Level 3 apprenticeship. There is no upper age limit for participation in the programme, however all participants must be in employment from day one. The Steps to Work programme supports participants to find work through a combination of one to one guidance and support from an advisor and access to training courses, qualifications provision, and work experience.

Training for Success Programme – Access and Progression:

White students consistently comprised almost all of 'Starts'[283], and 'Leavers'[284] on the Training for Success programme between 2007/08 and 2011/12. In 2011/12, white students represented a 98.9% share of both 'Starts' and 'Leavers', while minority ethnic students represented a 1.0% share of 'Starts' and 0.9% share of 'Leavers' (unknown, 0.1% share of 'Starts' and 'Leavers'). There were no notable trends in the shares of minority ethnic 'Starts' and 'Leavers' between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (see Technical Table 7.18). According to the Census 2011, 98.2% of the Northern Ireland general population was white, and 1.8% was minority ethnic, indicating that minority ethnic groups were underrepresented in the programme.

ApprenticeshipsNI Programme – Access and Progression:

In 2011/12, minority ethnic 'Starts' represented a 2.0% share of all enrolees on the programme. This represents a slightly higher proportion than the percentage of people in Northern Ireland as a whole who are minority ethnic (1.8%)[285]. Of the 'Starts' in the programme in 2011/12 who were minority ethnic, approximately two-thirds (64.0%) were male and one-third (36.0%) were female. There is an underrepresentation of minority ethnic females on the programme given that over half (53.3%) of white 'Starts' were female (see Technical Table 7.20). The share of minority ethnic 'Starts' on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme increased from 1.4% in 2007/08 to 2.0% in 2011/12. Caution should be taken when analysing the gender breakdown of ethnic minorities as sample size was low.

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[282] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-for-you-on-training-for-success - *'Who can take part in the Training for Success programme?'*
[283] According to DEL, 'Starts' refer to participants starting a programme.
[284] According to DEL 'Leavers' refer to the number of participants completing a programme.
[285] Census 2011

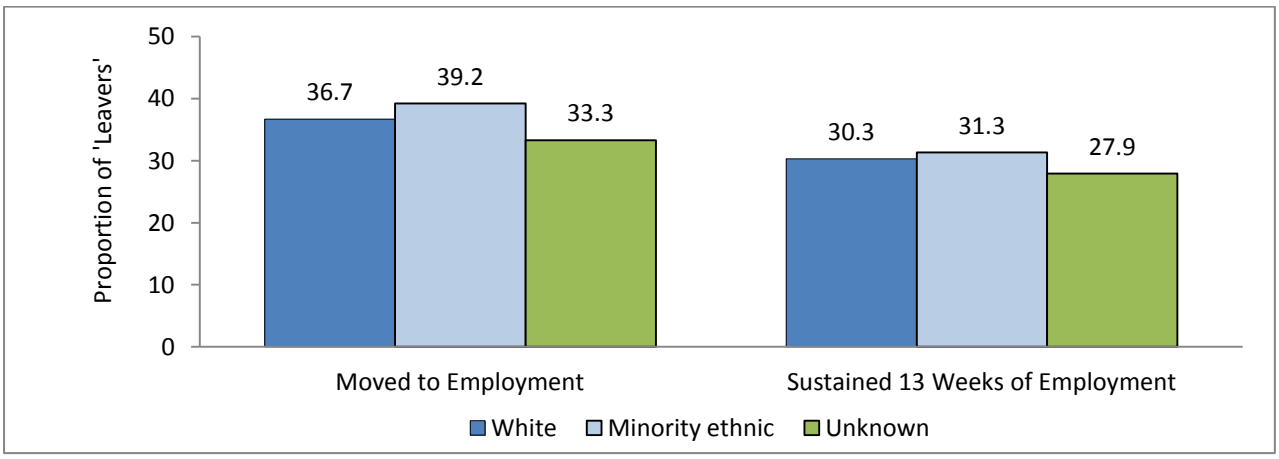
In 2011/12, minority ethnic 'Leavers' represented a 2.3% share of all enrolees on the programme, slightly higher than the share of 'Starts' on the programme. Reflecting 'Starts' on the programme, there was a sex differential in 'Leavers' amongst minority ethnic students with the share of male minority ethnic 'Leavers' (62.1%) greater than the share of female minority ethnic 'Leavers' (37.9%). The share of minority ethnic 'Leavers' on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme increased from 1.6% in 2007/08, reflecting the increase in the share of 'Starts' on the programme from 2007/08 to 2011/12 (see Technical Table 7.19).

Steps to Work Programme – Access, Progression and Destinations:

DEL figures for the Steps to Work programme for the 2008/09-2011/12 period[286] consistently show that almost all Steps to Work 'Starts' were white (see Technical Table 7.21) Of all 'Starts' in 2011/12, 96.7% were white, 1.9% were minority ethnic and the ethnicity of 1.5% was unknown. The proportion of minority ethnic 'Starts' reflects the share of minority ethnic people in the Northern Ireland population as a whole (1.8%[287]). These figures have fluctuated slightly between 2008/09 and 2011/12 (see Technical Table 7.21).

In 2011/12, minority ethnic 'Leavers' were proportionately slightly more likely to have either moved into employment (39.2%) or sustained 13 weeks of employment (31.3%) than white participants (36.7% and 30.3% respectively) and those of unknown ethnicity (33.3% and 27.9% respectively, see Figure 7.13). It is not possible to reliably comment on trends between 2008/09 and 2011/12 in the proportion of minority ethnic 'Leavers' moving into employment or sustaining 13 weeks of employment due to small sample size (<40 individuals) in some years (see Technical Table 7.21).

Figure 7.13: Proportion 'Leavers' from Steps to Work who moved to employment or sustained 13 weeks of employment, 2011/12



[286] The most recent period available for analysis
[287] Census 2011

Higher Education (Source: DEL)

Undergraduate/Postgraduate Status – Access and Attainment:

In 2011/12, minority ethnic students accounted for a smaller share of undergraduate enrolments and qualifiers (1.3% and 1.4% respectively) than the proportion of minority ethnic people in the Northern Ireland population (1.8%)[288]. However, minority ethnic students represented a higher share of postgraduate enrolments (2.5%) and qualifiers (2.2%) than the proportion of minority ethnic people in the Northern Ireland.

Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the share of white enrolees increased for undergraduate courses (from 90.6% to 93.6%) and postgraduate courses (from 82.2% to 95.8%) while the share of those enrolees whose ethnicity was unknown decreased for undergraduate (from 8.2% to 5.1%) and postgraduate courses (from 15.6% to 1.7%). There was no notable trend in the share of undergraduate and postgraduate minority ethnic enrolees between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (see Technical Table 7.22).

Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the share of undergraduate qualifiers reflected patterns for undergraduate enrolments; the share of white undergraduate qualifiers increased (from 90.4% to 97.8%), the share of qualifiers whose ethnicity was unknown decreased (from 8.3% to 0.8%) and there was no notable trend in the share of minority ethnic undergraduate qualifiers between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (see Technical Table 7.22). While there was no notable trends in the share of minority ethnic postgraduate enrolees between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the share of postgraduate qualifiers who were minority ethnic or white increased (from 1.5% to 2.2% for minority ethnic qualifiers and from 84.5% to 96.2% for white qualifiers). The share of qualifiers of unknown ethnicity decreased (from 14.0% to 1.6%) within this time period.

Full-time/Part-time Status – Access and Attainment:

In 2011/12, minority ethnic students accounted for a smaller share of 'full-time/sandwich'[289] enrolments (1.4%) than the proportion of minority ethnic people in the Northern Ireland population (1.8%[290]). However, the share of minority ethnic students who were 'part-time/other'[291] enrolees

[288] Census 2011

[289] *Full-time* students are those normally required to attend an Institution for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the year of study, on thick or thin sandwich courses, and those on a study-related year out of their institution. During that time students are normally expected to undertake periods of study, tuition or work experience which amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week.

[290] Census 2011

[291] *Part-time* students are those recorded as studying part-time, or studying full-time on courses lasting less than 24 weeks, on block release, or studying during the evenings only.

(1.7%) was similar to the proportion of minority ethnic people in the Northern Ireland. Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the share of white enrolees increased for 'full-time/sandwich' (from 95.4% to 98.2%) and 'part-time/other' courses (from 74.0% to 82.4%) while the share of those enrolees whose ethnicity was unknown decreased for full-time (from 3.4% to 0.4%) and part-time courses (from 24.3% to 15.9%). There was no notable trend in the share of full-time and part-time minority ethnic enrolees between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (see Technical Table 7.23).

Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the share of white full-time qualifiers increased (from 94.7% to 98.1%), while, the share of full-time qualifiers whose ethnicity was unknown decreased (from 4.3% to 0.5%). The share of 'part-time/other' qualifiers who were minority ethnic or white increased (from 1.9% to 2.2% for minority ethnic qualifiers; from 78.4% to 95.5% for white qualifiers). The share of 'part-time/other' qualifiers whose ethnicity was unknown decreased (from 19.7% to 2.3%) within this time period (Technical Table 7.23).

Subject Choice – Access and Attainment:

The minority ethnic shares of enrolments were greatest in the STEM[292] subject areas of 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology', and 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects allied to Medicine' (both 2.1% in 2011/12, see Table 7.3).These enrolment shares are higher than the share of minority ethnic people in the Northern Ireland population as a whole (1.8%[293]). This was a persistent trend in these subjects from 2007/08-2011/12. In 2011/12, the minority ethnic shares of enrolments were lowest in 'Social Studies and Law' (1.2%) and 'Other Disciplines' (1.0%) (see Table 7.3).

The shares of minority ethnic students qualifying from the various subject areas were subject to low sample sizes[294] (see Technical Table 7.25). In 2011/12, minority ethnic students accounted for 3.3% of all qualifiers from 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology' – much higher than other subject areas within higher education (see Technical Table 7.25).

In 2011/12, the largest proportion of white students enrolled in and qualified from 'Other Disciplines', while the largest proportion of minority ethnic students enrolled in and qualified from 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects allied to Medicine' (see Technical Tables 7.24 and 7.25).

[292] STEM is an acronym of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. According to the Department of Employment and Learning, STEM related qualifications include qualifications in the following subject areas; Medicine & Dentistry, Subjects allied to Medicine, Biological Sciences, Veterinary Sciences, Agriculture & related subjects, Physical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science, Engineering & Technology and Architecture, Building & Planning. See http://www.delni.gov.uk/2857p_stem_booklet_v5.pdf.
[293] Census 2011
[294] Sample size <40 individuals

Table 7.3: Higher education subject enrolments and qualifications by ethnicity, 2007/08 – 2011/12

			Medicine, Dentistry & Subjects Allied to Medicine	Biological, Veterinary, Agricultural & Physical Sciences	Maths, IT, Engineering & Technology	Social Studies & Law	Business, Administration, Mass Communication & Documentation	Other Disciplines
Enrolments	**Year**		**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
	2007/08	**White**	79.0	96.6	96.0	92.8	91.3	89.0
		Minority ethnic	1.8	1.1	2.0	1.3	1.4	0.8
		Not known	19.2	2.3	2.0	5.9	7.3	10.2
	2011/12	**White**	97.5	98.3	97.5	97.2	97.8	84.8
		Minority ethnic	2.1	1.2	2.1	1.2	1.8	1.0
		Not known	0.4°	0.5°	0.4°	1.5	0.4°	14.2
Qualifiers	**Year**							
	2007/08	**White**	78.8	96.4	94.9	90.7	90.8	91.9
		Minority ethnic	1.9	0.8°	2.1°	1.0°	1.3°	1.2
		Not known	19.3	2.8°	3.0°	8.3	7.9	6.9
	2011/12	**White**	96.6	98.6	95.7	96.9	98.0	98.0
		Minority ethnic	2.2	1.0°	3.3	1.1°	1.3°	1.3
		Not known	1.2°	0.4°	1.1°	2.0	0.7°	0.8°

°Note that the number is less than 40

Higher Education – Progression:

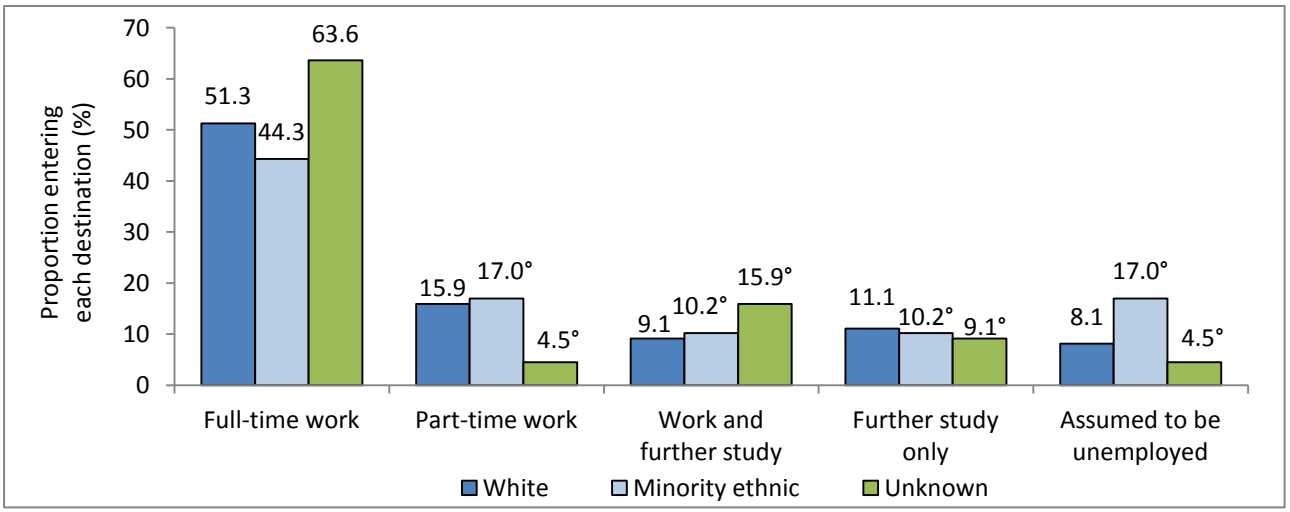
Consistently over the years 2007/08 to 2011/12, white students represented the majority of all students who dropped out of higher education (see Technical Table 7.26). In 2011/12, white students represented 98.0% of all those who dropped out of their course; students from minority ethnic backgrounds represented 1.1% of those who did not continue with their higher education course; and, those of unknown ethnicity represented 0.9% of all those who dropped out of their course.

Higher Education Leavers – Destinations:

There were some differences between white and minority ethnic students in regard to destinations after leaving higher education. All destinations for minority ethnic groups, except for full-time employment, were subject to low sample size[295] (see Technical Table 7.27).

In 2010/11, the proportion of students of unknown ethnicity entering full-time employment (63.6%) was greater than the proportions of white and minority ethnic student leavers (51.3% and 44.3% respectively). Minority ethnic leavers were more likely to enter part-time paid work (17.0% minority ethnic) than the other groups (15.9% white; 4.5% unknown ethnicity), while white leavers were more likely to do further study only (11.1% white; 10.2% minority ethnic; 9.1% unknown ethnicity). A higher proportion of leavers of unknown ethnicity went on to work and further study (15.9%) than all other groups (10.2% minority ethnic; 9.1% white). Minority ethnic leavers were more likely to be assumed to be unemployed (17.0%) compared to all other groups (8.1% white; 4.5% unknown).

Figure 7.14: Destinations of higher education leavers by ethnicity, 2010/11



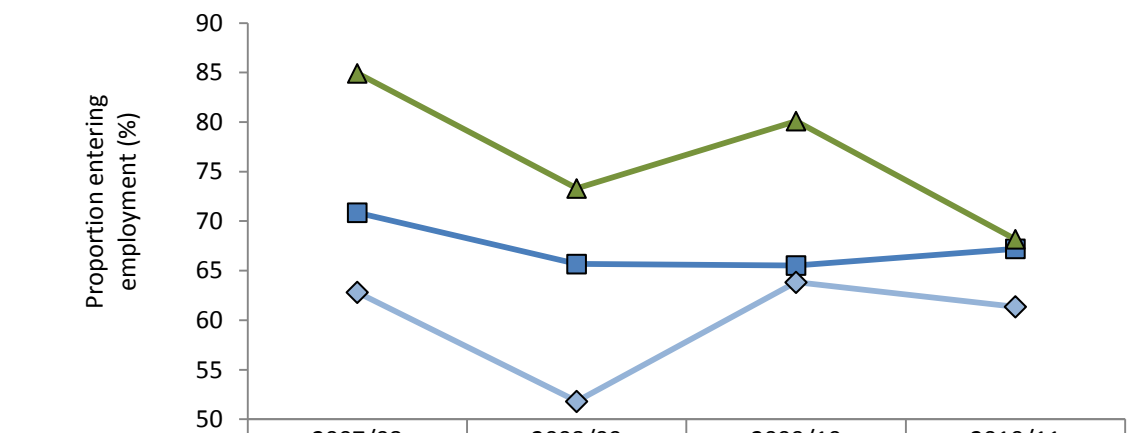
°Note that the number is less than 40

[295] Sample size <40 individuals

When the proportion of those entering any employment (full-time and part-time combined[296]) was considered for the period 2007/08 to 2011/12, the proportion of leavers entering employment had decreased overall for all groups (see Figure 7.14)

Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, it was not possible to reliably comment on trends in the proportion of minority ethnic school leavers entering all other destinations due to small sample size (<40 individuals) (see Technical Table 7.27).

Figure 7.14: Proportion of higher education leavers entering employment (full-time and part-time) by ethnicity, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
White	70.9	65.7	65.5	67.2
Minority ethnic	62.8	51.8	63.8	61.4
Unknown	84.9	73.3	80.1	68.2

[296] Numbers entering full-time and part-time employment were combined for all groups to boost sample size across all five years.

Overall Population (Source: Census)

Highest Qualification Attainment:

- **Ethnicity**

  The Census data in Table 7.4 shows some changes in regard to highest qualifications for people from different race and ethnicity categories over the ten years between 2001 and 2011. In 2011, Irish Travellers were more likely to have no qualifications (67.0%) than all other groups (see Table 7.4), while a higher proportion of the Chinese (27.2%) and Other Black ethnic group (28.9%) had no qualifications, than the White ethnic group (25.6%). However, people from an Indian or Other Asian ethnic background were less likely to have no qualifications (4.5% and 7.7% respectively) than all other groups (see Table 7.4). All ethnic groups experienced a decrease in the proportion of individuals with no qualifications from 2001-2011 (see Table 7.4).

  The proportion of people who have lower level qualifications as their higher qualification was greatest for those from Black Caribbean (42.6%) and White ethnic groups (41.6%). The proportion of people who have lower level qualifications as their highest qualification has decreased for almost all groups from 2001-2011.

  In 2011, people from the Indian and Other Asian ethnic group had a highest proportion of higher level qualifications (62.2% and 51.1% respectively) than any other group (see Table 7.4), while Irish Travellers were least likely to have higher qualifications (8.4%). Some ethnic groups experienced an increase in the proportion of people with higher level qualifications between 2011-2011 (White, Irish Traveller, Chinese, Mixed, Indian, Pakistani, Black Caribbean and Other Black), while other groups experienced a decrease within this time period (Bangladeshi, Other Asian, Black African, and Other Ethnic groups) (see Table 7.4).

Table 7.4: Highest qualification proportions by ethnicity in the Northern Ireland population

		Census 2001 (% in ethnic group)	Census 2011 (% in ethnic group)
White	No qualifications	41.7	25.6
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	42.6	41.6
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	15.7	24.4
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	8.3
Irish Traveller	No qualifications	71.5	67.1
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	20.6	19.5
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	7.9	8.4
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	5.0
Chinese	No qualifications	43.4	27.2
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	30.5	29.1
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	26.1	26.4
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	17.3
Mixed	No qualifications	24.3	12.1
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	47.7	43.4
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	28.0	34.8
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	9.8
Indian	No qualifications	18.7	4.5
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	27.0	17.4
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	54.4	62.2
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	15.8
Pakistani	No qualifications	35.3	16.6
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	31.8	27.0
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	32.9	42.8
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	13.6
Bangladeshi	No qualifications	42.0	25.6
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	36.3	35.0
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	21.7	19.4
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	19.9
Other Asian	No qualifications	19.6	7.7
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	26.1	18.1
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	54.2	51.1
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	23.0
Black Caribbean	No qualifications	23.0	15.3
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	52.9	42.6
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	24.0	27.3
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	14.7
Black African	No qualifications	14.9	14.6
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	39.2	31.4
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	45.9	37.4
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	16.6
Other Black	No qualifications	32.9	28.9
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	51.7	33.5
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	15.4	16.1
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	21.5
Other Ethnic	No qualifications	21.0	16.1
	Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	27.7	29.3
	Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	51.3	34.1
	Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	-	20.4

Source: Census 2001 and 2011

- **Country of Birth**

  When Census 2011 data was examined for country of birth, differences in the highest level of qualification were identified for those born in other countries but residing in Northern Ireland, compared to those born in, and residing in, Northern Ireland. In 2011, people born in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland were more likely to have no qualifications (30.3% and 30.9% respectively) than people born in other countries (see Table 7.5). However, people who had migrated to Northern Ireland from other UK regions were more likely to have lower level qualifications (42.1%) than all other groups, including those born in Northern Ireland (39.6%, Northern Ireland; see Table 7.5). People who were born in non-European Union (EU) regions were more likely to have higher qualifications (41.2%) than all other groups, including those born in Northern Ireland (22.7%, Northern Ireland; see Table 7.5), while people who were born in the EU Accession countries were more likely to have 'Other' qualifications (42.8%) than all other groups including those born in Northern Ireland (7.4%, Northern Ireland; see Table 7.5).

Table 7.5: Highest qualification proportions by country of birth in the Northern Ireland population, Census 2001

	Northern Ireland	Other UK Regions	Republic of Ireland	Other EU: Member countries prior to 2004 expansion	Other EU: Accession countries 2004 onwards	Other
	%	%	%	%	%	%
No qualifications	30.3	21.7	30.9	14.5	16.9	14.1
Lower (Level 1-3) qualifications	39.6	42.1	24.8	34.3	21.9	27.8
Higher (Level 4 and above) qualifications	22.7	29.3	32.3	31.6	18.3	41.2
Other qualifications (incl. Apprenticeships)	7.4	6.9	12.1	19.5	42.8	17.0

Source: Census 2011: DC2503NI

Notes:

1. Country of Birth –Other UK regions are England, Scotland and Wales

2. Country of Birth - 'Other' consists of persons born at sea or in the air, or with country of birth not stated.

3. 'Member countries prior to 2004 expansion' includes United Kingdom (part not specified) and Ireland (part not specified).

4.. 'Accession countries 2004 onwards' includes Republic of Cyprus; Other includes Cyprus (not otherwise specified)

The next section of this chapter will present the findings from the qualitative element of the research (focus groups, interviews, and a stakeholder engagement event), in order to thematically illustrate the barriers and enablers that stakeholders identified for ethnicity.

Findings from Qualitative Data

During engagement with key stakeholders at the expert seminar, some representatives had additional comments to make regarding achieving educational equality for those of different race and ethnic groups. Some of the stated barriers and enablers to educational equality included:

1. ***Funding for Newcomer children***

- Support for Newcomer children is dependent on class size, which presents challenges for schools with low numbers of Newcomer pupils – there needs to be a minimum level of funding provided to a school. Another problem with funding is that there is no funding given for pupils who arrive after the October school census is taken. DE also needs to address the differences in resource allocation between primary and post primary schools;
- There are limited numbers of officers in the Inclusion and Diversity Service to support Newcomer children.

2. ***Diversity in Newcomer children***

- Some children are unfamiliar with the school system and/ or have poor literacy and poor pre-literacy skills which acts as a barrier to learning;
- There is a need to distinguish between Newcomers and Newcomer children with complex needs – some children require more support than others.

3. ***Understanding of the Education System***

- A major barrier is Newcomer parents' understanding of the education system. They may lack understanding and clarity on the working of the system, and practical difficulties they face aren't under any central remit; for instance, the Inclusion and Diversity Service doesn't have any remit to work with parents. Furthermore, parents may be reluctant or may not want to engage with a school.

4. ***Attitudes of the School***

- Some schools are perceived as 'Newcomer friendly', whilst other schools are still more resistant to accepting Newcomer children;
- Racial bullying exists in schools – data on the extent of this should be systematically collected. An additional barrier for children may be the lack of capacity of teachers and schools to identify, acknowledge, challenge and deal effectively with this. There is a need for further training to enable teachers and schools to effectively identify and respond to controversial issues. This will allow for appropriate support and guidance to be shared, with teachers feeling confident in dealing with controversial issues.

5. ***Multiple inequalities***

- Children with a SEN or disability who have had a diagnosis in their country of origin may not have documentation to support that, in which case assessment/re-assessment will only be undertaken if parents alert the schools to this or the 'needs' are observed by teaching or other educational staff. Starting at the beginning of our statement process will significantly delay the appropriate provision being provided to the children and impact on their access to the curriculum. There should be a process in place that will allow for previous diagnosis to be shared and inform support, whilst the child is going through the Northern Irish statementing process.

6. ***Roma children: Barriers and Enablers***

- Roma children face particular barriers in Northern Ireland – there is little information about their school experiences, and there is a need to substantively consult with Roma people. Roma mediators are needed to assist with educational performance, and a Roma Inclusion Strategy is required to provide a strategic framework around addressing educational inequalities.

7. ***Monitoring of Race***

- In further and higher education, race categories in monitoring forms are not useful, since they cannot give information about whether a student was born in Northern Ireland or if they are Newcomer. This makes the analysis of educational inequalities and specific group needs difficult to track.

Summary

Overall, a key finding from the review of the quantitative data and literature review was the limited available data and/or research on key ethnic groups in Northern Ireland and the need for more detailed reporting of ethnicity within education[297]. There is little formal research on the educational experiences of vulnerable groups such as Roma children and the refugee or asylum seeker children. In addition, monitoring of ethnicity within education does not allow for the disaggregation of the 'white' category by nationality which would enable the educational experiences of non-Newcomer Eastern European migrants and other minority ethnic groups to be determined. The qualitative research further indicated that within further and higher education race categories in monitoring forms do not collect information on whether a student is a migrant which makes the analysis of educational inequalities in this specific group difficult to track.

Findings on access to different school types by minority ethnic background and Newcomer status revealed that children from minority ethnic groups or Newcomer children were slightly less likely to attend controlled schools than other types of schools. In support of findings from the literature review, minority ethnic and Newcomer children were more likely to attend non-grammar secondary schools and represent a greater share of children within the integrated sector. A range of factors that represented barriers to accessing grammar education were identified in the literature and qualitative research including the use of tests to determine admission and lack of knowledge of the educational system.

The findings on the attainment of school leavers showed that although high proportions of minority ethnic school leavers achieved attainment targets at GCSE and A Level (i.e. 2+ A Levels A*-E, 5+ GCSEs A*-C, or 5+ GCSEs A*-C including Maths and English), their attainment proportions in 2011/12 were slightly lower than the attainment proportions of white pupils. This is a reversal in trends that were observed in 2007/08 - that year, the proportions of students achieving GCSE and A Level attainment targets were higher for minority ethnic school leavers than for white school leavers. Between 2007/08 and 2011/12 the attainment of white students increased at GCSE and A Level, however the attainment of minority ethnic students did not increase to the same degree, or decreased overall. This had a particular impact on minority ethnic females; while female attainment at GCSE and A Level increased between 2007/08 and 2011/12 in the general (and mostly white) population, the proportion of minority ethnic

[297] Although a more detailed breakdown of ethnic minorities is currently collected by the institutions, it is not reported due to small numbers.

females achieving GCSE and A Level attainment targets decreased dramatically in the last five years. These attainment trends have therefore revealed emergent inequalities which may need further exploration to determine the reasons for them. A persistent inequality identified in the literature and quantitative analysis is the low attainment of Irish Traveller children. Irish Traveller children had much higher rates of non-achievement than any other groups – for the combined years 2008-2012, two-thirds (67%) of all Irish Traveller school leavers did not achieve any GCSEs. The literature highlighted the work that has been undertaken recently with respect to Irish Traveller education and has highlighted recommendations made on improving access, attendance and attainment of Irish Traveller children[298].

In terms of the destinations of school leavers, minority ethnic students were slightly more likely to enter higher education. However, the proportion of minority ethnic students going onto higher education decreased over the five-year period from 2007/08 to 2011/12 while the proportion of white pupils entering higher education increased slightly– the ethnicity gap has therefore narrowed to the detriment of minority ethnic students. In 2011/12, a higher proportion of white females entered higher education than minority ethnic females (49.6% and 46.0% respectively). This is a reversal on 2007/08 when a greater proportion of minority ethnic females entered higher education than white females. This is another emergent inequality which may be linked to the previously reported decrease in the proportion of minority ethnic females achieving GCSE and A Level attainment targets.

Minority ethnic representation in further education courses, on the job training, apprenticeships and employment programmes is approximately in proportion with their representation in the Northern Ireland population as a whole, however, there was an underrepresentation of minority ethnic females on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. In addition minority ethnic students had lower retention and achievement on accredited courses in further education than white students. The reason for these persistent differences requires further exploration. However, in contrast to the situation five years ago, minority ethnic

[298] e.g. See:

- www.deni.gov.uk/taskforce_on_traveller_education_-_report_of_the_taskforce_to_the_department_of_education.pdf
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. (2008). *Mainstreaming Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations for Traveller children in schools*. Belfast: ECNI;
- http://www.selb.org/equality/Documents/AuditofInequalities2ndEditionJune2012.pdf;
- Hamilton et al. (2007). *The Adequacy and Effectiveness of Educational Provision for Traveller Children and Young People in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: ECNI/NICCY;
- http://www.equalityni.org/Footer-Links/News/Delivering-Equality/Recommendations-to-achieve-racial-equality

students in 2011/12 were proportionally more likely to find employment or sustain 13 weeks employment after leaving the Steps to Work programme than white students.

In higher education, minority ethnic students were slightly underrepresented in undergraduate enrolments, but overrepresented in postgraduate enrolments. Minority ethnic students were most likely to enrol in the STEM subject areas of 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology' and 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine'. However, in terms of destinations after higher education, white students were more likely to find any type of employment (full or part-time) after leaving higher education than minority ethnic students. This is a persistent inequality that requires further exploration. Examination of Census data on the highest level of qualification by ethnicity and country of birth has revealed inequalities in attainment between different ethnic groups. In keeping with the analysis of the attainment of Irish Traveller children, Irish Travellers were more likely to have no qualifications and less likely to have higher qualifications than any other ethnic group in 2011, highlighting the persistent low attainment of this ethnic group. In addition, another emergent inequality is that people from EU Accession countries were more likely to have 'other qualifications' than any other group. This is of particular concern, given that research[299] has suggested that migrant workers may find it difficult to improve their position in the labour market due to the lack of recognition of 'other' overseas qualifications –potentially leading to underemployment of migrant workers.

The qualitative data highlighted that a lack of recognition of diversity in the needs of Newcomer children and a lack of understanding of the Northern Ireland education system by Newcomer parents may present a barrier to educational equality. Furthermore, the funding available to support Newcomer children, or the lack thereof, and the attitudes of schools towards Newcomer children may present both a barrier and enabler to educational inequality. Finally, unrecognised multiple identities, particularly in relation to disability and special educational needs, may present an additional barrier to educational equality for Newcomer and minority ethnic children.

[299] e.g. Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (2012): Bayanihan: the Filipino community in Northern Ireland. NICEM:NI; Wallace A, McAreavey R and Atkin K (2013) Poverty and Ethnicity in Northern Ireland: An Evidence Review. JRF: York.

Chapter 8: Disability and Special Educational Needs Inequalities in Education

Introduction

In Northern Ireland, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995[300] (the DDA) provides protection for disabled persons against discrimination on the grounds of disability. Schools, Education and Library Boards (ELBs), universities and colleges, including teacher training and agricultural colleges, cannot discriminate against a disabled person or a person who has had a disability in the past for an unjustified disability-related reason. It is unlawful for the body responsible for a school or institution of further and higher education to discriminate against a disabled person:

- in the arrangements it makes for determining admission to the school or institution;
- in the terms on which it offers to admit him/her to the school or institution;
- by refusing or deliberately omitting to accept an application for admission;
- in the education or associated services provided for or offered to pupils, or the student services provided or offered to further and higher education students;
- by suspending or expelling a disabled pupil from the school or institution; or,
- by subjecting a student or pupil to harassment.

It is unlawful for a responsible body to discriminate against a disabled person in relation to the conferring of qualifications. This protection applies to the awarding of qualifications and to the treatment of those holding such qualifications. The duty to make reasonable adjustments also applies to the conferring of qualifications and the treatment of qualification holders. Furthermore, Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998[301] requires public authorities including educational bodies (but not including schools), in carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons with a disability and persons without.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities (UNCRPD) provides an international standard for disabled people's human rights. Article 24: A Right to Inclusive Education in the UNCRPD guarantees all disabled learners a right to participate in all forms of mainstream education with appropriate support. However, when the UK Government ratified this UNCRPD in June 2009 it decided to place a number of restrictions on its UNCRPD obligations. The first restriction was an Interpretative Declaration which clarifies the UK

[300] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/50/contents
[301] http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/section_75

Government's definition of a 'general education system'. The UK Government also placed a Reservation against Article 24 which states that: 'the United Kingdom reserves the right for disabled children to be educated outside their local community where more appropriate education provision is available elsewhere. Nevertheless, parents of disabled children have the same opportunity as other parents to state a preference for the school at which they wish their child to be educated.'[302]

The DDA was amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (Northern Ireland) 2005[303] (SENDO) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (Amendment) (Further and Higher Education) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.[304] To be clear on the difference between disability and special educational need, the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996[305] states that:

- a child has 'special educational needs' (SEN) 'if he has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him'; and,
- a child with a learning difficulty is defined as someone who has 'a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his age'.

Therefore, not all children with a SEN have a disability, and not all children with a disability have a SEN.

The SENDO amendments increased the rights of children and young people with special educational needs (SEN), and introduced disability discrimination laws for the whole education system in Northern Ireland for the first time. At the school level, children and young people with SEN were given increased rights to attend mainstream schools, and new services for parents and for schools were established. In regard to further and higher education, the new laws offered further protection against discrimination for young people with disabilities, and placed new duties on further and higher education institutions to make reasonable adjustments where appropriate, including physical adjustments to premises. As of June 2011, 4.2% of the school population in Northern Ireland - almost 14,000 children - had statements of special educational need, but over 19% of the school population - almost 65,000 children – were on the SEN register. Of these, 93% (approximately 60,000 pupils with SEN) were in mainstream schools[306].

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[302] http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CRPD/Future/DefExMainstreamersGroup_UK_CRPDFuture.doc

[303] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2005/1117/contents/made

[304] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2006/332/contents/made

[305] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1996/274/contents

[306] Statistics derived from Northern Ireland Assembly Hansard Report, 16th June 2011, available at: http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Official-Report/Committee-Minutes-of-Evidence/Session-2011-2012/June-2011/Special-Educational-Needs-/

A five-staged approach is used in identifying and dealing with a child's special needs. Stages 1 and 2 are carried out by the child's school and parents should be kept informed of what is happening. At Stage 3 the school may request outside help, e.g. from an educational psychologist. Statutory assessment is the focus of Stage 4. Stage 5 involves the issuing of a statement of special needs, and at this stage the relevant ELB will make additional resources available to a mainstream school or indicate that a change of placement may be necessary for the child.

Disability Statistics in Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Census 2011 asked all usual residents whether they had a long-term health problem or disability and how much their day-to-day activities were limited. Nearly four-fifths (79.6%) of usual residents between the ages of 16-74 years old said their daily activities were not limited by a long-term health problem or disability; 8.8% said their daily activities were limited 'a little', and 11.6% said their daily activities were limited 'a lot'. As disability rates increase with age, it should be noted that 5.8% of those under 25 years of age had a disability which limited their daily activities 'a little' or 'a lot' (5.4% of those under 18 years), according to the Census 2011. Just over two-thirds of the entire population (all usual residents) (68.6%) said they had no long-term condition or disability at all.

The Annual Schools' Census of 2007/08 was the first year in which the Department of Education (DE) Northern Ireland asked post primary schools to record those pupils who had been assessed as having a disability. Drawing from this data[307]:

- just over 1% (251) of the 21,056 post-primary children registered across the 5 stages of the current Code of Practice[308] were recorded as having been assessed by a medical professional as having a disability;
- 4.3% (179) of post-primary children with a statement (4,163) were recorded as having a disability; and
- 0.09% (111) of the 126,886 post-primary children without SEN were recorded as having been assessed as having a disability.

[307] Figures are taken from the Education and Library Board's Audit of Inequalities, June 2012. Available at: http://www.selb.org/equality/Documents/2013/AuditofInequalities2ndEditionJune2012.pdf

[308] The Code of Practice 'addresses the identification, assessment and provision made for all children who may have special educational needs at some time in their school careers'. 'Special educational needs' in the Code is defined as a 'learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made'; a 'learning difficulty' may refer to a disability which hinders a child's use of everyday educational facilities. See http://www.deni.gov.uk/the_code_of_practice.pdf

Literature Review

Disability

A report 'Inequalities in Education: Facts and Trends 1998-2008'[309] commissioned by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (hereafter referred to as ECNI) found that the educational attainment gap between people with and without a declared disability had widened in the ten years covered by the report. The Audit of Inequalities for 2011-2015 published by the ELBs in Northern Ireland[310] found that 41% of people with disabilities in Northern Ireland have no qualifications, and reported that evidence shows that the inclusion of children with a disability, especially where the disability includes deafness, is crucial to the development and integration of children with a disability. The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) Northern Ireland has also published its 'Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan 2011-2015'[311] and reported that people with a declared disability were less likely to enrol in further and higher education that those without a declared disability.

The Audit published by the ELBs includes a series of suggested actions which could improve levels of attainment, access and inclusion within schools. For example:

- the development of outreach measures to better enable parental inclusion and involvement;
- ELBs working in conjunction with DE to publish a Building Handbook for Special Schools;
- work on the part of the ELBs to obtain funding to facilitate the development of an Inter-Board regional electronic library through Learning NI that will be accessible both to schools and for pupils with a visual impairment to access at home;
- ensuring that individual works are undertaken as a result of physiotherapist reports;
- ensuring that disability access is included in new builds and refurbishment schemes;
- more collection of information on the educational experiences of children and young people with a disability;
- increasing the participation and inclusion of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs in sport and PE through the provision of advice and guidance to PE teachers;

[309] Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. (2008a). *Inequalities in Education – Facts and Trends 1998-2008*. Belfast: ECNI.
[310] http://www.selb.org/equality/Documents/AuditofInequalities2ndEditionJune2012.pdf
[311] Department of Employment and Learning. (2011). *Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan 2011-2015*. Belfast: DEL.

- consideration of how the Extended Schools programme could be tailored to offer more opportunities for pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs to participate in after-school clubs and activities;
- contributing to the development and subsequent implementation of the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum's Action Plan in relation to disablist bullying and the resource packs being prepared for schools, parents and children/young people;
- exploration of the possibility of providing 'safe places/safe areas' where children with disabilities and/or special educational needs/and quieter children can feel safe;
- exploration of the scope to review data on a regional basis, through the creation of a 'virtual' school, which would bring together all information on children, who have a particular disability e.g. children who are deaf, to examine attainment and attendance levels and ascertain if individual schools were actually assisting these children.

Furthermore, the Audit points to issues that arise when children with disabilities transition to adult services. This can be a very stressful time for young people with disabilities and their families, because they will need to move from services and supports that focus on children and families to those addressing the needs of adults. This transition process may be difficult due to a range of factors such as the numbers of agencies and professionals involved (for example education, social care and health) and the different approaches between those working in services for children and those working in adult services. A Cerebra report on this issue, 'Transition to Adulthood',[312] recommends that the transition planning for most young people should start at the age of 13/14 years; and by no later than the age of 16 years, all young people will need to make some important decisions about their future education and training. The ELBs in Northern Ireland suggest that the Education and Training Inspectorate's recommendations on its 'Evaluation of the Transition Arrangements from the Special School Sector to Further Education, Adult and Working Life' are reviewed, and to explore the scope for the further development of outreach work through Area Learning Communities, in particular through enhanced links with locally-based business/education partnerships.

In addition, the ECNI's publication 'Strengthening Protection for Disabled People: Proposals for Reform (2012)'[313] recommends that the current disability legislation in Northern Ireland should be strengthened and simplified to improve protection against harassment and discrimination against disabled pupils in schools, as this is currently weaker than the protection offered to

[312] http://base-uk.org/sites/base-uk.org/files/knowledge/Transition%20to%20Adulthood%20-%20guide%20for%20practitioners/cerebra_transitions_guide_for_professionals.pdf
[313] http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/Strengthening_protection_for_disabled_people0312Summary.pdf

students in further or higher education. It also recommends that an additional duty is placed on schools to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled pupils, where reasonable. This could include extra equipment or support, such as an adapted keyboard, for disabled pupils.

Research commissioned by DEL in 2000 on participation and provision for students with disabilities or learning difficulties in further education in Northern Ireland[314] revealed that the overall participation by students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was around 4%, and the percentage of those identified in each college as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities ranges from less than 1% to over 18% of total enrolments. Only 11% of students with disabilities or learning difficulties in the DEL research were attending full-time programmes. The research[315] also found that there was considerable variation among colleges in the proportions of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities following mainstream, discrete or combined programmes, and two thirds of colleges have more students on discrete provision than on mainstream provision.

In 2003, the Education and Training Inspectorate in Northern Ireland published a survey on provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in further education colleges[316], which drew attention to some concerns regarding the colleges, including: constant changes in the funding formula, which make it difficult to plan provision and allocate resources; a demand greater than supply for community classes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; suitable accreditation and progression routes for students with severe learning difficulties; and suitable staff development. The Equality and Human Rights Commission Review on Lifelong Learning (2010)[317] reports that in Great Britain as a whole, disabled people participate at half the rate of non-disabled people in formal and informal learning (23% compared to 46%). The Review also states that historically lower levels of educational qualifications among people with disabilities compared to people without disabilities has an impact on their employment status, the sector they work in, and their participation in part-time work. It remains the case that disabled people are less likely to participate in education, training and employment at age 16 years or to participate in Further Education and Higher Education, and as a result of the ongoing impacts of these factors, they are less likely to participate in adult learning[318]. The Leitch Review (2006)[319] found that more than

[314] http://www.delni.gov.uk/sldd_report-2.pdf
[315] Ibid
[316] http://www.etini.gov.uk/report-of-a-survey-of-provision-for-students-with-learning-difficulties-and-or-disabilities-in-colleges-of-further-education-in-northern-ireland.pdf
[317] Jones, P. (2010). Equality and Human Rights Commission Triennial Review: Education (Lifelong Learning). Southampton: University of Southampton.
[318] Ibid.

20% of the adult working-age population are economically inactive, and those with health problems and disabilities are over represented in the numbers of economically inactive. Barriers to employment and participation in adult learning are therefore closely interlinked for people with disabilities.

As outlined in the introduction of this chapter, the UK has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Article 24 of the Convention specifically relates to education. It declares that 'States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels', and that they should ensure that 'Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability' and that 'persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education'. The Equality and Human Rights Review on Lifelong Learning[320] states, however, that these are complex and difficult issues in relation to participation in adult learning and it must be recognised that part of the reason for the dramatic inequalities between disabled and non-disabled people in both employment and participation in adult learning is connected with the nature of disability. Nonetheless, the Review[321] outlines that disabled people have the right to expect that reasonable provision will be in place in terms of access, equality of opportunity, the ways in which mobility and social inclusion policies are implemented, regard for issues of personal safety and dignity and protection from process discrimination in both employment and training.

Purdam et al (2008)[322] claim that another key factor behind the inequality in participation in adult learning is the lower prior educational achievement of people with disabilities compared to those who are without disabilities: disabled people are more than twice as likely to leave school with no qualifications. The authors also argue that people with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty, live in households with low incomes or workless households, struggle to cope with additional living, care and transport costs, to have debt problems – again pointing to the overarching influence of poverty on all educational inequalities.

In regard to enabling inclusion and access to further and higher education for people with disabilities, the ECNI published a SENDO code of practice for further and higher education

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[319] The Leitch Review of Skills (2006). Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills. Available at http://www.delni.gov.uk/leitch_finalreport051206[1]-2.pdf

[320] Jones, P. (2010). Equality and Human Rights Commission Triennial Review: Education (Lifelong Learning). Southampton: University of Southampton.

[321] Ibid

[322] Purdam, K., P. Thornton, Olsen, W K., Afkhami, R. (2008). Disability in the UK - Measuring Equality. ***Disability and Society***, 23, 1

institutions in 2006[323] which outlined practical steps to make education more accessible. For example, the guidance recommends:

- careful consideration of what information can be included in advertisements and promotional materials and where they may be placed;
- making contact with schools providing sixth form education, and other providers of education for disabled students to encourage applications;
- an understanding that it is often environmental factors, such as the structure of a building, social attitudes, communication or the policies, procedures and practices within an educational institution, rather than limitations arising from a person's disability, which unnecessarily restrict a disabled person's ability to participate fully in society;
- avoiding making assumptions about disabled people, especially since any given disability will affect different people in different ways and individual needs may be different as well;
- seeking expert advice about meeting the needs of people with disabilities; this may include establishing a Disability Forum in order to comply with the duties of anti-discrimination legislation, and consulting with all representatives when developing and implementing an inclusion policy; and,
- monitoring and reviewing policies, practices and procedures regularly.

Special Educational Needs and Education Inequalities

According to School Census data in Northern Ireland for 2007/08, almost 1 in 5 (18%) pupils were classified as having SEN and 4% of all pupils had been officially statemented[324]. Thirty-eight percent of children with SEN Stages 1-4 and 21% of those with SEN Stage 5 achieved 5 GCSEs (A*-C) or equivalent. 6% of the former and 13% of the latter achieved no GCSEs at all compared with 1% of children with no SEN. The NICCY review (2008) on children's rights[325] raised some concerns about the ability of mainstream schools to meet the additional needs associated with SEN. Children and young people who participated in the review highlighted issues in relation to teachers' ability to understand their needs and/or cope with their associated behaviours in mainstream settings. The review also indicates that the challenges facing mainstream educational establishments in meeting the needs of children with SEN, in the absence of adequate funding, training and support, are further complicated by the increasingly

[323] http://www.equalityni.org/Publications/Employers-Service-Providers/Service-providers/SENDO-Code-of-practice-for-further-higher-educatio?ID=478
[324] Pupils who have been statemented are SEN Stage 5
[325] NICCY. (2008). *Children's Rights: Rhetoric or Reality*. Belfast: NICCY.

diverse and/or complex nature of children's needs. Lundy et al (2013)[326] reported that concerns about the existing system for young people with SEN include: delays in assessment and statementing processes; insufficiently specific provision in the statements; and the lack of a statutory requirement to give children's views due weight. Furthermore, children who do not have a statement have fewer legal protections, and the provision and allocation of resources is largely at the discretion of the school. The authors claim that there is a strong argument for further legal protection in relation to provision for these children with disabilities.

The ECNI's response to DE's consultation on 'Every School a Good School-The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs'[327], entitled 'The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion'[328], includes recommendations for the Department in developing and implementing its revised SEN framework, particularly in regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). These recommendations include:

- ensuring that the best interests of the child are a priority;
- ensuring that disabled children have the right to express their views freely and that their views are given due weight;
- ensuring that steps are taken to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people (including disabled pupils), tackle bullying of disabled children (including those with SEN), and to raise awareness, within schools, of rights under the UNCRPD and the disability equality legislation as it applies to schools;
- consideration of whether further steps are necessary in order to improve its data collection and analysis so as to ensure that it can effectively monitor and review the impact and outcomes of its proposed changes to the SEN framework; and,
- consideration of multiple identity issues; for example, difficulties experienced by Traveller children or other black minority ethnic children with SEN.

[326] Lundy, L., Emerson, L., Lloyd, K., Byrne, B., & Yohanis, J. (2013). *Education Reform in Northern Ireland: A Human Rights Review.* Belfast: Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission/Centre for Children's Rights, Queen's University Belfast.

[327] Commission response to the Department's consultation on *Every School a Good School-The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs*, 2010, http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/FinResptoESAGTheWayforwardforSENandInclus.pdf

[328]http://www.equalityni.org/sections/default.asp?id=229&cmsid=7_33_229&cms=Publications_Disability_consultation%20responses&pagesize=10&searchterm=&secid=8&pageoffset=1

The next section of this chapter will present the key findings from existing datasets with regard to proportions and shares of enrolments, achievements, progression and destination across the 2007/08 – 2011/12 period for SEN and disability status, in order to highlight the most current picture of existing inequalities, as well as to highlight whether these inequalities have emerged within the past five years or whether they have been persistent since 2007/08.

Findings from Quantitative Data

Pre-school, Primary and Post-primary Level (Source: DENI)

Special Educational Needs (SEN) – Access:

(Please note, the terms 'any special educational need' or 'any SEN' includes children and young people with SEN Stages 1-5)

- **Nursery schools**

  From 2007/08 to 2011/12, the share of children with any special educational needs increased for both Catholic maintained and controlled nursery schools. In 2011/12 the share of children with any SEN was higher in Catholic maintained nursery schools (23.0%) than in controlled nursery schools (20.4%) (see Table 8.1).

- **Nursery classes and receptions**[329]

  In 2011/12, the share of children in Catholic maintained nursery classes and receptions with any SEN was 3.9%, compared to 3.2% for controlled nursery classes and receptions. Overall, the shares of children registered as having any SEN in nursery classes and receptions were much lower than the shares of children registered as having a special educational need in nursery schools (see Technical Table 8.1).

  From 2007/08 to 2011/12, the shares of children with any SEN slightly increased for all schools, with the exception of other maintained schools. There were similar shares of children with any SEN in Catholic maintained nursery classes and receptions and controlled nursery classes and receptions (with the exception of the year 2010/11) (see Table 8.1).

- **Primary schools**

  In 2011/12, the shares of children with any SEN were: 21.9% in controlled primaries; 21.6% in Catholic maintained primaries; 24.6% in other maintained primaries; 22.2% in controlled integrated primaries; and, 25.4% in grant maintained integrated primaries. Across the school years 2007/08 to 2011/12, the shares of children with any SEN in most of the different types of primary schools were similar (see Table 8.1; Technical Table 8.2).

[329] Nursery and reception classes represent pre-school provision within primary/preparatory schools, whereas nursery schools are self-contained units with a focus on pre-school provision.

- **Secondary schools**

  In 2011/12, the share of children and young people with any SEN was greatest in other maintained secondary schools (34.7%), and lowest in controlled integrated schools (22.4%) compared to other school management types (controlled schools 24.1%; Catholic maintained 26.9%; grant maintained integrated schools 31.3%). The shares of children and young people with any SEN increased from 2007/08 to 2011/12 in some schools more than others. For instance, in grant maintained integrated schools, the share increased from 23.1% in 2007/08 to 31.3% in 2011/12. However, in controlled schools the share increased less substantially, from 18.8% in 2007/08 to 24.1% in 2011/12 (see Table 8.1; Technical Table 8.3).

- **Grammar schools**

  Grammar schools had much lower shares of children and young people with any SEN than secondary schools. In 2011/12, Catholic or other managed grammar schools had slightly higher shares of pupils with any SEN (7.7% and 7.9% respectively) than controlled grammar schools (5.8%). The share of pupils with special educational needs increased from 2007/08 to 2011/12 in all grammar schools, in particular in Catholic or other managed grammar schools (from 4.7% and 4.6% in 2007/08 respectively) (see Table 8.1; Technical Table 8.3).

Table 8.1: Share of enrolments by school management type and SEN status within the pre-school, primary and post-primary sectors in 2007/8 and 2011/12

		No SEN (%)		SEN Stages 1-4 (%)		SEN Stage 5 (%)	
		2007/08	2011/12	2007/08	2011/12	2007/08	2011/12
Nursery Schools	Controlled	83.9	79.6	15.1	18.9	1.0	1.5
	Catholic Maintained	80.8	77.0	18.7	22.4	0.5°	0.6°
Nursery and Reception Classes[330]	Controlled	97.4	96.8	2.3	2.7	0.3°	0.5°
	Catholic Maintained	97.2	96.1	2.3	2.8	0.5°	1.1
	Other Maintained	90.4	98.1	9.6°	*	0.0	*
	Controlled Integrated	*	91.5	*	8.5°	*	0.0
	Grant Maintained Integrated	98.5	96.9	*	*	*	*
Primary Schools	Controlled	80.2	78.1	16.9	19.0	2.9	2.9
	Catholic Maintained	79.6	78.4	17.6	18.8	2.8	2.8
	Other Maintained	83.4	75.3	15.5	22.9	1.1°	1.7
	Controlled Integrated	82.9	77.8	13.8	19.3	3.3	2.9
	Maintained Integrated	78.6	74.6	18.2	22.0	3.3	3.4
Preparatory Schools	Controlled	91.1	89.8	*	*	*	*
	Voluntary	90.9	88.2	*	*	*	*
Secondary Schools	Controlled	81.2	75.9	14.6	18.9	4.2	5.2
	Catholic Maintained	77.2	73.1	18.5	21.4	4.3	5.5
	Other Maintained	81.0	65.3	*	31.1	*	3.6°
	Controlled Integrated	78.1	77.6	*	16.7	*	5.7
	Maintained Integrated	76.9	68.7	18.2	24.3	4.9	7.0
Grammar Schools	Controlled	95.6	94.1	3.8	5.0	0.6	0.8
	Catholic Managed	95.3	92.3	3.9	6.6	0.8	1.1
	Other Managed	95.4	92.1	4.1	7.1	0.5	0.8

° Note that the number is less than 40

*Denotes numbers too small to report (<5) or (if =>5) suppressed due to possible identification of individual pupils

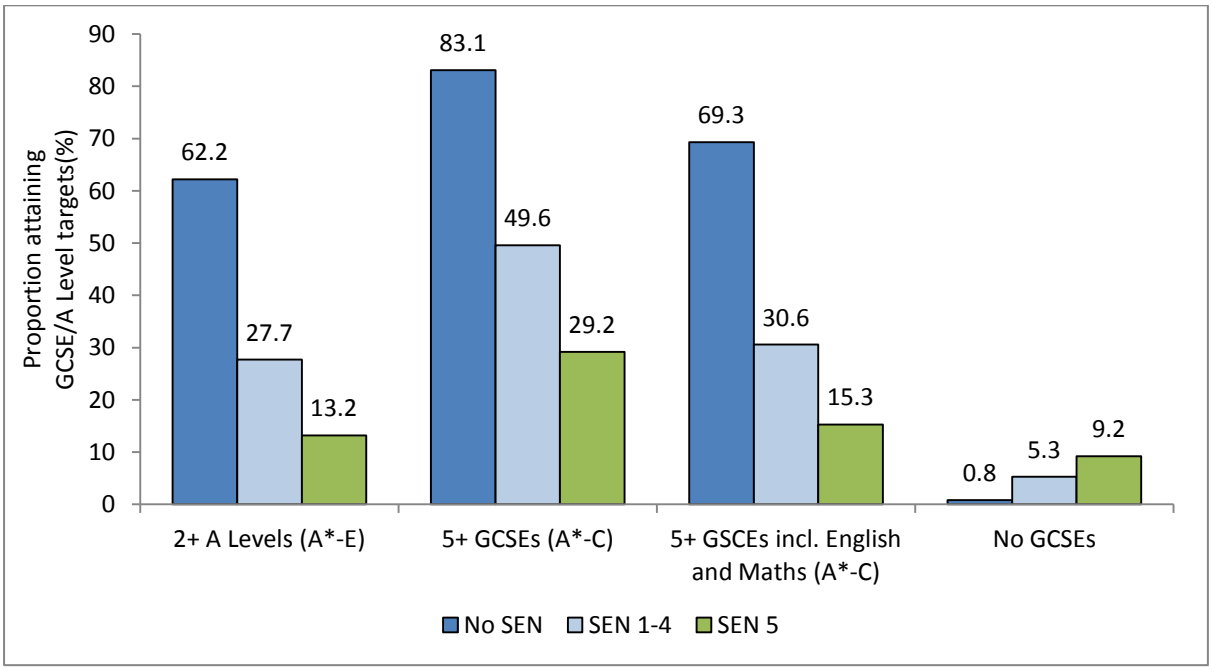
[330] Nursery and reception classes represent pre-school provision within primary / preparatory schools, whereas nursery schools are self-contained units with a focus on pre-school provision.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) – Attainment:

It should be noted, that in terms of educational attainment, the data presented in this report only covers SEN pupils in mainstream schools. There is no data available on attainment of pupils in special schools.

There were stark differences between the achievement rates of young people who have a special educational need and those who do not; a higher proportion of those with no special educational needs attained GCSE and A Level qualifications than those with any SEN (see Figure 8.1; Technical Table 8.6).

Figure 8.1: Proportion attaining GCSE and A Level attainment targets by SEN status, 2011/12



- **GCSE level**

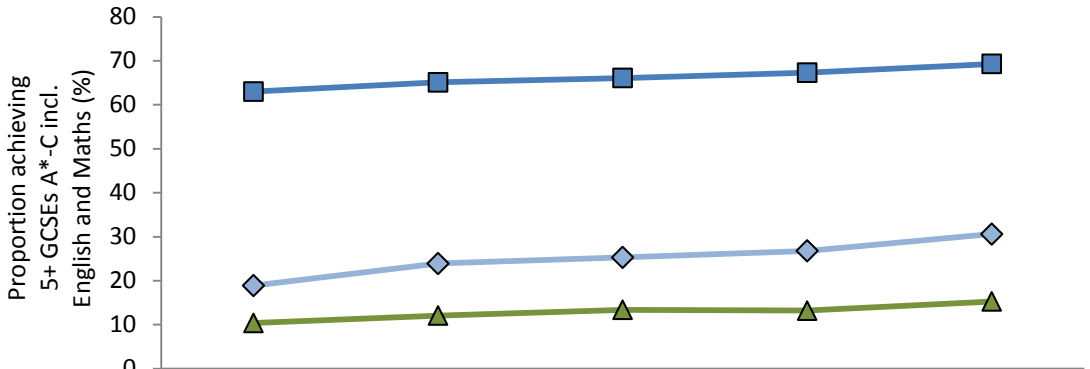
  In 2011/12, over four-fifths (83.1 %) of students with no SEN achieved 5+ GCSES at A*-C (including equivalents) compared to 49.6% of students SEN Stages 1-4 and 29.2% of students with SEN Stage 5 (see Figure 8.1). The attainment proportion for students with no SEN increased from 74.0% in 2007/08, however, while there were also substantial increases in the proportions of pupils with any SEN achieving 5+ GCSES at A*-C during the same time period, (from 27.8% to 49.6% for SEN Stages 1-4 and from 15.3% to 29.2% for SEN Stage 5), their attainment proportions were still substantially below that for pupils who do not have a special educational need (see Technical Table 8.6).

- **GCSEs including Maths and English**

  In 2011/12, over two-thirds (69.3%) of pupils with no SEN achieved 5+ GCSES at A*-C including Maths and English, compared to 30.6% of students with SEN Stages 1-4 and 15.3% of students with SEN Stage 5 (see Figure 8.1).

  When compared to 2007/08, there was an increase of 6.3 percentage points in the attainment of pupils with no SEN. The greatest proportionate increase was for pupils with SEN Stages 1-4 achieving 5+ GCSES at A*-C including Maths and English; an increase of 11.7 percentage points. The attainment proportion of pupils with SEN Stage 5 increased by 4.9 percentage points. These results indicate a widening of the gap in attainment between students with SEN Stage 5 and SEN Stages 1-4 (see Figure 8.2).

Figure 8.2: Proportion attaining 5+ GCSEs (A*-C) including English and Maths by SEN status, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
No SEN	63.0	65.1	66.1	67.3	69.3
SEN 1-4	18.9	23.9	25.3	26.8	30.6
SEN 5	10.4	12.1	13.4	13.2	15.3

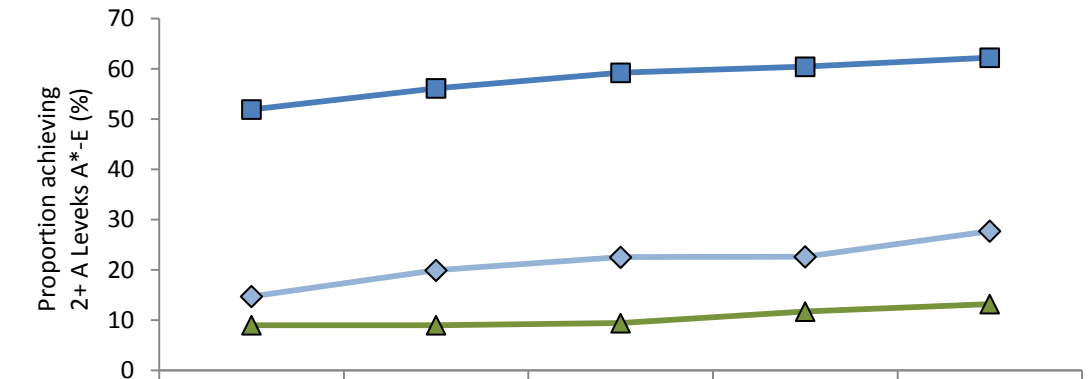
- **No GCSEs**

  In 2011/12, students with SEN Stage 5 and SEN Stages 1-4 were more likely to leave school with no GCSEs (9.2% and 5.3%, respectively) than students with no SEN (0.8%) (see Figure 8.1). For all groups, the proportion of students who left school with no GCSES decreased by at least half between 2007/08 and 2011/12. When compared to 2007/08, the proportion of students with no SEN decreased by 1.1 percentage points; for pupils with SEN Stages 1-4, the proportion decreased by 6.2 percentage points; and for pupils with SEN Stage 5, the proportion decreased by 14.7 percentage points (see Technical Table 8.6).

- **A Level**

  In 2011/12, school leavers who had no SEN were much more likely to achieve 2+ A Levels at A*-E (62.2%) than leavers with SEN Stages 1-4 or SEN Stage 5 (see Figure 8.3). From 2007/08 to 2011/12, the proportions of school leavers achieving 2+ A Levels at A*-E increased, but the increase was particularly large for students with SEN Stages 1-4 (jumping from 14.7% in 2007/08 to 27.7% to 2011/12). The comparative increase for students with no SEN was from 51.9% in 2007/08 to 62.2% in 2011/12, while the increase for students with SEN Stage 5 was from 9.0% to 13.2%, indicating a widening of the gap in attainment between students with SEN Stage 5 and all other students (SEN Stages 1-4 or no SEN) (see Figure 8.3).

Figure 8.3: Proportion attaining 2+ A Levels (A*-E) by SEN status, 2007/08 – 2011/12



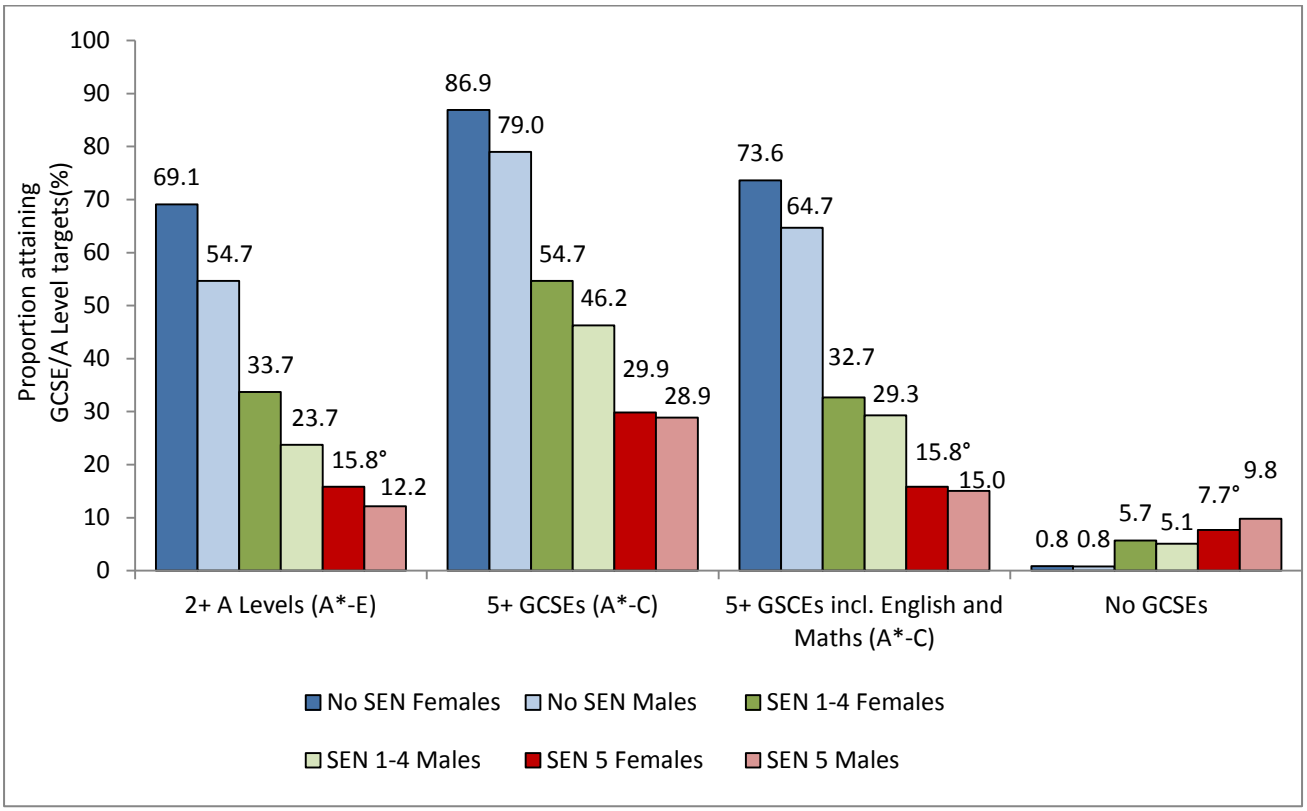
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
No SEN	51.9	56.1	59.2	60.4	62.2
SEN 1-4	14.7	19.9	22.5	22.6	27.7
SEN 5	9.0	9.0	9.4	11.7	13.2

Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Gender – Attainment:

The attainment proportions for SEN status by gender were analysed for the years 2007/08 to 2011/12. For each category of attainment and across each SEN group, females outperformed their male counterparts (see Figure 8.4). In 2011/12, the gap between males and females who attained 2+ A Levels A*-E was largest for those with no SEN (14.4 percentage points in favour of females), followed by those with SEN Stages 1-4 (10.0 percentage points in favour of females), and finally, those with SEN Stage 5 (3.6 percentage points in favour of females).

Although the order of the largest gender gap by SEN status changes depending on the category of attainment, the gender gap is always in favour of females. This has been a consistent pattern since 2007/08 (see Figure 8.4; Technical Table 8.6).

Figure 8.4: Proportion attaining GCSE and A Level attainment targets by SEN status and gender, 2011/12



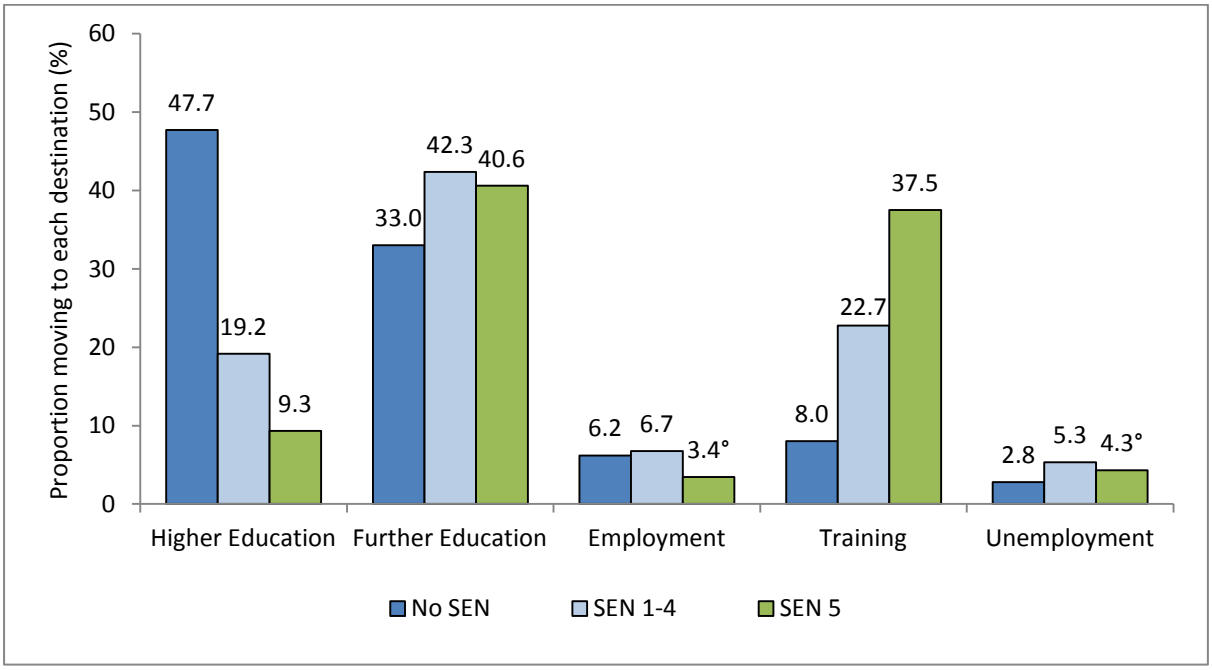
° Note that the number is less than 40

Special Educational Needs (SEN) – Destinations:

There were differences in the destinations of school leavers with and without SEN. In 2011/12, the most common destination of school leavers with no SEN was higher education (47.7%). School leavers with no SEN were more likely to enter higher education than school leavers with SEN Stages 1-4 (19.2%) or SEN Stage 5 (9.3%). The most popular destination for school leavers with SEN Stages 1-4 and SEN Stage 5 was further education (42.3% and 40.6%, respectively) in 2011/12; a destination where they maintained a higher proportionate representation than school leavers with no SEN (see Figure 8.5; Technical Table 8.7).

School leavers with SEN Stages 1-4 and SEN Stage 5 were also more likely to go into training[331] (22.7% and 37.5%, respectively) than those with no SEN (8.0%). This pattern is consistent throughout the five year period between 2007/08 and 2011/12 where the most common destination of school leavers with no SEN was higher education (44.9% in 2007/08) and that of school leavers with SEN Stages 1-4 was further education (36.1% in 2007/08). However, the most common destination in 2007/08 of school leavers with SEN Stage 5 was training (41.4%).

Figure 8.5: Proportion school leavers' destinations by SEN status, 2011/12



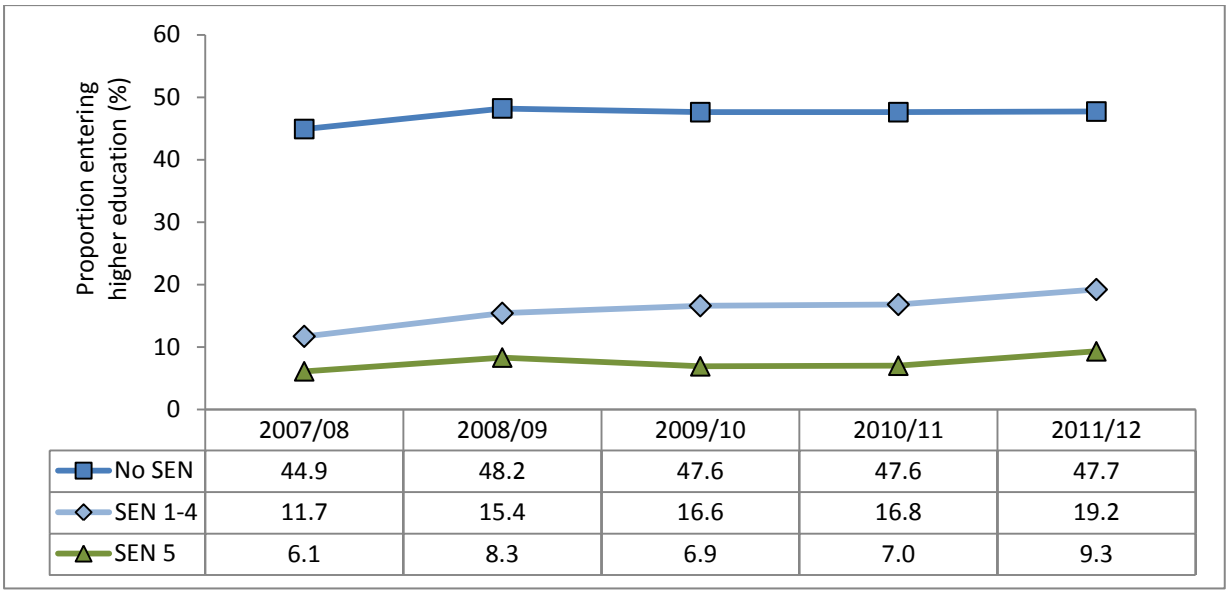
° Note that the number is less than 40

[331] Numbers entering training include those entering the Training for Success programme, operated by the Department for Employment and Learning. Training on Training for Success is delivered by a range of training providers, including Further Education Colleges. Training for Success trainees who receive training at Further Education Colleges are recorded as being in training and not in Further Education. This convention avoids double counting of Training for Success trainees.

- **Higher education**

  The percentage of school leavers entering higher education increased from 2007/08 to 2011/12 for all groups.. The gap in enrolment between those with SEN Stage 5 and those with SEN Stages 1-4 has widened from 5.6 percentage points in 2007/08 to 9.9 percentage points in 2011/12, while the gap between those with SEN Stages 1-4 and no SEN decreased from 33.2 percentage points to 28.5 percentage points (see Figure 8.6; Technical Table 8.7).

Figure 8.6: Proportion of school leavers entering higher education by SEN status, 2007/08 – 2011/12



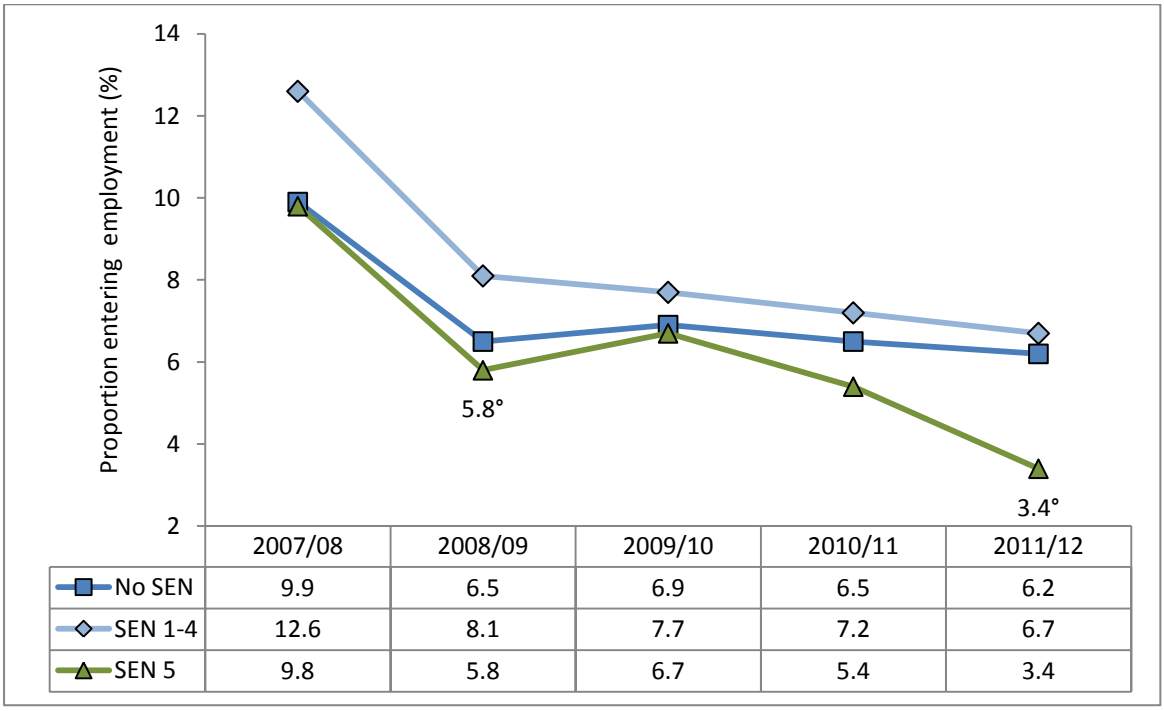
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
No SEN	44.9	48.2	47.6	47.6	47.7
SEN 1-4	11.7	15.4	16.6	16.8	19.2
SEN 5	6.1	8.3	6.9	7.0	9.3

- **Employment**

  In 2011/12, school leavers with SEN Stages 1-4 were more likely to enter employment (6.7%) than school leavers with no SEN (6.2%) and school leavers with SEN Stage 5[332] (3.4%) (see Figure 8.7). The proportions of all school leavers entering employment decreased across the 2007/08 to 2011/12 time period, but especially so for school leavers with any SEN. For school leavers with SEN Stages 1-4, the proportion fell from 12.6% in 2007/08; for school leavers with SEN Stage 5, the proportion fell from 9.8%; and, the proportion for school leavers with no SEN decreased from 9.9%. Therefore, although the order remained the same, the gap between school leavers with SEN Stages 1-4 and those with no SEN closed from 2.7 percentage points to 0.5 percentage points (see Figure 8.7).

[332] The number of school leavers with SEN Stage 5 that entered employment fell below 40 in 2008/09 and 2011/12, therefore this analysis should be treated with caution.

Figure 8.7: Proportion of school leavers entering employment by SEN status, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
No SEN	9.9	6.5	6.9	6.5	6.2
SEN 1-4	12.6	8.1	7.7	7.2	6.7
SEN 5	9.8	5.8	6.7	5.4	3.4

° Note that the number is less than 40

- **All other destinations**

  Consistently over the five-year period, school leavers with any SEN entered unemployment and unknown destinations in higher proportions than school leavers with no SEN (see Technical Table 8.7). In 2011/12, school leavers with SEN Stages 1-4 were more likely to be unemployed (5.3%) than any other group (SEN Stage 5, 4.3%[333]; no SEN, 2.8%) whilst the destination of SEN Stage 5 school leavers was more likely to be unknown (4.8%) than for any other group[334] (SEN Stages 1-4, 3.7%; no SEN 2.3%). While the proportion in unemployment decreased for all school leavers, the proportion for school leavers with SEN Stages 1-4 fell by 1.1 percentage points from 6.4% in 2007/08; and, the proportion for school leavers with no SEN fell by 0.2 percentage points from 3.0% in 2007/08 (see Technical Table 8.7).

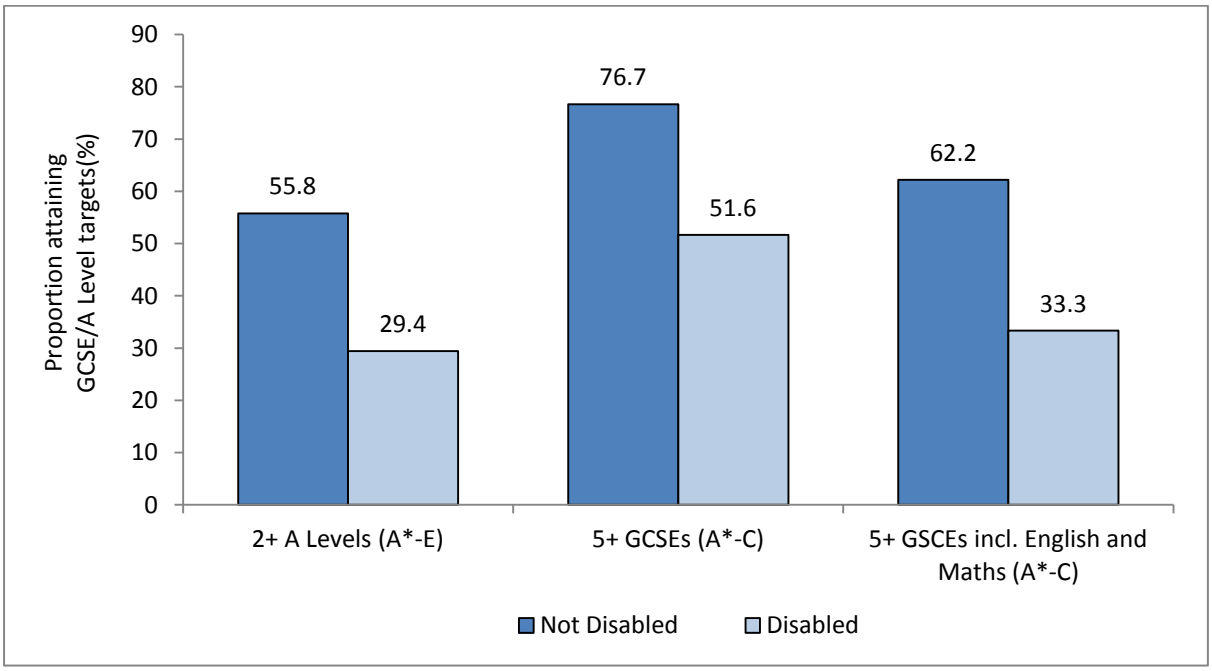
[333] The number of school leavers with SEN Stage 5 that went into unemployment is below 40 for 2011/12, therefore this analysis should be treated with caution.
[334] The number of school leavers with SEN Stage 5 whose destination was unknown falls is below 40 from 2007/08 to 2011/12, therefore this analysis should be treated with caution.

Disability Status[335] – Attainment:

No access data was available for analysis by disability status.

Over the five years analysed, the total number of school leavers reported as having a disability increased from 62 in 2007/08 to 153 in 2011/12. In 2011/12, 29.4% of school leavers with a disability attained 2+ A Levels A*-E, compared to 55.8% of school leavers without a disability; 51.6% of school leavers with a disability attained 5+ GCSEs at A*-C, compared to 76.7% of leavers without a disability; and, 33.3% of leavers with a disability attained 5+ GCSEs at A*-C including Maths and English, compared to 62.2% of leavers without a disability (see Figure 8.8). Data for the 2007/08 – 2011/12 time period show inconsistent patterns of GCSE and A Level results for school leavers who have a disability compared with school leavers who do not have a disability. This is likely due to the low numbers of pupils who are reported as having disabilities (see footnote below).

Figure 8.8: Proportion attaining GCSE and A Level attainment targets by disability status, 2011/12

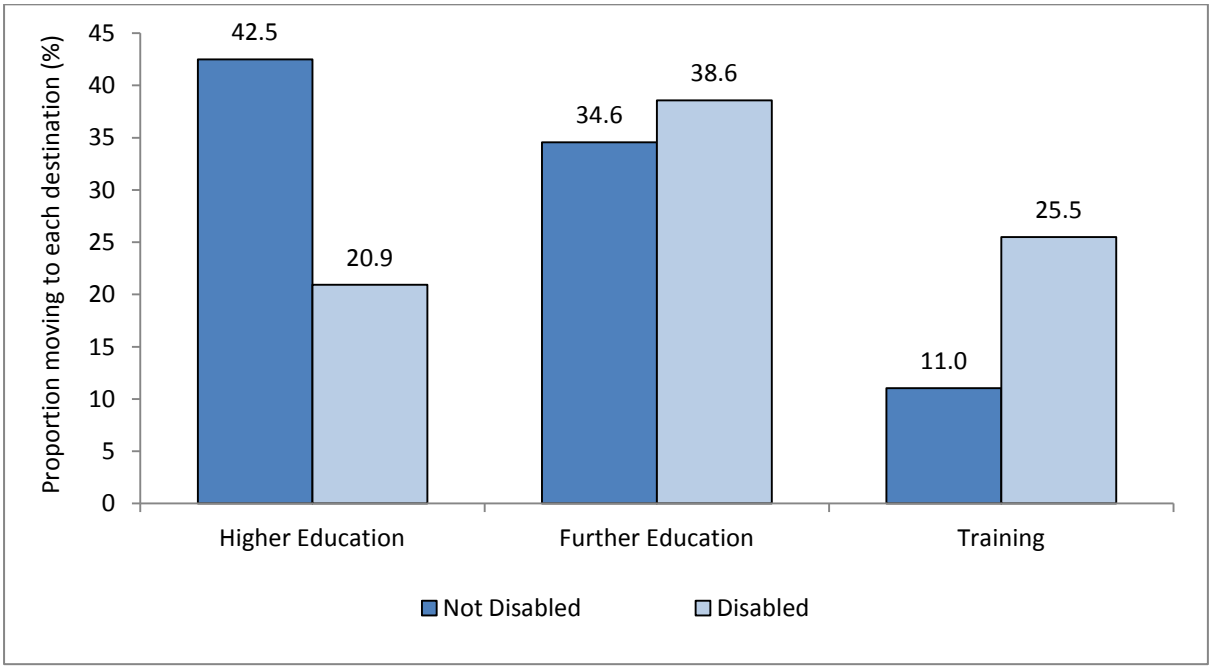


[335] The definition for 'disability' in these statistics is that a child 'has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term (has or is likely to last 12 months or more) and which has adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.' This must have been assessed by a medical professional. The disability variable is not validated by the Department.

Disability Status – Destinations:

In 2011/12[336], the highest proportion of school leavers with a disability entered institutions of further education, 38.6%, compared to 34.6% of school leavers without a disability. Job training was the second most popular destination for school leavers with a disability, 25.5%, compared to 11.0% of school leavers without a disability. Just over one-fifth of school leavers with a disability (20.9%) entered higher education compared to 42.5% of school leavers without a disability (see Figure 8.9). Data for the 2007/08 – 2011/12 period showed inconsistent patterns and trends for destinations of school leavers who had a disability compared with school leavers who did not have a disability. This is again likely due to the low numbers of pupils who are reported as having disabilities in each year analysed.

Figure 8.9: Proportion of school leavers entering destinations by disability status, 2011/12[337]



[336] 153 school leavers were reported to have disabilities in 2011/12.

[337] Higher education, further education and training were the only destinations that could be reported on due to low numbers.

Further Education (Source: DEL)

This section will explore data related to those courses which result in a qualification – accredited courses and Essential Skills courses – and those which do not lead to a qualification – non-accredited courses.

Accredited (Professional and Technical) Courses[338] – Access, Progression and Attainment:
Consistently, from 2007/08 to 2011/12, the vast majority of enrolees on accredited (professional and technical) courses did not have a self-reported disability (90.7% in 2011/12), and the proportion of enrolees who did report having a disability (9.3% in 2011/12) (Technical Table 8.8) was much lower than the proportion of people (aged 16-74 years) who reported having a long-term illness or disability in Northern Ireland as a whole (20.4%, according to the Census 2011). However, given that the majority of enrolees on accredited courses are 25 years or younger (65.3%, see Chapter 4), these figures for participants who have a disability are over-representative of the sample they come from – 5.8% of the 25 years and under age group had a disability according to the Census 2011.

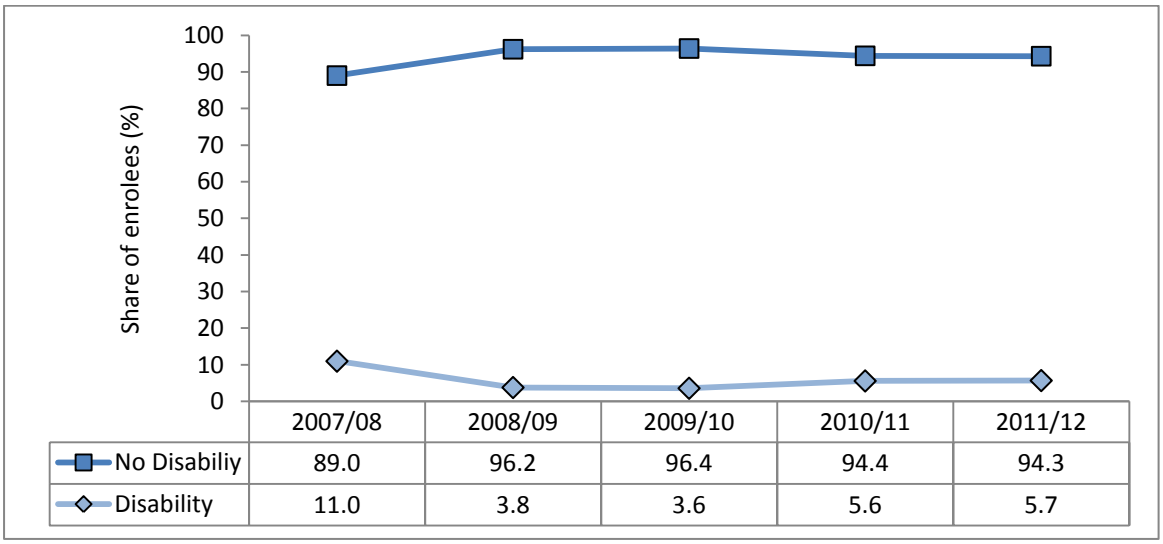
From 2010/11 – 2011/12 (the period for which retention data were available), there were no significant differences in the retention[339] proportions of participants with a disability (91.0% in 2010/11 and 91.7% in 2011/12) and participants without a disability (90.3% in 2010/11 and 91.4% in 2011/12). In 2011/12, participants without a disability were more likely to successfully complete their course[340] (85.1% in 2011/12) than participants who had a disability (84.2% in 2011/12) – a reversal in the trend from the 2010/11 year (see Technical Table 8.9).

[338] Includes a range of assessed full-time and part-time education and training options from entry level to postgraduate level.
[339] Retention (%) = final year completers / final year enrolees (where final year completers are defined as final year enrolments which do not have a student status of withdrawn or transferred).
[340] Achievement (%) = final year achievers / final years completers (where achievement is defined as full and partial achievements within outcome for those classed as final year completers.)

Essential Skills – Access:

In 2011/12, 5.7% of enrolees in Essential Skills courses reported having a disability, much lower than the share of people (aged 16-74 years) who reported having a long-term illness or disability in Northern Ireland as a whole (20.4%[341]). Over the five year period between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the share of enrolees in Essential Skills courses with a self-reported disability decreased from 11.0% in 2007/08 to 5.7% in 2011/12, despite an overall doubling of enrolment figures over that time period from 26,819 in 2007/08 to 60,814 in 2011/12 (see Figure 8.10; Technical Table 8.10).

Figure 8.10: Share of enrolees in Essential Skills courses by disability status, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
No Disabiliy	89.0	96.2	96.4	94.4	94.3
Disability	11.0	3.8	3.6	5.6	5.7

Non-accredited (Non-professional and Technical) Courses – Access:

Consistently over the five year period between 2007/08 and 2011/12, those who did not report a disability accounted for the majority of all non-accredited course enrolees (81.4% in 2011/12, a decrease from 85.9% in 2007/08). The share of students who did report having a disability increased from 14.1% in 2007/08 to 18.6% in 2011/12 (see Technical Table 8.8). This is lower than the share of people (20.4% of people aged 16-74 years) who reported having a long-term illness or disability in the Northern Ireland Census 2011; this is particularly notable as non-professional and technical course enrolees tend to be in the older age groups (36 years and older). Those who reported a disability were therefore underrepresented on these courses.

[341] Census 2011

Training, Apprenticeships, and Employment Programmes (Source: DEL)

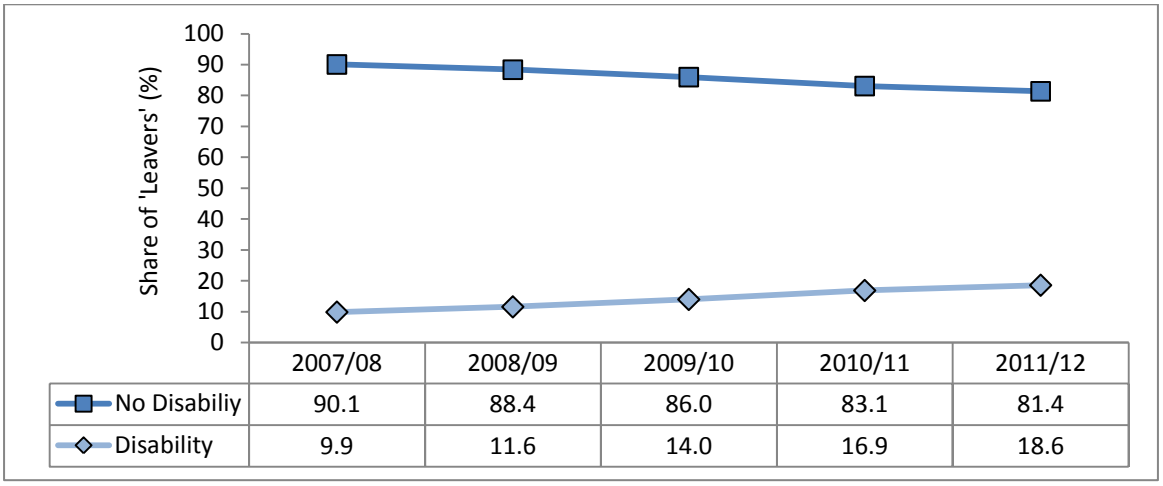
'Training for Success'[342] is designed for young people aged 16 - 17 years (up to 24 years for those who qualify under extended eligibility[343]) and provides training to give them the tools and skills they need to get a job. It is designed to enable learners to progress to higher level training, further education, or employment by providing training to address personal and social development needs, develop occupational skills, employability skills and, where necessary, Essential Skills training. 'ApprenticeshipsNI'[344] provides the opportunity for students to participate in a Level 2 or Level 3 apprenticeship. There is no upper age limit for participation in the programme, however all participants must be in employment from day one. The 'Steps to Work'[345] programme supports participants to find work through a combination of one to one guidance and support from an advisor and access to training courses, qualifications provision, and work experience.

Training for Success Programme – Access and Progression:

In 2011/12, 19.9% of 'Starts'[346] in the Training for Success programme had a disability. Although this is similar to the share of the Northern Ireland populace aged 16-74 who reported having a disability or long-term illness, it is much higher than the share of those under 25 years who reported having a long-term illness or disability (5.8%). Therefore, those with a disability are overrepresented in the Training for Success programme. Over the five year period between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the share of 'Starts' in the Training for Success Programme with a self-reported disability increased from 12.6% in 2007/08 to 19.9% in 2011/12 (see Technical Table 8.11). In 2011/12, the share of 'Leavers'[347] with a self-reported disability was 18.6%. This has increased year on year since 2007/08 when the share of 'Leavers' with a self-reported disability was 9.9% (see Figure 8.11).

[342] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-for-you-on-training-for-success
[343] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-for-you-on-training-for-success - *'Who can take part in the Training for Success programme?'*
[344] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsni
[345] http://www.delni.gov.uk/stepstowork
[346] According to DEL, 'Starts' refers to participants starting a programme.
[347] According to DEL, 'Leavers' refers to the number of participants completing a programme.

Figure 8.11: Share of 'Leavers' from Training for Success by disability status, 2007/08 – 2011/12

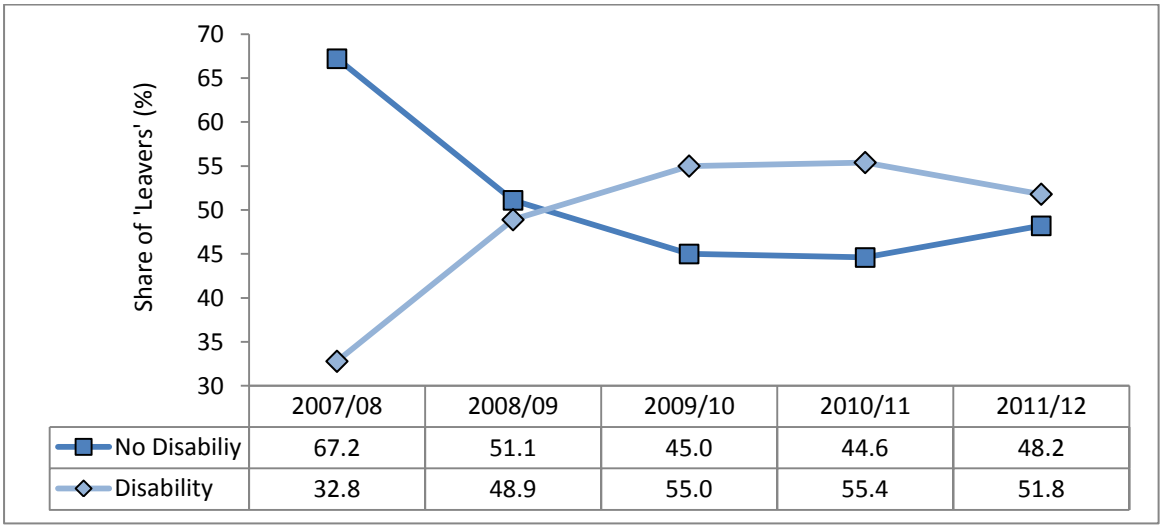


	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
No Disabiliy	90.1	88.4	86.0	83.1	81.4
Disability	9.9	11.6	14.0	16.9	18.6

<u>ApprenticeshipsNI Programme – Access and Progression:</u>

In 2011/12, only 1.6% of 'Starts' on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme reported having a disability. This represents a much lower share than the percentage of people in Northern Ireland reporting a disability or long-term illness (20.4% of those age 16-74 years old[348]). The share of 'Starts' with a disability increased slightly from 1.3% in 2007/08 to 1.6% in 2011/12 (see Technical Table 8.12). In 2011/12 the share of 'Leavers' with a disability was 51.8%, up from 32.8% in 2007/08. The share of 'Leavers' with a disability has increased over the five year period, and since 2009/10, those with a disability represented the majority of 'Leavers' from the ApprenticeshipsNI programme (see Figure 8.12).

Figure 8.12: Share of 'Leavers' from ApprenticeshipsNI by disability status, 2007/08 – 2011/12



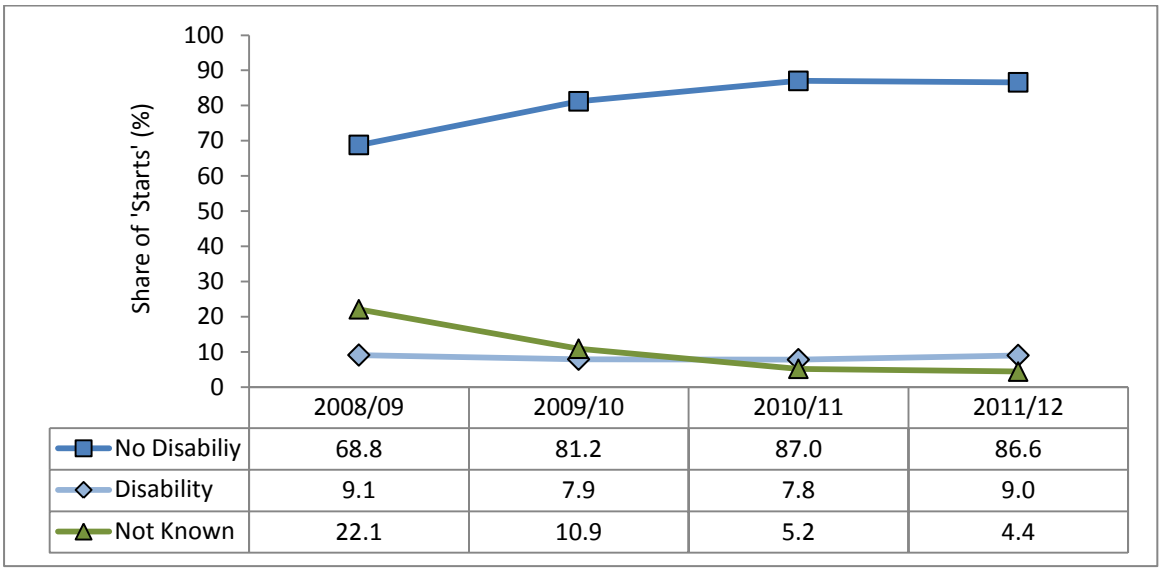
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
No Disabiliy	67.2	51.1	45.0	44.6	48.2
Disability	32.8	48.9	55.0	55.4	51.8

[348] Census 2011

Steps to Work Programme – Access, Progression and Destinations:

In 2011/12, 9.0% of Steps to Work 'Starts' reported having a disability and 86.6% did not have a disability, while the status of 4.4% of 'Starts' was not known. The share of 'Starts' whose status was unknown has consistently decreased since 2008/09 (22.1%); as a result, although the share of 'Starts' without a disability saw a large increase since 2008/09 (68.8%), the share 'Starts' with a disability remained relatively unchanged (9.1% in 2008/09) (see Figure 8.13; Technical Table 8.13).

Figure 8.13: Share of 'Starts' on Steps to Work by disability status, 2008/09 – 2011/12



	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
No Disabiliy	68.8	81.2	87.0	86.6
Disability	9.1	7.9	7.8	9.0
Not Known	22.1	10.9	5.2	4.4

In 2011/12, upon leaving the programme, participants with no reported disability were more likely to have either moved into employment (38.1%) or to have sustained 13 weeks of employment (31.5%) than participants who reported a disability (24.3% and 19.1% respectively). Since 2008/09, the proportions of those with and without a disability who moved into employment (9.2% and 24.1% in 2008/09 respectively) or had sustained 13 weeks of employment (5.4% and 16.4% in 2008/09 respectively) increased (see Figures 8.14 and Figure 8.15).

Figure 8.14: Proportion of 'Leavers' from Steps to Work that moved into employment by disability status, 2008/09 and 2011/12

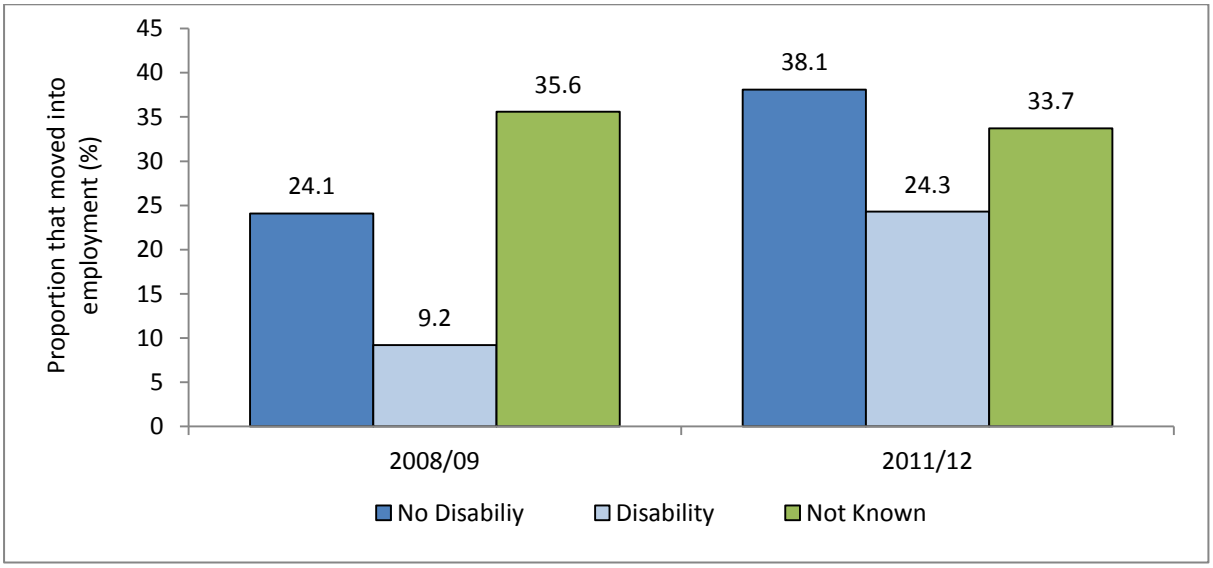
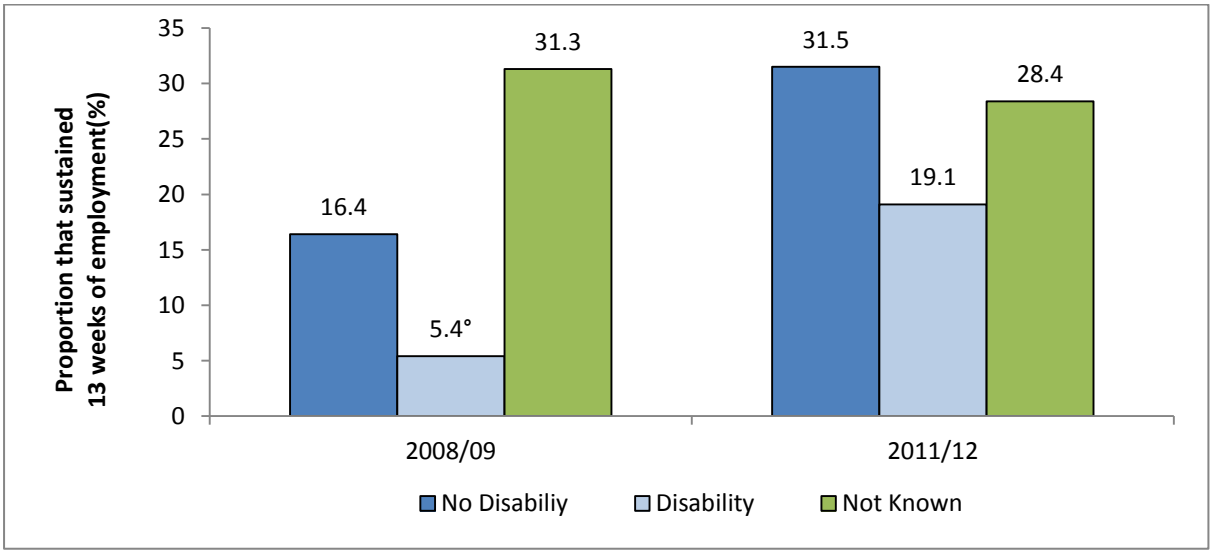


Figure 8.15: Proportion of 'Leavers' from Steps to Work that sustained 13 weeks of employment by disability status, 2008/09 and 2011/12



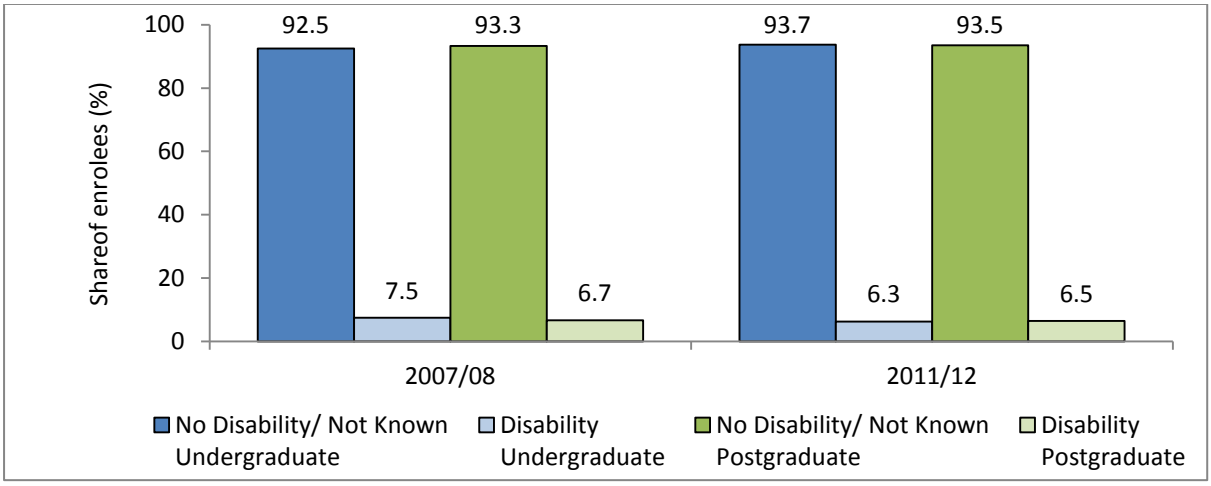
° Note that the number is less than 40

Higher Education (Source: DEL)

Undergraduate/Postgraduate Status – Access and Attainment:

In 2011/12, students who reported having a disability accounted for a smaller share of undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments (6.3% and 6.5% in 2011/12 respectively) than those without a disability/not known[349]. These shares have remained fairly consistent between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (see Figure 8.16). As nearly three-quarters of undergraduate enrolees are under 25 years old, and the share of people aged under 25 years old in Northern Ireland who self-report having a disability is 5.8%[350], those with a disability are fairly represented in undergraduate enrolments. However, as over two-thirds of postgraduate enrolees are over 25 years old, and the share of people who self-report having a disability aged 16-74 years old is 20.4%[351], those with a disability are under-represented in postgraduate enrolments.

Figure 8.16: Share of undergraduate and postgraduate enrolees by disability status, 2007/08 and 2011/12



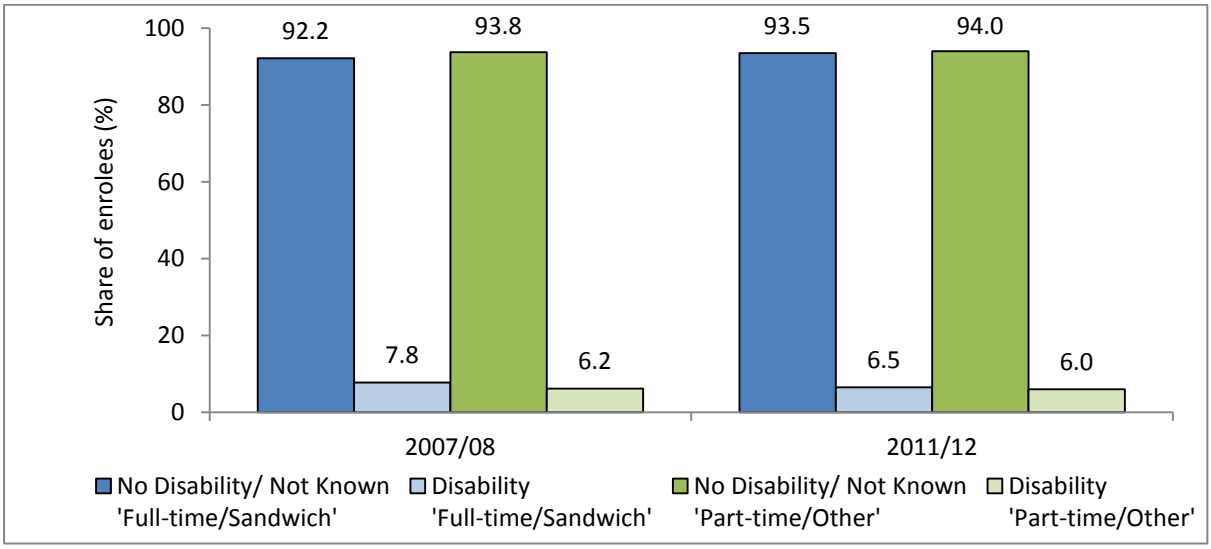
The trend in the shares of undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments is repeated in the shares of undergraduate and postgraduate qualifiers. In 2011/12, the shares of those with a disability who received undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications were 6.7% and 5.2% respectively. Since 2007/08, students with disability consistently made up less than 8% of undergraduate and postgraduate qualifiers. Furthermore, the shares of those with and without a disability/not known who received an undergraduate qualification remained relatively constant between 2007/08 and 2011/12, with an overall change of 0.1 percentage points (see Technical Table 8.14).

[349] Data on higher education enrolments is available in separate 'not disabled' and 'not known' categories
[350] According to the Northern Ireland Census 2011
[351] Ibid

Full-time/Part-time Status – Access and Attainment:

Throughout the time period 2007/08 to 2011/12, students who reported a disability accounted for a much smaller share of 'full-time/sandwich'[352] and 'part-time/other'[353] enrolments (6.5% and 6.0% in 2011/12 respectively) than those who did not report a disability/not known (see Figure 8.19). While the shares have fluctuated throughout the time period, there has been an overall decrease in the share of 'full-time/sandwich' and 'part-time/other' enrolees with a disability (from 7.8% and 6.2% respectively in 2007/08). Consistently, throughout the time period, students with a disability maintained a greater share of 'full-time/sandwich' enrolees than of 'part-time/other' enrolees (see Technical Table 8.15).

Figure 8.17: Share of 'full-time/sandwich' and 'part-time/other' enrolees by disability status, 2007/08 and 2011/12



In 2011/12, students who reported having a disability accounted for 6.5% of 'full-time/sandwich' qualifiers and 6.0% of 'part-time/other' qualifiers. Although there was some fluctuation in the shares of both 'full-time/sandwich' and 'part-time/other' qualifiers, the variance was never more than 2 percentage points. In 2007/08, students with a disability represented 7.8% of 'full-time/sandwich' qualifiers and 4.7% of 'part-time/other' qualifiers. Similar to the enrolee data, throughout the time period students with a disability represented a greater share of 'full-time/sandwich' qualifiers than of 'part-time/other' qualifiers (see Figure 8.17; Technical Table 8.15).

[352] *Full-time* students are those normally required to attend an Institution for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the year of study, on thick or thin sandwich courses, and those on a study-related year out of their institution. During that time students are normally expected to undertake periods of study, tuition or work experience which amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week.

[353] *Part-time* students are those recorded as studying part-time, or studying full-time on courses lasting less than 24 weeks, on block release, or studying during the evenings only.

Subject Choice – Access and Attainment:

Figures from DEL also revealed differences in the types of subjects which students with and without a disability enrolled in and qualified from in higher education.

Consistently over the five year period, students who reported having a disability represented less than 9% of enrolees in any subject area. In 2011/12, the share of students with a disability was largest in 'Social Studies and Law' (7.6%) and lowest in 'Medicine, Dentistry and Subjects Allied to Medicine' (5.3%). The subject area of 'Medicine, Dentistry and Subjects Allied to Medicine' consistently had the lowest share of enrolees with a disability throughout the time period, and the share has decreased since 2007/08 (5.9%). The subject areas with the largest share of students with a disability in 2007/08 were 'Biological, Veterinary, Agricultural and Physical Sciences' and 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology' (both 8.4%).

All subject areas experienced an overall decrease from 2007/08 to 2011/12 in the share of enrolees with a disability. An interesting point to note is that, the shares of those with a disability increased/remained unchanged and decreased in sync each year across all subject areas, i.e. all subject areas experienced a decrease in the share of enrolees with a disability from 2008/09 to 2009/10 and all subject areas experienced an increase from 2009/10 to 2010/11 (see Table 8.2; Technical Table 8.16).

Similar to enrolee data, over the five year period, students who reported having a disability represented less than 9% of qualifiers in any subject area. In 2011/12, the largest share of students who reported having a disability was in the STEM[354] subject area of 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology' (7.6%); this was also the subject area with the largest share of qualifiers with a disability in 2007/08 (8.4%). The smallest share of qualifiers with a disability in 2011/12 was in 'Medicine, Dentistry and Subjects Allied to Medicine' (5.6%); this was also the subject area with the smallest share of qualifiers with a disability in 2007/08 (5.0%) (see Figure 8.2; Technical Table 8.17).

[354] STEM is an acronym of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. According to the Department of Employment and Learning, STEM related qualifications include qualifications in the following subject areas; Medicine & Dentistry, Subjects allied to Medicine, Biological Sciences, Veterinary Sciences, Agriculture & related subjects, Physical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science, Engineering & Technology and Architecture, Building & Planning. See http://www.delni.gov.uk/2857p_stem_booklet_v5.pdf.

Table 8.2: Share of subject enrolments and qualifiers in higher education by disability, 2007/08 and 2011/12

			Medicine, Dentistry & Subjects Allied to Medicine	Biological, Veterinary, Agricultural & Physical Sciences	Maths, IT, Engineering & Technology	Social Studies & Law	Business, Administration, Mass Communication & Documentation	Other Disciplines
	Year		%	%	%	%	%	%
Enrolments	2007/08	No Disability/ Not Known	94.1	91.6	91.6	91.7	92.6	92.8
		Disability	5.9	8.4	8.4	8.3	7.4	7.2
	2011/12	No Disability/ Not Known	94.7	93.1	93.4	92.4	94.3	93.5
		Disability	5.3	6.9	6.6	7.6	5.7	6.5
Qualifications	2007/08	No Disability/ Not Known	95.0	92.0	91.6	91.9	93.2	93.3
		Disability	5.0	8.0	8.4	8.1	6.8	6.7
	2011/12	No Disability/ Not Known	94.4	93.0	92.4	93.4	94.3	93.5
		Disability	5.6	7.0	7.6	6.6	5.7	6.5

Higher Education – Progression:

In 2011/12, the share of students with a disability who did not continue their course was 5.4%. This has decreased since 2007/08 when students with a disability made up 6.8% of those who did not continue their course. Throughout the time period, those without a disability have made up over 90% of those who did not continue their course (see Technical Table 8.18).

Higher Education Leavers – Destinations:

There were substantial differences between the groups in regard to what students do after leaving higher education. In 2010/11[355] student leavers without a disability were more likely to enter full-time paid work (52.1%) compared to students with disabilities (42.1%); this gap has persisted since 2007/08 (61.5% and 47.2% respectively) (see Table 8.3; Technical Table 8.19).

In 2007/08, student leavers with a disability were more likely to enter part-time work than those without a disability (12.6% and 10.9% respectively), but by 2010/11, this had reversed (14.5% and 15.9% respectively) (see Table 8.3). In 2010/11, students with a disability were more likely to do further study only (11.5%) than students without a disability (11.0%), this has been constant since 2007/08 when the proportions continuing on to further study only were 13.3% and 10.3% respectively (see Table 8.3; Technical Table 8.19).

In 2010/11, more than twice the proportion of students with a disability were assumed to be unemployed (15.9%) compared to students without a disability (7.6%), although both groups have experienced an increase since 2007/08 (11.7% and 5.9% respectively), those with a disability were still nearly twice as likely to be assumed to be unemployed that those without a disability (see Technical Table 8.19).

[355] The most recent year for which data were available.

Table 8.3: Proportion of higher education leavers' destinations by disability, 2007/08 – 2011/12

		Full-time paid work only	Part-time paid work only	Work and further study	Further study only	Assumed to be unemployed	Not available for employment
Year		**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
2007/08	**No Disability/Unknown**	61.5	10.9	6.8	10.3	5.9	3.4
	Disability	47.2	12.6	7.6	13.3	11.7	5.9°
	Total						
2008/09	**No Disability/Unknown**	52.5	14.2	9.9	12.7	6.9	2.7
	Disability	41.4	12.9	10.8	17.5	11.6	3.7°
	Total						
2009/10	**No Disability/Unknown**	51.3	15.3	9.0	12.1	8.3	2.8
	Disability	39.2	14.2	10.1	16.4	13.1	4.6°
	Total						
2010/11	**No Disability/Unknown**	52.1	15.9	9.2	11.0	7.6	3.0
	Disability	42.1	14.5	8.8	11.5	15.9	5.2°
	Total						

° Note that the number is less than 40

Overall Population (Source: Labour Force Survey; Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, 2008-2012)

Highest Qualification Attainment:

According to the Labour Force Survey, people without a disability in 2008 were over twice as likely to hold a higher qualification (30%) than people with a disability (14%), and by 2012 the difference in rates had increased further; people without a disability were more than three times as likely to have a higher qualification (24.1%) than those without a disability (8.3%).

In 2012, 35% of people with a disability reported having no qualifications, compared to 14.1% of those who did not. Across the years 2008-2012, people who reported having a disability were more than twice as likely to have no qualifications than those who did not.

The NILT datasets from 2008 – 2012[356] were also analysed to check for differences between the highest qualification level of respondents with and without a long-standing illness/disability.

In 2012, those with a long-standing illness/disability were more likely to have no qualifications (41.2%) while those without a long-standing illness/disability were more likely to have a 'GCSE A-C or equivalent' qualification as their highest qualification (22.5%). From 2008-2012 all groups were most likely to have no qualifications (with the exception of those without a long-standing illness/disability in 2012). Consistently throughout the period, a larger proportion of those without a long-standing illness/disability had a 'Degree level or higher' qualification as their highest qualification than those with a long-standing illness/disability (21.8% and 10.6% respectively in 2012).

The next section of this chapter will present the qualitative findings from the stakeholder engagement event, to thematically illustrate the barriers and enablers that stakeholders identified for the equality ground of disability (and SEN).

[356] No survey was conducted in 2011

Findings from Qualitative Data

During engagement with key stakeholders at the expert seminar, some representatives made additional comments regarding achieving educational equality for those who have disabilities or special educational needs.

Disability-related barriers to education equality

Some of the stated barriers to educational equality included:

1. Barriers in the Education System

Teaching methods; a lack of funding and/or piecemeal support; low expectations and an unsupportive school ethos or culture; and, a lack of consultation with disabled and SEN students regarding their needs, were all cited as barriers to equality in education for disabled and SEN students.

2. Transitions

Another barrier is the transition between primary and secondary levels of education. Dealing with bureaucracy in the system can lead to delays in accessing provision, and there is a question about the accessibility to SEN services and support for children and young people coming to Northern Irish schools from the Republic of Ireland. There are also perceptions that service differs between ELBs, for example, there is variation across ELBs in the period of time required before home tuition can be provided.

3. Delays in Statementing

There are concerns about children and young people who have not received a SEN statement but are excluded from school for behavioural reasons – e.g. ADHD. The school might not receive a formal diagnosis due to delays in health system or insufficient alignment between health and social care and education - *"there is a general lack of 'joined up thinking'".* There are also a limited number of children who can be assessed for SEN due to the limited number of educational psychologists to assess children.

4. Lack of support for hidden disabilities/chronic illness

Some children with disabilities are in need of support but may not have a SEN statement i.e. those with chronic illnesses. They may be "keeping up" but may not be fulfilling their potential. Video links would be useful for children who are long-term sick – schools need to make more use of technology. Legislation is required to address the gaps in provision for those who are

disabled but who do not have a SEN. Children with 'fluctuating' health problems, e.g. ME or chronic headaches may also have no access to home tuition because of the lengths of their periods of absence.

5. Access

There are still issues regarding access to school buildings – the example was given of a child with asthma who had difficulties with stairs, and the parents requested that their child be taught in ground floor classrooms. The school could not provide this and the child was taught downstairs by a classroom assistant.

6. SEN vs Disability

SEN is not a proxy for disability. Pupils with Stages 1-2 are unlikely to have a disability; it is more probable for pupils with Stages 3-5. SEN statistics and stages need to be considered separately to disability when analysing educational inequalities, and the statistics should be further disaggregated by type of disability (as per Article 31 of the UNCRPD) - for example, a stakeholder reported that whilst statistics show that attainment is rising, deaf children's attainment is actually falling.

Potential disability-related enablers to education equality

1. Raising expectations

More recognition needs to be given to the skills of disabled children – this would be an enabler to educational equality.

2. Capacity building

Increasing parental awareness of their and their children's right would enable equality;

3. Further research

There is a need for more research to look at the number of SEN pupils who are excluded from school.

4. Targeting resources

A representative from a widening participation unit in higher education stated that there is recognition of the need to specifically target students who have missed certain years of school because of illness/disability.

Summary

Analysis of the access, attainment, progression and destination of people with and without SEN and disabilities in education from 2007/08 to 2011/12 has identified a number of areas where differentials by disability status and/or inequalities were apparent.

In terms of access, within nursery schools, secondary schools and grammar schools the shares of children and young people with special educational needs increased from 2007/08 to 2011/12. In other maintained schools and grant maintained integrated schools, the share of pupils with any SEN increased substantially; however, in controlled schools the share increased less substantially. Furthermore, grammar schools consistently had much lower proportions of children and young people with any special educational needs than secondary schools. The literature review noted issues surrounding identifying pupils with special education needs and statementing where there have been serious delays in the process. A number of sources recommended an overhaul of the current assessment and statementing process.

In terms of the attainment of school leavers, while there were increases in the proportion of school leavers with any SEN or a disability achieving 2+ A Levels (A*-E) and 5+ GCSES (A*-C), their attainment proportions were still substantially below the attainment proportion for pupils who do not have a special educational need or a disability. This is a persistent inequality. At GCSE level, while there were substantial increases in the proportions of pupils with any SEN achieving 5+ GCSES at A*-C, their attainment was still substantially below the attainment for pupils who do not have a special educational need. For GCSE attainment including Maths and English, there were greater increases in the attainment proportions of pupils with SEN Stages 1-4 than for students with SEN Stage 5, indicating a widening of the gap in attainment between students with SEN Stage 5 and SEN Stages 1-4. Students with SEN Stage 5 and SEN Stages 1-4 were more likely to leave school with no GCSEs than students with no SEN. At A Level, figures indicate a widening of the gap in attainment between students with SEN Stage 5 and all other students. For each category of attainment and across each SEN group, females outperformed their male counterparts. This is reflective of the literature review which highlighted concerns that the existing provisions in mainstreams schools, to meet the needs of pupils with disabilities, were lacking.

In 2011/12, the proportions of students with a disability that attained 2+ A Levels (A*-E), 5+ GCSEs (A*-C), or 5+ GCSEs (A*-C) including Maths and English, were at least 20 percentage

points lower than the proportion of students without a disability. However, as reported numbers were low, these figures should be treated with caution.

School leavers with no SEN were nearly five times more likely than those with SEN Stage 5 to enter higher education, over twice as likely as those with SEN Stages 1-4, and more than twice as likely as those with a disability, to enter higher education. This is a persistent inequality, and reflects findings in the literature review which also noted that students without a disability were more likely to enrol in higher education than those with a disability. Furthermore, the proportions of all pupils entering employment after school decreased across the 2007/08 to 2011/12 time period, but especially so for pupils with any SEN. Over the same time period, the proportion of pupils with SEN who were assumed to be unemployed increased. This is an emergent inequality.

While school leavers with any SEN or disability were more likely to enter further education or job training than school leavers without a disability, on several further education courses and job training programmes the shares of enrolees with a self-reported disability were lower than the share of people in Northern Ireland with a self-reported disability or illness. However, these shares must be carefully considered against the age compositions of these courses, which are predominantly made up of younger people. Data from the 2011 Census in Northern Ireland shows that the share of those with a disability increases with age, therefore, although those with a disability have a small share in further education courses, this is reflective of their share in that age group of the population. These findings are not reflective of the literature review which noted that people with a disability were less likely to go on to further education than people without a disability.

Leavers from the Steps to Work programme who had no self-reported disability were more likely to have either moved into employment or sustained 13 weeks of employment than participants who reported a disability. This is a persistent inequality.

In higher education, although similarly small shares of students who reported having a disability enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate courses and 'full-time/sandwich' and 'part-time/other' courses, students with a disability were underrepresented in postgraduate and 'part-time/other' enrolments given the older age composition of students in those pathways (see Chapter 4). This is a persistent inequality. In 2011/12, the largest share of enrolees with a self-reported disability was in 'Social Studies and Law', while they represented the smallest share of enrolees in 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine'. By

2010/11, leavers from higher education who did not have a disability were more likely to enter full-time work than leavers with a disability, and leavers with a disability were more likely to enter part-time work. These are also persistent inequalities.

Amongst the general population, the Labour Force Survey and Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey statistics supported the findings from the DEL data, that people without a disability were more likely to hold a higher qualification than people with a disability.

In terms of barriers to educational equality for people with SEN or a disability, the qualitative data highlighted the following: a lack of funding and low expectations; the transition between primary and secondary levels of education; delays in statementing; a lack of support for hidden disabilities and chronic illnesses; physical access difficulties; and the need to consider SEN as separate from disability. Potential enablers to educational equality included: raising expectations; capacity building; further research; and targeting of resources.

Chapter 9: Sexual Orientation Inequalities in Education

Introduction

The equality ground of sexual orientation is protected by a number of legislative statutes covering equality and anti-discrimination in Northern Ireland. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998[357] requires public authorities, including educational bodies (but not including schools), in carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different sexual orientation. In addition the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2003[358] makes it unlawful for employers and others to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation in vocational training including further and higher education and the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006[359] makes it unlawful for educational bodies (including schools) to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services.

There are no official statistics (e.g. Census, Department of Education (DE) Northern Ireland or Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) Northern Ireland data) collected on the proportion of people in Northern Ireland who are of different sexual orientations. The Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) and the Young Life and Times (YLT) surveys have to date included questions on sexual preference for respondents. Over the years, the numbers of NILT respondents (approximately 1,200 people) who reported their sexual orientation as gay, lesbian or bisexual, have been very small: in 2012, 1% reported being gay or lesbian and 0% reported being bi-sexual. The frequencies from the YLT surveys have been higher, although the question on sexual preference has been asked differently: in 2012, 7.7% of 16 year old females reported being attracted to females at least once, and 5.8% of 16 year old males reported being attracted to males at least once.

Literature Review

Within Northern Ireland and elsewhere in the UK and the Republic of Ireland, a major obstacle to equality is the lack of data on educational outcomes by sexual orientation. This makes it difficult for the inequalities in educational outcomes to be adequately highlighted and strategies put in place to address them. However, some research has explored the barriers to education that young lesbian, gay or bisexual people face, and their needs within education. A 2011

[357] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75
[358] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2003/497/contents/made
[359] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2006/439/contents/made

research report commissioned by DE[360] on the nature and extent of pupil bullying in schools in Northern Ireland found that bullying with mean names, comments or rude gestures with a sexual meaning was the sixth most common form of bullying amongst young post-primary pupils (Year 9, ages 12-13), experienced by around 14% of pupils (16% of boys and 12% of girls). Research commissioned by DE in 2003 (The ShOut Report)[361] identified the needs of older young people (91% were 17 or older) in Northern Ireland who identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). Just under half of the 362 respondents said they had been bullied at school because of their sexual orientation and 33% believed that they achieved lower results because of their sexuality; 86% of the young people who took part in the study were aware of their sexual orientation in school; 44% stated that they were bullied whilst in school because of their sexual orientation. The study also highlighted that many young people left school earlier than they would have preferred and 65% of those who had achieved low results had also been bullied. The ShOut Report also revealed that around 25% of those interviewed had played truant, having been bullied at school because of their sexual identity. Attendance at school[362] on a regular basis is not only important for increasing the prospects of educational achievement but it may also be a useful barometer for measuring the extent of marginalisation of individuals and groups.

Rates of homophobic bullying in the Republic of Ireland are similar to those found within Northern Ireland - Minton, Dahl, O'Moore and Tuck (2008)[363] reported that half of all respondents in their survey reported that they had been bullied in the last three months. Hunt and Jensen (2006)[364] also highlight an issue within faith based schools. In their report, they state that 75% of young gay people attending faith schools have experienced homophobic bullying. Norman and Galvin's research (2006)[365] into experiences of homophobic bullying in schools in the Republic of Ireland found five factors that contributed to homophobic bullying - heteronormativity, fear, stereotyping, pervasive terms, and religious influence. These themes were related to narrowly constructed definitions of masculinity among boys, limited personal experiences of people who identify as gay or lesbian among both boys and girls, the influence of the media and the limited provision of sexuality education programmes in all of the schools in

[360] http://www.deni.gov.uk/no_56_report_final_2011.pdf
[361] ShOut Report. (2003). *The Needs of Young People Who Identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender*. Belfast: Youthnet.
[362] ECNI (2012) 'Indicators of Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations in Education'. ECNI: Belfast.
[363] Minton, J., Dahl, T., O'Moore, A.M. Tuck, D. (2008). An Exploratory Survey of the Experiences of Homophobic Bullying among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Young People in Ireland. *Irish Educational Studies*: 27 (2) 177-191.
[364] Hunt, R. & Jensen, J. (2007). *The School Report: The Experiences of Young Gay People.* Stonewall.
[365] Norman, J., & Galvin, M. (2006). *Straight Talk*: An Investigation of Attitudes and Experiences of Homophobic Bullying in Second-Level Schools. Dublin: DCU.

which the research took place. Norman and Galvin (2006) also found[366] that some teachers seem to accept that homophobic bullying is a 'normal' part of the daily interaction of students, and as such, fail to address it unless it gets out of hand or is happening immediately in front of them. The teachers who were interviewed also said that the religious ethos of their school was an important factor in whether the school could address issues related to sexuality education or not. Norman and Galvin[367] recommended that as a result of this research, sexuality education be included as part of pre-service and in-service training for teachers, that sexual diversity is more adequately represented in the school curriculum, and that government education departments issue clear guidance for schools on their responsibility to address homophobic bullying.

A report published by Cara-Friend and The Rainbow Project in 2011[368] on the experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people at school in Northern Ireland revealed similar findings in regard to heternormativity and homophobic bullying in schools and the difficulties that young people have in trying to access help to deal with it. The report states that 75% of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people who participated in their research did not report incidents of bullying and harassment to school authorities. The most frequently cited reason[369] for not reporting incidents is that young people thought that the school would not take it seriously (43%). Of those who reported incidents to school authorities, 22% believed that the school did not take their claim seriously and 40% believed that the school took no action. The issue that LGB young people then face is whether to remain marginalised through silence and invisibility or risk physical or emotional abuse by reporting bullying and becoming visible. Findings in the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's (hereafter referred to as ECNI) research on 'Indicators of Equality and Good Relations in Education'[370] highlighted that whilst all schools are required to have an anti-bullying policy in place, it appears that information on the content of each policy (for example, the range and types of bullying covered, such as homophobic bullying) and the number of bullying incidents recorded under each policy is not routinely collected or considered.

A report by the Northern Ireland Policing Board, Human Rights 'Thematic Review: Policing with and for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Individuals'[371], also highlights that homophobic and transphobic language is particularly problematic in schools. Whilst the report commends the PSNI for taking the lead in discouraging the use of homophobic and transphobic

[366] Ibid
[367] Ibid
[368] http://www.cara-friend.org.uk/assets/docs/left%20out%20of%20the%20equation.pdf
[369] Ibid
[370] http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/EveryChildIndicators_FinalMainReport250412.pdf
[371] http://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/lgb_t_thematic_review.pdf

language in schools, it recommends that more is required from schools, the statutory agencies and private individuals to challenge inappropriate language and to report any incidents they witness to the police, to teachers and to supervisors in a workplace. Furthermore, the Cara-Friend/Rainbow Project report[372] and the ECNI's statement on 'Promoting Sexual Orientation Equality'[373] state that there are many ample opportunities within the Northern Ireland statutory curriculum to challenge negative stereotypes and present the diversity of sexual orientation to children and young people, but that the experience of LGB young people is that these opportunities are not taken up by teachers in schools. The Cara-Friend/Rainbow Project and ECNI reports also recommend better curriculum support materials and good practice guidance for teachers in order to support equality of opportunity for LGB pupils. These recommendations appear to be acknowledged in the Education and Library Boards' Audit of Inequalities in Northern Ireland[374]. The Audit suggests, amongst other suggested actions, exploring the potential for other LGBT youth groups to be established in other geographical areas in partnership with Cara-Friend/Gay and Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland; the scheduling of a scoping exercise between DE and the Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessments to see how it can best support the teaching of particularly sensitive areas in schools e.g. sexual orientation; and, exploring in partnership with the Rainbow Project how information can be collected on the identification of gay and lesbian young people and their experiences in the education system.

The Rainbow Project and Cara-Friend have recommended[375] that Section 75 designation is extended to schools in order to place a legal requirement on schools to promote and protect equality of opportunity for all young people, regardless of sexual orientation.

Similar findings and recommendations have been made as a result of other research across the UK. Hunt and Jensen (2006)[376] in their study in Britain found that homophobic bullying was almost endemic. They state that almost two-thirds (65%) of young lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils experienced direct bullying. Research published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission[377] suggests that children and young people can also experience bullying in school

[372] http://www.cara-friend.org.uk/assets/docs/left%20out%20of%20the%20equation.pdf
[373] http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/ECNI_SexualOrientation_PolicyPriorities3_v0c_301013.pdf
[374] http://www.selb.org/equality/Documents/2013/AuditofInequalities2ndEditionJune2012.pdf
[375] http://www.cara-friend.org.uk/assets/docs/left%20out%20of%20the%20equation.pdf
[376] Hunt, R. & Jensen, J. (2007). *The School Report: The Experiences of Young Gay People in Britain's Schools*. London: Stonewall.
[377] Burchardt, T. Tsang, T. & Vizard, P. (2009). Specialist Consultation on the List of Central and Valuable Capabilities for Children. EHRC Research Report 41.

because of having LGB or transgender parents. A survey carried out by Stonewall (2009)[378] found that two thirds of young people growing up gay in the UK were the victims of homophobic bullying at school (sometimes at the hands of school staff), which, as in Northern Ireland, had a negative impact on their participation in education and the educational outcomes they obtained due to the fear, distress, and isolation that accompanies bullying. The Stonewall report emphasises that where people are confident that they will be treated fairly, they are more likely to engage in public activity, including adult learning. However, places of learning, like schools, need to have clear and well-exercised anti-homophobic bullying policies; staff need to have the capacity to recognise and deal with any problems that arise; and there needs to be strong institutional leadership and acknowledgement of the issues.

The next section of this chapter will present findings from the Northern Ireland Life and Times datasets regarding the population share of LGB people, and the Young Life and Times 2008 dataset with regard to rates of bullying in school by sexual orientation.

[378] Guasp, A. (2009). *Homophobic Bullying in Britain's Schools*. London: Stonewall.

Findings from Quantitative Data

Overall Population (Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILT), 2008-2012)

As highlighted in the introduction to this chapter, sexual orientation is not recorded on any official statistics available from DEL or DENI, nor from the Census. The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILT), administered to just over one thousand people each year, asks about sexual orientation. The Young Life and Times Survey (YLT), the equivalent survey for 16-year olds, asked about same-sex attraction and the bullying experiences of young people in the 2008 survey.

The NILT datasets from 2008 – 2012[379] were analysed to check for trends regarding sexual orientation.

- Between 2008 and 2012, approximately 1% of NILT respondents each year reported being gay or lesbian; numbers were thus too small to be included in the dataset that is available for download from NILT, as respondents could be identified from other information they provided. It was therefore not possible to examine the qualification levels (also asked in the NILT) of the individuals who reported being gay or lesbian.

The 2008 YLT dataset was analysed to determine the experience of young people when broken down by reported sexual attraction.

- In 2008, the YLT data showed that females who reported sexual attraction to other females were more likely to report having been bullied in school than females who reported only being attracted to males (62.1% and 36.7%, respectively). Males who reported sexual attraction to other males were significantly more likely to report being bullied in school than males who were only attracted to females (70.4% and 28.3% respectively).

The next section will present the findings from the qualitative element of the research (focus groups, interviews, and a stakeholder engagement event), in order to thematically illustrate the barriers and enablers that stakeholders identified for sexual orientation.

[379] No survey was conducted in 2011

Findings from Qualitative Data

Several key issues were raised during qualitative data collection (interviews and stakeholder engagement) in relation to enablers and barriers to educational access, attainment, progression and destinations for people who are gay, lesbian or bisexual. In terms of barriers to education equality, stakeholders representing these groups reiterated some of the issues that were highlighted from the review of the literature:

Key barriers to education equality

1. Heteronormativity

Interviewed stakeholders felt that a major barrier to LGB young people feeling accepted and comfortable at school (which in turn impacted upon their wellbeing and engagement with their studies) is the existence of heteronormativity in schools – in other words, the assertion or existence of a notion that heterosexuality is the only sexual orientation or norm, and that sexuality always aligns with traditional gender roles and identities:

"It is not about helping the young person come out - it is more about promoting the existence of good relationships by same sex couples – illustrating that some people have two mums, or two dads, and to interrupt the notion that being gay is a bad thing. It is also about making schools aware that they have pupils with parents who are two mums or two dads – they need to think about how they will react to that, and the language that young people can use in school."

"At the primary school level, the issue is not that young children come out, but it's with being teased for having two mummies or two daddies, and the invisibility of same sex couples and marriages in teaching materials – all examples are a daddy, and mummy and the kids."

Heteronormativity and gender stereotyping also impacts on the choices that a young LGB person may make in terms of subjects to study at school and career paths. It was reported that many LGB people will avoid sports or physical activity courses because this is where a lot of teasing happens at school; boys get made fun of if they don't like football, and girls get teased in the changing rooms. It was also reported that LGB youth may apply for media, arts, textiles courses, and so on in disproportionate numbers:

"That's what the media 'tells' them they can do. That said, a young LGB person may feel more comfortable working in arts industries, because that's where most openly gay people are – for example, no professional footballers are out - it is about gender expectations in a career field. In

regard to sports, it is the reverse for women – the stereotype is that women who are in official sports are gay."

"Some LGB young people have problems with identifying what they are 'supposed' to do when they grow up – there are issues around role modelling. They may feel trapped by stereotypes - as a gay man or woman you are supposed to do hairdressing or beauty – you may go into it not because of a real desire to do it, but because you feel that's the only option open for you, especially if you leave school early."

2. Feelings of insecurity and lack of support

Stakeholders spoke of many times when they had worked with LGB young people who, because of homophobic bullying in school or at home, had self-excluded themselves from school or had left earlier than they wanted to, which had a very negative impact on their attainment levels. Some had to make up for this 'lost' school time at a later stage in life – later than their peers. One example was relayed where a girl was being bullied in the PE changing rooms, and she said the teacher heard all but didn't do anything about it – she felt totally unsupported at school:

"It [school] was not a place of protection for her, she didn't feel safe. That night she went to work in a bar, and got called a dyke by a person in the bar. The person was thrown out and the manager told him he wouldn't stand for anyone abusing his staff. She went into school on Monday and told them she wasn't going back – because she felt more protected at work than at school. She has now gone back to do A Levels and is starting university, but she is doing that at a much later age than her peers. There are years that are lost."

This example was not regarded as a one-off – it was believed that LGB people are over-represented in careers such as the service industry because of leaving school earlier and with fewer qualifications, but also because of the equality protection the workplace offers. The stress aspect and negative impact on mental health and well-being of feeling unsafe in the school environment was also mentioned:

"All young people have stress around exams, but LGB people have the additional stress of being in a hostile environment while doing exams, which negatively impacts their attainment. Low confidence and self-esteem can also be major issues because of difficulties with coming to terms with sexuality… there is a big issue regarding the mental health of young same sex attracted boys in particular. The likelihood of suicidal ideation of boys who have been bullied because of sexual orientation is much higher."

3. School ethos

Stakeholders were keen to stress that schools are individual bodies, and as such, some have better practices than others. This unfortunately creates something of a 'lottery' for LGB young people in terms of whether they are likely to feel supported at school:

"Some people would have had preconceptions that one school sector would be better at dealing with LGB issues than others – but the differences are negligible. The schools are individual bodies – it is all about their ethos – I have been to rural Catholic non-selective high schools that are fantastic and proactive, but I've also been to integrated schools where LGB people have been stabbed with compasses."

Another representative felt that it is generally more difficult for young people from rural areas to come out in school or schools that had very overtly religious ethos:

"Some will tell pupils that homosexuality is wrong and that the Bible says Adam and Eve not Adam and Steve – that was given out to a second year class and a young person sent it here to show it to us… We have heard that some teachers who actively try to provide support for young LGB people in their care have been told that it won't look good when they go for promotion in schools that are religious."

Stakeholders believed that only the school governors and the school principal would be able to change the ethos and culture of a school – individual teachers would not be able to do so, leadership in this area had to come from them. The best practice reported was a school with a society for LGB pupils and for straight but supporting pupils. This was considered to show LGB pupils that the school is an accepting, safe place. The school had also done a lot of internal staff training, had arranged for support organisations to come into the school to deliver workshops to 12 and 13 year olds, and had agreed to put posters up to advertise support organisations. In this way, the school ethos is conducive to having a visibly safe environment.

Potential enablers to education equality

*1. **Structural changes***

There were several areas within educational policy and equality legislation where stakeholders felt that changes could make a huge difference to the school experiences of LGB young people. In terms of educational policy, stakeholders believed that if it was a requirement that anti-bullying policies specifically had to cover issues of homophobic bullying, the situation for young LGB people would improve. Furthermore, they suggested: mainstreaming LGB issues and sexuality issues in the statutory curriculum – the current Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) guidance does not reflect the diversity of sexual orientation; encouraging the Education and Training Inspectorate to look to models of practice in England and Wales for inspecting good practice on LGB issues in schools; having a more joined-up approach between government Departments to deal with LGB issues – the Scottish example was given where hate crime is investigated through the Department of Justice, Department of Health and Social Services and DE; and having an overall more 'hands-on' approach to the issues from DE:

"It's systemic – it's about how education institutions as public authorities are able to protect all of the young people who access their service."

The extension of current equality legislation was also regarded as a key enabler for addressing the education inequalities that LGB young people face. One way that this could be achieved would be the designation of schools under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and another would be the creation of a Single Equality Bill:

"A big one for us is designation…When we made our presentation to the Shared Education Advisory Group, it was included in their recommendations, and now the Minister has accepted those recommendations. So there is now an acceptance from the Department of Education that designation should happen. That's great for us, because that really sets a framework where we can say to schools, 'you need to meet your obligations.'

This sentiment was expressed by both stakeholders who represented organisations in the LGB youth sector.

*2. **Teacher training and guidance***

Stakeholders believed that there is currently a lack of training for teachers on dealing with homophobic bullying in schools and talking about LGB issues and sexuality. It was thought that

they needed more support to know how to deal with issues as they arise, especially when schools do not always have a policy that deals with tackling these issues. Furthermore, because there is confusion and uncertainty about what to do or say, stakeholders reported that schools use this as an 'opt-out' for dealing with the problems:

"A lot of schools do nothing about it – young people have no one to turn to or talk to about it – they have to keep their sexual orientation to themselves, even though it's a difficult time when they are coming to terms with it. ... A lot of schools don't know how to react. Teachers are frightened of what other teachers, the principal, pupils, and parents will say if they offer support. Teachers need capacity building to help."

"Schools are ok talking about inclusion in terms of race and religion – but don't mention being gay, because we don't want to turn them gay!"

Additionally, it was felt that the need for more training is only going to increase:

"Young people nowadays are far more likely to identify they are gay at a younger age than even 10 years ago – they don't understand why such a big deal is made of it – they see from programmes such as Glee and so on that show it is fine to be gay in the USA, in England – and they don't see why it's different for them just because they live here. It is only going to become more visible – more young people are going to feel comfortable coming out, not less…Young teachers now probably have friends and family members who are gay – they know what the issues are, but when they go into school they don't feel able to talk about them in the same way that they would outside the school."

Fear of what parents will say in response to teachers talking about LGB issues with pupils was mentioned as a consideration that schools needs to deal with:

"When teachers understand sexual orientation issues, when they feel confident in talking about them, then they can intervene with no problem. But when they are not given any guidance, that's when they start to get fear about what a parent is going to say, am I going to run in with the Board of Governors, that kind of thing."

However, how a school explains the purpose of the sessions or sexuality education to parents and having clear communication with parents can abate any doubts that parents have:

"One school said they had a complaint from a parent that I had said homosexuality was a valid lifestyle choice – it doesn't sound like something I would say, but that's just an issue of it being communicated badly to parents. If we talk to parents about why we think it is important to talk to young people about these issues, it's about making the school a safe place – because about 70% of homophobic bullying is directed towards young people who are straight – it is something that affects all young people . Parents I think can get behind that idea."

Stakeholders did report that there was some good practice currently taking place; for example, the Belfast Education and Library Board have begun training and produced some materials for teachers, as well as appointing youth officers.

3. ***Better data collection***

Representatives from the LGB sector were keen to stress that much more needs to be done in terms of official data collection on LGB issues, as this will improve understanding of the experiences of LGB young people in schools:

"Everything with LGB problems in education is about invisibility. And unless we have a process through which people can identify themselves and identify the issues or experiences that they have, then we can't start to redress them."

"It's just good practice to know who your service users are and how they are accessing it, and what's good for them and what's bad for them."

However, it was also reported that careful consideration has to be given to the methodology of any new data collection requirements. Insensitive data collection would lead to inaccurate data:

"We would like to have the question as a standard in all forms of accessing data on young people. I brought the issue of the annual school survey before with the Minister – the annual school survey is linked to the common funding formula. So they have to get the data on children with disabilities, children from different ethnic minority backgrounds, because they affect the funding that is apportioned to the school. Whereas, you don't get any extra funding for having gay kids in a classroom. So it's maybe not the best mechanism. Also, it's something that is done by the teacher. But I think that if the existing data collection methods are not capable of collecting that data, then they need to change to make sure that they are collecting a reflective sample of the experiences of young people."

"From post-primary level we believe sexual orientation should be monitored. The problem with some surveys like the Census is that the parents fill that out, or someone comes to your door and asks you the questions. Surveys which are on an anonymous basis so that young people don't need to put their name to it would be better…It is about anonymising things and helping people feel safe to be open and disclosing sexual orientation."

Representatives from further and higher education colleges were unsure of the willingness of students to reveal information on their sexual orientation, but they were keen to know how the monitoring of sexual orientation in third level education was working in other parts of the UK:

"Anecdotally, we have students from the LGB community who would be here from other geographical areas – so that they don't have to come out to their own local community. They feel more able to be who they are in Belfast. But we might not have a lot disclosing that."

"The sexual orientation question is being asked in English universities – it is sometimes asked as 'identity' and 'preferences' – sexual orientation is one of four questions asked under those banners. We would need to see how well it is working over there."

Summary

The findings of the literature review, the quantitative data, and the qualitative data collected reveal a coherent picture in terms of the barriers and enablers to educational equality for people of different sexual orientations. Firstly, homophobic bullying in schools is a persistent and major issue, and is occurring regularly in Northern Irish schools. This negatively impacts students' mental health and well-being, and as a result, has a very detrimental impact on students' engagement with school, their levels of attainment, their educational progression, and the destinations that they go to after education.

Furthermore, a lack of available data on the experiences of LGB students throughout the education process (from primary school to further and higher education), and their educational outcomes (e.g. attainment levels), makes the exact extent of these disadvantages difficult to gauge. The limited quantitative data available demonstrated that young people who reported same sex attraction were much more likely to be bullied in school than their peers who reported opposite sex attraction only. This reflects findings in both the literature review and the qualitative data.

The qualitative research and literature have shown that if schools and colleges are able to create an ethos of openness, support and acknowledgement of LGB issues via the curriculum and 'hidden' curriculum (that is, the classroom materials that are used, the way teachers handle instances of homophobic bullying, the language that is used in a school to discuss these issues, the presence or absence of student support groups/helpline posters and so on), major strides will be made towards achieving educational equality for LGB young people. The qualitative data in particular suggested that these steps need to be underpinned by changes to educational and equality legislation if long-term and meaningful improvements are to be realised in all schools in Northern Ireland, not just a few.

Chapter 10: Marital Status and Inequalities in Education

Introduction

Marital status is covered under the statutory equality duties on public authorities including educational bodies (but not including schools) in Northern Ireland. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998[380] requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different marital status. According to the Census 2011, the percentage of all usual residents who are 16 years old and over in households and are married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting is 53.2%; the percentage who are single (never married or in a civil partnership) is 31.5%; the percentage who are married but living apart/separated/divorced is 9.0%; and the percentage who are widowed or the surviving partner from a civil partnership is 6.3%.

Literature Review

The barriers to education for those of different marital status are closely aligned to the barriers faced by different age groups and dependency status in relation to participation in further or higher education. As the data in this chapter will show, those who are married/co-habiting/in a civil partnership, separated, divorced or widowed are more likely to be enrolled in the same type of courses (i.e. full/part-time, under/postgraduate courses) as mature students (see Chapter 4 of this report) – furthermore, the vast majority of enrolees are under the age of 20 years (Chapter 4), and are also more likely to be single (highlighted later in this chapter).

Price (2005)[381] reviewed previous research on the links between marital status and postgraduate outcomes, and found that being married had a more positive impact on educational outcomes for males than females; this was because, compared to single men, married men are less likely to participate in risky behaviours that could affect their health. Behavioural changes accompanying marriage were not observed to the same extent in women. Price's own study[382] found that married male students are 75%, 66%, and 39% more likely than single male students to complete their postgraduate degrees by years 4, 5, and 6 respectively – an overall rate of .32 years quicker than single male students. Married female students were 25%, 32%, and 17% more likely than single female students to graduate by years 4, 5, and 6 – an overall rate of .21 years quicker than single female students[383].

[380] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75
[381] Price, J. (2005). *Marriage and Graduate Student Outcomes*. Cornell University: Department of Economics.
[382] Ibid.
[383] Ibid

The next section of this chapter will present the key findings from existing datasets with regard to proportions and shares of enrolments, achievements, progression and destination across the 2007/08-2011/12 period for marital status, in order to highlight the most current picture of existing inequalities, as well as to highlight whether these inequalities have emerged within the past five years or whether they have been persistent since 2007/08.

Findings from Quantitative Data

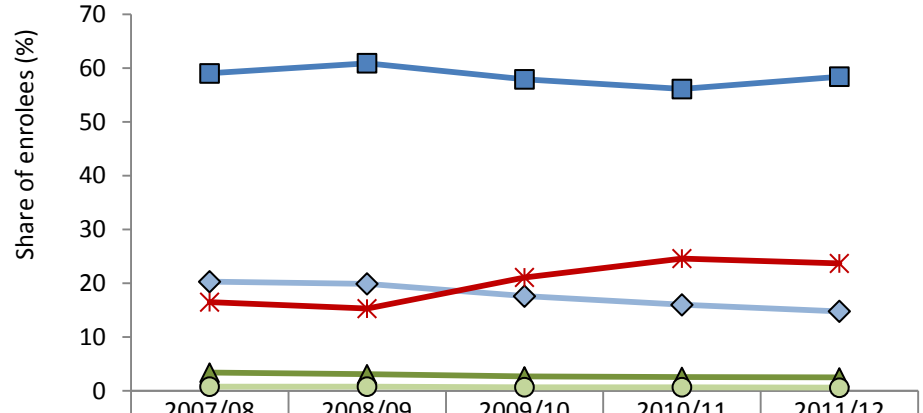
Further Education (Source: Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland)

This section will explore data related to those courses which result in a qualification – accredited courses and Essential Skills courses – and those which do not lead to a qualification – non-accredited courses.

Accredited (Professional and Technical) Courses[384] – Access, Progression and Attainment:

In 2011/12, the majority of people who enrolled on accredited courses in further education were single (58.4%), which may be a reflection of the predominantly young age groups (24 years and under) who fill the majority of places on the courses (see Chapter 4). Whilst the shares of enrolment remained fairly stable with a slight decrease for most groups between 2007/08 and 2011/12, those who were married/co-habiting experienced a notable decrease of 5.5 percentage points from 2007/08 to 2011/12 (see Figure 10.1). Those whose marital status was not known were the only group to experience an increase in their share of enrolments on accredited courses; an increase of 7.2 percentage points was found between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (see Technical Table 10.1).

Figure 10.1: Share of enrolees in accredited courses by marital status, 2007/08 – 2011/12



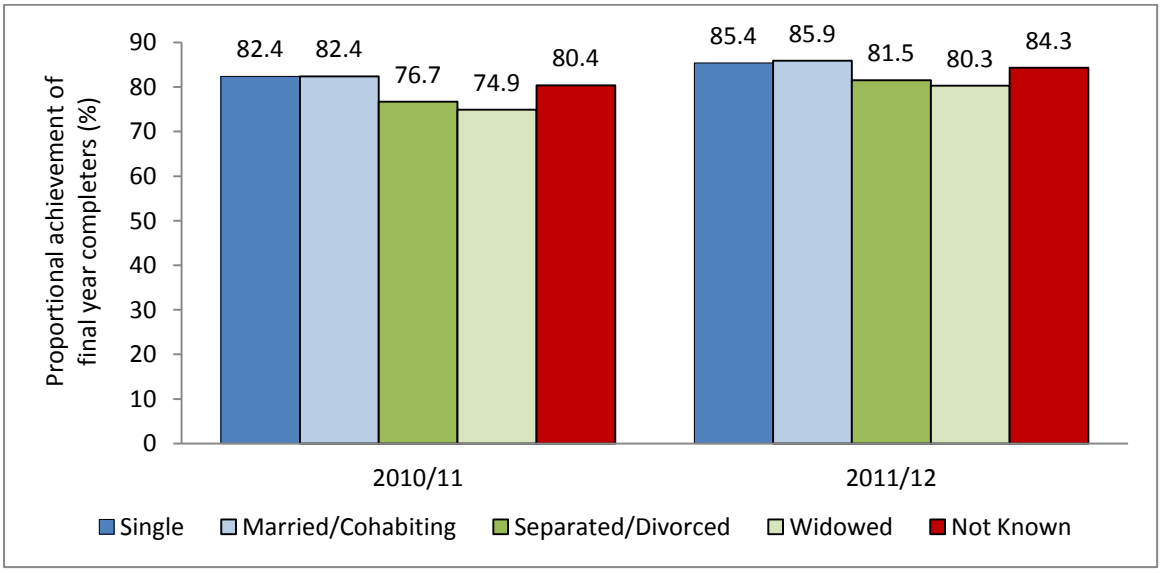
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Single	59.0	60.9	57.9	56.1	58.4
Married/Cohabiting	20.3	19.9	17.6	16.0	14.8
Separated/Divorced	3.4	3.1	2.7	2.6	2.5
Widowed	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.6
Not Known	16.5	15.3	21.1	24.6	23.7

[384] Includes a range of assessed full-time and part-time education and training options from entry level to postgraduate level.

In 2011/12, those whose marital status was not known had the highest retention[385] (93.8%), followed by those who were married/in a civil partnership (92.4%). This is a reversal on the previous year when those who were married/ in a civil partnership had the highest retention (92.2%) closely followed by those whose marital status was not known (92.1%). Retention for those who were single increased between the two time points, from 89.1% to 90.3%. Retention also increased for those who were widowed (from 88.4% to 89.9%) and decreased for those who were separated/divorced (from 87.7% to 87.1%) (see Technical Table 10.2).

With regard to the achievement[386] of final year completers (See Figure 10.2) in 2010/11, those who were married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting, and those who were single, maintained the highest achievement rates (both 82.4%), followed by those whose marital status was not known (80.4%). In 2011/12 achievement rates increased for all groups; those who were married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting again had the highest achievement rates (85.9%), this was followed by those who were single (85.4%) and those whose marital status was not known (84.3%). Those who were separated/divorced had higher achievement rates in both 2010/11 and 2011/12 (76.7% and 81.5%, respectively) than those who were widowed (74.9% and 80.3%, respectively). Therefore, the lowest rates of achievement at both time points were for those who were widowed.

Figure 10.2: Proportional achievement of final year completers of accredited courses by marital status, 2010/11 and 2011/12

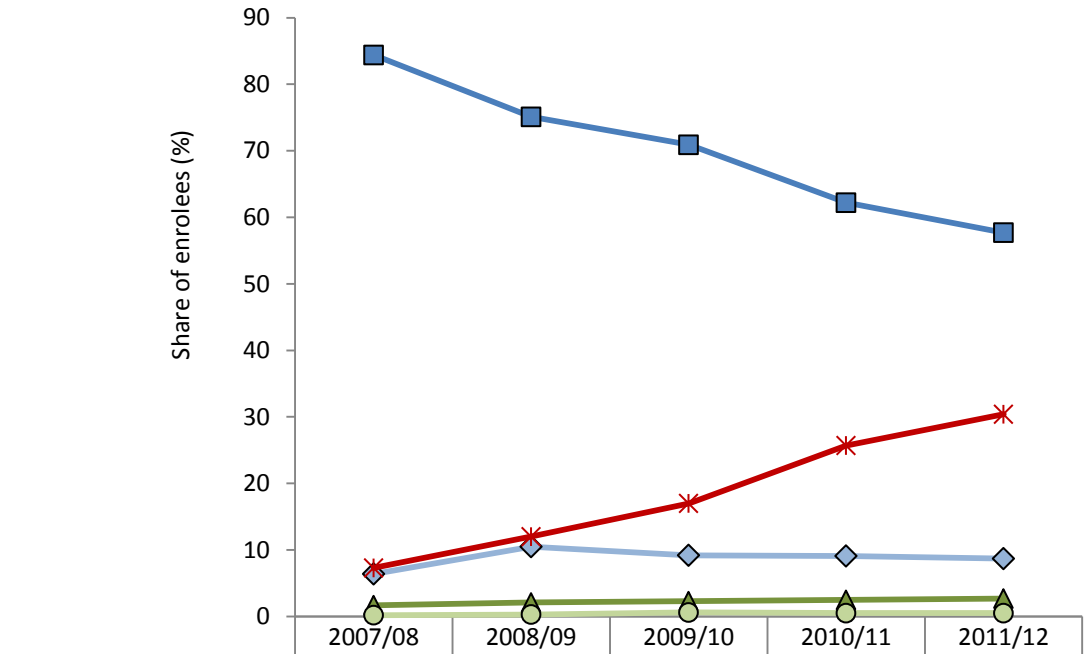


[385] Retention (%) = final year completers / final year enrolees (where final year completers are defined as final year enrolments which do not have a student status of withdrawn or transferred).
[386] Achievement (%) = final year achievers / final years completers (where achievement is defined as full and partial achievements within outcome for those classed as final year completers.)

Essential Skills – Access:

In 2011/12, the majority of enrolees in Essential Skills were single (57.7%) compared to other groups (married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting, 8.7%: separated/divorced, 2.7%; widowed, 0.5%), reflecting the fact that the majority of enrolees are also under 25 years. Over the five-year period between 2007/08 and 2011/12, there was an increased proportion of all groups enrolled in Essential Skills except those who were single (single enrolees experience a decrease of 26.7 percentage points) (see Technical Table 10.3).

Figure 10.3: Share of enrolees on Essential Skills courses by marital status, 2007/08 – 2011/12



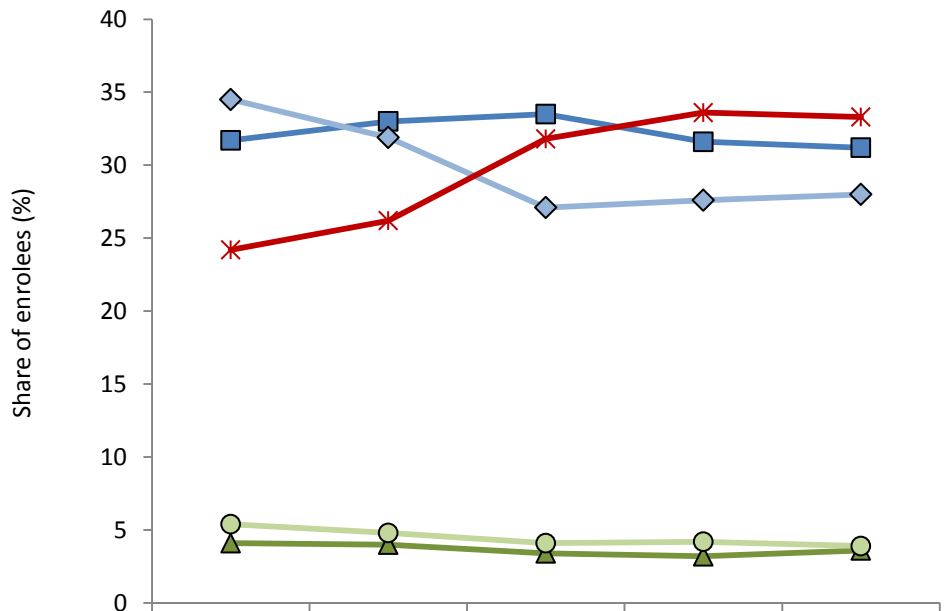
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Single	84.4	75.1	70.9	62.2	57.7
Married/Cohabiting	6.4	10.5	9.2	9.1	8.7
Separated/Divorced	1.7	2.1	2.3	2.5	2.7
Widowed	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.5
Not Known	7.3	12.0	17.0	25.7	30.4

Non-accredited (Non-professional and Technical) Courses – Access:

In 2011/12, the three groups who had the largest share of enrolments in non-accredited courses were: those whose marital status was not known (33.3%); those who were single (31.2%); and, those who were married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting (28.0%). Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the same three groups maintained the largest shares in enrolments, although the order changed at different times.

Three groups showed little variation between 2007/08 and 2011/12 in their share of enrolments in non-accredited courses (see Figure. 10.4): those who were single (31.7% and 31.2%, respectively); those who were separated/divorced (4.1% and 3.6%, respectively); and those were widowed (5.4% and 3.9%, respectively). Those whose marital status was not known experienced a steady increase in their share of enrolments in non-accredited courses between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (24.2% and 33.3%, respectively). Those who were married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting experienced a decrease in their share of enrolments of 6.5 percentage points between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (34.5% and 28.0%, respectively) (see Technical Table 10.1).

Figure 10.4: Share of enrolees in non-accredited courses by marital status, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Single	31.7	33.0	33.5	31.6	31.2
Married/Cohabiting	34.5	31.9	27.1	27.6	28.0
Separated/Divorced	4.1	4.0	3.4	3.2	3.6
Widowed	5.4	4.8	4.1	4.2	3.9
Not Known	24.2	26.2	31.8	33.6	33.3

Training, Apprenticeships and Employment Programmes (Source: DEL)

'Training for Success'[387] is designed for young people aged 16 - 17 years (up to 24 years for those who qualify under extended eligibility[388]) and provides training to give them the tools and skills they need to get a job. It is designed to enable learners to progress to higher level training, further education, or employment by providing training to address personal and social development needs, develop occupational skills, employability skills and, where necessary, Essential Skills training. 'ApprenticeshipsNI'[389] provides the opportunity for students to participate in a Level 2 or Level 3 apprenticeship. There is no upper age limit for participation in the programme, however all participants must be in employment from day one. The 'Steps to Work'[390] programme supports participants to find work through a combination of one to one guidance and support from an advisor and access to training courses, qualifications provision, and work experience.

Training for Success Programme – Access and Progression:

Given that the vast majority of 'Starts'[391] in the Training for Success programme between the years 2007/08 and 2011/12 were 16 or 17 years old, it is unsurprising that 96.3% of them were single in 2007/08. However, due to the large percentage of those whose marital status was not known in 2011/12, (68.2%) the share of those who were single reduced to 31.5% (see Technical Table 10.4). The shares of 'Leavers' reflected that of 'Starts' very closely until 2010/11. In 2010/11 and 2011/12, the share of both 'Starts' and 'Leavers' whose marital status was not known increased, however, the share of 'Leavers' whose marital status was unknown was approximately half that of 'Starts'.

ApprenticeshipsNI Programme – Access and Progression:

In 2008, the ApprenticeshipsNI programme was extended to those aged 25 years and older; which may account for a 32.8 percentage point drop between the share of those who were single in 2007/08 (94.9%) compared to 2008/09 (62.1%). The extension of the ApprenticeshipsNI programme may also explain the increase of those whose marital status was not known from 1.7% in 2007/08 to 31.2% in 2011/12 (see Figure 10.5)..

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[387] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-for-you-on-training-for-success

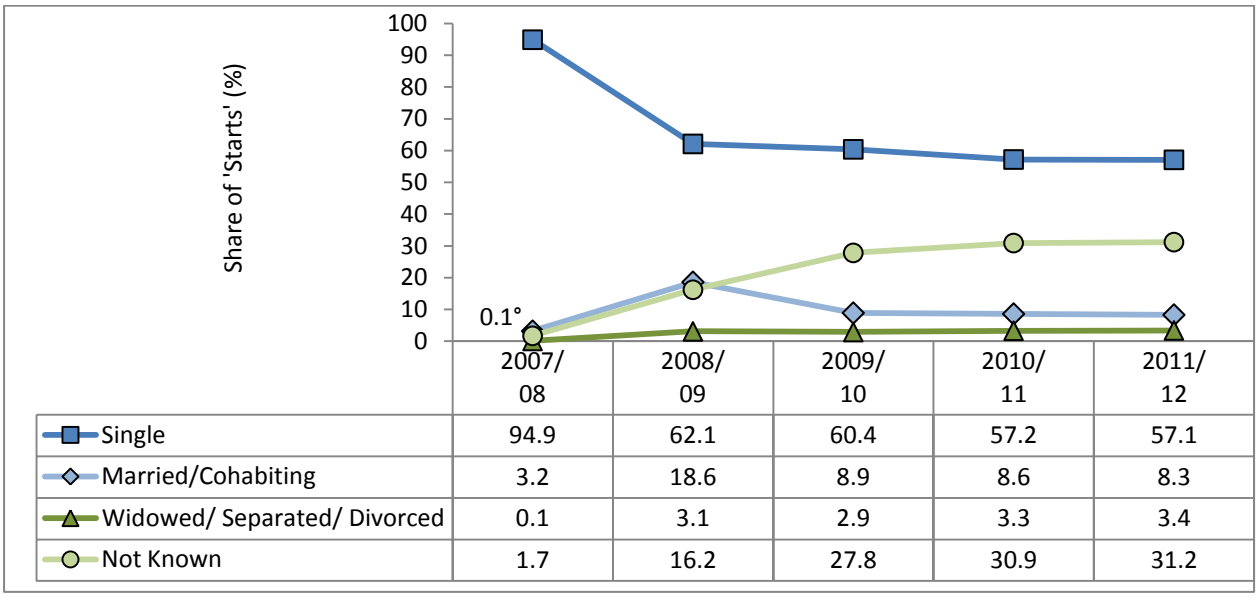
[388] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-for-you-on-training-for-success - *'Who can take part in the Training for Success programme?'*

[389] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsni

[390] http://www.delni.gov.uk/stepstowork

[391] 'Starts' refers to participants starting a programme.

Figure 10.5: Share of 'Starts' on ApprenticeshipsNI by marital status, 2007/08 – 2011/12

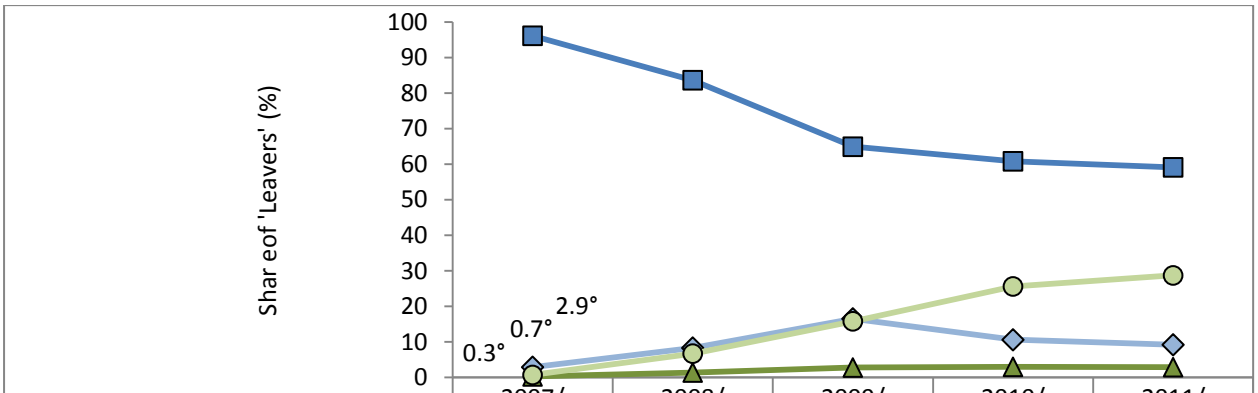


	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Single	94.9	62.1	60.4	57.2	57.1
Married/Cohabiting	3.2	18.6	8.9	8.6	8.3
Widowed/ Separated/ Divorced	0.1	3.1	2.9	3.3	3.4
Not Known	1.7	16.2	27.8	30.9	31.2

° Note that the number is less than 40

Figure 10.6 shows that the same pattern observed with 'Starts' in ApprenticeshipsNI can be observed with 'Leavers' of the programme. In 2011/12, single people comprised 59.1% of 'Leavers' (see Figure 10.6); those whose marital status was not known comprised 28.7%; people who were married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting comprised 9.2%; and widowed/separated/divorced people comprised 2.9%.

Figure 10.6: Share of 'Leavers' from ApprenticeshipsNI by marital status, 2007/08 – 2011/12



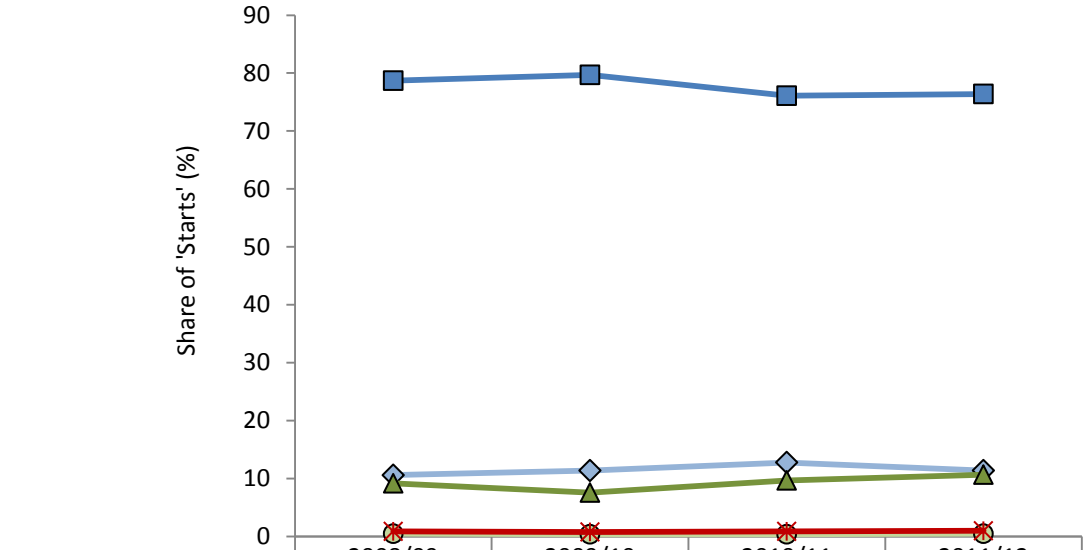
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Single	96.1	83.6	64.9	60.8	59.1
Married/Cohabiting	2.9	8.3	16.5	10.6	9.2
Widowed/ Separated/Divorced	0.3	1.4	2.8	3.0	2.9
Not Known	0.7	6.7	15.8	25.6	28.7

° Note that the number is less than 40

Steps to Work Programme – Access, Progression and Destinations:

DEL figures from the Steps to Work programme for the 2008/09-2011/12 period show that, consistently, over three-quarters of enrolees were single (see Figure. 10.7). In 2011/12, the composition of Steps to Work 'Starts' was: 76.4% single; 11.4% married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting; 10.7% separated/divorced; 0.5% widowed; 1.0% unknown marital status (see Technical Table 10.6). Trends could not be analysed for the widowed group as the numbers of 'Starts' or 'Leavers' were below 40 throughout the period of interest.

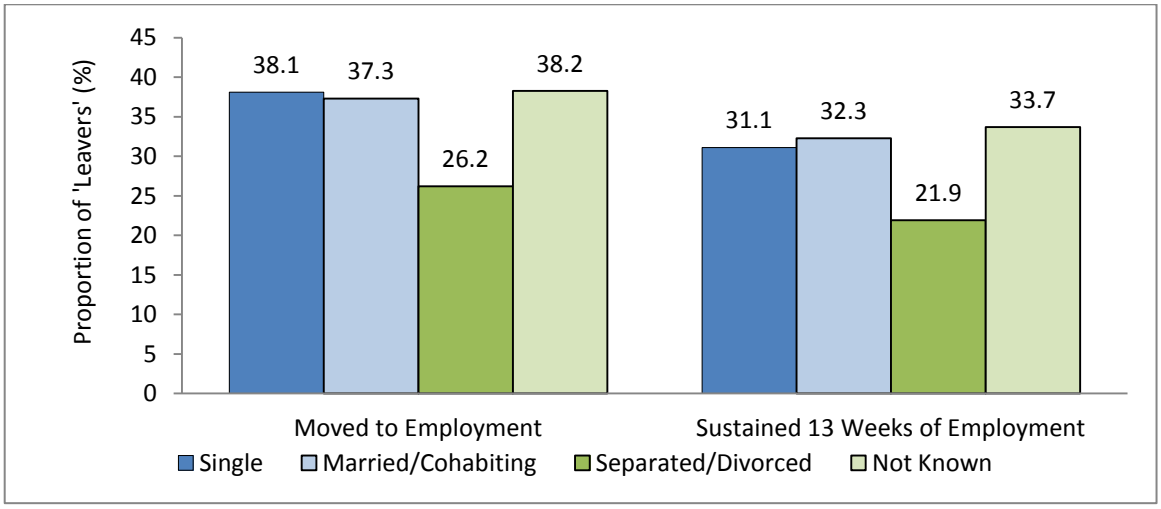
Figure 10.7: Share of 'Starts' on Steps to Work by marital status, 2008/09 – 2011/12



	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Single	78.7	79.7	76.1	76.4
Married/Cohabiting	10.6	11.4	12.8	11.4
Separated/Divorced	9.2	7.6	9.7	10.7
Widowed	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5
Not Known	0.9	0.8	0.9	1.0

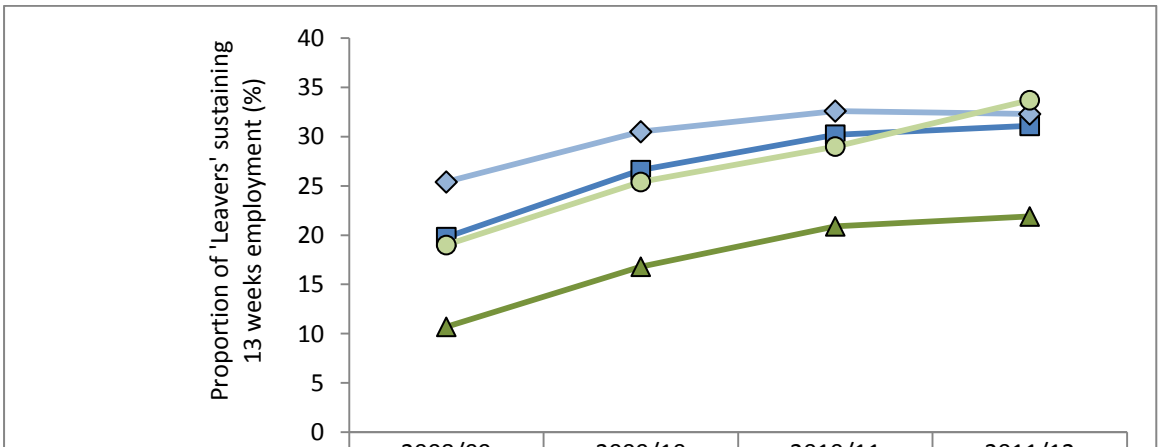
Consistently over the four-year period, those who were separated/divorced were least likely to have either moved into work or sustained 13 weeks of employment (26.2% and 21.9% respectively in 2011/12; see Technical Table 10.6). In 2011/12, 38.2% of the not known group moved to employment and 33.7% sustained employment; 38.1% of the single group moved to employment and 31.1% sustained 13 weeks of employment; and 37.3% of the married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting group moved to employment and 32.3% sustained 13 weeks of employment.

Figure 10.8: Proportion of 'Leavers' from Steps to Work who moved to employment and 'Leavers' who sustained 13 weeks employment by age, 2011/12



All marital status groups experience an increase in the proportion of leavers who sustained 13 weeks employment between 2008/09[392] and 2011/12 (see Figure 10.9), the increases were as follows: 14.7 percentage points for those whose marital status was not known; 11.3 percentage points for those who were single; 11.2 percentage points for those who were separated/divorced; and 6.9 percentage points for those who were married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting.

Figure 10.9: Proportion of 'Leavers' from Steps to Work sustaining 13 weeks employment by marital status, 2008/09 – 2011/12



	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Single	19.8	26.6	30.2	31.1
Married/Cohabiting	25.4	30.5	32.6	32.3
Separated/Divorced	10.7	16.8	20.9	21.9
Not Known	19.0	25.4	29.0	33.7

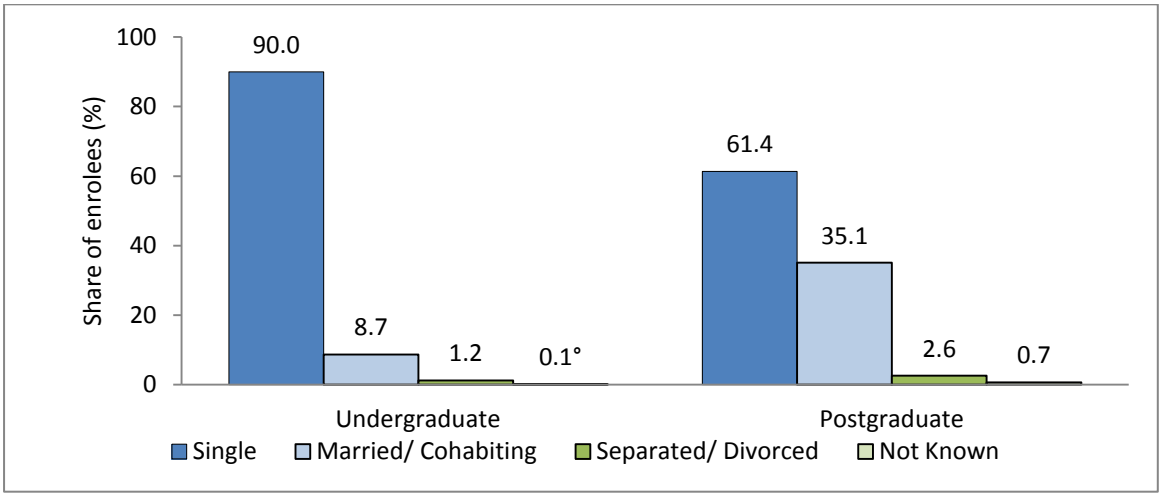
[392] The most recent time period available for analysis

Higher Education (Source: DEL)

Undergraduate/Postgraduate Status – Access and Attainment:

A persistent trend between the years 2007/08 and 2011/12 is that the vast majority of undergraduate enrolees were single (over four-fifths each year), while over a quarter of postgraduate enrolees were married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting. In 2011/12, 90.0% of undergraduate enrolees were single; 8.7% were married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting; and, 1.2% were separated/divorced. In the same year, 61.4% of postgraduate enrolees were single; 35.1% were married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting; and, 2.6% were separated/divorced (see Figure 10.10; Technical Table 10.7). Trends could not be analysed for the widowed group as the numbers were below 40 throughout the period of interest.

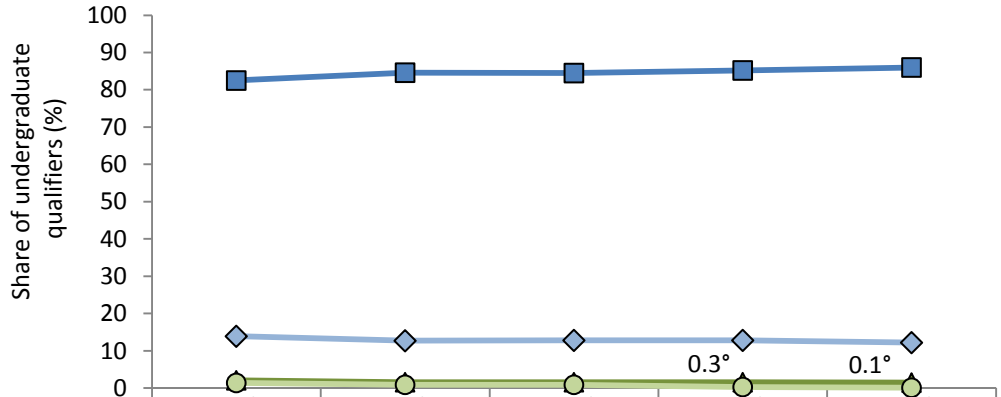
Figure 10.10: Share of undergraduate and postgraduate enrolees by marital status, 2011/12



° Note that the number is less than 40

In 2011/12, 86.0% of all undergraduate qualifications were awarded to single people (up from 82.5% in 2007/08); just over a tenth (12.2%) were awarded to people who were married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting (down from 13.9% in 2007/08); and 1.5% were awarded to separated/divorced people (down from 2.1% in 2007/08) (see Figure 10.11). In relation to postgraduate qualifications, the majority were also awarded to those in the single group (67.4%, an increase from 61.7% in 2007/08), while 28.8% were awarded to the married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting group (a decrease from 32.7% in 2007/08), and 2.4% were awarded to the separated/divorced group (down slightly from 2.7% in 2007/08). Trends could not be analysed for the widowed group as the numbers were below 40 throughout the period of interest.

Figure 10.11: Share of undergraduate qualifiers by marital status, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Single	82.5	84.6	84.5	85.2	86.0
Married/Cohabiting	13.9	12.7	12.8	12.8	12.2
Separated/Divorced	2.1	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.5
Not Known	1.4	0.9	0.9	0.3	0.1

° Note that the number is less than 40

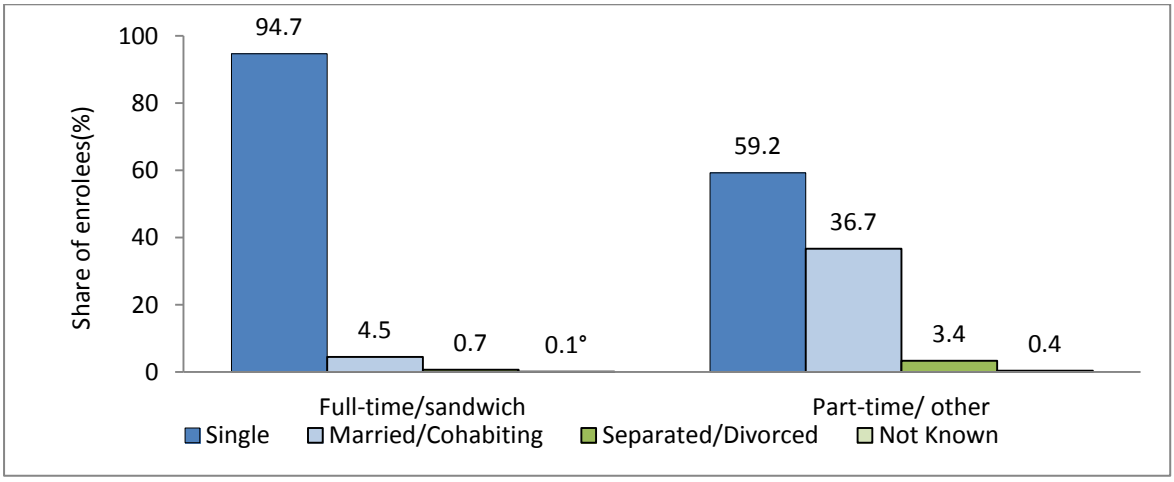
<u>Full-time/Part-time Status – Access and Attainment:</u>

From 2007/08 to 2011/12, approximately one-third of all 'part-time/other'[393] students at university were in the married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting group, and consistently across the years, over 90% of all 'full-time/sandwich'[394] enrolments were single. In 2011/12, 36.7% of 'part-time/other' students were married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting (up slightly from 34.1% in 2007/08); 59.2% were single (down slightly from 60.5% in 2007/08); 3.4% were separated/divorced (no change from 2007/08); and 0.3% were widowed. In contrast, 94.7% of 'full-time/sandwich' students were single; 4.5% were married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting; and, 0.7% were separated/divorced (see Figure 10.12; Technical Table 10.8). Trends could not be analysed for the widowed group as the numbers were below 40 throughout the period of interest.

[393] *Part-time* students are those recorded as studying part-time, or studying full-time on courses lasting less than 24 weeks, on block release, or studying during the evenings only.

[394] *Full-time* students are those normally required to attend an Institution for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the year of study, on thick or thin sandwich courses, and those on a study-related year out of their institution. During that time students are normally expected to undertake periods of study, tuition or work experience which amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week.

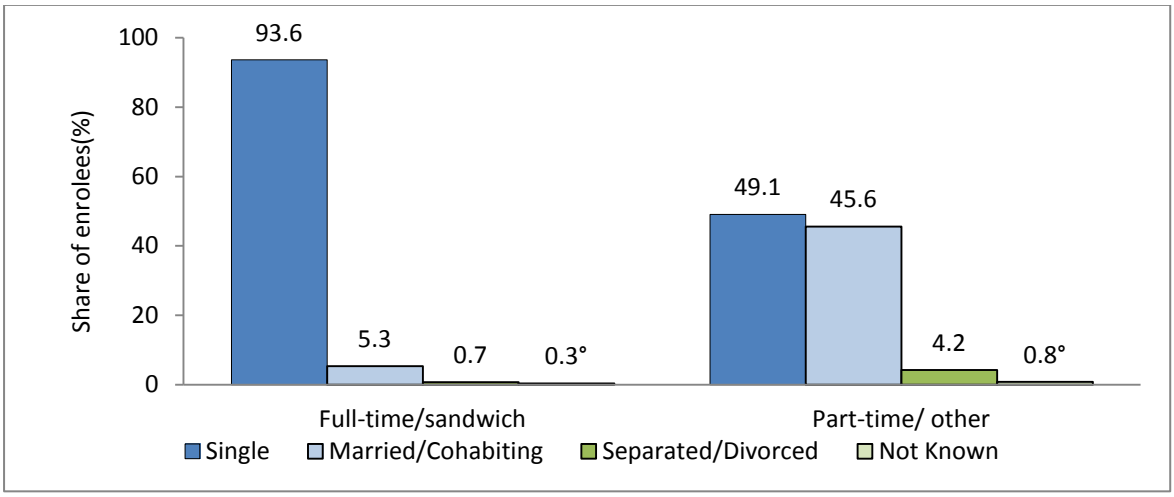
Figure 10.12: Share of 'full-time/sandwich' and 'part-time/other' enrolees by marital status in 2011/12



° Note that the number is less than 40

The pattern of enrolments is reflected in the qualifications awarded to part- or full-time students. In 2011/12, 49.1% of all 'part-time/other' qualifications were awarded to single people; 45.6% were awarded to married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting people; and 4.2% were awarded to separated/divorced people. Again, the pattern of 'full-time/sandwich' qualifications awarded in 2011/12 reflects the intake: the majority of full-time qualifications were awarded to single people (93.6%), followed by married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting people (5.3%), and those who were separated/divorced (0.7%) (see Figure 10.13).

Figure 10.13: Share of 'full-time/sandwich' and 'part-time/other' qualifiers by marital status, 2011/12



° Note that the number is less than 40

Subject Choice – Access and Attainment:

Consistently over the five year period, those who were single represented the largest shares of enrolees in all subject areas. The shares of single enrolees were lowest in 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine' (78.4% in 2011/12) and 'Social Studies and Law' (83.3% in 2011/12) (see Table 10.1; Technical Table 10.9). The shares of single qualifiers reflected that of enrolees, however, the share of single qualifiers from 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine' (69.8% in 2011/12) was notably lower than the share of enrolees in that subject area (Technical Tables 10.9 and 10.10).

Table 10.1 shows that in 2011/12, the shares of enrolees who were married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting, were highest in 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine' (19.2%). The married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting shares of qualifiers reflected that of enrolees, however, the married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting share of qualifiers from 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine' (26.7% in 2011/12) was notably higher than the share of enrolees in that subject area (Technical Tables 10.9 and 10.10).

The numbers for those who were separated/divorced, widowed and not known were too small to analyse reliably.

Table 10.1: Share of subject enrolees and qualifiers in higher education by marital status, 2011/12

	Subjects Allied to Medicine	Biological Subjects	Maths, IT, Eng., Tech.	Social Studies & Law	Business, Admin etc	Other Disciplines
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Enrolees						
Single	78.4	91.7	95.2	83.3	85.3	83.5
Married/ Civil Partnership/ Co-hab	19.2	7.0	4.3	14.0	13.2	14.8
Sep/Divorced	2.0	0.9	0.3°	2.2	1.3	1.4
Widowed	0.2°	0.2°	0.1°	0.2°	0.1°	0.1°
Qualifiers						
Single	69.8	91.4	94.4	81.3	84.5	79.3
Married/ Civil Partnership/ Co-hab	26.7	6.5	4.8	16.0	13.9	18.5
Sep/Divorced	2.6	1.2°	0.4°	2.2°	1.2°	1.8
Widowed	0.2°	0.1°	0.0	0.1°	0.1°	0.1°

° Note that the number is less than 40

Higher Education – Progression:

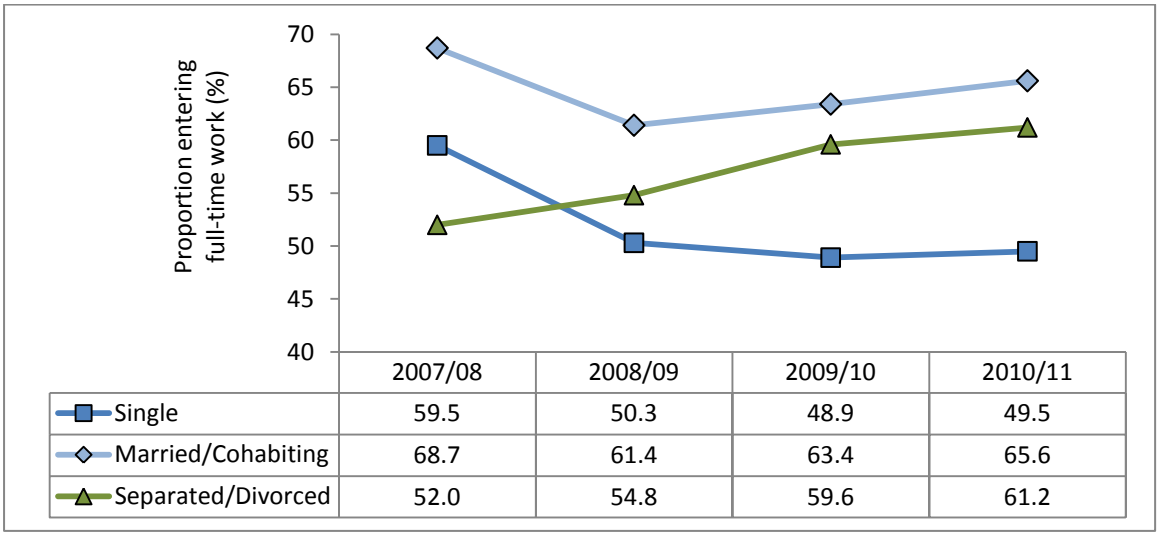
Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, those who were single made up over 90% of students who did not continue their course. The numbers in the other marital status groups are too small to analyse reliably (see Technical Table 10.11).

Higher Education Leavers – Destinations:

In 2010/11[395], people who were married/in a civil partnership/cohabiting were more likely to enter full-time employment (65.6%) after leaving higher education than any other group (single, 49.5%; separated/divorced, 61.2%) (see Figure 8.14). In 2010/11, single leavers were more likely to: enter part-time employment (16.3%) than other groups (married/in a civil partnership/cohabiting, 11.9%; separated/divorced, 10.2%); both work and embark on further study (9.4%) (married/in a civil partnership/cohabiting, 8.0%; separated/divorced, 10.2%); and embark on further study only (11.9%) (married/in a civil partnership/cohabiting and separated/divorced, both 4.1%).

Between 2007/08 and 2010/11, the proportion of leavers entering full-time paid work decreased substantially for all groups, particularly for single student leavers (59.5% in 2007/08 to 49.5% in 2010/11) . Conversely, the proportions of leavers from the single category entering part-time employment increased substantially over the period, from 10.5% to 16.3%. The proportion of single leavers who both worked and embarked on further study increased from 6.8% in 2007/08 to 9.4% in 2010/11 (see Technical Table 10.12).

Figure 10.14: Proportion of leavers entering full-time work by marital status, 2007/08 – 2010/11



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Single	59.5	50.3	48.9	49.5
Married/Cohabiting	68.7	61.4	63.4	65.6
Separated/Divorced	52.0	54.8	59.6	61.2

[395] The most recent year available for analysis

Overall Population (Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey)

Highest Qualification Attainment:

The NILT datasets from 2008 – 2012[396] were also analysed to check for differences between the highest qualification level of respondents from different marital status categories.

Due to small numbers, the only two groups that could be reliably analysed for trends were 'single (never married)' and 'married and living with husband/wife'. In 2012, those who were 'married and living with husband/wife' were most likely to have 'Degree level or higher' as their highest qualification (24.1%) while those who were 'single (never married)' were most likely to have 'GCSE A-C or equivalent' as their highest qualification (25.4%). Throughout the period 2008-2012, approximately a fifth of both groups had no qualifications (20.0% for 'married and living with husband/wife' and 19.1% for 'single (never married)' in 2012).

The next section of this chapter will present the findings from the qualitative element of the research (focus groups, interviews, and a stakeholder engagement event), in order to thematically illustrate the barriers and enablers that stakeholders identified for marital status.

[396]No survey was conducted in 2011

Findings from Qualitative Data

In discussion with stakeholders, the perceived barriers and enablers to educational equality for people of different marital status groups were regarded as similar to the barriers and enablers for people of different age groups (as was found to be the case from the review of the literature), since marital status is correlated with the different life stages of an individual.

Marital status-related barriers to education equality

Barriers included:

1. ***Provision of Support***

Reasons for the high retention rate of married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting people included the additional support that partnered individuals may receive (particularly motivational and financial support). Entering adult education is likely to be more difficult for single parents, and those with additional caring responsibilities due to a lack of support.

2. ***Time and Cost***

The time needed for further study and the cost of higher education were considered to be particular barriers for those who were not single.

Potential marital status-related enablers to education equality

Potential enablers included:

1. ***Flexibility in the delivery of courses***

Distance learning and flexibility in courses (for example, blended courses and courses designed around individual needs – in other words, adapted teaching approaches) and increased access to support for IT skills were considered potential enablers to educational equality that could be built into policy and practice.

2. ***Family friendly policy and practice***

Changes in childcare provision to allow individuals to return to education and flexible payment arrangements of fees for those who have mortgages and childcare costs were considered potential enablers to educational equality, particularly for those with dependants.

Summary

Analysis of education access, attainment, progression and destinations for people of different marital status from 2007/08 to 2011/12 has identified a number of areas where differentials by marital status and/or inequalities were apparent.

Married/co-habiting/in a civil partnership, separated/divorced, and widowed groups were consistently underrepresented in further and higher education enrolments compared to their shares of the population revealed in the Census 2011. However, within the Essential Skills and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes, since 2007/08 there were marked decreases in the shares of enrolees from the single group and increases in the shares of those from all other marital status groups. Widowed people had the lowest achievement of all other marital status groups in professional and technical courses in further education, and this is a persistent inequality. Separated/divorced people had the lowest retention rate in professional and technical courses in further education; this is also a persistent inequality. When interpreting the further education data it is important to note that there were high numbers of those whose marital status was not known.

In regard to destinations, within the Steps to Work programme those from the separated/divorced category were least likely to move to employment or sustain 13 weeks employment after leaving. The proportion of separated or divorced people who entered employment and sustained employment after the programme was approximately 10 percentage points lower than the other marital status groups. This was a persistent inequality over the time period examined.

In higher education, between 2007/08 and 2011/12, approximately nine out of ten undergraduates and full-time students were single, and three-fifths of postgraduates and part-time students were single. Those from marital status groups other than single were most likely to enter the subject areas of 'Medicine, Dentistry, or Subjects Allied to Medicine'. The subject areas of 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology' had the highest proportions of single enrolees out of all subject areas. These are all persistent inequalities. Furthermore, the literature review highlighted that married students graduated faster single students.

In terms of higher education destinations, those from the single group were considerably less likely to move into full-time work than those from the married/co-habiting/in a civil partnership group, and more likely to be assumed to be unemployed (numbers for other groups

were too small to analyse). There was a decrease in full-time employment over the time period for both groups, but there was a bigger decrease for the single group. This is an emergent inequality.

Amongst the overall population, Northern Ireland Life and Times data 2008-2012 revealed that married people were more likely to have some higher education as their highest qualification level, and single people were more likely to have GCSEs at A-C as their highest qualification than other marital status groups.

Some of the stated barriers to educational equality for people of different marital status groups were related to those mentioned in the age category, and reflected those described in the literature review. Barriers included the provision of support or lack thereof (i.e. financial and for caring responsibilities) and the time and costs needed to enter higher education. Potential enablers included flexibility in the delivery of courses, and family-friendly policies and practices.

Chapter 11: Dependency Status and Inequalities in Education

Introduction

Dependency status is covered under the statutory equality duties on public authorities including educational bodies (but not including schools) in Northern Ireland. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998[397] requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons with dependants and persons without. 'Dependants' can include a dependent child/children, or a person with a long-term sickness or disability who is cared for by someone else.

According to the Census 2011, the percentage of all households with dependent children[398] of any age is 33.9%. Lone parent households with dependent children comprise 9.1% of all households in Northern Ireland. In addition, according to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, in 2012, 4.4% of all births were to teenage mothers[399]. The Census 2011 also revealed that 12% of the population provide unpaid care to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long-term physical or mental ill-health / disabilities, or problems related to old age. Of this group of people, 26% said they provided 50 or more hours a week of unpaid care. Indeed, the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey notes that since 2008 approximately one-quarter of respondents have said they look after a sick, disabled or elderly person at home or outside of their home. In addition, according to the Crossroads Young Carers Project in Northern Ireland[400], 1 in 6 people in Northern Ireland are a carer; 8,352 children (56% of them female) in Northern Ireland provide care to someone; and the average age of a young carer is 12.

Literature Review

Women and Caring

Literature on the barriers to education for those who have caring responsibilities frequently overlaps with literature on the barriers to education faced by women, and older women in particular, who are more likely than men to report having dependants or close friends/relatives

[397] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75
[398] 'Dependent child' is defined by the Census 2011 as follows: 'A dependent child is a person aged 0 – 15 in a household (whether or not in a family) or aged 16 – 18 in full-time education and living in a family with his or her parent(s) or grandparent(s). It does not include any children who have a spouse, partner or child living in the household.'
[399] See Statistical Bulletin on births in Northern Ireland 2012, http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/publications/births_deaths/births_2012.pdf
[400] See http://www.crossroadsyoungcarers.co.uk/young-carers/

whom they care for, and who are more likely to be lone parents (Hinds, 2011)[401]. Lynch, (1997)[402], in her study of mature students in higher education, found that the absence of adequate support services for carers meant that many such women would not be in a position to enter higher education even if the opportunity were to arise. The cost of providing alternative care is often prohibitive relative to disposable income. These women felt under considerable pressure in trying to balance their caring and other domestic commitments with study. While men and women experience similar time conflicts, such as the conflict between work and/or travel and study, the care pressures were felt most keenly by women. Furthermore the report highlighted that another factor was the lack of any affordable or accessible transport, particularly for carers from rural areas.

Young Carers

A recent study by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE, 2013)[403] found that young carers experience significant levels of disadvantage. They often live in poverty, miss large chunks of learning, are isolated, have restricted social networks, and their own health and wellbeing can be compromised. This can make it a challenge to engage in education, training and employment, especially if appropriate support is not offered when they are learners. A 2010 Audit Commission report[404] revealed that for young people between the ages of 16-18, having responsibilities as a carer was a factor that significantly increased their risk of being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), and the risk of being NEET for more than six months was twice that of their peers. Seventy-five percent of young carers had been NEET at least once (compared with 25% of all young people) and 42% had been NEET for six months or more (compared with 10% of all young people). Traditionally young carers' services and projects end at the age of 18 when adult services begin. The Audit Commission research evidence shows that once a young carer is in this gap, it is very difficult for carers organisations to re-engage with them and they often become 'lost in transition' to services that could and should be offering support, including education and training services. There is a growing recognition and acceptance that young adult carers aged 16-25 years have particular needs that are distinct from those of young carers (up to 18 years old) and adults who are carers. For young adult carers, because of their caring responsibilities, many do not make linear transitions

[401] Hinds, B. (2011). *Women on the Edge? A Comprehensive Analysis of the Impacts of the Financial Crisis: Lone Parents*. Belfast: Women's Resource and Development Agency.
[402] Lynch, K. (1997). *A Profile of Mature Students in Higher Education and an Analysis of Equality Issues*. In: R. Morris (Ed.) *Mature Students in Higher Education*.
[403] NIACE (2013). Access and Inclusion: Young Adult Carers and Education and Training.
[404] Audit Commission. (2010). Against the Odds: Targeted Briefing – Young Carers. Available from http://archive.audit commission.gov.uk/auditcommission/sitecollectiondocuments/Downloads/201008neetsyoungcarers.pdf

and are not afforded the opportunities taken for granted by their peers. This can have an impact throughout their lives particularly in terms of education and training.

Using data from the 2001 Census, Becker and Becker (2008) identified 290,369 young adult carers between 16-24 years in the UK[405]. The NIACE (2013) report[406] however found that many young adults do not realise they are carers or do not want to be identified as carers so this figure is very likely to be an underestimate of the real number of young adult carers. Of the 229,318 young adult carers aged 18-24 years in the UK identified by Becker and Becker in their 2008 report, 25% were caring over 20 hours a week and nearly half this group were caring 50+ hours a week. The NIACE (2013) report explores the impact that these responsibilities have on a young carer's life. Many experience poor health and wellbeing as a direct consequence of their caring responsibilities, and such personal difficulties can have a big impact on young adult carers' confidence in themselves as learners. Furthermore, they often have to miss or be late for classes and are tired and therefore struggle to complete work on time. Their commitments also restrict their social lives and the social aspects of learning –the formation of friendships and relationships is an important factor in the transition from childhood to independent adulthood, but young carers may feel that they cannot engage in informal activities and interactions outside of the classroom resulting in individuals feeling isolated and lonely.

Furthermore, a National Union of Students report on student finances and well-being[407] showed that in the England, 2.9% of the 14,000 students surveyed were carers, and that 56% of student carers had seriously considered leaving their course, compared to 39% of students without adult caring responsibilities. The main reasons given for considering leaving their courses were financial difficulties (64%); personal, family, or relationship problems (59%); and difficulties of balancing study and other commitments (58%). In addition, the study found that many young adult carers cannot go out to work, or, if they can find time to work part-time, it can prove difficult to find a job that allows enough flexibility to fit with caring responsibilities. Very often the kind of work that does offer this flexibility is low skilled, low paid work.

[405] Becker, F. and Becker, S. (2008) Young Adult Carers in the UK: Experiences, Needs and. Services for Carers aged 16-24. London: The Princess Royal Trust for Carers.
[406] NIACE (2013). Access and Inclusion: Young Adult Carers and Education and Training.
[407] National Union of Students. (2012). *The Pound in Your Pocket*. Available at: http://www.poundinyourpocket.org.uk/downloads/PIYP_Summary_Report.pdf

School Age Parents

The Audit of Inequalities for 2011-2015 published by the Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland[408] recommends the continuation of programmes such as the Department of Education (DE) Northern Ireland's School Age Mothers programme, delivered through Barnardos, which supports pregnant and parenting schoolgirls to continue their education either in their own school, or where this is not feasible, in an alternative setting. These projects are supporting 295 girls, who may otherwise have discontinued their schooling. The programme has resulted in excellent attainment levels with most school age mothers making the transition to third level education.[409]

Financial barriers have also been identified as a barrier to participation in further and higher education for teenage parents. Research by Spielhofer et al (2010)[410] found that the most common barrier for teenage parents who did participate in adult education was a course not being available to them in their area (a barrier reported by 20% of teenage parents); finance (15%) and not knowing all of the options available to them (18%) were secondary barriers and constraints. The teenage parents who did not participate in education or training after leaving school said that they would have done a course or training if they had received money to cover the cost of books and equipment; transport; and food at college/sixth form. One third of the respondents said that more affordable childcare would encourage them to participate in education or training. The main factors identified by the research for encouraging teenage parents' participation in higher education were being able to get to the place of learning by public transport (33%) and being able to achieve qualifications while working in a job (31%). Hinds (2011) also suggests that non-gendered training and careers advice and support is needed to develop access for lone parents (who are predominantly women) onto non-traditional career paths and training programmes[411].

[408] http://www.selb.org/equality/Documents/AuditofInequalities2ndEditionJune2012.pdf
[409] http://www.selb.org/equality/Documents/AuditofInequalities2ndEditionJune2012.pdf
[410] Spielhofer, T., Golden, S., Evans, K., Marshall, H., Mundy, E., Pomati, M., and Styles, B. (2010). *Barriers to Participation in Education and Training.* London: Department for Children, Schools and Families.
[411] Hinds, B. (2011). *Women on the Edge? A Comprehensive Analysis of the Impacts of the Financial Crisis: Lone Parents*. Belfast: Women's Resource and Development Agency

Multiple Identities

The combination of identities within further and higher education experiences is well documented in an NUS study on student parents[412]; it found that that the majority of student parents are women, mature and studying part-time. The vast majority of home students who are parents do not move to attend college or university (92% of UK respondents); this can affect their experience significantly, in terms of choice of course and institution, travel time and costs, and levels of participation in wider student life[413]. While the participants in the NUS research were proud of the positive impact that being a student parent had on both their academic achievement and on their relationships with their children and family life, having little free time, no money for additional childcare, and parenting responsibilities make it very difficult for student parents to get involved with student life outside their course. Timings of events, costs, alcohol and a lack of 'child-friendly' activities on campus put additional obstacles in the way of student parents' engagement in the student community[414]. The NUS study also revealed that student parents are an at-risk group in terms of student retention, with 60% of survey respondents having thought about leaving their course; this figure rises to 65% for lone parents. Personal ambition and creating financial security for their children were two of the main reasons that student parents remained on their course, according to the NUS study.

The next section of this chapter will present the key findings from existing datasets with regard to proportions and shares of enrolments, achievements, progression and destination across the 2007/08-2011/12 period for dependency status, in order to highlight the most current picture of existing inequalities, as well as to highlight whether these inequalities have emerged within the past five years or whether they have been persistent since 2007/08.

[412] National Union of Students. (2009). *Meet the Parents: The experiences of students with children in further and higher education.* London: NUS.
[413] Ibid
[414] Ibid

Findings from Quantitative Data

Further Education (Source: Department for Education and Learning Northern Ireland)

This section will explore data related to those courses which result in a qualification – accredited courses and Essential Skills courses – and those which do not lead to a qualification – non-accredited courses.

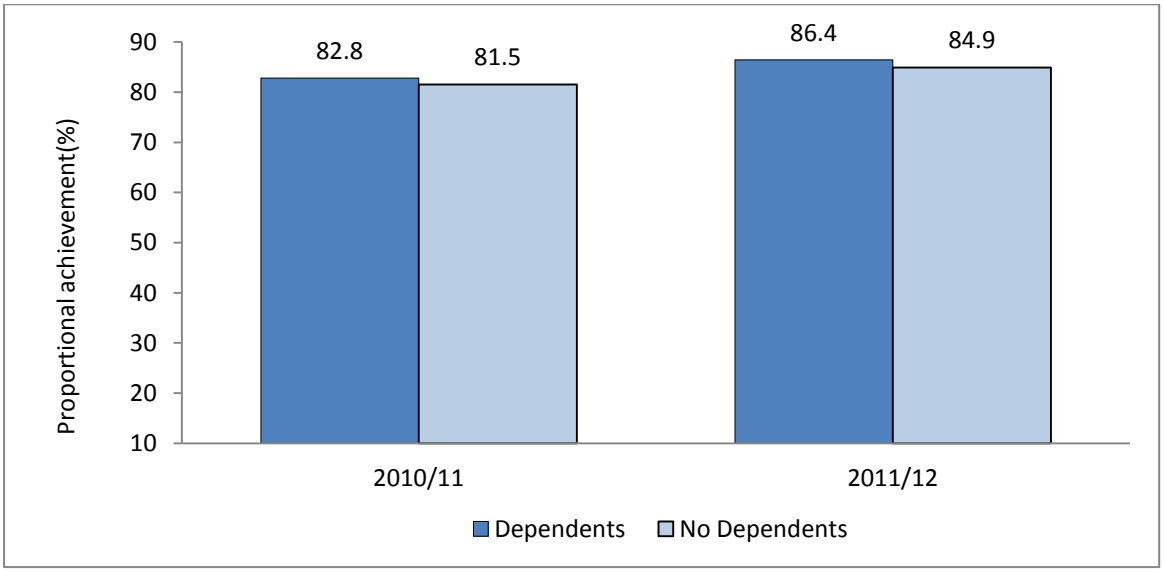
Accredited (Professional and Technical) Courses[415] – Access, Progression and Attainment:

In 2011/12, the majority of people who enrolled on accredited courses had no dependants (92.0%), while 8.0% of enrolees had dependants. This may be a reflection of the predominantly young age groups (24 years and under) who fill the majority of places on the courses[416]. During the period 2007/08 and 2011/12 the share of people with dependants enrolling on accredited courses declined, from 10.8% in 2007/08 to 8.0% in 2011/12 (see Technical Table 11.1).

From 2010/11 to 2011/12[417], those without dependants had similar retention[418] proportions (90.3% in 2010/11 and 91.6% in 2011/12), to those with dependants (90.8% in 2010/11 and 89.2% in 2011/12). However, in the same period there was a difference in achievement[419] between those with and without dependants. Those with dependants were more likely to successfully complete their courses (82.8% in 2010/11 and 86.4% in 2011/12) than those with no dependants (81.5% in 2010/11 and 84.9% in 2011/12) (see Figure 11.1; Technical Table 11.2).

[415] Includes a range of assessed full-time and part-time education and training options from entry level to postgraduate level.
[416] 65.8% of professional and technical course enrolees are 25 years of age or younger,
[417] Data were only available for this two-year time period.
[418] Retention (%) = final year completers / final year enrolees (where final year completers are defined as final year enrolments which do not have a student status of withdrawn or transferred).
[419] Achievement (%) = final year achievers / final years completers (where achievement is defined as full and partial achievements within outcome for those classed as final year completers.)

Figure 11.1: Proportional achievement of final year completers on accredited courses by dependency status, 2010/11 and 2011/12



Essential Skills – Access:

During the period 2007/08 – 2011/12 those with no dependants consistently accounted for the large majority of Essential Skills enrolments (96.2% in 2011/12). In 2011/12, those with dependants comprised 3.8% of Essential Skills participants; this figure has remained largely consistent since 2007/08, when 3.5% of participants had dependants (see Technical Table 11.3).

Non-accredited (Non-professional and Technical) Courses – Access:

In 2011/12, those with no dependants accounted for 93.7% of enrolees on non-accredited courses whilst those with dependants accounted for 6.3% of enrolees. Consistently over the five-year period 2007/08 – 2011/12, those who had no dependants accounted for approximately nine-tenths of enrolees on non-accredited courses, and this figure increased from 91.1% in 2007/08 to 93.7% in 2011/12 (see Technical Table 11.1).

Training, Apprenticeships and Employment Programmes (Source: DEL)

'Training for Success'[420] is designed for young people aged 16 – 17 years (up to 24 years for those who qualify under extended eligibility[421]) and provides training to give them the tools and skills they need to get a job. It is designed to enable learners to progress to higher level training, further education, or employment by providing training to address personal and social development needs, develop occupational skills, employability skills and, where necessary, Essential Skills training.

'ApprenticeshipsNI'[422] provides the opportunity for students to participate in a Level 2 or Level 3 apprenticeship. There is no upper age limit for participation in the programme, however all participants must be in employment from day one. The 'Steps to Work'[423] programme supports participants to find work through a combination of one to one guidance and support from an advisor and access to training courses, qualifications provision, and work experience.

Training for Success Programme – Access:

Given that the vast majority of 'Starts'[424] in the Training for Success programme between the years 2007/08 and 2011/12 were 16 or 17 years old (see Chapter 4), it is unsurprising that most 'Starts' had no dependants. In 2011/12, 1.5% of 'Starts' had dependants compared to 28.1% who had no dependants; the dependency status of 70.3% of 'Starts' was not known. The number of 'Starts' with dependants has decreased over the five-year period from 7.6% in 2007/08 to 1.5% in 2011/12. During the period 2007/08 and 2011/12 the share of 'Leavers'[425] from the Training for Success programme with dependants has decreased year-on-year, from 9.2% in 2007/08 to 2.5% in 2011/12 (see Technical Table 11.4). For both 'Starts' and 'Leavers', the share of those whose dependency status was not known at least tripled from 2007/08 to 2011/12.

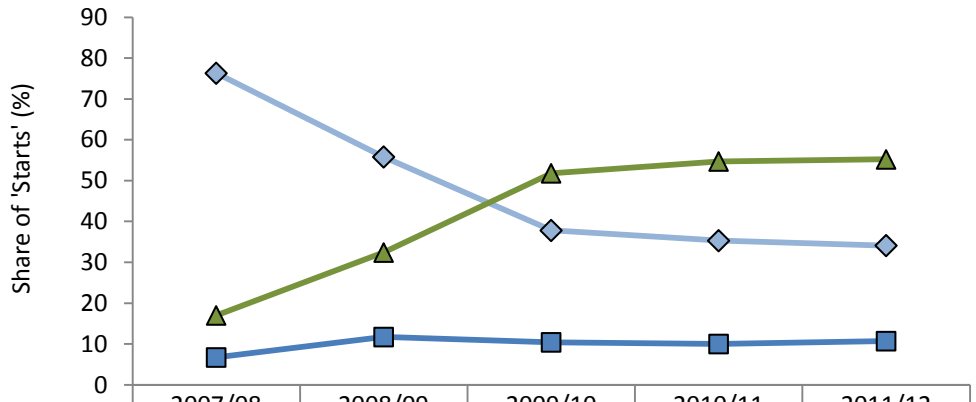
ApprenticeshipsNI Programme – Access and Progression:

In 2011/12, the number of 'Starts' with dependants increased to 10.7%, compared to 6.7% in 2007/08. During the period 2007/08 and 2011/12, the share of 'Starts' without dependants has decreased from 76.3% to 34.1% (see Figure 11.2; Technical Table 11.5). However, the share of

[420] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-for-you-on-training-for-success
[421] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-for-you-on-training-for-success - *'Who can take part in the Training for Success programme?'*
[422] http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsni
[423] http://www.delni.gov.uk/stepstowork
[424] 'Starts' refers to participants starting a programme.
[425] 'Leavers' refers to the number of participants completing a programme.

'Starts' whose dependency status was not known increased over the five year period, from 17.0% in 2007/08 to 55.2% in 2011/12. In 2011/12, those without dependants comprised 38.1% of 'Leavers'; compared to 9.9% of those with dependants.

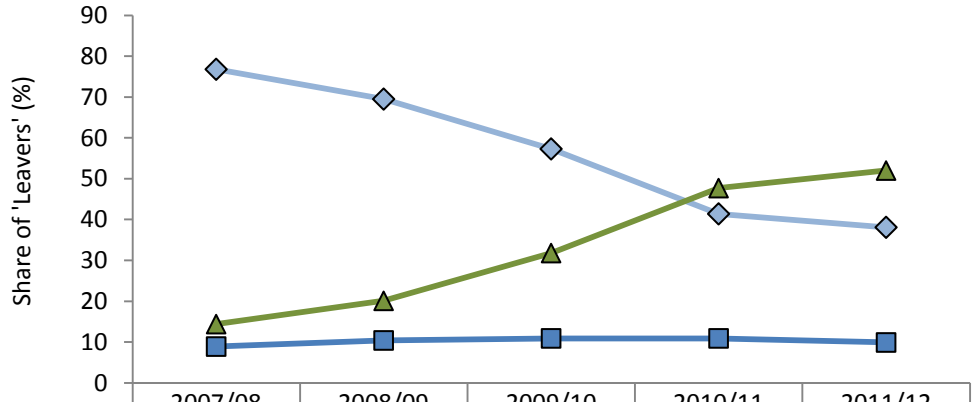
Figure 11.2: Share of 'Starts' on ApprenticeshipsNI by dependency status, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Dependents	6.7	11.7	10.4	10.0	10.7
No Dependents	76.3	55.8	37.8	35.3	34.1
Not Known	17.0	32.4	51.8	54.7	55.2

Since 2008/09 the share of 'Leavers' from ApprenticeshipsNI with dependants increased from 8.9% to 9.9% in 2011/12 (see Figure 11.3; Technical Table 11.5).

Figure 11.3: Share of 'Leavers' from ApprenticeshipsNI by dependency status, 2007/08 – 2011/12



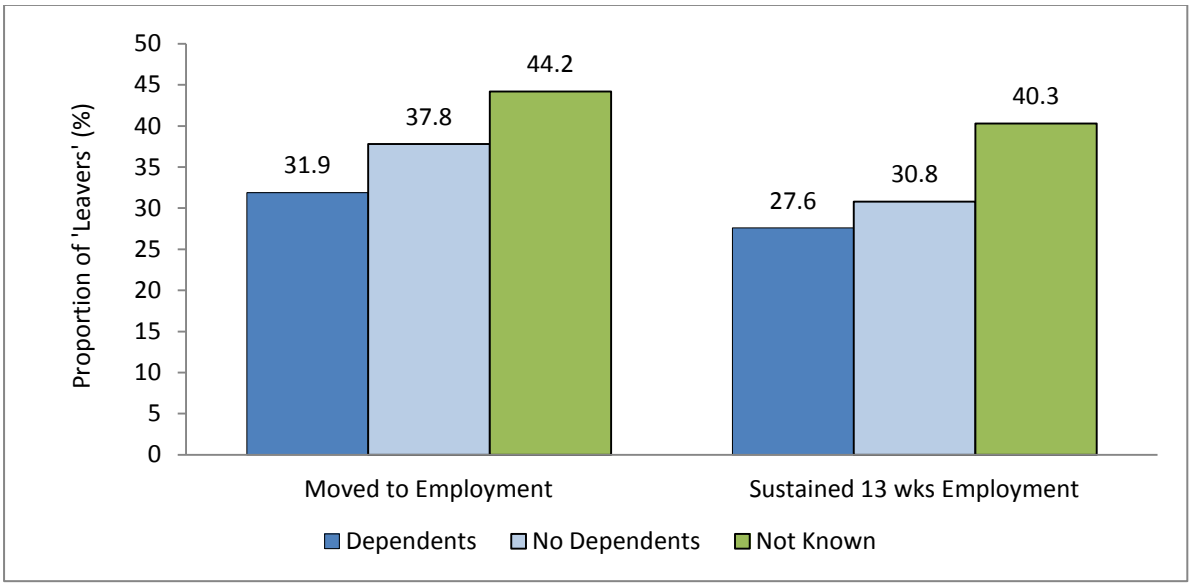
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Dependents	8.9	10.4	10.9	10.9	9.9
No Dependents	76.8	69.5	57.3	41.4	38.1
Not Known	14.4	20.1	31.8	47.7	52.0

Steps to Work Programme – Access, Progression and Destinations:

In 2011/12, 18.8% of 'Starts' on the Steps to Work programme had dependants and 80.7% did not, while the status of 0.5% of 'Starts' was not known. The share of 'Starts' with dependants has remained relatively consistent during the period 2008/09-2011/12[426] (Technical Table 11.6).

In 2011/12, upon leaving the programme, those whose dependency status was not known were the most likely to have either moved into employment (44.2%) or sustained 13 weeks of employment (40.3%) after leaving the Steps to Work programme. In 2011/12, 37.8% of those with no dependants moved to employment and 30.8% sustained 13 weeks of employment compared to 31.9% of those with dependants who moved to employment and 27.6% who sustained 13 weeks of employment (see Figure 11.4). Since 2008/09, the proportions of those with and without dependants who moved into employment (18.5% and 28.2% in 2008/09 respectively) or had sustained 13 weeks of employment (14.1% and 21.0% in 2008/09 respectively) increased year-on-year (Technical Table 11.6).

Figure 11.4: Proportion of 'Leavers' from Steps to Work who moved to employment and 'Leavers' who sustained 13 weeks employment by dependency status, 2011/12



[426] Data for 2007/08 was not available for analysis

Higher Education (Source: DEL)

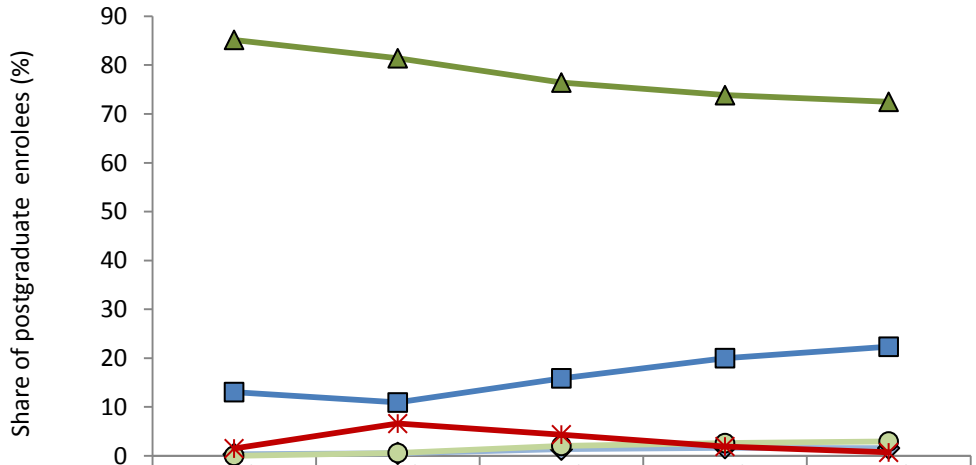
Undergraduate/Postgraduate Status – Access and Attainment:

In 2011/12, those with dependants made up 9.7% of undergraduate enrolments, compared to 90.3% no dependants (see Technical Table 11.7).

In 2011/12, 7.9% of undergraduate enrolees had young people/children to care for; 1.0% cared for both children and other relatives/friends; and 0.7% looked after other relatives/friends. Between the years 2007/08 and 2011/12 the share of undergraduate enrolees who had young people/children to care for increased from 4.9% in 2007/08; and the share who had other relatives/friends to care increased from 0.3% in 2007/08 (see Figure 11.5).

In 2011/12, 72.5% of postgraduate enrolees had no dependants, compared to 26.8% of postgraduate enrolees who had dependants and 0.7% not known. In 2011/12, those who looked after children/young people accounted for 22.3% of postgraduate enrolees, while those looking after both children and other relatives/friends accounted for 2.9%, and those who looked after other relatives/friends accounted for 1.6% of postgraduate enrolees. Between the years 2007/08 and 2011/12, the share of postgraduate enrolees with dependants doubled from 13.3% to 26.8% (see Figure 11.5).

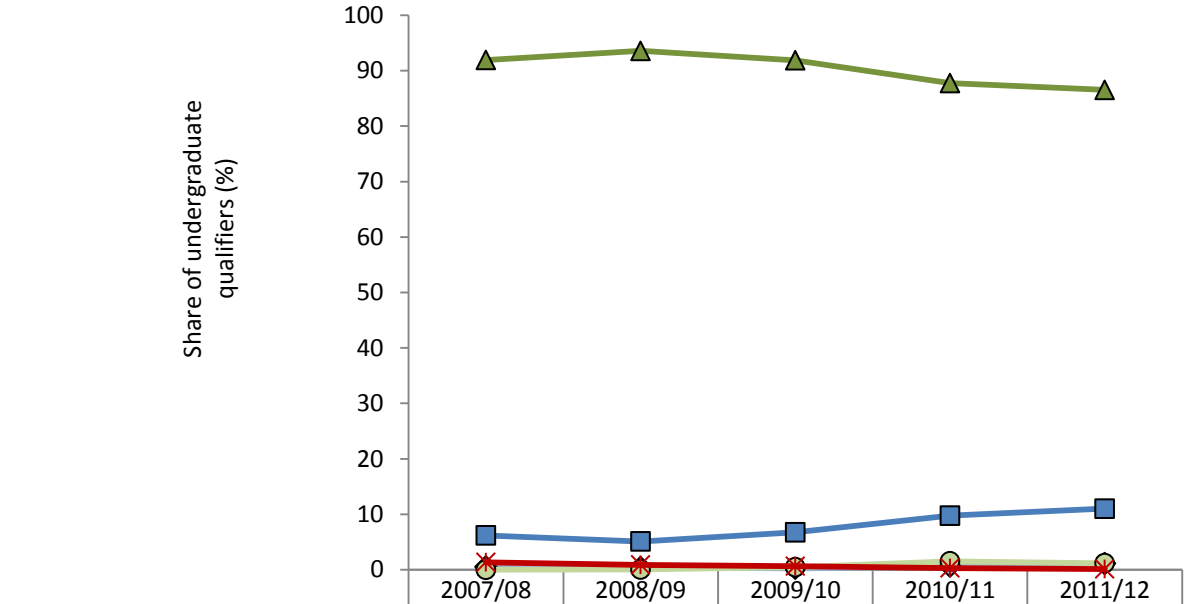
Figure 11.5: Share of postgraduate enrolees by dependency status, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Young People/Children	13.0	10.9	15.9	20.0	22.3
Other Relatives/Friends	0.3	0.5	1.3	1.7	1.6
No Dependents	85.2	81.4	76.4	73.8	72.5
Both Young People/Children and Other Relatives/Friends	0.0	0.6	2.0	2.6	2.9
Not Known	1.5	6.6	4.3	1.9	0.7

In 2011/12, 86.5% of all undergraduate qualifications were given to those who had no dependants, and just over a tenth (11.0%) were awarded to those who looked after young people/children; 1.2% were awarded to those who looked after both children and other relatives/friends; and 1.1% were awarded to those who cared for other relatives/friends. During the period 2007/08 and 2011/12, the share of those with dependants who received undergraduate qualifications increased from 6.7% in 2007/08 to 13.3% in 2011/12 (see Figure 11.6).

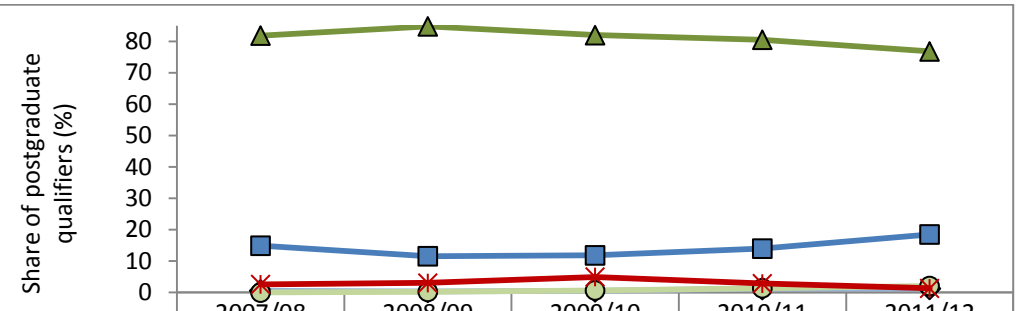
Figure 11.6: Share of undergraduate qualifiers by dependency status, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Young People/Children	6.2	5.1	6.8	9.8	11.0
Other Relatives/Friends	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.6	1.1
No Dependents	91.9	93.6	91.9	87.8	86.5
Both Young People/Children & Other Relative/Friends	0.0	0.0	0.5	1.5	1.2
Not Known	1.4	0.9	0.7	0.3	0.1

In 2011/12, the majority of postgraduate qualifications were awarded to those with no dependants (76.8%); 18.5% were awarded to those who looked after young people/children; 2.1% were awarded to those who looked after both children and other relatives/friends; and 1.3% were awarded to those who looked after other relatives/friends; and 1.3% of qualifiers were from not known. During the period 2007/08 and 2011/12, there was a consistent increase in the share of postgraduates with dependants who received qualifications from 15.5% in 2007/08 to 21.9% in 2011/12 (see Figure 11.7).

Figure 11.7: Share of postgraduate qualifiers by dependency status, 2007/08 – 2011/12

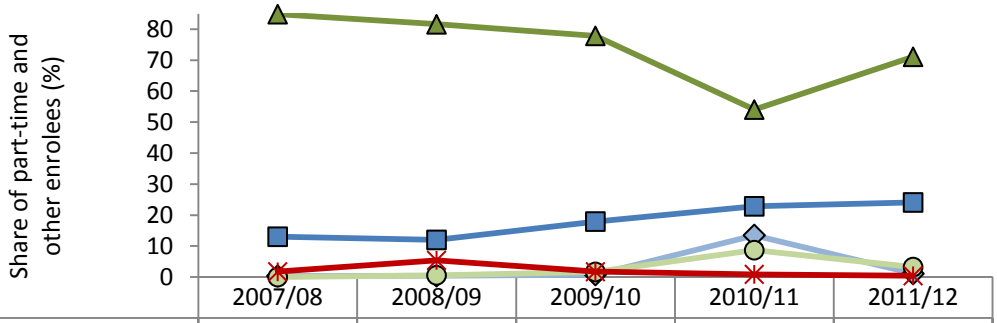


	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Young People/Children	14.9	11.6	11.8	14.0	18.5
Other Relatives/Friends	0.6	0.3	0.5	1.2	1.3
No Dependents	81.9	84.8	82.0	80.6	76.8
Young People/Children & Other Relative/Friends	0.0	0.2	0.7	1.4	2.1
Not Known	2.6	3.1	5.0	2.9	1.3

<u>Full-time/Part-time Status – Access and Attainment:</u>

In 2011/12, a substantial share of 'part-time/other'[427] enrolees had dependants (28.4%) compared to 71.1% without dependants and 0.4% not known. Of 'part-time/other' enrolees with dependants 24.1% had young people/children to care for; 3.2% cared for both children and other relatives/friends; and 1.1% looked after other relatives/friends. Between 2007/08 and 2011/12 the shares of 'part-time/other' enrolees with dependants increased from 13.4% to 28.4% (see Figure 11.8; Technical Table 11.8).

Figure 11.8: Share of part-time/other enrolees by dependency status, 2007/08 – 2011/12

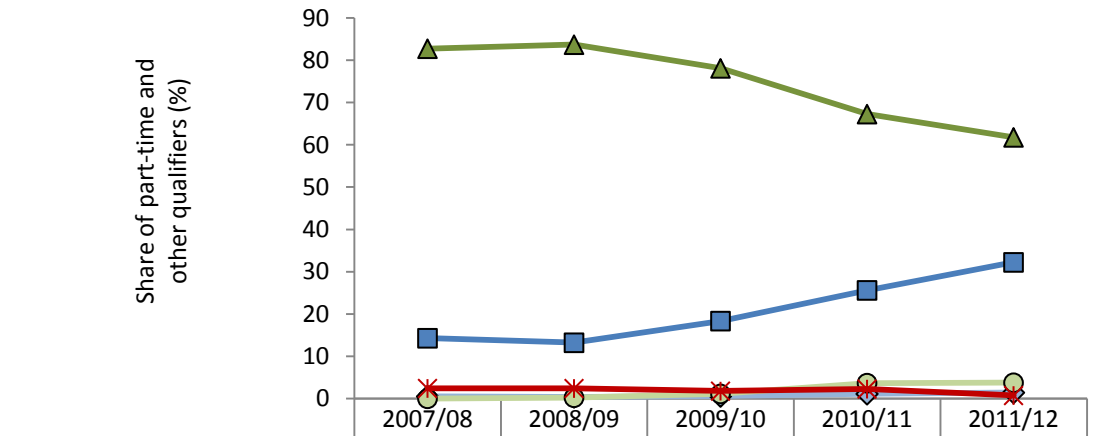


	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Young People/Children	13.0	12.0	17.9	22.8	24.1
Other Relatives/Friends	0.4	0.4	0.8	13.5	1.1
No Dependents	84.9	81.6	77.9	54.1	71.1
Young People/Children & Other Relative/Friends	0.0	0.6	1.7	8.7	3.2
Not Known	1.7	5.4	1.7	0.9	0.4

[427] *Part-time* students are those recorded as studying part-time, or studying full-time on courses lasting less than 24 weeks, on block release, or studying during the evenings only.

In 2011/12, 61.8% of all 'part-time/other' qualifications were awarded to those with no dependants compared to 37.5% to those with dependants (32.2% were awarded to those with dependent young people/children; 3.8% were awarded to people who looked after both children and other relatives/friends; and 1.5% were awarded to those who looked after other relatives/friends only) and 0.8% not known (see Figure 11.8; Technical Table 11.8).

Figure 11.8: Share of part-time/other qualifiers by dependency status, 2007/08–2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Young People/Children	14.3	13.2	18.4	25.6	32.2
Other Relatives/Friends	0.5	0.4	0.6	1.2	1.5
No Dependents	82.7	83.7	78.1	67.3	61.8
Young People/Children & Other Relative/Friends	0.0	0.2	1.1	3.7	3.8
Not Known	2.4	2.4	1.8	2.3	0.8

In 2011/12, the majority of 'full-time/sandwich'[428] enrolees had no dependants (93.2%), whilst 6.7% had dependants (comprising 5.3% who had children; 0.8% who cared for other relatives/friends; and 0.6% who cared for both children and other relatives/friends). Between the years 2007/08 and 2011/12, the share of 'full-time/sandwich' enrolees with dependants increased slightly from 3.6% in 2008/09 to 6.7% in 2011/12. Again, the pattern of 'full-time/sandwich' qualifications awarded reflects the enrolments: the majority of 'full-time/sandwich' qualifications were awarded to people with no dependants (92.5%), while people with dependants comprised7.2% (5.6% awarded to people who looked after other young people/children; 1.1% awarded to people who looked after other relatives/friends; and, 0.5% awarded to people who looked after both children and other relatives/friends).

[428] *Full-time* students are those normally required to attend an Institution for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the year of study, on thick or thin sandwich courses, and those on a study-related year out of their institution. During that time students are normally expected to undertake periods of study, tuition or work experience which amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week.

Subject Choice – Access and Attainment:

Consistently throughout the time period, those with no dependants represented the largest share of enrolees in all subject areas. In 2011/12 the subject area with the largest share of enrolees with any dependants was 'Medicine, Dentistry and Subjects Allied to Medicine' (20.4%), while the subject area with the smallest share of enrolees with any dependants was 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology' (4.4%). The shares of enrolees with dependants increased in all subject areas over the five year period. Since 2007/08 the largest share of enrolees with no dependants was in 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology' (96.2% in 2007/08), this share has not changed in any notable way over the five year period (see Table 11.1; Technical Table 11.9).

The largest share of enrolees who looked after young people/children was in 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine' (16.8% in 2011/12), this has more than doubled since 2007/08 when their share was 7.4% (see Table 11.1). The smallest share of enrolees who looked after young people/children was in 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology' (3.4% in 2011/12).

Table 11.2 shows that the shares of qualifiers reflect the shares of enrolees in the different subject areas. In 2011/12, in all subject areas, the share of qualifiers with dependants was greater than the share of enrolees with dependants. Since 2007/08 the largest share of qualifiers with no dependants was in 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology' (95.2% in 2007/08), this share has not changed in any notable way over the five year period (94.9% in 2011/12) (see Table 11.2; Technical Table 11.10).

The largest share of qualifiers who looked after young people/children was in 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine' (20.7% in 2011/12); similar to enrolee data, this has more than doubled since 2007/08 when their share was 9.5% (see Table 11.2). The smallest share of enrolees who looked after young people/children was in 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology' (3.8% in 2011/12).

All subject areas experienced an overall decrease from 2007/08 to 2011/12 in share of qualifiers with no dependants.

Table 11.1: Subject enrolments in higher education by dependency status, 2007/08 to 2011/12

	Subjects Allied to Medicine	Biological Sciences	Maths, IT, Eng. and Tech	Social Studies & Law	Business & Admin	Other Disciplines
2007/08	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
Young people/children	7.4	4.9	2.8	8.0	7.8	5.1
Other relatives/friends	0.3°	0.4°	0.3°	0.3°	0.4°	0.3°
No dependants	91.6	93.8	96.2	90.7	90.3	93.7
Both young people/children & other relatives/friends	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not known	0.7	0.9	0.6°	1.0	1.6	0.9
2011/12						
Young people/children	16.8	7.0	3.4	13.6	10.9	8.6
Other relatives/friends	1.0	0.8°	0.7°	1.2	0.7	0.9
No dependants	79.5	91.5	95.6	83.5	87.2	89.0
Both young people/children & other relatives/friends	2.6	0.5°	0.3°	1.4	1.1	1.4
Not known	0.1°	0.2°	0.1°	0.3°	0.2°	0.1°

° Note that the number is less than 40

Table 11.2: Subject qualifiers in higher education by dependency status, 2007/08 and 2011/12

	Subjects Allied to Medicine	Biological Sciences	Maths, IT, Eng. and Tech	Social Studies & Law	Business & Admin	Other Disciplines
2007/08	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
Young people/children	9.5	6.2	3.4	9.2	8.9	7.6
Other relatives/friends	0.5°	0.6°	0.4°	0.6°	0.6°	0.6°
No dependants	88.8	91.3	95.2	88.1	88.6	90.2
Both young people/children & other relatives/friends	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not known	1.3	1.9°	1.0°	2.1°	1.9	1.7
2011/12						
Young people/children	20.7	7.2	3.8	14.6	11.2	12.8
Other relatives/friends	1.3°	1.0°	0.7°	1.6°	0.7°	1.4
No dependants	73.9	90.3	94.9	82.5	86.9	84.2
Both young people/children & other relatives/friends	3.5	0.6°	0.2°	0.9°	0.8°	1.4
Not known	0.6°	0.9°	0.3°	0.4°	0.3°	0.3°

° Note that the number is less than 40

Higher Education – Progression:

In 2011/12 students with no dependants had the highest share of non-continuation, a trend that occurred year-on-year since 2007/08. Overall, this has decreased from 95.5% in 2007/08 to 92.4% in 2011/12 (see Technical Table 11.11).

Higher Education Leavers – Destinations:

In 2010/11[429], graduates who looked after children and young people (60.6%) or both children and other relatives/friends (54.0%) were more likely to enter full-time work than those with no dependants (50.6%) or who looked after other relatives/friends (42.4%). Those with no dependants were more likely to enter part-time work (16.0%) than those who cared for young people/children (14.2%), other relatives/friends (8.5%) or both children and other relatives/friends (7.9%). Graduates who cared for both children and other relatives/friends were more likely to take up work and further study (14.3%) than any other group (see Table 11.3). In addition, those who cared for other relatives/friends were more likely to engage in further study only (30.5%) than any other group (see Table 11.3; Technical Table 11.12).

Table 11.3: Destinations of higher education leavers by dependency status, 2010/11

	Full-time work	Part-time work	Work & further study	Further study only	Assumed to be unemployed
	%	%	%	%	%
Young people/ children	60.6	14.2	7.7	5.4°	8.0
Other relatives/friends	42.4°	8.5°	8.5°	30.5°	6.8°
No dependants	50.6	16.0	9.3	11.4	8.2
Young people/children & other relatives/friends	54.0°	7.9°	14.3°	7.9°	11.1°
Not known	62.3°	15.1°	7.5°	7.5°	3.8°

° Note that the number is less than 40

Between 2007/08 and 2010/11, the proportion of graduates with no dependents entering full-time paid work has decreased substantially – from 60.3% in 2007/08 to 50.6% in 2010/11. The proportion of graduates who had no dependants and entered part-time employment after leaving higher education increased over the period, from 10.7% in 2007/08 to 16.0% in 2010/11.

The next section of this chapter will present the findings from the qualitative element of the research (focus groups, interviews, and a stakeholder engagement event), in order to

[429] The most recent year available for analysis

thematically illustrate the barriers and enablers that stakeholders identified for dependency status.

Findings from Qualitative Data

Stakeholders from a carer's support organisation and educational institutions discussed the barriers and enablers of educational equality for people of different dependency status.

Dependency status-related barriers to education equality

In analysing the resultant data, themes on the barriers to education included:

1. Unpredictability of caring

The unpredictability of caring and the impact this has on a person's ability to attend classes or a course. This applies in both the school and at post-compulsory education: people may miss classes because of short-notice needs of the person they care for; there may be absence due to responsibilities, hospital visits, etc. This is not truancy – but the missing school time adds up and has a negative impact on achievement. If a parent is ill, there is also not the support at home for homework checks, reading, and so on.

2. Financial pressures of caring

There are additional financial pressures on carers – a carers allowance is £58 per week. In addition, benefit changes make carers uneasy: *"they are afraid of the future, of financial instability. Some feel that if they don't do it now, they'll never get to do it if the benefits won't allow them to take on that sort of thing."* However, one representative stated that this could prompt more carers into applying to FE and HE courses.

3. Definition of caring

The way that 'dependants' and 'caring responsibilities' are defined could be an issue in terms of understanding the depth and breadth of people's educational needs. Some stakeholders noted a need to distinguish between the educational needs of parents and carers (including young people who provide care). Others felt that many people do not define themselves as a 'carer', especially young people: "*they just see their home as the way life is."* There is therefore a high likelihood that the number of people who report having caring responsibilities is underreported: *"If a student is moving away from home, they don't see themselves as a carer anymore – but you are still on-call, you still have to be on-duty at weekend...The statistic of students with both types of care needs [looking after children and other relatives] is probably especially affected by underreporting."*

4. Young carers – transitions to third level education

There are particular barriers for young carers after they leave school in terms of accessing support which could help them to enter further or higher education or employment: *"There is statutory involvement with young carers up to the age of 18, but there is a gap when they turn 18 – they are no longer under children's services, they are ineligible for support from Action for Children etc, and are probably going through a lot of transition in their own lives – and our adult care services aren't really what they need - many services are during the day, and it is mostly older people in the support groups. We are developing a project with Action for Children and business in community to arrange social activities, time out, capacity, skills, confidence development, job skills, interview skills."*

5. Identity

For people who have cared for someone for a long time, there is a particular barrier regarding their self-concept as 'a carer': *"Some feel like they have no identity anymore, especially after bereavement – they have built their whole lives, their purpose, around looking after someone. Something is needed to help older people get back into education."*

6. Family friendly services

For students who are parents, other barriers include a lack of awareness about university support services such as crèche facilities, and if their children are at school, a barrier is needing someone to be at home or to collect them after school if the student is in full-time study.

It was claimed that with an anticipated increase in demand for care due to an ageing population, the educational inequalities faced by people who care for others are likely to increase.

Potential dependency status-related enablers to education equality

Suggested enablers to education for people who are carers were:

1. Prioritising young carers

The need to make young carers a priority in education, and adopt a holistic approach that addresses the social, emotional and educational needs of the young person, not just educational attainment. There is recognition in the widening participation units in universities of the need to specifically target students who are parents or who have missed certain years of school because of illness/disability and/or caring responsibilities themselves.

2. Disaggregation of statistics

Disaggregating the statistics of carers to recognise the difference between parenting and caring, which will better illuminate their needs in different educational environments. For example, one representative suggested that those students who look after other friends/relatives are more likely to be full-time than other types of carers because they could be 'weekend' carers, sharing a caring role with other family members or friends. *"If you are a parent, you're a parent and you're the only one with responsibility. For other relatives, they might have worked it in 'shifts', and arrange caring with other people in family to all help out."*

3. Provision of care

Enhanced provision of daycare and respite care and support for carers (especially those who are in further and higher education – *"carers make a lot of adjustments in their lives to get into higher education, and so they are probably more likely to want to stay on their course once they get there.")* When and where respite care can be offered is often determined by the service provider, not the person with caring responsibilities. It is hard for carers to get respite planned and to get it when they want it, for example, to cover a weekend-long adult education course: *"Carers need to identify what they want, then providers need to tailor it around them, rather than the providers deciding first and the carers having to slot into set times."*

4. Flexible learning

Provision of opportunities for carers to catch-up with their studies if they have been absent through flexible learning: *"IT is making a huge difference in access to education – if people aren't able to attend on a day because of hospital appointments and so on. There needs to be recognition that there can be short-notice demands on carers, and giving people options on how to address those things at the start of the year, so that people aren't panicking that they will get in trouble with university. Give them options for making up the time, for missing lectures; for example, you can miss up to five lectures a semester as long as you do this and this. Modules online would help, but maintaining the social aspect of university is important too."* The provision of short courses is also an enabler, as these are often the most accessible types of courses for people with caring responsibilities: *"We can't run anything for more than 3 weeks- carers just can't give that type of commitment. They sign up with the caveat – given the situation is all ok, they can go. Mornings are better time-wise for courses – if someone is caring for children then they are at school or at a day centre, or an older person or person with disability often at a day centre. But they often depend on a partner to come home in the evenings to let them go out – evening courses important too."*

5. Marketing of courses

'Taster' courses can help people who have been out of education for a long time to not only re-enter education but build confidence and new interests. *"We did a creative writing course – to help carers talk about their stories – and they loved it. As a result one has joined a creative writing course for short stories. It is not formal education, but it is about developing new interests and life-skills. We also organise museum trips, Linen Hall library, lectures, talks, art exhibitions – to learn about crafts. Living history events also provide informal educational opportunities. It gives people an opportunity to challenge themselves – it is about not patronising them with bingo every week!"* How courses get promoted can make a big difference in terms of equal access to education. One representative said that if further education courses are advertised through carers' organisations, this makes them more attractive.

6. Tackling stigma

Another enabler would be to reduce the stigma of being a carer in education: *"The main thing is if there wasn't the stigma around education – if carers could more easily identify each other for mutual support. But everything in terms of support for carers is usually during the day – e.g. behaviour support for autism classes. If universities could make space available for these things to be on site – e.g. first aid for carers free on campus – so that they don't have to sacrifice caring needs for education, and vice versa. Make it easier for people to do both. Might not help recruitment, but would help people feel more supported while in higher or further education."*

7. Funding

Carer's allowance needs to keep pace with the rate of inflation to help carers financially. Furthermore, there needs to be more awareness in educational establishment of the small grants that are available from carer's support organisations and health trusts, which may encourage more people to apply for education courses: *"If there was a section in further or higher education prospectuses about the small funding options for carers, it might not be seen as much of an issue for carers. There are sections in prospectuses on people with disabilities and so on, so why not for carers'? Even a paragraph to acknowledge that there are carers would help."*

Summary

Analysis of education access, attainment, progression and destinations for people of different dependency status from 2007/08 to 2011/12 has identified a number of areas where differentials by dependency status and/or inequalities were apparent.

The literature review highlighted a number of issues surrounding participation in education for people with dependants. The literature highlighted that carers are often women and therefore experience multiple identity issues. However, gender disaggregation for the data analysed in this report was not available. In addition, the literature review discussed some of the particular barriers facing young carers, but again, the data was not available broken down by age, or at primary/post-primary level.

The quantitative data showed that those who have dependants were consistently underrepresented in further education enrolments compared to their shares of the population revealed in the Census 2011. Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the majority of enrolees in several types of further education courses and programmes had no dependants: accredited (professional and technical) courses; non-accredited (non-professional and technical) courses; ApprenticeshipsNI; and Steps to Work. This is likely a reflection of the age composition of the student intake on some of these courses – for example, on accredited courses and Steps to Work, the majority of students were under 25 (see Chapter 4) and are therefore less likely to have dependants (and Training for Success is specifically designed for young people aged 16 – 17 years, or up to 24 years for those who qualify under extended eligibility). However, on accredited courses, non-accredited courses, and in Training for Success, the share of enrolees with dependants decreased over the time period examined. This is an emergent inequality.

On accredited courses, those who had dependants were more likely to complete their course successfully. However, those who had dependants on the Steps to Work programme were less likely to move into employment or sustain 13 weeks of employment than those who had no dependants.

While the majority of undergraduates and postgraduates in higher education had no dependants, the shares of enrolment of those groups with dependants (classified as carin for children only, children and caring for other relatives/friends, or caring for other relatives/friends only) increased between 2007/08 and 2011/12. Groups with dependants were better represented in postgraduate courses than undergraduate courses, and better

represented in part-time courses than full-time courses – potentially due to older age make-up of those courses.

Compared to other subject areas, 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine' were more likely than any other subject areas to enrol people who had young people/children. Furthermore, the proportion of enrolees on medical courses who had young children to care for has more than doubled since 2007/08. 'Social Studies and Law' courses also had some of the highest proportions of enrolees with dependants out of all subjects. Again, the proportions of enrolees with any dependants on these courses increased notably since 2007/08. Consistently, the 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology' subjects had the highest proportions of enrolees with no dependants out of all subject areas. In 2011/12, students with no dependants had the highest share of non-continuation in higher education, a trend that occurred year-on-year since 2007/08. While the proportions of all dependency status groups entering employment after leaving higher education decreased since 2007/08, the group with no dependants suffered a bigger decrease over the time period than the group with young people/children as dependants (other groups are too small in numbers to comment on). There has been a corresponding increase in part-time work as a destination for leavers with no dependants. As highlighted in the literature review, financial implications can often be a barrier to education for those with dependents. The finding in the quantitative data, that those with dependents were more likely to go on to employment following higher education, than those without dependents, correlates with the literature review as moving into employment is a necessity for those with dependants, rather than an option.

Qualitative data from engagement and interviews with stakeholders revealed that there are particular barriers to entering further or higher education for those who care for someone who is sick or disabled, and that this is especially the case for young carers. This reflects the findings outlined in the literature review at the beginning of this chapter. Barriers include: the unpredictability of caring; financial pressures; the way that 'carers' are defined and how educational outcomes are monitored for people with caring responsibilities; the difficulties with transitioning between child and adult support services; and a lack of awareness about the support available for carers to enter adult education. Enablers include: disaggregating statistics to illuminate the barriers for different types of carers; targeting young carers through widening participation programmes; enhanced provision of daycare, respite and support for carers attending further and higher education, and greater awareness around what is already available; flexible delivery of courses; the provision of 'taster' and short courses to develop new interests; and better marketing of further and higher education courses to carers.

Chapter 12: Multiple and Other Inequalities in Education

While the focus of this report is educational inequalities by each of the nine equality grounds listed in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998[430], it is recognised that there are other groups that have been documented as facing major inequalities in education within Northern Ireland and further afield. As such, data on children in care and data on the attainment and destination rates of school leavers by the multiple variables of gender, religion and free school meals entitlement will be examined in some depth.

Looked After Children (Children in Care)

Introduction

While equality legislation in Northern Ireland does not specifically extend to, or differentiate between, those who are in care and those who are not, 'The Care Matters' strategy, which aims to improve support for children in care, was endorsed by the Northern Ireland Executive in 2009. One of the recommended actions from the strategy was the introduction of a Personal Education Plan for each Looked After Child or young person for the expressed purpose of improving educational outcomes. The Department of Education (DE) Northern Ireland, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the Health and Social Care Board, Health and Social Care Trusts and the Education and Library Boards (ELBs), with the support of a number of voluntary sector organisations, worked together to develop a standardised regional Personal Education Plan for all Looked After Children of statutory school age. These plans aim to establish clear targets and actions to respond effectively to each child's needs and provide a continuous record of their achievements. In regard to the number of children in care in Northern Ireland, according to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, at 30 September 2012, 1,878 children and young people had been looked after continuously for 12 months or longer[431]. This represents a rate of 44 children per 10,000 population aged under 18 years old[432]. Of these children, 52% were males and 48% were females; 95% were White, and 14% had a disability[433].

[430] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75
[431] http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/children_in_care_in_northern_ireland_2011_12.pdf, p.1
[432] ibid, p.8
[433] ibid, p.9

Literature Review

Lundy et al's report (2013) on education reform in Northern Ireland and human rights[434],claims that in Northern Ireland in 2010, 675 children and young people had been Looked After continuously for 12 months or longer. Over three-quarters (77%) of children were of school age, 24% of whom had a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) (4% for the general school population), 1% had a permanent exclusion from school, 10% had been suspended from school, and 12% had missed at least 25 school days within the relevant school year. A study by Barnardos[435] of 66 young people who had been in care during their school years, revealed that 41 had been excluded for more than 60 days and 2 had no secondary education at all. By contrast, among those children who were not in care, the majority of parents (93%) said their child had never been excluded from school, and of those who had, 83% said it was for less than a week[436].

There are differences, however, between children within different types of care settings; the Education Welfare Service in Northern Ireland has identified that those in a family environment tend to have satisfactory/good levels of attendance. Those who live in a residential setting tend to have very poor levels of attendance[437]. These overlapping and additional needs and issues all combine to lead to severe disadvantages for children who are Looked After. Department of Health data[438] indicates that the proportion of young people leaving care with no qualifications was 31% in 2011/12, compared with 2% of general school leavers in Northern Ireland with no GCSEs, and the proportion of care leavers obtaining 5+ GCSEs (grades A*-C) or higher was 19% in 2011/12 compared with 73% of general school leavers in Northern Ireland.

The Audit of Inequalities published by the ELBs for 2011-2015[439] reported that children in the care of the state in Northern Ireland are 10 times more likely than school leavers in general to leave school without gaining any qualifications at all. Furthermore, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (hereafter referred to as ECNI) has called for urgent action in the light of its publication 'Inequalities in Education – Facts and Trends',[440] which highlights that there has

[434] Lundy, L., Emerson, L., Lloyd, K., Byrne, B., & Yohanis, J. (2013). *Education Reform in Northern Ireland: A Human Rights Review.* Belfast: Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission/Centre for Children's Rights, Queen's University Belfast.
[435] http://www.barnardos.org.uk/failed_by_the_system_report.pdf
[436] ibid
[437] http://www.selb.org/equality/Documents/AuditofInequalities2ndEditionJune2012.pdf
[438] http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/media-centre/news-departments/news-dhssps/news-dhssps-march-2013-archive/news-dhssps-080313-publication-of-northern.htm
[439] http://www.selb.org/equality/Documents/AuditofInequalities2ndEditionJune2012.pdf
[440] Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. (2008a). *Inequalities in Education – Facts and Trends 1998-2008.* Belfast: ECNI.

been little or no improvement in the educational attainment levels of Looked After Children in the period between 2001/02 and 2007/08. Another publication by the ECNI, 'Indicators of Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations in Education' (2012),[441] found that Looked After Children tend to move between schools frequently and often in very difficult circumstances. Lack of consistency in schooling may therefore be a key factor in respect of both achievements and emotional well-being. A report carried out for DE by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC, 2011)[442] found that other underlying causes and influences on the non-attendance of children in care included:

- peer pressure - interviews with school staff suggested that this may be more of an issue for those placed in residential care settings than those placed in foster care;
- behavioural issues - one of the main reasons for exclusion is persistent, disruptive behaviour , but early intervention can prevent poor behaviour escalating to a crisis;
- underlying social and personal issues – Looked After Children dealing with the loss of a parent or underlying drug or alcohol problems, tend to have poor attendance rates;
- personal factors - as well as possible SEN, Looked After Children may have a lack of self-esteem, social skills, and face challenging peer relations;
- contact with birth parents and age when a child enters the system - a stable foster care environment can lead to higher attendance rates amongst Looked After Children. However, where a child makes contact with their birth family, this has the potential to have a negative impact on school attendance. Those who became Looked After when they were younger have tended to live in foster homes and therefore have more settled lives.

Positive influences identified by the ELBs' Audit[443] are the development of the Personal Education Plans and the work of the multi-agency teams within a number of Boards – known as the 'Looked After Children in Education Support Services'. However, the Audit stresses that there needs to be a five Board/multi-agency approach to work with Looked After Children and young people in a residential setting to encourage their attendance and participation in school life. In addition, an inter-Board Working Group should be established to address the issues and recommendations that emerged from the PwC research report[444] on how the education system can improve the attendance of Looked After Children at post-primary school (i.e., through

441 http://www.equalityni.org/sections/default.asp?cms=Research_Research%20publications&cmsid=90_93&id=93&secid=7

442 http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4251/1/no_55_2011.pdf

443 http://www.selb.org/equality/Documents/AuditofInequalities2ndEditionJune2012.pdf

444 Ibid; p. iv

positive rewards; reduced hours/phased return; additional adult support/mentoring/counselling; joined up working between stakeholders; having a Looked After Children champion in the school; and increasing staff training on Looked After Children)[445].

The next section of this chapter will present the key findings from existing datasets with regard to proportions and shares of enrolments, achievements, progression and destination across the 2007/08-2011/12 period for Looked After Children, in order to highlight the most current picture of existing inequalities, as well as to highlight whether these inequalities have emerged within the past five years or whether they have been persistent since 2007/08.

[445] Ibid

Findings from Quantitative Data – Looked After Children

Pre-school, Primary and Post-primary Level (Source: DENI)

Access:

As the numbers of Looked After Children in the education system are small, for the purposes of this section, raw numbers will be presented alongside percentages, as necessary. Caution should be taken in relation to the interpretation of trends, due to the small population size.

- **Nursery schools**

In 2011/12, Looked After Children comprised a greater share of enrolments in Catholic maintained nursery schools (0.6%, n=10) compared to controlled nursery schools (0.4%, n=15) (see Table 12.1 below). Over the five-year period between 2007/08 and 2011/12, Looked After Children comprised a larger share of enrolments in Catholic maintained nursery schools compared to controlled nursery schools (see Technical Table 12.1).

However, when the overall numbers for Looked After Children enrolled in nursery schools were considered (n=25), in 2011/12 Looked After Children were proportionately more likely to attend controlled nursery schools compared to Catholic maintained nursery schools (60.0%, n=15 compared to 40.0%, n=10, respectively)(see Technical Table 12.2). While this was largely consistent between 2007/08 and 2011/12, caution must be taken in relation to the interpretation of trend due to the very small population size.

- **Primary schools**

Looked After Children comprised the same share of both Catholic maintained and controlled primary schools (0.4% each, n= 264 and 253, respectively) (see Table 12.1). Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the share of enrolments was largely the same for Looked After Children in both Catholic maintained and controlled primary schools (0.3% share in 2007/08 for both school types) (see Technical Table 12.3).

When the overall numbers were considered, in 2011/12 proportionately more Looked After Children attended Catholic maintained primary schools compared to controlled primary schools (46.7% compared to 44.8%, respectively) (see Technical Table 12.4). However, until 2011/12, the trend between 2007/08 to 2010/11 showed that more Looked After Children attended controlled primary schools compared to Catholic maintained primary schools (47.7% and 45.3% respectively in 2007/08) (see Technical Table 12.4).

- **Special schools**

With regard to enrolments in special schools, Looked After Children comprised a greater share of Catholic maintained special schools than in controlled special schools (4.7%, n=9 compared to 2.8% ,n=119, respectively) (see Table 12.1). From 2009/10 to 2011/12 Looked After Children consistently comprised a greater share of enrolments in Catholic maintained special schools compared to controlled special schools (4.3% and 2.8% in 2009/10 respectively) (see Technical Table 12.5).

When the overall numbers of Looked After Children attending special schools were considered, proportionately more attended controlled special schools than Catholic maintained special schools in 2011/12 (93.0% compared to 7.0%, respectively). Over the period 2009/10 to 2011/12, more Looked After Children attended controlled special schools compared to Catholic maintained special schools (93.5% compared to 6.5% in 2009/10, respectively) (see Technical Table 12.6). Caution must be taken in relation to the interpretation of trend due to small population size.

- **Post-primary schools**

At the post-primary level, a greater concentration of Looked After Children could be found within secondary schools. Looked After children comprised a 0.8% share of the total enrolment in secondary schools in 2011/12), compared to a 0.1% share of the total enrolment for grammar schools in 2011/12 (see Technical Table 12.7)[446]. This appears to be a broadly consistent trend since 2009/10.

[446] This figure has been calculated using the raw data for 2011/12 see Technical Table 12.7

Table 12.1: Share of enrolments by school management type for Looked After Children (LAC) and children not in care, 2007/08 and 2011/12

School Sector	School Management Type	2007/08 (%)		2011/12 (%)	
		LAC	Not In Care	LAC	Not In Care
Nursery Schools	Controlled	0.2°	99.8	0.4°	99.6
	Catholic Maintained	0.3°	99.7	0.6°	99.4
Nursery and Reception Classes	Controlled	0.1°	99.9	0.3°	99.7
	Catholic Maintained	*	*	*	*
	Other Maintained	*	*	*	*
	Controlled Integrated	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
	Maintained Integrated	*	*	*	*
Primary Schools	Controlled	0.3	99.7	0.4	99.6
	Catholic Maintained	0.3	99.7	0.4	99.6
	Other Maintained	0.3°	99.7	0.3°	99.7
	Controlled Integrated	0.2°	99.8	0.4°	99.6
	Maintained Integrated	0.4°	99.6	0.5°	99.5
Preparatory Schools	Controlled	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
	Voluntary – Other Management	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Non-grammar Schools	Controlled	0.4	99.6	0.9	99.1
	Catholic Maintained	0.4	99.6	0.6	99.4
	Other Maintained	*	*	*	*
	Controlled Integrated	*	*	*	*
	Grant Maintained Integrated	0.6	99.4	1.0	99.0
Grammar Schools	Controlled	*	*	0.1°	99.9
	Catholic Managed	*	*	0.1°	99.9
	Other Managed	<0.1°	>99.9	0.1°	99.9
Special Schools	Controlled	3.3	96.7	2.8	97.2
	Catholic Maintained	*	*	4.7°	95.3
	Other Maintained	*	*	0.0	100.0

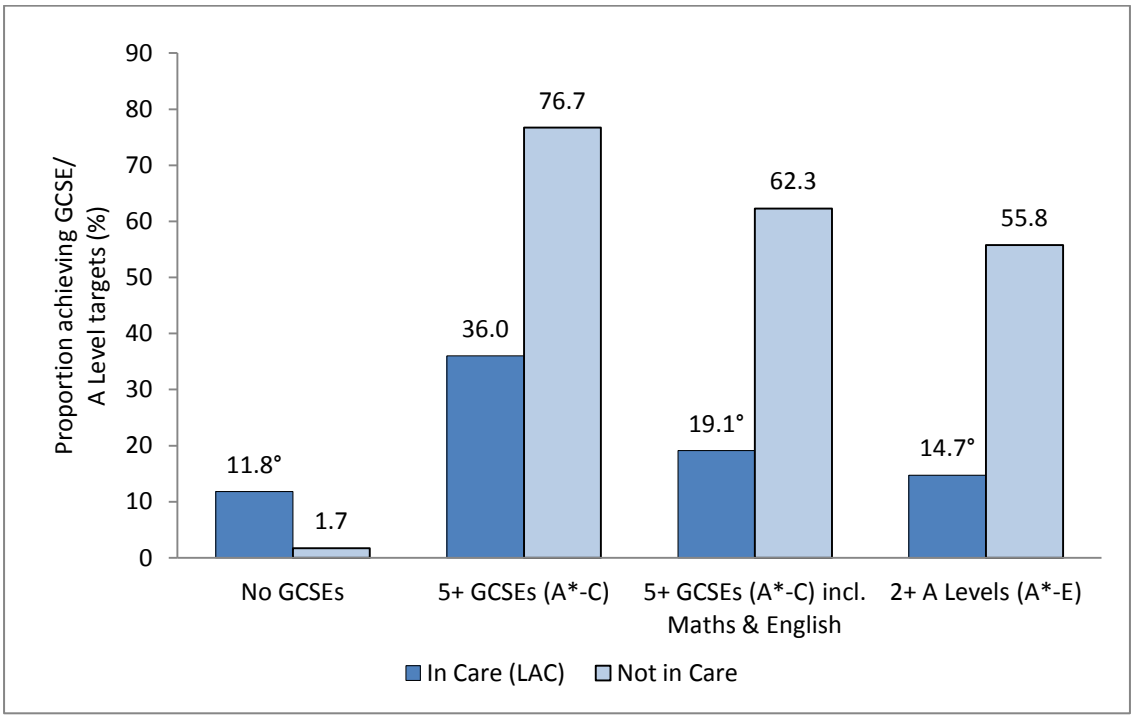
° Note that the number is less than 40

*Denotes numbers too small to report or suppressed due to possible identification of individual pupils

Attainment:

There are large differences between the achievement proportions of young people who are Looked After and those who are not. Looked After Children were much less likely to achieve attainment targets for GCSE (5+ GCSEs A*-C; 5+ GCSEs A*-C including Maths and English) and A Level (2+ A Levels A*-E) and much more likely to leave school with no GCSEs than children not in care (see Figure 12.1).

Figure 12.1: Proportion achieving GCSE and A Level targets by care status, 2011/12



° Note that the number is less than 40

- **GCSE level**

  In 2011/12, Looked After Children were much less likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs at A*-C (36.0%, n=49) than children not in care (76.7%) (see Figure 12.1 above). While there was a large rise in the proportion of Looked After Children achieving 5+ GCSES at A*-C during the five year period, from 23.3% (n=21) in 2007/08, the GCSE achievement proportion of children not in care also increased between 2007/08 to 2011/12, from 67.1% in 2007/08 to 76.7% in 2011/12 (see Technical Table 12.8). Caution must be taken in relation to the interpretation of trend due to small population size.

- **GCSEs including English and Maths**

  In 2011/12, children not in care were approximately three times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs at A*-C, including English and Maths, (62.3%) than Looked After Children (19.1%, n=26) (see Figure 12.1 above). While the proportion of Looked After Children achieving 5+ GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths almost doubled between 2007/08 and 2011/12, from 10.0% to 19.1%, the achievement proportion for children not in care also increased, from 56.5% in 2007/08 to 62.3% in 2011/12 (see Figure 12.1; Technical Table 12.8) However, caution must be taken in relation to the interpretation of trend due to the small population size of the Looked After Children group.

- **No GCSEs**

  In 2011/12, Looked After Children were much more likely to leave school with no GCSEs (11.8%, n=16) than children not in care (1.7%) (see Figure 12.1). While the proportion of Looked After Children leaving school with no GCSEs reduced between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (from 20.0%, n= 18), the proportion of children not in care leaving school with no GCSEs has also decreased, from 3.6% in 2007/08 (Figure 12.1; Technical Table 12.8). However, caution must be taken in relation to the interpretation of trend due to the small population size of the Looked After Children group.

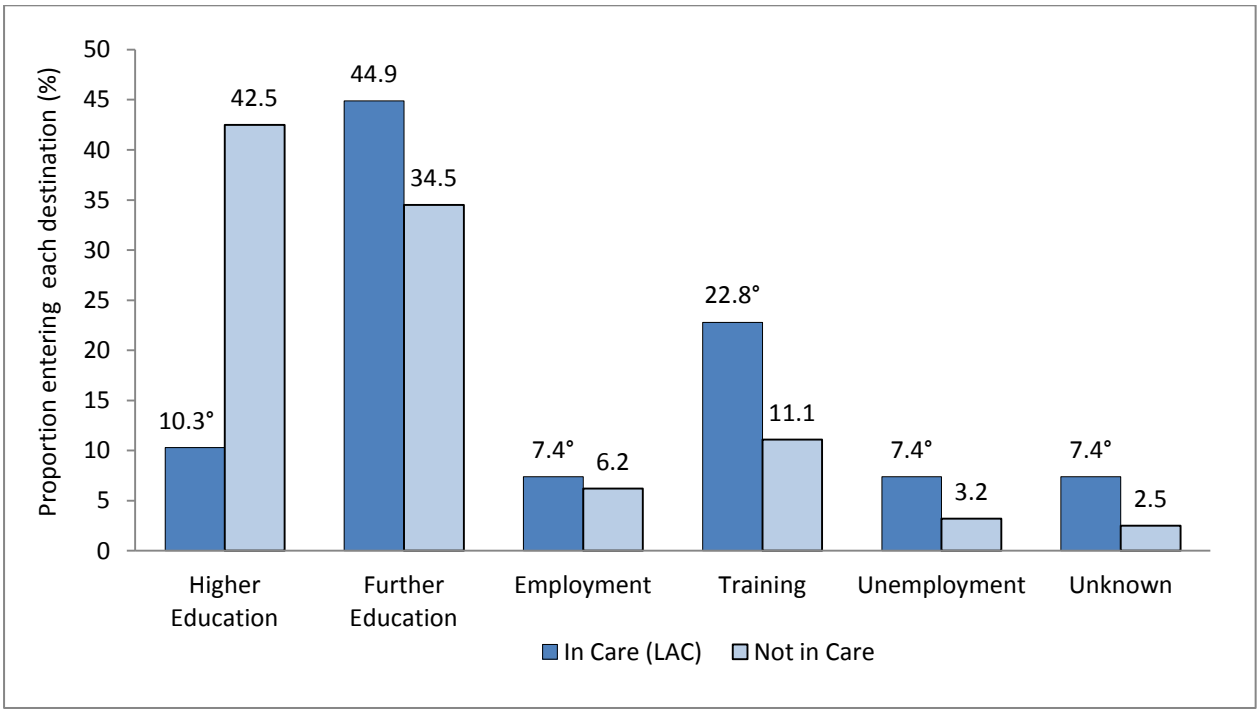
- **A Level**

  In 2011/12, Looked After Children were much less likely to achieve 2+ A Levels at A*-E (14.7%, n=20) than students not in care (55.8%) (see Figure 12.1). The proportion of Looked After students achieving 2+ A Levels at A*-E almost doubled in the five year period, from 7.8% (n=7) in 2007/08. The proportion of students not in care achieving 2+ A Levels A*-E also increased during the five-year period from 46.5% to 55.8%. Caution must be taken with regard to the interpretation of data due to small population size (see Technical Table 12.8).

Destinations:

In 2011/12, the data suggests substantial differences in terms of the destination of school leavers, when comparing Looked After students and students not in care. Looked After students were proportionately more likely to enter further education after leaving school and were less likely to enter higher education than students not in care (see Figure 12.2).

Figure 12.2: Proportion of school leavers' destinations by care status, 2011/12



° Note that the number is less than 40

- **Higher education**

  In 2011/12, school leavers not in care were over four times more likely to enter higher education (42.5%) than Looked After school leavers (10.3%, n=14) (see Figure 12.2). While the proportion of Looked After students entering higher education increased overall between 2007/08 and 2011/12, due to small population size (<40 individuals) it was not possible to reliably comment on trends in the proportion of Looked After Children entering higher education (see Technical Table 12.9).

- **Further education**

  In 2011/12, Looked After school leavers were more likely to enter further education (44.9%, n=61) than school leavers not in care (34.5%) (see Figure 12.2). Consistently over the five years analysed from 2007/08 to 2011/12, over two-fifths of Looked After school leavers entered further education. The proportion of school leavers not in care entering further education increased between 2007/08 to 2011/12, from 29.4% to 34.5% (see Technical Table 12.9).

- **All other destinations**

  All other destinations for Looked After Children were subject to low population size[447]. The proportion of Looked After school leavers entering employment was slightly higher (7.4%, n=10) than the proportion of school leavers not in care (6.2%), in 2011/12. Looked After school leavers also consistently entered job training at approximately twice the rate of school leavers not in care. In 2011/12, 22.8% (n=31) of Looked After school leavers entered job training, compared to 11.1% of school leavers not in care (see Figure 12.2; Technical Table 12.9).

  Looked After school leavers entered unemployment and unknown destinations at more than twice the rate of school leavers not in care. In 2011/12, Looked After school leavers were more likely to be unemployed (7.4%, n=10) compared to school leavers not in care (3.2%) (see Figure 12.2; Technical Table 12.9). In addition, the destination of Looked After school leavers was proportionately more likely to be unknown (7.4%, n=10) than school leavers not in care (2.5%), in 2011/12.

  Between 2007/08 and 2011/12 it was not possible to reliably comment on trends in the proportion of Looked After school leavers entering training, employment and unemployment due to small sample size (<40 individuals).

[447] Sample size <40 individuals

Findings from Qualitative Data – Looked After Children

Stakeholders with experience of working with Looked After Children were consulted during the data gathering phase of the research.

Care status-related barriers to education equality

In terms of current barriers to educational equality for Looked After Children, the following themes emerged:

1. ***Impact of multiple placements***

The lack of consistency in a child's life due to multiple placement transitions can disrupt their education; Currently the care of Looked After Children is very much focused in short-term thinking rather than a long-term approach that considers the implications of care in the future in terms of the educational attainment and subsequent career. Careplans include personal education plans (PEPs). Judges tend not to see the PEPs , since the focus is on placement rather than appropriate education provision, and the expectation is that children and young people may not remain in placement for a long period.

2. ***Delays in the system***

The delay in state intervention is often too long.

3. ***Transitions to adulthood***

In terms of entering higher education, the transition after leaving care at 16 years old can result in anxiousness about living arrangements – finding and managing a home may become the priority, with thoughts about education and starting a path to a career becoming sidelined. One suggestion recommended by a stakeholder that could help children in care feel more supported in applying for HE, could be the opening of dedicated student accommodation which is open 365 days a year (rather than shut over the university holidays).

Potential care status-related enablers to education equality

Suggested enablers to educational equality included:

1. ***Statementing of children***

The increase in SEN statemented Looked After Children is a good step as it enables schools to attract additional resources to support the child.

2. ***Child-centred approach***

There is a need for a 'root and branch' analysis of Looked After Children's needs and services – it is '*not fit for purpose'*. The needs of the child should be the primary focus of any placement, as well as an enhanced education focus;

3. ***Policy and practice***

There is a need for more joined-up policy and a need to follow the current policy already in place.

4. ***Support for vulnerable parents***

More support is needed for parents who can't look after children themselves.

Summary – Looked After Children

Analysis of education access, attainment, progression and destinations for Looked After and non-Looked After Children from 2007/08 to 2011/12 has identified a number of areas where differentials by Looked After status were apparent.

As discussed in the literature review, the findings reported in this chapter show that the attainment of Looked After Children is still a major cause for concern. The proportion of non-Looked After pupils achieving 2+ A Levels at A*-E in 2011/12 was nearly four times the proportion of Looked After young people achieving the same grades. Although the attainment proportion of Looked After pupils at A Level has doubled since 2007/08, the achievement proportion for non-Looked After pupils at A Level also increased during the same time period and therefore the gap has not closed over time. The attainment of non-Looked After pupils achieving 5+ GCSES at A*-C (including equivalents) was also notably higher than those who have been Looked After, but, on a positive note, the attainment of Looked After pupils at GCSE increased between 2007/08 to 2011/12. However, Looked After pupils were consistently and considerably more likely to leave school with no GCSEs than pupils who had not been in care. These attainment differences are therefore persistent inequalities. These findings of the lower attainment of Looked After Children confirm findings in the literature review that Looked After Children are less likely to achieve the attainment targets, and more likely to leave school with no qualifications.

In regard to destinations after leaving school, Looked After Children were more likely to go on to further education and less likely to go on to higher education than children who had not been in care. Looked After Children were also more likely to go into unemployment than non-Looked After Children.

From the qualitative element of the research, current barriers to educational equality for Looked After children highlighted by stakeholders included: the impact of multiple placements; delays in the system; and transitions to adulthood. Potential enablers to educational equality included: the SEN statementing of Looked After Children who need it to attract more resources to support a child; a child-centred approach to placements; more joined-up policy and practice; and support for vulnerable parents. These are additional to the barriers and enablers outlined in the literature review.

Gender x Religion x Free School Meals

Introduction

Whilst socioeconomic status is currently not an equality ground covered by legislation in Northern Ireland, poverty has often been found to compound other inequalities[448] and may have an additional negative impact on other equality grounds.

Within Northern Ireland, socioeconomic status is frequently (but somewhat problematically) measured by whether a child or young person is entitled to receive free school meals (FSM). Parents do not have to pay for school meals if they are on income support or Jobseeker's Allowance, have an annual taxable income of £16,190 or less, or receive several other allowances or tax credits. With regard to FSM entitlement, in 2011/12, 23% of all pupils in grant aided schools were entitled to free school meals[449], but statistics acquired from DE for the 2011/12 school year show that 19.9% of pupils in all grant-aided schools (59,624 pupils) actually take/eat a free school meal. This renders FSM entitlement a somewhat complicated and unfair measure to use as a proxy for poverty or lower socio-economic status. The statistics for 2011/12 also a showed large difference in FSM entitlement by school type; secondary (non-grammar) schools have the highest proportion of pupils who are entitled to a free school meal (27% in 2011/12), while only 7% of pupils in grammar schools are entitled to a free school meal.[450]

Literature Review

In the consideration of any issues regarding educational attainment, many researchers in education stress the key underlying concerns of poverty and the impact of social class distinctions on children and young people's opportunities and experiences within education (see Raffo et al, 2007[451] for a review of evidence on the links between poverty and education). Archer and Francis (2007)[452] suggest that the focus on gender differences in educational outcomes

[448] See Cassen, R. and Kingdon, G. (2007). *Tackling low educational achievement.* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

[449] Statistics available within Excel file entitled '*Percentage pupils entitled to free school meals 2001/02 - 2013/14'* from: http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/facts-and-figures-new/education-statistics/32_statistics_and_research-numbersofschoolsandpupils_pg/32_statistics_and_research-northernirelandsummarydata_pg.htm

[450] Ibid; see column within file for '*2011/12'* statistics.

[451] Raffo, C., Dyson, A., Gunter, H., Hall, D., Jones, L., & Kalambouka, A. (2007). *Education and Poverty: A Critical Review of Theory, Policy and Practice*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

[452] Archer, L., & Francis, B. (2007). *Undertanding Minority Ethnic Achievement*. London: Routledge.

> 'has meant that gender has dominated debate on achievement whereas other aspects of social identity have been marginalised from it. As we have seen, for the majority of pupils in Britain, ethnicity and social class continue to be stronger predictors of educational achievement than gender.'

Breitenbach and Galligan (2004)[453] argue that where poor educational performances are observed, the differences between pupils are greater for socioeconomic status than for gender, and therefore any policy interventions designed to tackle this should pay attention to problems experienced by both boys and girls. Lloyd (2011)[454] concludes, in his literature review on boys' underachievement in schools, that social class is the most dramatic variable influencing educational achievement, while gender is the most predictable and race and ethnicity is the most unpredictable variable, but an intersecting one.

Lundy et al (2013)[455] outline the disadvantages facing children and young people at all educational stages who are entitled to FSM in Northern Ireland. In 2011/12, FSM-entitled pupils were only half as likely to have at least 5+ GCSEs (A*-C) or with 2+ A levels, and they are almost four times more likely to have no educational qualifications[456]. Regarding the attainment levels of Protestant working class males, a qualification and destinations report released by DENI for 2011/12[457] revealed that 19.7% of Protestant males entitled to FSM achieved 5+ GCSEs (A*-C) including English and Maths compared with 33.2% of Catholic males entitled to FSM. In terms of actual numbers, due to the higher number of Catholic school leavers overall, a higher number of Catholic FSM male leavers do not achieve at this level (836 in 2011/12) compared to their Protestant male counterparts (474 in 2011/12).

The ELBs' 'Equality Action Plan for the period 1 April 2012 - 31 March 2013'[458] also reveals that absence levels increase with the percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. School leavers not entitled to FSM are also more likely to continue their education; for example, in 2011/12, 80.2% of leavers not entitled to FSM entered institutions of higher or further

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[453] Breitenbach, E. & Galligan, Y. (2004). *Gender Equality Indicators for Northern Ireland.* Belfast: OFMDFM.
[454] Lloyd, T. (2011). *Boys' Underachievement in Schools: Literature Review.* Belfast: CYMS.
[455] Lundy, L., Emerson, L., Lloyd, K., Byrne, B., & Yohanis, J. (2013). *Education Reform in Northern Ireland: A Human Rights Review.* Belfast: Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission/Centre for Children's Rights, Queen's University Belfast.
[456] Available at: http://www.deni.gov.uk/qualifications_and_destinations_1112.pdf
[457] Available at: http://www.deni.gov.uk/qualifications_and_destinations_1112.pdf
[458] See http://www.selb.org/equality/Documents/2013/EqualityActionPlan2ndUserFriendlySummaryApril2012March2013.pdf

education compared to 61.8% of leavers who were entitled to FSM[459]. The NICCY review of children's rights[460] in education quotes from a Save The Children report (2007)[461], which claimed that educational disadvantage begins at an early age in Northern Ireland, before a child has even begun formal education:

> 'Young children living in areas of high deprivation score less well on verbal skills, early number concepts and general cognitive skills. They also show less progress on sociability and cooperation. So before poor children even start their formal education, they are already playing catch-up with those from more affluent backgrounds' (Save the Children 2007, p. 25).

Lundy et al (2013) summarise some of the factors that have been found in prior literature that help explain the poorer educational outcomes for children and young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds: (i) young people from less well-off families report significantly worse school experiences than those from well-off families due in part to poor relationships with teachers and a perceived lack of respect from them; (ii) children and young people from poorer backgrounds have been critical of the curriculum and its relevance to their lives, and report that teaching methods are not sufficiently engaging; (iii) children from poorer backgrounds are aware of, and worried about, the difficulties faced by parents in meeting all the costs associated with schooling, particularly in relation to school uniforms, trips and no-uniform days.

The 2007 Save the Children Child Poverty report also claims that children from poorer backgrounds may experience less parental support, be less likely to access extra-curricular learning and may exhibit lower levels of motivation and a fatalistic attitude to (non) achievement. Children living in poverty are also more likely to experience bullying and/or stigmatisation than other children within the school environment (NICCY, 2008, p.290)[462]. The Dawn Purvis and Working Group report on Educational Disadvantage and the Protestant Working Class[463] stated that there are additional cultural and community factors that impact upon how Protestant families perceive education and participation in schools. This subsequently impacts negatively on the attainment rates of young Protestant working class males.

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[459] See http://www.deni.gov.uk/qualifications_and_destinations_1112.pdf
[460] NICCY. (2008). *Children's Rights: Rhetoric or Reality*. Belfast: NICCY.
[461] Save the Children (2007). Child Poverty Report. Belfast: Save the Children.
[462] NICCY. (2008). *Children's Rights: Rhetoric or Reality*. Belfast: NICCY.
[463] http://www.nicva.org/sites/default/files/A-Call-to-Action-FINAL-March2011_0.pdf, Chapter 5

The Audit of Inequalities for 2011-2015, published by the ELBs in Northern Ireland[464], has identified several activities that have made a positive impact on educational outcomes for children and young people from less well-off families: the implementation of the 'Every School A Good School' strategy; the implementation of the DE strategy for raising attainment in literacy and numeracy; and the Extended Schools programme, which is targeted on reducing differentials and improving the life chances of children and young people who have limited access to current services, particularly from deprived and disadvantaged areas. The Boards recommend that the key learning points from the Extended Schools programmes need to be recorded and shared.

The next section of this chapter will present the key findings from existing datasets with regard to proportions and shares of enrolments, achievements, progression and destination across the 2007/08-2011/12 period for gender by religion and free school meals entitlement, in order to highlight the most current picture of existing inequalities, as well as to highlight whether these inequalities have emerged within the past five years or whether they have been persistent since 2007/08.

[464] http://www.selb.org/equality/Documents/AuditofInequalities2ndEditionJune2012.pdf

Findings from Quantitative Data

Gender x Free School Meals

Primary Level (Source: DENI)

Attainment:

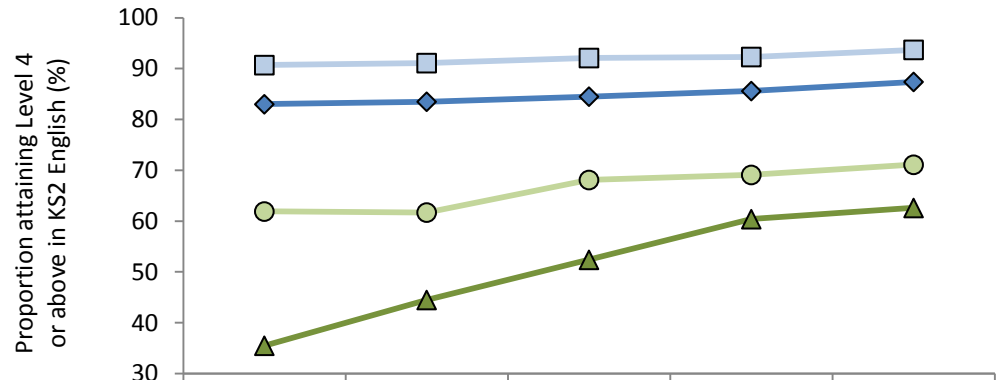
The following data from DENI shows English and Maths Key Stage 2 attainment at Level 4 or above broken down by school FSM band and gender. Schools in the 0.00–9.99 band have less than 10% of children receiving free school meals; 60.00+ refers to schools which have more than 60% of children receiving free school meals. The data in this section is presented at school level, i.e. all males attending schools in the lowest FSM band are analysed together, regardless of their individual FSM status.

- **Key Stage 2 English**

  Figure 12.3 below indicates that the FSM band of the school has a large influence on how well both females and males perform in their English Key Stage 2 assessments. For both males and females, those attending schools in the lowest FSM band (0.00-9.99) were the most likely to achieve Level 4 or above; those attending schools in the highest FSM band (60.00+) were the least likely to achieve Level 4 or above. Over the five-year period, results generally improved for males and females no matter which FSM band their school falls into (see Figure 12.3).

  Males attending schools in the highest FSM band almost doubled their attainment proportion in Key Stage 2 English between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (see Figure 12.3; Technical Table 12.10), however, they still have the lowest attainment level out of all categories. In 2011/12, only 62.6% of males attending schools in the highest FSM band (60.00+) achieved Level 4 or higher, compared to 87.4% of males attending schools in the lowest FSM band (0.00-9.99). This compares to 71.1% of females attending schools in the highest FSM band and 93.7% of females attending schools in the lowest FSM band.

Figure 12.3: Proportion attaining Level 4 or above in Key Stage 2 English by gender and school FSM band (lowest = 0.00-9.99; highest = 60.00+), 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Males attending schools in lowest FSM band	83.0	83.5	84.5	85.6	87.4
Females attending schools in lowest FSM band	90.7	91.1	92.1	92.3	93.7
Males attending schools in highest FSM band	35.5	44.5	52.4	60.4	62.6
Females attending schools in highest FSM band	61.9	61.7	68.1	69.1	71.1

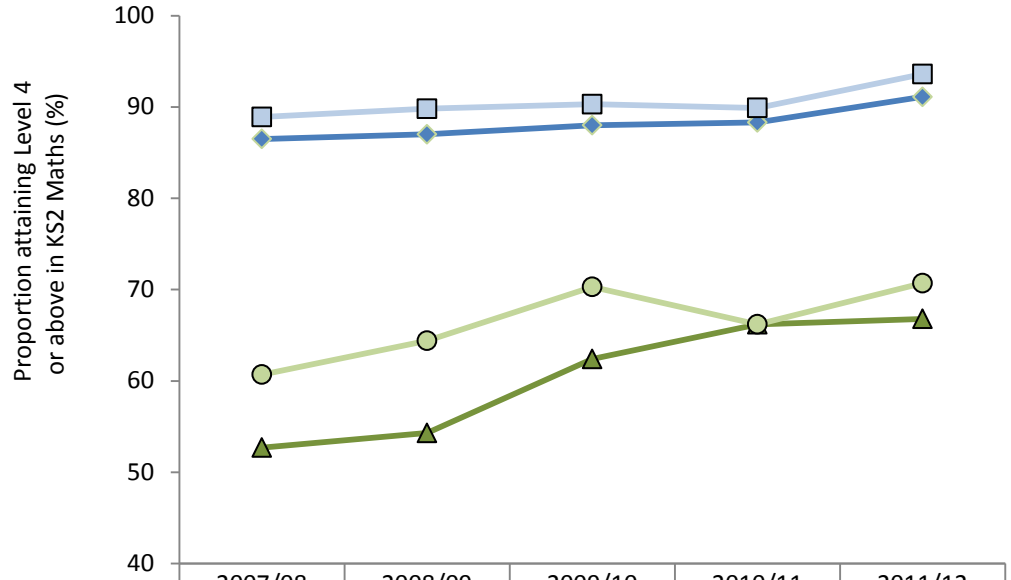
- **Key Stage 2 Maths**

  Figure 12.4 below indicates that FSM band also has a large influence on how well both females and males perform in their Maths Key Stage 2 assessments. In 2011/12, those attending schools in the lowest FSM percentage band (0.00-9.99) within both genders were the most likely to achieve Level 4 or above in Maths, while; those attending schools in the highest FSM band (60.00+) were the least likely to achieve Level 4 or above in Maths (see Figure 12.4; Technical Table 12.10)

  Females attending schools in the highest FSM band (60.00+) and lowest FSM band (0.00-9.99) were more likely to attain Level 4 or above in Maths (70.7% and 93.6% respectively in 2011/12) than their male counterparts (66.8% and 91.1% respectively). Females attending schools in the lowest FSM band were, therefore, most likely to attain Level 4 or above in Maths, while males attending schools in the highest FSM band were least likely to attain Level 4 or above in Maths at Key Stage 2. This has been a consistent trend since 2007/08 (see Figure 12.4).

The attainment gap has narrowed between 2007/08 and 2011/12 for children attending schools in all FSM bands, particularly between males attending schools in the highest and lowest FSM bands (from a gap of 33.8 percentage point in 2007/08 to 24.3 percentage points in 2011/12, both in favour of males attending schools in the lowest FSM band) (see Technical Table 12.10).

Figure 12.4: Proportion attaining Level 4 or above in Key Stage 2 Maths by gender and school FSM band (lowest = 0.00-9.99; highest = 60.00+), 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Males attending schools in lowest FSM band	86.5	87.0	88.0	88.3	91.1
Females attending schools in lowest FSM band	88.9	89.8	90.3	89.9	93.6
Males attending schools in highest FSM band	52.7	54.3	62.4	66.2	66.8
Females attending schools in highest FSM band	60.7	64.4	70.3	66.2	70.7

These clear and distinct patterns of results for the Key Stage 2 assessment subjects show that FSM entitlement is a stronger predictor of attainment at Key Stage 2 than gender[465].

[465] Data were not available to look at Key Stage 3 assessments by gender and free school meal band.

Post-primary Level (Source: DENI)

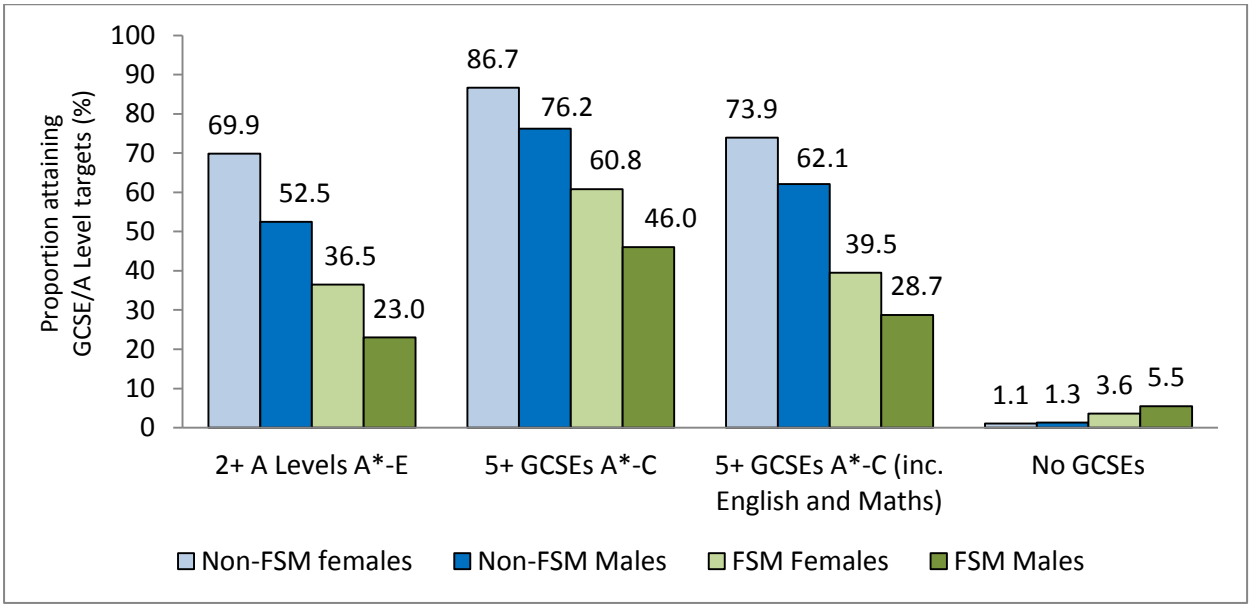
Attainment:

The attainment proportions at GCSE and A Level by gender and FSM entitlement were analysed for the years 2007/08 - 2011/12. The data in this section is presented at an individual level, i.e. whether or not the individual pupil is entitled to free school meals. Overall, FSM entitled students had poorer attainment at GCSE and A Level than students who were not entitled to FSM. However, FSM and non-FSM entitled females had higher levels of attainment at GCSE and A Level than their male counterparts (see Technical Table 12.11) from 2007/08 to 2011/12. For both males and females, whether entitled to free school meals or not, there was an upward trend in terms of achievement – a greater proportion of pupils in 2011/12 achieved 2+ A Levels, 5+ GCSEs, or 5+ GCSEs including Maths and English than in 2007/08, and less pupils left school with no GCSEs (see Technical Table 12.11).

- **GCSE level**
  In 2011/12, non-FSM females were the most likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C (86.7%) followed by: non-FSM males (76.2%); FSM females (60.8%); and FSM males (46.0%), who were least likely to achieve to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C (see Figure 12.5). This trend was consistent from 2007/08 to 2011/12.

- **GCSEs including Maths and English**
  When GCSEs including Maths and English were considered from 2007/08 to 2011/12, non-FSM females were also the most likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C including Maths and English (73.9% in 2011/12), while FSM males were the least likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C including Maths and English (28.7% in 2011/12) (see Figure 12.5; Technical Table 12.11).

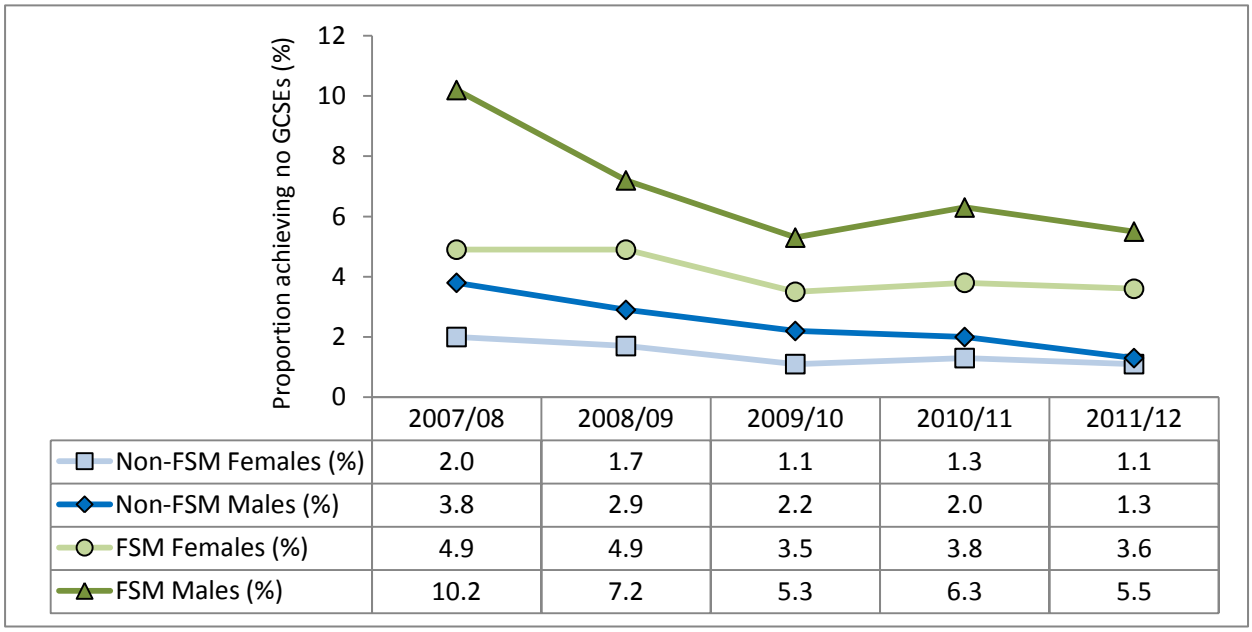
Figure 12.5: Proportion attaining GCSE/A Level targets by gender and FSM entitlement, 2011/12



- **No GCSEs**

  In 2011/12 FSM males were the most likely to leave school with no GCSEs (5.5%), followed by: FSM females (3.6%); non-FSM males (1.3%); and non-FSM females (1.1%). All groups experienced a decrease in the proportion leaving school with no GCSEs from 2007/08 to 2011/12; however, FSM males experienced the greatest drop indicating a narrowing of the gap in attainment (see Figure 12.6; Technical Table 12.11).

Figure 12.6: Proportion achieving no GCSEs by gender and FSM entitlement, 2007/08 – 2011/12



	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Non-FSM Females (%)	2.0	1.7	1.1	1.3	1.1
Non-FSM Males (%)	3.8	2.9	2.2	2.0	1.3
FSM Females (%)	4.9	4.9	3.5	3.8	3.6
FSM Males (%)	10.2	7.2	5.3	6.3	5.5

- **A Level**

  In 2011/12, non-FSM females were the most likely to achieve 2+ A Levels A*-E (69.9%), while FSM males were least likely to achieve 2+ A Levels A*-E (23.0%) (see Figure 12.5; Technical Table 12.11). This was a consistent trend from 2007/08 to 2011/12.

  These results indicate that FSM entitlement is a stronger influence on differential attainment at the post-primary level than gender.

Destinations:

The destinations of male and female school leavers by their FSM-status were analysed for the years 2007/08 to 2011/12. This data is also presented at the individual level.

Table 12.2: Proportion of school leavers' destinations by gender and FSM entitlement, 2007/08 and 2011/12

		Non-FSM		FSM	
		Females	Males	Females	Males
Year		%	%	%	%
2007/08	Higher Education	52.2	36.5	20.7	10.8
	Further Education	27.9	29.0	40.1	30.2
	Employment	8.6	11.1	10.6	13.9
	Training	6.9	18.2	18.7	35.2
	Unemployment	2.7	3.1	6.8	7.1
	Unknown	1.7	2.1	3.1	2.9
2011/12	Higher Education	55.1	39.9	23.7	13.5
	Further Education	30.9	34.6	44.7	41.8
	Employment	5.0	7.2	6.3	6.4
	Training	4.8	13.0	15.0	27.7
	Unemployment	2.2	2.8	6.6	6.2
	Unknown	2.0	2.4	3.7	4.4

- **Higher education**

  For all school leavers, the proportions entering higher education increased slightly over the five year period (see Table 12.2; Technical Table 12.12). In both 2007/08 and 2011/12, non-FSM females were more likely to enter higher education (55.1% in 2011/12) than any other group.

- **Further education**

  The proportions of leavers entering further education also increased over time, but particularly for FSM entitled males (from 30.2% in 2007/08 to 41.8% in 2011/12). However, in both 2007/08 and 2011/12, FSM females were more likely to go onto further education after leaving school (44.7% in 2011/12) than any other group (see Table 12.2; Technical Table 12.12).

- **Employment**

  For both males and females in both FSM categories, the proportions of pupils entering employment after school decreased between 2007/08 and 2011/12, but non-FSM males were more likely to enter employment (7.2%) than any other group in 2011/12 (see Table 12.2; Technical Table 12.12).

- **Training**

  The proportions of all groups entering training also decreased over the five year period, but particularly so for FSM males (proportions decreased from 35.2% in 2007/08 to 27.7% in 2011/12). This may be the result of increases in the proportion of FSM entitled males entering higher and further education (see Table 12.2; Technical Table 12.12).

- **Unemployment**

  In 2011/12, FSM females (6.6%) and males (6.2%) had the highest proportions of unemployment compared to non-FSM females (2.2%) and males (2.8%) (see Table 12.2; Technical Table 12.12).

Religion x Free School Meals

Post-primary Level (Source: DENI)

Attainment:

The attainment proportions at GCSE and A Level by religion and FSM entitlement were analysed for the years 2007/08 - 2011/12. This data is presented at an individual level, i.e. whether or not the individual pupil is entitled to free school meals. Overall FSM entitled pupils had poorer attainment at GSCE and A Level than students who were not entitled to FSM. However, FSM Catholics and non-FSM Catholics had higher levels of attainment at GCSE and A Level than their Protestant and 'Other'[466] counterparts.

- **GCSE level**

  In 2011/12. Non-FSM Catholics were the most likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs (at A*-C) (84.3%), followed by: 'Other' non-FSM pupils (80.1%); non-FSM Protestants (78.5%); FSM Catholics (59.7%); 'Other' FSM pupils (44.2%); and FSM Protestants (42.0%) (see Figure 12.7). The attainment proportions for most groups increased by approximately 10 percentage points since 2007/08, but the increase was greatest for FSM Catholics (up 14.4 percentage points, from 45.3% in 2007/08) and FSM Protestants (up 13.8 percentage points, from 28.2% in 2007/08) (see Technical Table 12.13).

- **GCSEs including Maths and English**

  Non-FSM Catholics were also the most likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs including Maths and English (A*-C) in 2011/12 (70.6%), followed by: 'Other' non-FSM pupils (66.7%); non-FSM Protestants (65.2%); FSM Catholics (38.5%); 'Other' FSM pupils (28.3%); and FSM Protestants (25.9%) (see Figure 12.7). All groups displayed an increase, between 3 and 6 percentage points in their attainment proportions from 2007/08 (see Technical Table 12.13).

[466] 'Other' refers to those all those who do not identify as Protestant or Catholic and therefore could include those of other/unknown religions and those of no religion.

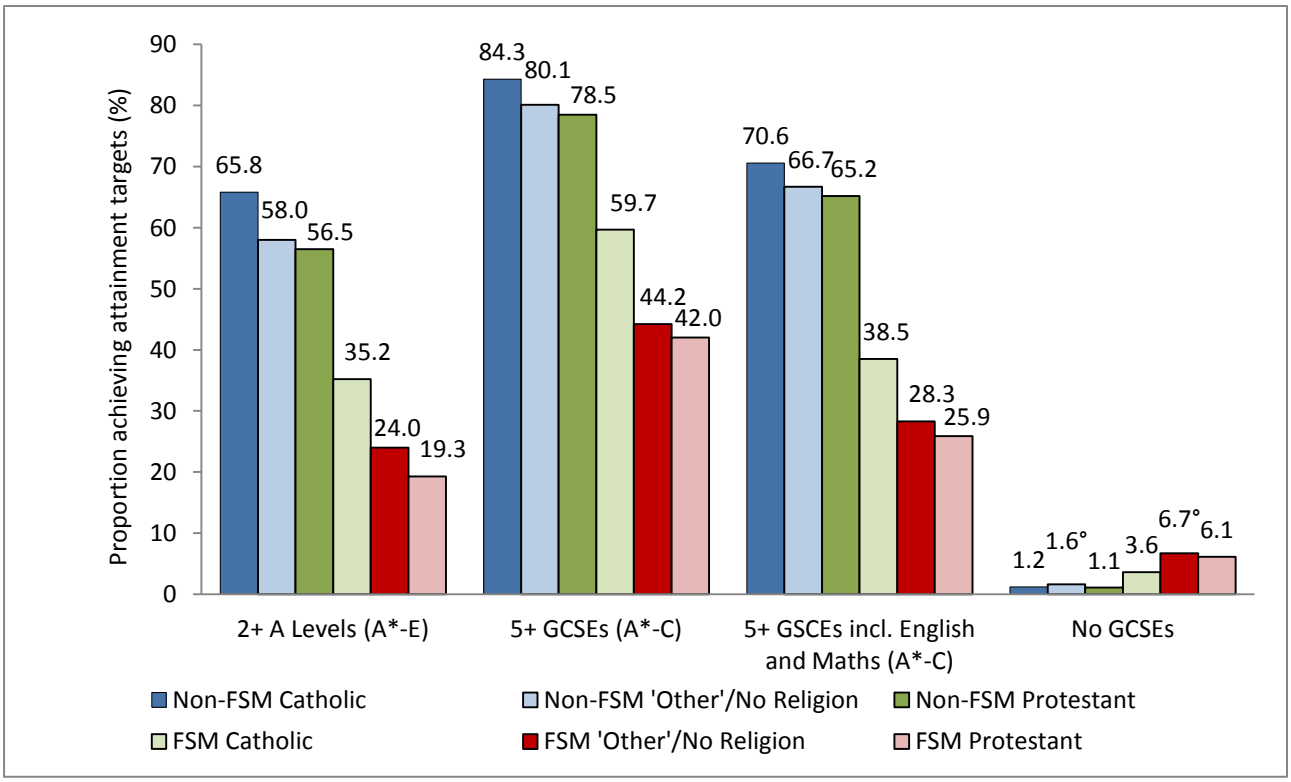
- **No GCSEs**

  In 2011/12, 'Other' FSM pupils were the most likely to leave school with no GCSEs (6.7%), followed by: FSM Protestants (6.1%); FSM Catholics (3.6%); non-FSM 'Others' (1.6%); non-FSM Catholics (1.2%); and non-FSM Protestants (1.1%) (see Figure 12.7). This is a persistent pattern of results since 2007/08, and the proportion of leavers with no GCSEs decreased for all groups since 2007/08 (see Technical Table 12.13).

- **A Level**

  In 2011/12, non-FSM Catholics were the most likely to achieve 2+ A Levels (at A*-E) (65.8%), followed by: non-FSM 'Others' (58.0%); non-FSM Protestants (56.5%); FSM Catholics (35.2%); FSM 'Others' (24.0%); and FSM Protestants (19.3%) (see Figure 12.7). Proportions for all groups increased by approximately 10 percentage points between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (see Technical Table 12.13).

Figure 12.7: Proportion attaining GCSE/A Level targets by religion and FSM entitlement, 2011/12



° Note that the number is less than 40

These patterns of results (consistent over the five-year timeframe) indicate that FSM entitlement is a stronger influence behind differential attainment at the post-primary level than religion.

Destinations:

The destinations of school leavers by religion and their FSM status were analysed for the years 2007/08 to 2011/12. There were increases from 2007/08 to 2011/12 in the proportions of students from all religions and both FSM categories entering higher and further education (with the exception of FSM 'Others' who experienced a decrease in the proportion entering higher education, see Technical Table 12.14). For all groups and both FSM categories, the proportions of pupils entering employment or training after school decreased between 2007/08 and 2011/12. For FSM and non-FSM Protestant pupils and 'Other' FSM pupils, there were decreases in the proportions entering unemployment over the five year period, but the rates of unemployment for Catholic pupils of both FSM category increased (see Technical Table 12.14).

- **Higher Education**

  In 2011/12, non-FSM Catholics were the most likely enter higher education (51.6%, up almost 3 percentage points from 48.7% in 2007/08) whilst FSM Protestants were the least likely to enter higher education (10.8%, a slight increase from 9.0% in 2007/08). Proportions for other groups in 2011/12 were: non-FSM 'Others' (44.9%); non-FSM Protestants (43.3%); FSM Catholics (22.7%); and FSM 'Others' (13.8%, see Figure 12.8).

- **Further Education**

  In 2011/12, 'Other' FSM pupils were the most likely to go on to further education after leaving school (49.5%, an increase of nearly 13 percentage points from 36.8% in 2007/08), whilst non-FSM Catholics were the least likely to enter further education (29.1%, an increase of nearly 5 percentage points from 24.2% in 2007/08). Proportions for other groups in 2011/12 were: FSM Protestants (46.8%); FSM Catholics (40.9%); non-FSM Protestants (36.3%); non-FSM 'Others' (35.1%, see Figure 12.8).

- **Employment**

  In 2011/12, 'Other' FSM pupils were the most likely to enter employment (7.8%), whilst non-FSM-entitled Catholics were the least likely (5.6%), compared to all other groups (see Figure 12.8): non-FSM 'Others' (7.3%); FSM Protestants (6.9%); non-FSM Protestants (6.5%); FSM Catholics (5.9%). Although employment proportions for all groups decreased since 2007/08, FSM Catholics and FSM Protestants experienced the biggest decreases, of approximately 6 percentage points each (see Technical Table 12.14).

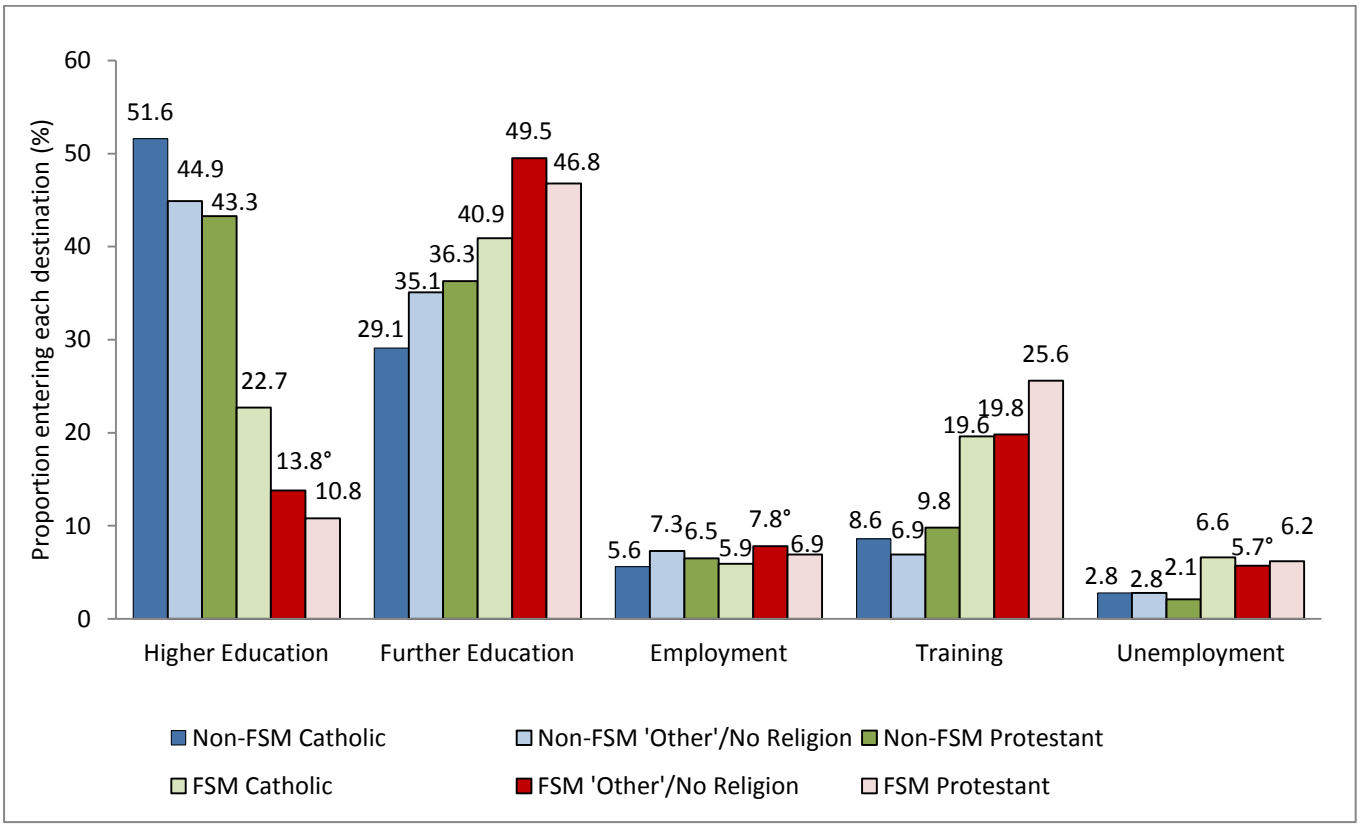
- **Job training**

  In 2011/12, FSM Protestants were the most likely to enter job training (25.6%), whilst non-FSM 'Others' were the least likely (6.9%), compared to all other groups (see Figure 12.8): FSM 'Others' (19.8%); FSM Catholics (19.6%); non-FSM Protestants (9.8%); non-FSM Catholics (8.6%). Catholics of both FSM categories experienced the largest decreases out of all groups between 2007/08 and 2011/12 in terms of entry to training: for FSM Catholics, the proportion decreased from 26.7% to 19.6%, and for non-FSM Catholics, the rate decreased from 13.2% to 8.6%. The proportions for other groups have decreased by approximately 3 percentage points since 2007/08 (see Technical Table 12.14).

- **Unemployment**

  In 2011/12, FSM Catholics were the most likely to enter unemployment after leaving school (6.6%, up from 5.6% in 2007/08), whilst non-FSM Protestants were the least likely (2.1%, down from 3.2% in 2007/08) compared to all other groups (see Figure 12.8): FSM Protestants (6.2%); FSM 'Others' (5.7%); non-FSM Catholics and non-FSM 'Others' (2.8% each) (see Technical Table 12.14).

Figure 12.8: Proportion of school leavers' destinations by religion and FSM entitlement, 2011/12



° Note that the number is less than 40

Gender x Religion x Free School Meals

Primary and Post-primary Level (Source: DENI)

Attainment:

Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, FSM entitled students were less likely to achieve attainment targets at GCSE (5+ GCSEs A*-C; 5+ GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths) and A Level (2+ A Levels A*-E) and much more likely to leave school with no GCSEs than students not entitled to FSM (non-FSM). Generally, within each FSM group, males were less likely to achieve attainment targets than females, and Catholics, regardless of either FSM status or gender, were overall more likely to achieve attainment targets than Protestants or 'Others'[467] (see Technical Table 12.15). There was also an interaction between gender, religion and FSM entitlement, with FSM entitled Catholic males more likely to achieve attainment targets than FSM entitled Protestant females. Overall, non-FSM Catholic females were most likely to achieve attainment targets at GCSE and A Level, while FSM entitled Protestant males were least likely to achieve attainment targets.

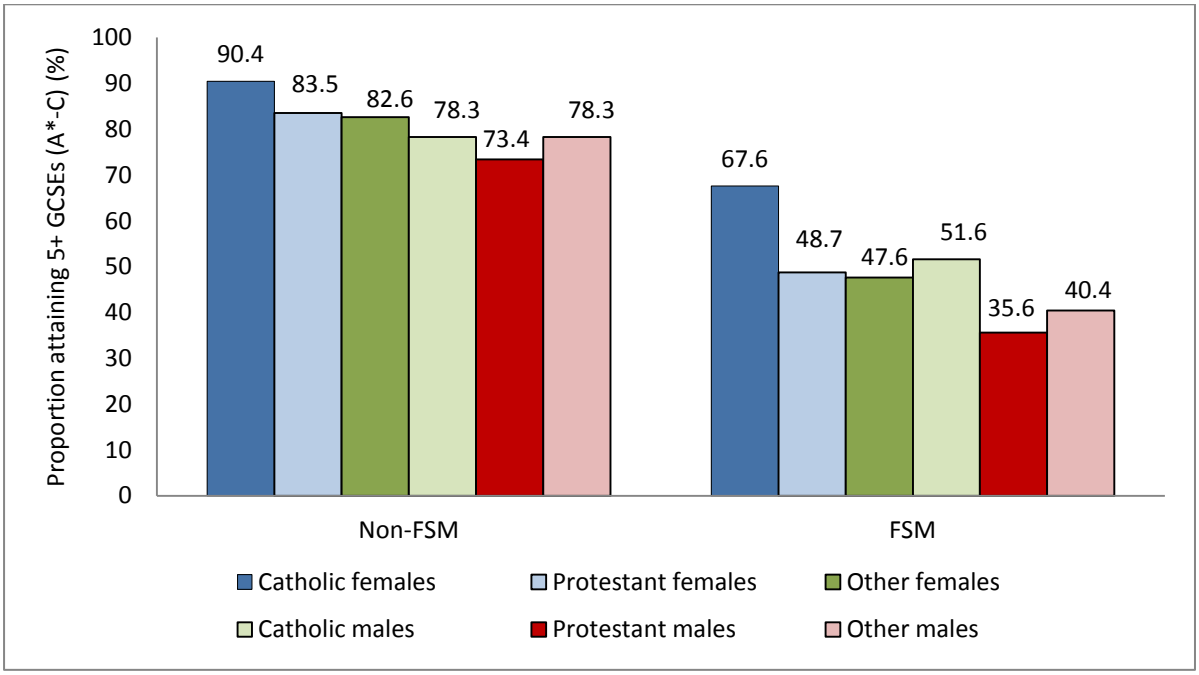
- **GCSE level**

  In 2011/12, non-FSM school leavers were more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C than FSM entitled school leavers. Non-FSM Catholic females were most likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C (90.4%), while FSM Protestant males were least likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C (35.6%) compared to all other groups, regardless of FSM status (see Figure 12.9).

  While non-FSM Protestant females were more likely to obtain 5+ GCSEs A*-C (83.5%) than non-FSM Catholic males (78.3%), a greater proportion of FSM Catholic males obtained 5+ GCSEs A*-C (51.6%) than FSM Protestant females (48.7%, see Figure 12.9). Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the proportion of school leavers obtaining 5+ GCSEs A*-C increased for all groups (see Technical Table 12.15). However, while the attainment of FSM Protestant males greatly improved at GCSE level since 2007/08, they remained at a persistent disadvantage compared to all other gender-religion-FSM status groups (see Technical Table 12.15).

[467] 'Other' refers to those all those who do not identify as Protestant or Catholic and therefore could include those of other/unknown religions and those of no religion.

Figure 12.9: Proportion of school leavers attaining 5+ GCSEs (A*-C) by gender, religion and FSM status, 2011/12

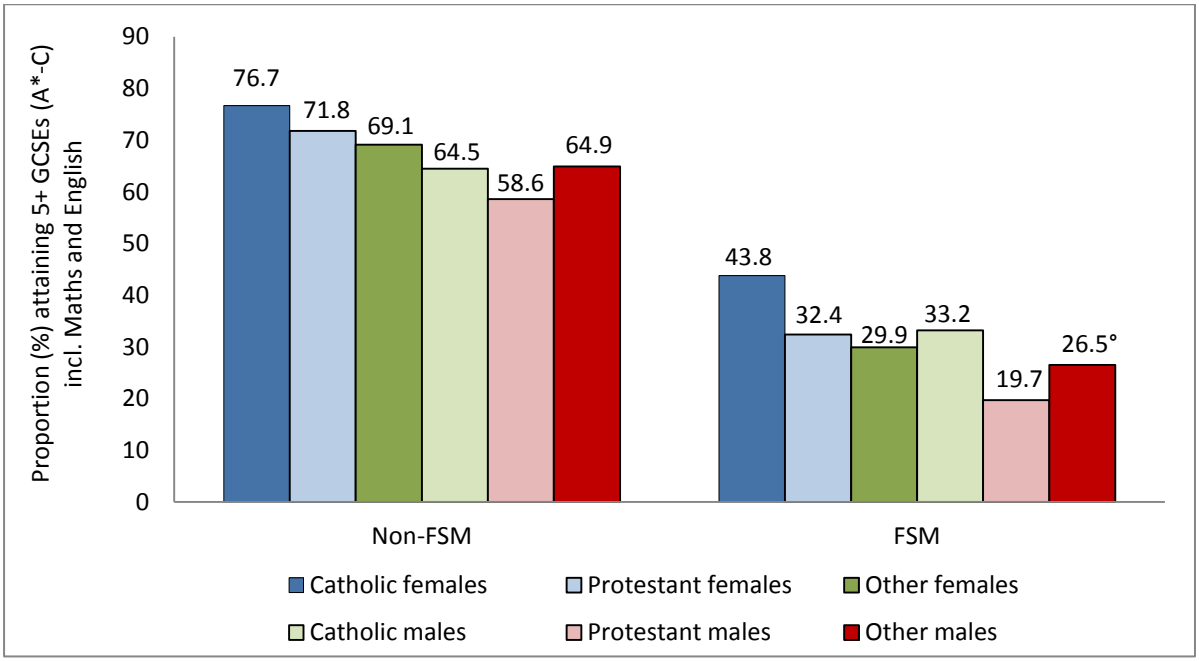


- **GCSEs including English and Maths**

  In 2011/12, non-FSM school leavers were more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths than FSM entitled school leavers. Non-FSM Catholic females were most likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths (76.7%), while FSM Protestant males were least likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths (19.7%) compared to all other groups, regardless of FSM status (see Figure 12.10).

  While non-FSM Protestant females were more likely to obtain 5+ GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths (71.8%) than non-FSM Catholic males (64.5%), a slightly greater proportion of FSM Catholic males obtained 5+ GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths (33.2%) than FSM Protestant females (32.4%, see Figure 12.10) and this was a consistent pattern between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (see Technical Table 12.15). Between 2007/08 and 2011/12 the proportion of school leavers obtaining 5+ GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths increased for all groups, regardless of FSM status. However, while the attainment of FSM Protestant males improved at this level since 2007/08 they remained at a persistent disadvantage compared to all other gender-religion-FSM status groups (see Technical Table 12.15).

Figure 12.10: Proportion of school leavers attaining 5+ GCSEs (A*-C) including English and Maths by gender, religion and FSM status, 2011/12



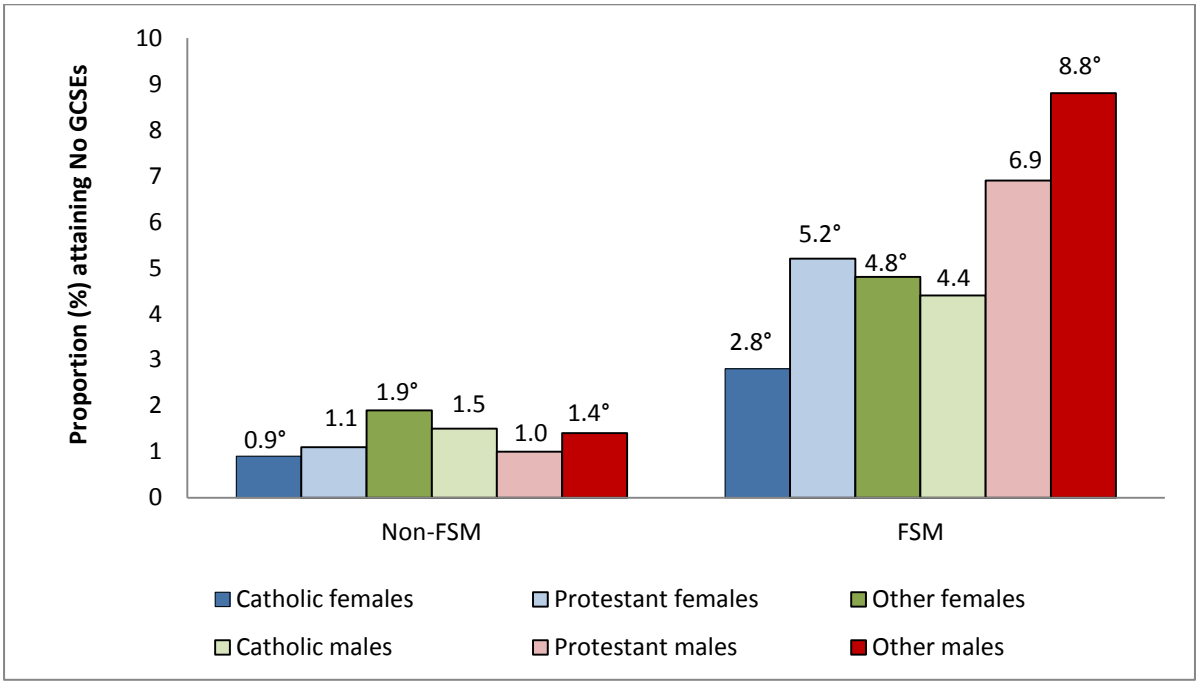
° Note that the number is less than 40

- **No GCSEs**

  In 2011/12, FSM entitled school leavers were more likely to leave school with no GCSEs than non-FSM entitled school leavers, and this trend was observed over the five-year period. Non-FSM Catholic females were least likely to leave school with no GCSEs (0.9%), while FSM 'Other' males were most likely to leave school with no GCSEs (8.8%) compared to all other groups, regardless of religion, gender or FSM status (see Figure 12.11).

  While non-FSM Protestant males were slightly less likely to leave school with no GCSEs (1.0%) than non-FSM Catholic males (1.5%), a greater proportion of FSM Protestant males and FSM Protestant females left school with no GCSEs (6.9% and 5.2%, respectively) than FSM Catholic males (4.4%, see Figure 12.11). Between 2007/08 and 2011/12 the proportion of school leavers leaving school with no GCSEs decreased overall for all groups, regardless of religion, gender or FSM status (see Technical Table 12.15). However, due to small sample size between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (<40 individuals) it was not possible to reliably comment on trends in the proportion of FSM 'Other' males and females obtaining no GCSEs.

Figure 12.11: Proportion of school leavers attaining no GCSEs by gender, religion and FSM status, 2011/12



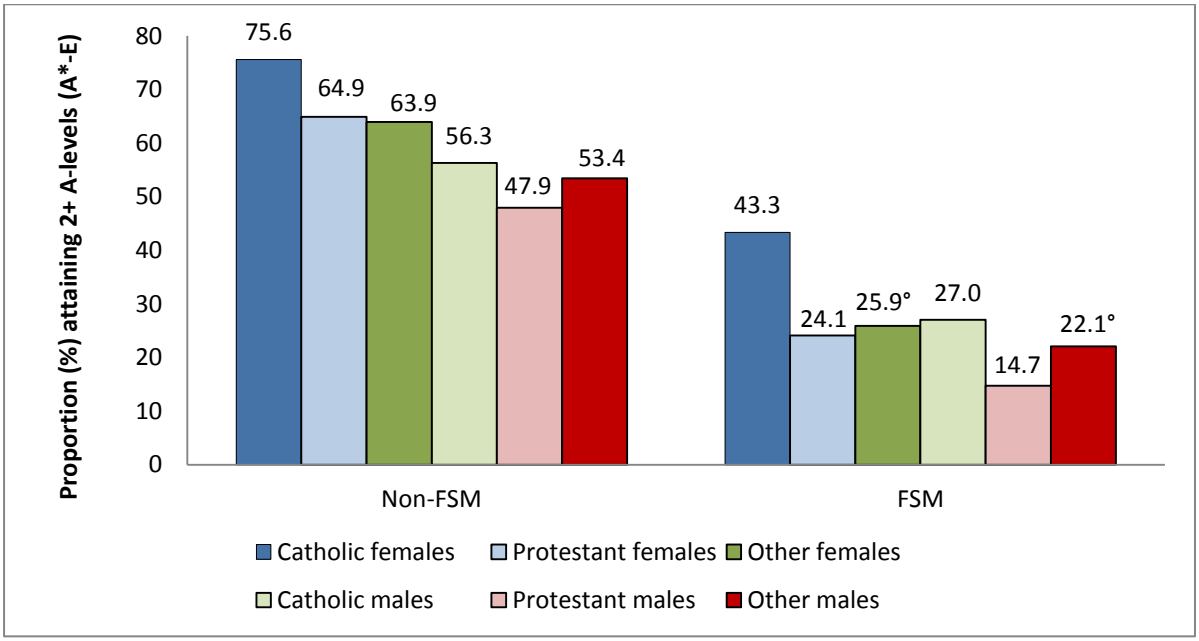
° Note that the number is less than 40

- **A Levels**

  In 2011/12, non-FSM school leavers were more likely to achieve 2+ A Levels A*-E than FSM entitled school leavers. Non-FSM Catholic females were most likely to achieve 2+ A Levels A*-E (75.6%), while FSM Protestant males were least likely to achieve 2+ A Levels A*-E (14.7%) compared to all other groups (see Figure 12.12).

  While non-FSM Protestant females were more likely to obtain 2+ A Levels A*-E (64.9%) than non-FSM Catholic males (56.3%), a greater proportion of FSM Catholic males obtained 2+ A Levels A*-E (27.0%) than FSM Protestant females (24.1%, see Figure 12.12) and this was a consistent trend in four of the five years analysed (2008/09-2011/12, see Technical Table 12.15). Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the proportion of school leavers obtaining 2+ A Levels A*-E increased for all groups, regardless of religion, gender and FSM status. However, while the attainment of FSM Protestant males improved at A Level since 2007/08, they remained at a persistent disadvantage compared to all other gender-religion-FSM status groups (Technical Table 12.15).

Figure 12.12: Proportion of school leavers attaining 2+ A Levels (A*-C) by gender, religion and FSM status, 2011/12



° Note that the number is less than 40

Destinations:

Some differences were observed between and within FSM and non-FSM entitled groups in regard to the destinations of school leavers of different religions and gender groups, with FSM Protestant males doing least well, overall, in terms of destination after leaving school.

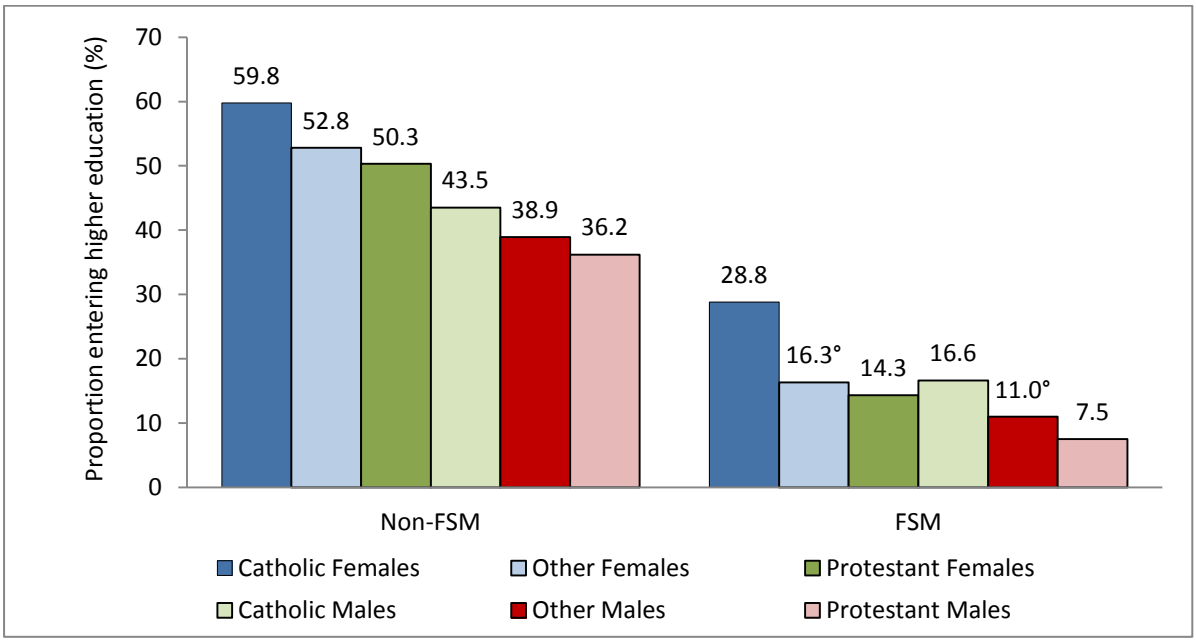
- **Higher education**

  Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, mirroring A Level attainment results, non-FSM school leavers were more likely to enter higher education than FSM school leavers (see Technical Table 12.16). In 2011/12, non-FSM Catholic females were much more likely than any other group to go on to higher education (59.8%, up from 57.4% in 2007/08), and this was consistent over the five-year period (2007/08-2011/12), while FSM Protestant males were least likely to go onto higher education (7.5%, up from 6.3% in 2007/08) compared to all other groups and this was generally consistent between 2007/08 and 2011/12 (see Figure 12.13; Technical Table 12.16).

  In 2011/12, non-FSM Protestant females were more likely to enter higher education (50.3%) than non-FSM Catholic males (43.5%) and this was consistent over the five-year period. However, in 2011/12 FSM Catholic males were more likely than FSM Protestant females to enter higher education (16.6% compared to 14.3%, respectively) and this was

also consistent over the same period (see Technical Table 12.16). Between 2007/08 and 2011/12 the proportion of school leavers entering higher education fluctuated but overall increased for all groups, regardless of religion, gender or FSM status.

Figure 12.13: Proportion of school leavers entering higher education by gender, religion and FSM status, 2011/12



° Note that the number is less than 40

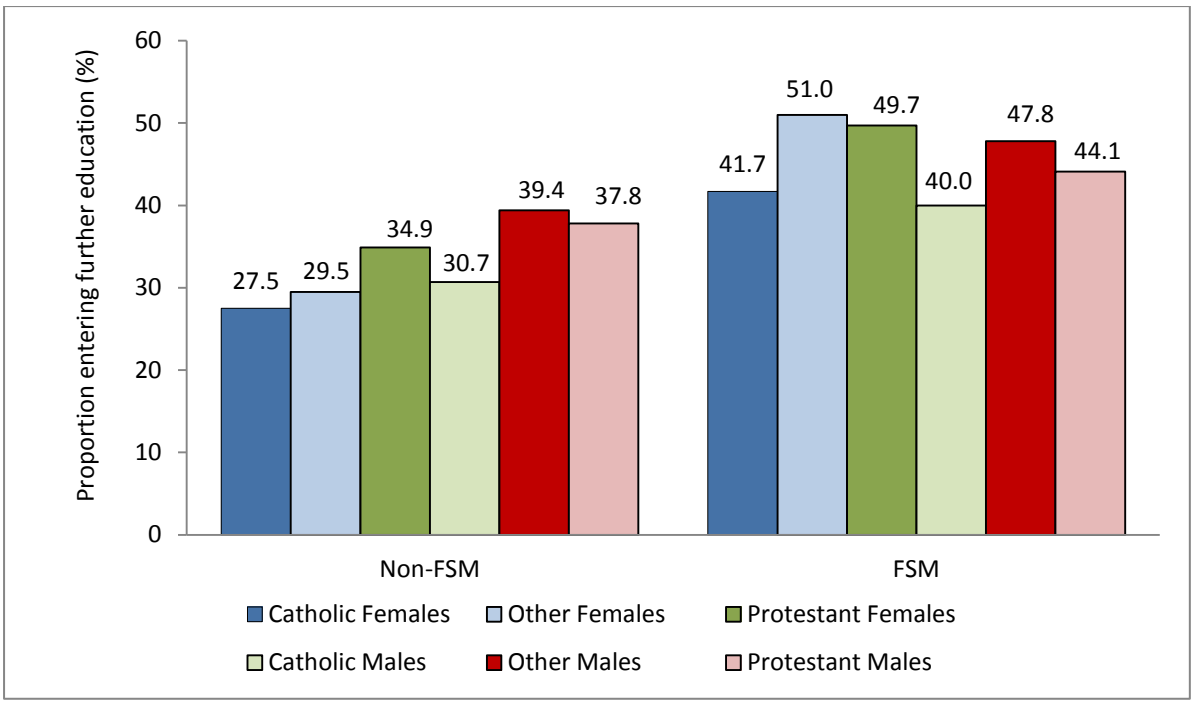
- **Further education**

  In 2011/12, 'Other' FSM females were the most likely group to go on to further education (51.0%, an increase from 36.1% in 2007/08) and this trend was observed for four of the five years under analysis (2008/09 to 2011/12). Non-FSM Catholic females were the least likely group to go on to further education (27.5%, up from 23.0% in 2007/08) compared to all other groups, regardless of FSM status, (see Figure 12.14; Technical Table 12.16) and this was consistent between 2007/08 and 2011/12.

  In addition, in 2011/12, non-FSM Protestant males (37.8%) and females (34.9%) were more likely to go on to further education than non-FSM Catholic males (30.7%) and females (27.5%); FSM Protestant males (44.1%) and females (49.7%) were more likely to go on to further education than FSM Catholic males (40.0%) and females (41.7%, see Figure 12.14). Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the proportion of school leavers entering further education fluctuated but overall increased for all groups, except for non-FSM 'Other' females where the

proportion fluctuated but decreased overall (from 32.6% in 2007/08 to 29.5% in 2011/12, see Technical Table 12.16).

Figure 12.14: Proportion of school leavers entering further education by gender, religion and FSM status, 2011/12



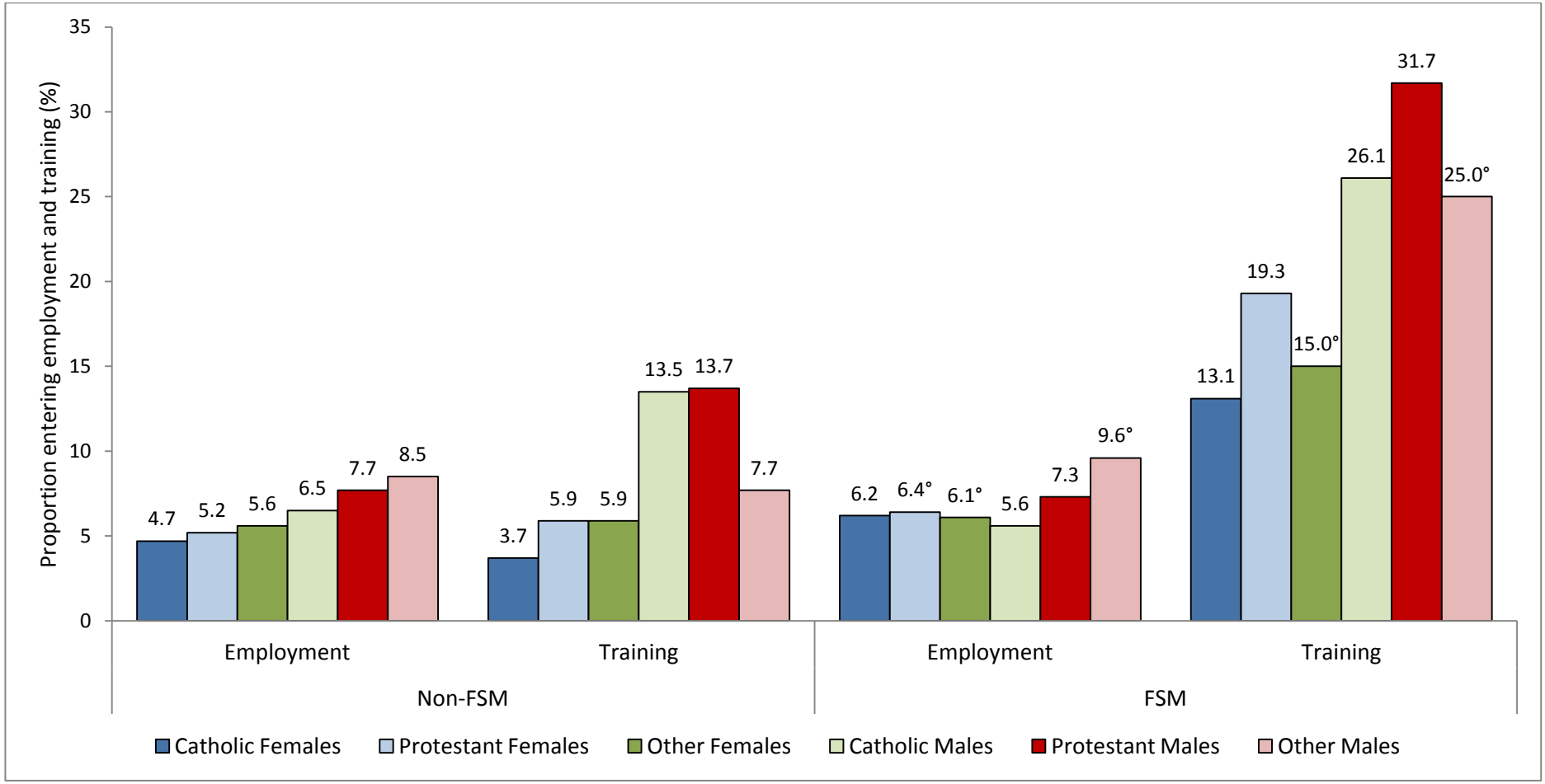
- **All other destinations**

  All other destinations were subject to small sample size[468] within some groupings (see Technical Tables 12.16). In 2011/12, FSM 'Other' males were the most likely to go into employment (9.6%) and non-FSM Catholic females were the least likely to go into employment (4.7%) compared to all other groups, irrespective of FSM status (see Figure 12.15).

  In 2011/12, FSM Protestant males were the most likely group to enter job training compared to all other groups (31.7%), while non-FSM Catholic females were the least likely group to enter job training (3.7%, see Figure 12.15; Technical Table 12.16).

[468] < 40 individuals

Figure 12.15: Proportion of school leavers entering employment and training by religion, gender, and FSM status, 2011/12



° Note that the number is less than 40

Findings from Qualitative Data – Gender x Religion x Free School Meals

A stakeholder event was held in order to consult with educational policymakers and representatives from educational institutions, who were asked about the potential barriers and enablers to educational equality by religion, gender and FSM entitlement.

Multiple inequalities-related barriers to education equality

From the discussions, the key barriers to equality included:

1. ***Lack of political will***

A lack of political will to put effective strategies in place, despite a robust evidence base – this applies to all three grounds (gender, religion, and FSM status).

2. ***Culture***

There is a cultural legacy to deal with, in that some parents fail to take up or acknowledge the need for FSM despite their entitlement. This is particularly evident among the Protestant community; the aspirations of children from lower socio-economic backgrounds need to be raised, as do the expectations of their potential.

3. ***Definition of deprivation***

There is a need to increase access to education for children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, especially in nursery and pre-school provision. One representative, from a support organization, reported that the definition of 'deprivation' and the prioritization of FSM entitled-children for nursery places, impacts on the ability of some children to access places who could greatly benefit. This organization had received calls from adoptive/foster parents who were unable to secure places and who argued that, given the unsettling/difficult experiences their children had gone through, they should have been prioritized for nursery places.

4. ***Greater awareness and understanding***

There is a need for greater understanding of the interplay between gender/religion and FSM in influencing educational attainment.

5. Structure of the Northern Ireland education system

The religious divisions in the structure of the Northern Irish education system (see Chapter 2) have a negative impact on school budgets and the subsequent resources to which deprived children need greater access.

6. Private tuition

Access to additional private tuition is limited for children and young people from lower-socio economic backgrounds. Given the continuance of academic selection for entrance to most grammar schools in Northern Ireland, this negatively impacts on access to grammar school provision for children and young people from such backgrounds.

Potential multiple inequalities-related enablers to education equality

Enablers and positive influences on educational equality for children and young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds included:

1. Collaborative learning

Greater provision of collaborative programmes between schools linked to raising attainment levels.

2. School Funding

Greater allocation of funding to schools that cater for high proportions of FSM-entitled pupils:

> *"These children have no parents who went to uni - for the middle classes it was never an issue, and they can't comprehend why the percentage of FSM in a school should influence the budget of a school."*

3. Widening participation initiatives

Widening participation units in higher education:

> *"can help to raise young people's confidence to apply for higher education and the self-belief to see it through."*

Activities can include bringing students from areas of higher deprivation to the campus to become familiar with it, to speak to staff and university students, and to see it as somewhere they could 'belong' (examples were given of students from an area of high deprivation located close to a university who had never walked around the campus); to sit in on subject-specific events (Taster Days) to get a better understanding of the subject content; outreach activities

within schools; workshops to enable the students to relate their current curriculum content to courses at university.

4. Data collection and monitoring of deprivation

In further and higher education, data collection could better monitor how many students are coming from areas of high unemployment and deprivation:

> *"we need to know how many are coming from those categories, how many NEETs we are getting in, and if we knew where they are too, it would help us target for recruitment. It would be useful to know more about ways to monitor the categories such as criminal background, care background, those who have been homeless. One in seven people are at risk of homelessness – through marital breakups, home repossessions, their domestic situation – and this impacts greatly on their ability to stay in a course. Their access to education is very much hampered...But we have no data – it would be useful to collect the information to say why we are targeting these groups so much, to justify our efforts."*

Summary - Gender x Religion x Free School Meals

Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, young people who were FSM entitled had lower attainment than non-FSM young people; males of either FSM category did less well than females; and Catholics of either FSM category or gender did better than Protestants or 'Others'. Therefore, the best achievement proportions were observed for non-FSM Catholic females. In contrast, FSM-entitled Protestant males had the lowest achievement out of all of the group categories, with consistently lower attainment proportions at GCSE and A Level than all other groups. This is a persistent inequality, as also observed in the literature review. However, FSM-entitled males from 'Other' religions (that is, males who are not Protestant or Catholic - other religions, no religion, unknown religion) were the most likely to leave school with no GCSEs out of all groups.

It should be reiterated that social disadvantage was found to have an impact on attainment, no matter which gender a person was. When free school meals data was included in the analysis of primary and school leavers' attainment, the results showed that FSM entitlement was a stronger predictor of attainment (and destination after leaving school) than gender. The data highlighted that FSM entitled males had the lowest achievement at GCSE and A Level, and were less likely to go onto higher education than all other gender-FSM groups. This is a persistent inequality. The literature review also identified the impact that social deprivation has on achievement, compounding the negative effects of other inequalities including those identified for religion too (not just gender).

In terms of the destinations of non-FSM pupils, Protestants were the least likely group to go to higher education; Catholic females were the group most likely to go on to higher education; 'Other' males were the most likely to go on to further education and employment; Protestant males were the most likely group to enter job training; and Catholic males were the most likely to be unemployed. Within the FSM entitled category, Catholic females were more likely than any other group to go on to higher education, while Protestant males were the least likely to go into higher education. Protestant males also experienced the smallest increase in the proportion going on to higher education of all groups since 2007/08. This is therefore a persistent inequality. 'Other' females were the most likely to go on to further education; 'Other' males were the most likely to enter employment after leaving school; and, Protestant males were the most likely group to enter job training. The literature review highlighted that FSM pupils are less likely than their non-FSM peers to continue their education through further or higher education after leaving school and this is reflected in the findings from the quantitative data.

From the qualitative element of the research, current barriers to educational equality for children from different gender x religion x free school meals categories included: a lack of political will to put joined-up strategies in place; a cultural legacy, particularly amongst Protestants, not to claim for FSM and low community expectations; a need to increase access to education for children from other types of disadvantaged backgrounds; greater understanding of the complexity and interactions between the variables of gender, religion, and free school meals entitlement; the religious divisions within the Northern Ireland educational system; and restricted access to individual private tuition, which impacts on the likelihood of children receiving FSM who enter the grammar school system. Enablers to educational equality included: greater provision of collaborative programs between schools, linked to raising attainment levels; greater allocation of funding to schools that cater for high proportions of FSM-entitled pupils: and the targeting of pupils from areas of high deprivation for widening participation activities in higher education.

Further Issues of Educational Inequality Raised by Stakeholders

During the course of this research study, stakeholders who represent children and young people from a number of equality grounds were keen to acknowledge the educational inequalities that exist for other groups who are not reflected in the current report. It was felt that group categories needed to be broken down further than the Section 75 groupings in order to accurately reveal the inequalities that actually exist in education. A representative from a further education college stated:

> *"We wanted to collect additional information to Section 75 –for example, people from a care background, homelessness, people with criminal convictions, socio-economic grouping and students from neighbourhood renewal areas. But it would be important for a directive to come from DEL so that all colleges collect the same."*

A stakeholder from a widening participation unit in an institution of higher education felt that equality directives need to:

> *"think about the widest type of inclusive society – what type of agenda do you want to set for that?...My job is to create an equitable institution, so for me, Section 75 needs to be updated. We don't just educate people to build the economy – it's about creating a more equitable and stable society – equity creates a peaceful society. Every person who is sitting in our library studying is a person who is not out throwing a stone in the street. That is why you do widening participation, that's the impact – we can drive social change as well as economic change. But you need to gather the evidence first that there are issues that go wider than Section 75."*

The need to look at educational outcomes for young people who have been suspended or expelled from school was also raised by one educational policy representative. These young people may not have access to adequate educational provision, especially if work is not sent home or home tuition is not available. Parents generally have to pick up work for their children, and older young people are less likely to have access to home tuition. Another group was children in the youth justice system – while there is good provision in juvenile justice centres, these children do not have access to the full Northern Ireland curriculum and therefore they do not have the same educational opportunities as those who are not in the justice system. They may face further challenges when they are integrating back into the mainstream system. Lastly, children living in rural areas may face educational disadvantages in terms of access to after school clubs and activities due to transport difficulties.

There were also concerns that in primary schools, pupils who are not sitting the unregulated academic selection tests are being 'left out' and not being taught, leaving them even further behind their peers. There are no specific requirements placed on schools for those children not taking the test; one stakeholder claimed that:

> *"even if a child is given work, sitting amongst those preparing for test may contribute to their sense of failure. In some cases, children and young people spend time with classroom assistant and not with their peers in a classroom."*

Stakeholders from further and igher education also repeatedly raised the issue of disclosure being very low for certain equality grounds, which has a negative impact on the robustness of data that is collected on groups' educational experiences and the subsequent strategies that can be put in place to redress them:

> *"They are trying to make it a compulsory part of the application process, so that everyone completes it, but with the option for 'not stated' if they wish – as long as they fill out the forms – this will stop forms being lost. The colleges are in a process therefore to increase the reliability of the data. About a third of enrolments have been non-disclosures. The most reliable categories would be age and gender because they are on their main application form, but other categories are in a separate form."*

Lastly, a stakeholder from Widening Participation in Higher Education reported that it was difficult to monitor the success of widening participation activities at universities in terms of pupils' success rates in achieving the grades needed to be considered for higher education, enrolling in higher education, and staying in higher education. Furthermore, it was claimed that some non-selective schools send their 'best' students to widening participation activities, i.e., those who are most likely to get the A level grades needed to enter higher education - but they may not be the pupils who need the additional support. It was considered important that the work of Widening Participation Units begins earlier than Year 13, since by the time a student has finished their GCSEs and has decided to pursue A Levels, it is likely that they have already considered that a higher education path might be for them:

> *"the key is to start with students from Year 9, when they may never have even thought about university, to plant a seed which may help them from making their GCSE choices through to gaining their GCSEs and making AS/A Level choices."*

Chapter 13: Conclusions

Discussion of results

This discussion section will explore some of key inequalities that emerged from this research for each equality ground.

In regard to gender and educational attainment, a key finding was the persistent attainment gap between males and females, and the fact that this attainment gap appears to consistently increase, to the detriment of males, after leaving primary school: there was a clear increase in the gap between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, and it widened as the school years progressed up to A Level. As was highlighted in the literature review, many of the barriers to education for males that have been identified in other studies include frustration with the formal nature of the classroom, some teachers having lower expectations of males, and a lack of connection between curriculum content and the lives of many males. The finding therefore also raises a question of whether there are elements of the school day structure and curriculum in Northern Ireland that do not suit the specific needs of many males. That question is also related to the persistent underachievement of males, specifically males from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. The recommendations on enablers for educational equality (particularly in regard to increasing the attainment rates of males) from the literature review and the qualitative data on gender, such as increasing flexibility in the way the curriculum is delivered (as previously mentioned above) and increasing male (particularly working class male) role models in schools need to be appropriately incorporated into policy and implemented into practice.

Lower attainment also impacts on male entry to higher education – the gender gap in this regard is reflective of the gap at A Level, with females more likely to go on to higher education than males – and this is likely to have an impact on the composition of the future graduate workforce in Northern Ireland. However, when examining subject choice in higher education, males are much more likely than females to enter the STEM subject area of 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology'. Given that the types of industries that are currently growing in Northern Ireland are more aligned with these STEM subject areas, more analysis needs to be conducted regarding the type of jobs that these leavers enter, as they may be more secure, and higher paying, jobs than other leavers (i.e. the mostly female leavers) from further and higher education obtain.

There is also an urgent need for the educational needs of transgender young people to be addressed in central policy directives. At present, little is known about their exact rates of educational attainment, progression and their destinations after leaving education, but from what is known about the barriers they face in their educational journeys, much more could be done centrally in order to give schools and educational institutions directives on how to support transgender young people and deal with transphobic bullying and discrimination.

There were two key findings in relation to age and education, both of which were related to further education. Firstly, there was a clear age profile difference between accredited and non-accredited courses – on accredited courses, the majority of enrolees were under the age of 25 years, while the majority of enrolees on non-accredited courses were over the age of 25 years. Notably, participation of the older age groups (56+ years) decreased on non-accredited courses whilst participation for younger groups slightly increased between 2007/08 and 2011/12. This is an emergent inequality. Secondly, younger 'Leavers' from the Steps to Work programme (aged under 25 years) were persistently more likely to gain employment and sustain employment after completing their course. Therefore, the disadvantage that older groups face in finding employment and sustaining employment after job training programmes compared to younger age groups is a persistent inequality. The qualitative research also identified the impact of intergenerational disadvantage on present and future generations of learners, in that, negative past educational experiences can create negative perceptions of education that can be passed onto the next generation thus creating 'poverty of aspiration'.

In terms of religion and educational attainment, the key finding was a persistent and overarching trend of higher proportions of Catholics achieving the education targets in all three areas (GCSEs, GCSEs including English and Maths, and A Levels), than both Protestants and 'Others'[469]. Furthermore, this gap between Catholics and the other groups widened between 2007/08 and 2011/12 for all three education targets. Therefore, this is a persistent, and increasing, inequality. Within higher education, Catholics were over-represented in both undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments. There was a trend of slightly increasing shares of enrolment for Catholics, stagnant shares of enrolment for Protestant – this resulted in a small widening of the gap between Protestants and Catholics in higher education. This is a persistent inequality.

[469] 'Other' refers to those all those who do not identify as Protestant or Catholic and therefore could include those of other/unknown religions and those of no religion.

A key inequality outlined in the Equality Commission's 2008 statement on education inequalities[470] was the underachievement and lack of progression of male working class Protestants. This inequality has persisted – Protestant males entitled to free school meals were found to have the lowest GCSE and A Level attainment rates, the highest proportions of non-attainment, and the lowest proportions of school leavers moving on to higher education of all gender/religion/FSM categories. Given that any young people (no matter what gender or religion) who are entitled to free school meals have lower proportions of attainment and progression than those who are not, the particular barriers to educational equality for Protestant males must be considered closely – in other words, the question of why their attainment is so far behind Catholic males or Protestant females who are entitled to free school meals must be considered and addressed. From the limited qualitative data gathered in this research and a review of the literature, some of these barriers for Protestant males include: intergenerational mistrust and negativity towards the benefits of education; the divided nature of the school system in Northern Ireland and lower post-16 provision in controlled schools; a lack of male working-class role models in schools; and weakened community infrastructure in urban Protestant areas in particular.

Despite the persistent and wide gender and religion gaps in attainment, the factors that appear to be most strongly associated with the greatest levels of inequality in terms of attainment (no matter what gender or religion a child is) are the socio-economic background of a child (as currently measured by free school meals entitlement) and attendance (or not) at a grammar school. If educational inequalities in Northern Ireland are to be redressed in any meaningful way, steps need to be taken to help children who do not have as many resources at home as others (whether in terms of material resources or social capital) to reach their full academic potential. It is crucial that improving educational outcomes for children from lower socio-economic backgrounds remains a priority in educational policy and that their outcomes continue to be closely monitored, especially against the background of the debate over academic selection at the age of 11 years[471].

Educational inequalities by political opinion were closely related to the inequalities found by religious background. There was a strong feeling amongst stakeholders that if the issue of the underachievement of Protestant males was adequately addressed, many of the perceived barriers to education articulated by unionist students in higher education would be solved.

[470] Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. (2008a). *Inequalities in Education – Facts and Trends 1998-2008*. Belfast: ECNI.
[471] As highlighted in Chapter 3, children who are entitled to FSM are less likely be selected for grammar school, regardless of test scores.

However, other barriers were experienced by students of both ends of the political spectrum. In particular, the finding regarding the emphasis on political neutrality within many educational establishments is a worrying one. These students felt that their progression in higher education (and the likelihood of entering their preferred destinations afterwards) was hampered if they overtly stated their political affiliations. The expected silence and secrecy that surrounds the holding of political affiliations is an unhealthy symptom in a democratic society, especially in educational institutions wherein debate is a crucial aspect of learning. The recommendations of the stakeholders regarding enabling openness about political differences, especially amongst young people, need to be addressed with educational establishments.

The research also revealed that there is a continued relationship between low educational attainment and other types of social exclusion and marginalisation experienced by:, children from the Traveller community, Roma children, and Looked After Children. These children and young people were found to have some of the lowest proportions of attainment of all groups who were considered in the course of this research. This has been a persistent trend since the last Equality Commission statement on educational inequalities published in 2008. The qualitative data and other literature gathered for these groups in the current research indicates that while steps have been taken to redress these inequalities by government departments and the Education and Library Boards, there are further ways that education equality could be enabled, such as: placing the rights and needs of children first; providing more support for parents; more engagement and consultation with the groups at hand; and more joined-up departmental working.

There are mixed conclusions for educational inequalities on the basis of race and newcomer status. Firstly, in terms of access, there appears to be fewer children from minority ethnic and newcomer backgrounds enrolling in controlled schools (excluding controlled integrated) than other types of schools – this may be partly related to the Catholic religious backgrounds of some of the more prevalent minority ethnic and newcomer groups in Northern Ireland, but further research would be needed to confirm this.

While a high proportion of minority ethnic school leavers attain 2+ A Levels (similar to the proportion of white school leavers), the research showed that there is also a high proportion of minority ethnic school leavers who leave school with no GCSEs, and an emergent inequality is that they were less likely to attain 2+ A Levels or 5+ GCSEs (particularly 5+ GCSEs including Maths and English) than their white peers. This was a reversal in the trend observed in 2007/08. This pattern of results for minority ethnic school leavers was shown to be particularly

strong for minority ethnic females – while they were more likely than their male counterparts to achieve 2+ A Levels, they were also much more likely to leave school with no GCSEs. More research is needed on the educational experiences of minority ethnic females in Northern Ireland to better understand this trend.

Furthermore, while minority ethnic school leavers were slightly more likely than white school leavers to enter higher education, they were also over twice as likely to enter unemployment after leaving school – and this is a new inequality since 2007/08. It is difficult however to know from the aggregated data that is available which particular minority ethnic and/or newcomer groups are more successful at entering destinations such as further and higher education, and which are more likely to be unemployed. While minority ethnic groups were found to be well represented in further and higher education and in training and employment programmes (particularly in all STEM subjects), the data on their progression showed that minority ethnic students had some difficulty with remaining on some further education and job training programmes. In addition, while minority ethnic students were slightly more likely to enter employment after leaving the Steps to Work training programme, they were much less likely to gain employment after leaving higher education (an emergent inequality for minority ethnic higher education leavers). It is therefore pertinent that the barriers to employment for minority ethnic leavers from school and from higher education are considered in more depth, and that more quantitative data and research is gathered on the experiences of Roma children in Northern Ireland in particular, as so little is known about this group.

The quantitative and qualitative data gathered for the equality ground of disability and special educational needs reinforced how important it is for these two categories to be considered separately in addressing the educational needs of both. Not all disabled young people have a statement of special educational needs; but it appears that at times the educational needs of some disabled young people can be overlooked if they do not have a statement that outlines for schools how exactly their needs should be met. However, it appears that disability is often underreported by schools, parents and perhaps in further and higher education – this makes understanding the needs and outcomes of people with disabilities in regard to education difficult to understand fully. From the data that is available, a key concern is the underrepresentation of people with disabilities in further and higher education – this is likely to have continued negative impacts in the future on this group's ability to participate in the workforce and their lifelong income.

In regard to sexual orientation, while available data from the literature review suggested that homophobic bullying is prevalent in Northern Irish schools, it is difficult to measure the direct impact this has on their educational attainment and progression. However, the information gathered from key stakeholders during this research illustrates that young lesbian, gay or bisexual people could be better supported in schools in a number of ways: more directives from the Department of Education on dealing with issues of homophobic bullying; the extension of current equality legislation; increased teacher training on discussing issues of sexuality with pupils and handling incidences of homophobic behaviour when they see it; and increased data collection and monitoring of the educational needs of young LGB people.

The findings for those of different marital and dependency status and of different age groups could be argued as being closely related, as the educational inequalities they face are likely related to peoples' life trajectories. With increased age come increased barriers to accessing or returning to education, such as caring and parenting responsibilities; a lack of available and affordable childcare or flexible respite care; other financial burdens such as fees, materials and travel costs; less time; and previous negative experiences of education. The vast majority of enrolees on most further or higher education courses or job training programmes were young, single people with no dependants. Access improved in some of these areas over the past five years, and older people (36 years and older) were well represented in non-professional and technical further education courses, which may be to do with how and when these courses are delivered. Older groups (aged 50 years and older), those who were separated or divorced, and those with dependants were less likely to gain employment after leaving a job training programme. Those who had been married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting did not have the same difficulties finding employment after leaving a job training programme. Why this difference exists for leavers from job training programmes would be worth exploring in more depth.

The findings for progression and achievement in further education accredited courses were most positive for those who were married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting – they had better achievement and retention rates than single students - and those who had dependants had better achievement rates in accredited courses than those who had no dependants. It appears that enabling older students and those with dependents to enrol in further education in the first place is the key challenge.

The findings also showed that some higher education subject areas were more accessible for those over 25 years or older age groups, people who are married/co-habiting/in a civil

partnership, and those who have dependants – 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine' and 'Social Studies and Law'. Reasons as to why these subject areas are more attractive for people from these equality grounds than other subjects should be explored in more depth – it may be due to the enablers that were articulated by stakeholders, such as flexible frameworks of delivery for some courses, and the marketing of these courses to 'mature students', carers, and so on.

Those aged under 25 years, single people, and those with no dependants, were least likely to move into full-time work after leaving higher education. This may imply that older groups, those who have been married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting, and those who have dependants in higher education may be those who are already in employment or have been given leave by their employers to study.

It is also worth noting how useful it is to make the distinction between those who are parents and those who look after a sick or disabled person with care needs. The qualitative data further revealed the specific barriers and enablers to education for young carers. Further disaggregation of the data on educational outcomes by dependency status would help to illuminate carers' and younger carers' specific needs.

Finally, it must be stated that the general lack of knowledge and data on the educational access, attainment, progression and destinations of transgender people, people of different political opinions, Roma people, people of different sexual orientations, and young people in transition (whether from leaving care or having been a carer to someone), could be viewed as key inequalities in themselves, and must be addressed in the first instance if educational equality is to be achieved for all.

Key Inequalities Across all Grounds

The following key inequalities have been chosen from the research based on their persistence or new emergence across the years examined, as well as where several equality grounds have been observed to be particularly disadvantaged in one or more of the four areas of concern: educational access, attainment, progression and destination.

Access

- There was a widening of the gap in undergraduate and postgraduate enrolment in higher education between Protestants and Catholics, to the detriment of Protestants.
- There is self-exclusion or forced exclusion from school of gender variant or transgender young people, and young people who are gay, lesbian or bisexual. Young people of different political opinions may also self-exclude themselves from particular courses and campuses of higher education.
- There was a persistent underrepresentation of pupils who are Newcomer or from minority ethnic backgrounds, pupils who are entitled to FSM, and pupils who are from a care background in grammar schools.
- People with disabilities were underrepresented in enrolments in postgraduate and 'part-time/other' courses in higher education.
- There was a persistent underrepresentation of older people, people who were previously or are currently married/in a civil partnership/co-habiting, and people who have dependants in most further and higher education courses and job training programmes.
- On accredited courses, non-accredited courses in further education, and in Training for Success, the shares of enrolees with dependants decreased over the time period examined. This is an emergent inequality.

Attainment

- Of great concern is the lower educational attainment of males, particularly Protestant males and all pupils who are entitled to free school meals. These attainment gaps are persistent inequalities and have yet to be addressed.
- Catholics consistently had higher achievement proportions that Protestants at post-primary level and this gap widened over the time period.
- Since 2007/08, there has been a reversal of patterns in the proportion of minority ethnic and white school leavers achieving attainment targets at GCSE and A Level between 2007/08 and 2011/12. In particular, the attainment proportions of female minority ethnic

pupils in general decreased since 2007/08, while Irish Traveller school leavers had persistently low attainment throughout the time period examined.

- There were persistently lower proportions of educational attainment for pupils with disabilities, pupils who have special educational needs, and pupils from a care background. Despite increases in their attainment proportions since 2007/08, the attainment gaps widened.
- Widowed people had the lowest achievement rate out of all other marital status groups in accredited courses in further education.
- Those with dependants were more likely to successfully complete accredited further education courses than those who did not have dependants. In the general population, those who are carers were much less likely than others to have higher education as their highest qualification level.

Progression

- Males fall further behind females in their progression from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3.
- Catholics and those from 'Other' religions, minority ethnic groups, and separated/divorced people were more likely to leave accredited professional and technical further education courses early than other groups.
- Those aged 25 years and older were less likely than younger age groups to receive job training while in employment.
- Students with overt political affiliations, particularly those studying subject areas such as politics or history, do not feel able to debate or interrogate their political opinions while in their courses.

Destinations

- Upon leaving school, females were less likely than males to enter employment and job training programmes and the subject area of 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology' in higher education; males were underrepresented in accredited and non-accredited further education courses and in all subject areas in higher education (except 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology'). These trends are persistent inequalities.
- Students aged 25 years and older, students from marital status groups other than 'single', and students with dependants in higher education were persistently less likely to enrol in the STEM subject area of 'Maths, IT, Engineering and Technology'. Students with a disability represented the smallest share of enrolees 'Medicine, Dentistry, and Subjects Allied to Medicine'.

- Compared to other groups within the equality grounds, there were persistently lower proportions of school leavers entering higher education from the following groups: Protestants, 'Others'; school leavers who have a disability or any special educational needs; school leavers who are Traveller; young people from a care background; and young people who receive free school meals.
- The proportion of minority ethnic school leavers going onto higher education has decreased (dramatically so for minority ethnic females), while the proportion of white school leavers entering higher education has increased slightly over the five year period – the ethnicity gap has therefore narrowed to the detriment of minority ethnic students.
- Student with a disability, minority ethnic students, students aged 20 years and under, and single students were much less likely to enter full-time paid work upon leaving higher education than other groups.
- Older leavers (aged 50 years and older), separated/divorced leavers, leavers who had dependants, and leavers who had a self-reported disability were persistently less likely to gain employment and sustain employment after completion of job training programmes.

Other Key Inequalities

- The lack of available and/or robust data on the educational access, attainment, progression and destinations of several groups hinders progress being made on redressing the educational inequalities they may face. These groups include: transgender people; people from 'Other' religious group categories (i.e. disaggregation of this category is needed); people of different political opinions; Roma people and Eastern European immigrants (as they are classed as 'white' within official statistics); people with disabilities; people of different sexual orientations; and young people in transition (whether from leaving care or having been a carer to someone).

Appendix A: Stakeholder Engagement

A.1 List of groups/organisations whose staff/members participated in focus groups or interviews

- Belfast Carer's Centre
- Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People
- Belfast Metropolitan College
- Queen's University Belfast
- University of Ulster
- The Rainbow Project
- Gay and Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland- Cara Friend
- TransgenderNI-SAIL
- FOCUS: THE IDENTITY TRUST
- Unionist Students' society
- Mairéad Farrell Republican Youth Committee

A.2 List of groups/organisations whose staff/members participated in Expert Seminar Event

- Barnardos
- Belfast Carers' Centre
- Belfast Education and Library Board
- Belfast Metropolitan College
- Botanic Primary School
- Cara-Friend/Gay and Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland
- Southern Education & Library Board"
- Children's Law Centre
- Contact a Family Northern Ireland
- Department of Employment and Learning (DEL)
- Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI)
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI)
- Gender Essence
- Mediation Northern Ireland
- MENCAP
- North Eastern Education and Library Board
- Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People
- Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
- Northern Ireland Youth Forum /Fóram Óige Thuaisceart Éireann
- Queen's University, Belfast
- Include Youth
- Support, Acceptance, Information, Learning (SAIL)
- Shine Charity
- South West College
- Special Education Needs Advice Centre
- Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards
- Focus: The Identity Trust
- The National Deaf Children's Society
- Women's Support Network
- Youthnet

Appendix B: Enrolments by School Type

Data for the tables presented in this appendix was calculated using data available from the following sources:

Table B.1: DENI. (2012). Enrolments at schools and in funded pre-school education in Northern Ireland 2011/12 (revised). Statistical Press Release 29 May 2012. Available at www.deni.gov.uk/

Table B.2: DENI. (2013). Enrolments at schools and in funded pre-school education in Northern Ireland 2012/13 (revised). Statistical Press Release 13 May 2013. Available at www.deni.gov.uk/

Table B.3: DENI. (2014). Enrolments at schools and in funded pre-school education in Northern Ireland 2013/14 (revised). Statistical Press Release 20 March 2014. Available at www.deni.gov.uk/

Table B.1. Enrolments by School Type, 2011/12.

School Sector 2011/12	School Management Type	Number of Schools	Number of Pupils	Percentage of Pupils within Sector	Percentage pupils within subsector
PRE-SCHOOL					
Nursery School	Controlled	65	4,134	17.9%	69.9%
	Catholic Maintained	32	1,777	7.7%	30.1%
	Total within nursery schools	***97***	***5,911***	***25.6%***	***100.0%***
Nursery School and Reception*	Controlled	142	4,375	18.9%	48.3%
	Catholic Maintained	147	3,905	16.9%	43.1%
	Other Maintained	9	258	1.1%	2.9%
	Controlled Integrated	6	94	0.4%	1.0%
	Grant Maintained Integrated	14	420	1.8%	4.6%
	Total within nursery class/reception	**318**	**9,052**	***39.2%***	***100.0%***
Voluntary and Private Pre-school Centres	Voluntary	341	**7,323**	31.7%	89.9%
	Private	40	**826**	3.6%	10.1%
	Total within voluntary and private	***381***	***8,149***	**35.3%**	**100.0%**
	TOTAL PRE-SCHOOL	**796**	**23,115**	**100.0%**	-
PRIMARY	Controlled	378	71,224	45.7%	-
	Catholic Maintained	392	71,603	46.0%	-
	Other Maintained	27	2,388	1.5%	-
	Controlled Integrated	19	3,209	2.1%	-
	Grant Maintained Integrated	23	5,316	3.4%	-
	Grammar school preparatory depts - Controlled	3	246	0.2%	-
	Grammar school preparatory depts - Other Management	12	1,708	1.1%	-
	TOTAL PRIMARY	**854**	**155,694**	**100.0%**	

POST-PRIMARY					
Non-Grammar	Controlled	56	30,358	20.7%	36.1%
	Catholic Maintained	71	41,154	28.0%	48.9%
	Other Maintained	1	550	0.4%	0.7%
	Controlled Integrated	5	2,713	1.8%	3.2%
	Grant Maintained Integrated	15	9,418	6.4%	11.2%
	Total within non-grammar	***148***	***84,193***	***57.4%***	
Grammar	Controlled	17	15,185	10.3%	24.3%
	Voluntary Under Catholic Management	29	27,097	18.5%	43.3%
	Under Other Management	22	20,272	13.8%	32.4%
	Total within grammar	***68***	***62,554***	***42.6%***	-
	TOTAL POST-PRIMARY	**216**	**146,747**	**100.0%**	-
OTHER	Special	41	4,549	83.9%	-
	Hospital	2	191	3.5%	-
	Independent	15	681	12.6%	-
	TOTAL OTHER	**58**	**5,421**	***100.0%***	**-**
ALL	**TOTAL ENROLMENTS**	-	**330,974**	-	-
	TOTAL SCHOOLS	**1,210**	-	-	-

* Figures include primary schools with reception classes.

Table B.2. Enrolments by School Type, 2012/13.

School Sector 2012/13	School Management Type	Number of Schools	Number of Pupils	Percentage of Pupils within Sector	Percentage pupils within subsector
PRE-SCHOOL					
Nursery School	Controlled	65	4,134	17.6%	69.9%
	Catholic Maintained	32	1,776	7.6%	30.1%
	Total within nursery schools	***97***	***5,910***	**25.2%**	**100.0%**
Nursery School and Reception*	Controlled	140	4,408	18.8%	48.3%
	Catholic Maintained	142	3,892	16.6%	42.7%
	Other Maintained	12	311	1.3%	3.4%
	Controlled Integrated	7	89	0.4%	1.0%
	Grant Maintained Integrated	14	420	1.8%	4.6%
	Total within nursery class/reception	***315***	***9,120***	**38.9%**	**100.0%**
Voluntary and Private Pre-school Centres	Voluntary	343	7,453	31.8%	88.6%
	Private	47	957	4.1%	11.4%
	Total within voluntary and private	***390***	***8,410***	**35.9%**	**100.0%**
	TOTAL PRE-SCHOOL	**802**	**23,440**	**100.0%**	
PRIMARY	Controlled	374	72,759	45.8%	-
	Catholic Maintained	387	72,891	45.9%	-
	Other Maintained	29	2,551	1.6%	-
	Controlled Integrated	19	3,414	2.1%	-
	Grant Maintained Integrated	23	5,467	3.4%	-
	Grammar school preparatory depts - Controlled	3	235	0.1%	-
	Grammar school preparatory depts - Other Management	12	1,597	1.0%	-
	TOTAL PRIMARY	**847**	**158,914**	**100.0%**	-

POST-PRIMARY					
Non-Grammar	Controlled	55	29,763	20.4%	35.8%
	Catholic Maintained	71	40,642	27.9%	48.9%
	Other Maintained	1	541	0.4%	0.7%
	Controlled Integrated	5	2,612	1.8%	3.1%
	Grant Maintained Integrated	15	9,501	6.5%	11.4%
	Total within non-grammar	***147***	***83,059***	***57.0%***	
Grammar	Controlled	17	15,181	10.4%	24.3%
	Voluntary Under Catholic Management	29	27,170	18.7%	43.4%
	Under Other Management	22	20,248	13.9%	32.3%
	Total within grammar	***68***	***62,599***	***43.0%***	-
	TOTAL POST-PRIMARY	**215**	**145,658**	**100.0%**	-
OTHER	Special	40	4,653	85.9%	-
	Hospital	1	78	1.4%	-
	Independent	15	687	12.7%	-
	TOTAL OTHER	**56**	**5,418**	***100.0%***	-
ALL	**TOTAL ENROLMENTS**	-	**333,430**	-	-
	TOTAL SCHOOLS	**1,200**	-	-	-

* Figures include primary schools with reception classes.

Table B.3. Enrolments by School Type, 2013/14.

School Sector 2013/14	School Management Type	Number of Schools	Number of Pupils	Percentage of Pupils within Sector	Percentage pupils within subsector
PRE-SCHOOL					
Nursery School	Controlled	64	4,074	17.3%	69.6%
	Catholic Maintained	32	1,778	7.6%	30.4%
	Total within nursery schools	**96**	**5,852**	***24.9%***	***100.0%***
Nursery School and Reception*	Controlled	138	4,432	18.9%	47.7%
	Catholic Maintained	132	3,983	16.9%	42.9%
	Other Maintained	12	341	1.5%	3.7%
	Controlled Integrated	7	88	0.4%	0.9%
	Grant Maintained Integrated	14	451	1.9%	4.9%
	Total within nursery class/reception	**303**	**9,295**	***39.5%***	***100.0%***
Voluntary and Private Pre-school Centres	Voluntary	343	**7,319**	31.1%	87.5%
	Private	53	**1,041**	4.4%	12.5%
	Total within voluntary and private	**396**	**8,360**	**35.6%**	**100.0%**
	TOTAL PRE-SCHOOL	**795**	**23,507**	**100.0%**	
PRIMARY	Controlled	370	74,377	45.8%	-
	Catholic Maintained	384	74,252	45.8%	-
	Other Maintained	29	2,724	1.7%	-
	Controlled Integrated	19	3,555	2.2%	-
	Grant Maintained Integrated	23	5,545	3.4%	-
	Grammar school preparatory depts - Controlled	3	212	0.1%	-
	Grammar school preparatory depts - Other Management	11	1,588	1.0%	-
	TOTAL PRIMARY	**839**	**162,253**	**100.0%**	

POST-PRIMARY					
Non-Grammar	Controlled	53	28,699	19.9%	35.3%
	Catholic Maintained	68	39,970	27.8%	49.1%
	Other Maintained	1	564	0.4%	0.7%
	Controlled Integrated	5	2,557	1.8%	3.1%
	Grant Maintained Integrated	15	9,549	6.6%	11.7%
	Total within non-grammar	**142**	**81,339**	***56.5%***	
Grammar	Controlled	17	15,144	10.5%	24.2%
	Voluntary Under Catholic Management	29	27,262	18.9%	43.5%
	Under Other Management	22	20,228	14.0%	32.3%
	Total within grammar	**68**	**62,634**	***43.5%***	
	TOTAL POST-PRIMARY	**210**	**143,973**	**100.0%**	
OTHER	Special	40	4,832	86.4%	-
	Hospital	1	72	1.3%	-
	Independent	15	688	12.3%	-
	TOTAL OTHER	**56**	**5,592**	***100.0%***	
ALL	**TOTAL ENROLMENTS**		**335,325**	-	-
	TOTAL SCHOOLS	**1,187**	-	-	-

* Figures include primary schools with reception classes.