The seventeenth annual Fair Employment Monitoring Report presents an analysis of monitoring returns submitted by 150 public bodies and 4,038 private sector employers during 2006. This update presents a summary of key findings.

In Brief ...

- The monitored Northern Ireland workforce totalled almost 521,000 in 2006, an increase of approximately 3,000 (0.6%) on 2005.
- The composition of the monitored workforce was 56.3% Protestant and 43.7% Roman Catholic.
- While the number of Roman Catholic employees increased overall, there was a fall in the Protestant count, resulting in a rise of 0.7 of a percentage point in the Roman Catholic share of the monitored workforce.
- Private sector employment levels rose by (1.4%), with the continuing decline in manufacturing industry notably affecting Protestants.
- Although Public Sector employment fell by (0.7%), the Catholic share grew by 0.7 of a percentage point.
- The Part-time workforce showed little change during 2006: only one in ten males work part-time compared with almost one in four females.
- Females accounted for 51.7% of all monitored employees.
- Comparing the same sections of the monitored Northern Ireland workforce as were monitored in 1990, by 2006 the Roman Catholic share had increased by 8.2 percentage points (see chart below).
Monitored Northern Ireland Workforce

The monitored Northern Ireland Workforce continued to expand in 2006, with an overall increase of 3,119 employees (0.6%). Growth was confined to the private sector, with a (1.4%) rise, compared with a fall of (0.7%) in public sector employment. Employment levels rose for Roman Catholics during the year by (1.5%) and fell for Protestants by (1.3%). The community composition was 56.3% Protestant and 43.7% Roman Catholic, representing an 0.7 percentage point rise in the Catholic share of monitored employment. The LFS Religion Report (2005) estimated that the Catholic share of the economically active (working age) lies somewhere between 40.4% and 44.0% 5.

The Public Sector Workforce

In 2006, the total public sector workforce was comprised of approximately 193,000 employees, a decrease of just over 1,300 (0.7%) compared with 2005. There was a fall in employment for both communities. The community composition was 56.2% Protestant and 43.8% Roman Catholic, representing an 0.3 percentage point rise in the Catholic share. Females comprised (62.0%) of the total public sector workforce.

In 2006 there were just over 159,000 full-time employees in the public sector, a decline of just under 1,400 employees (0.9%) from 2005. The public sector is comprised of five main sectors, namely: Health, containing over one-third (36.1%) of all public sector full-time employees, followed by the Civil Service (25.5%), Education (12.8%), Security-related employment (9.8%) and the District Councils (5.9%).

The community composition of Public Sector full-time employees was 56.1% Protestant and 43.9% Roman Catholic. In 1990 Catholic full-time representation was 35.3%. Compared with 2005, the number of Roman Catholic employees rose in health, security and the district council sectors, while the Protestant count increased in health and the district councils. Overall, the (0.3%) increase in the number of Catholic employees, coupled with a decrease of (2.0%) in the Protestant count, led to an increase of 0.6 of a percentage point in the Roman Catholic share.

In the health sector the Protestant count rose by (2.3%), while Roman Catholic employment increased by (2.5%). The civil service saw decreases of (2.0%) in Protestant and (0.8%) in Catholic employment levels. The education sector reported falls of (11.8%) and (5.1%)
in Protestant and Catholic employment respectively. In the district councils, by contrast, there was a growth of (1.5%) and (2.5%) respectively in the number of Protestant and Catholic employees.

In security-related employment the Protestant total declined by (5.6%) while the Roman Catholic count rose by (5.4%). In January 2001, around one in thirteen police officers were Roman Catholic: by 2006 this figure had risen to one in six.

In 1990, 48.9% of public sector full-time employees were female. By 2006, this figure had risen to 58.8%, an increase of 0.2 of a percentage point from 2005.

The Private Sector Workforce

In 2006 the total private sector workforce was comprised of just over 328,000 employees, an increase of almost 4,428 (1.4%) on the previous year. The number of Protestant employees fell by (1.2%), while the Roman Catholic count increased by (2.5%). The community composition was 56.4% Protestant and 43.6% Roman Catholic, which represented a rise of 0.9 of a percentage point in the Catholic share of employment. The majority of the private sector workforce (54.4%) is male.

Private Sector Full-time

In 2006 there were approximately 273,500 full-time employees in the private sector, an increase of (1.7%) compared with 2005. The composition was 57.5% Protestant and 42.5% Roman Catholic, representing an increase of 0.9 of a percentage point in the Catholic share of employment.

Looking at the same sections of the full-time private sector workforce as were monitored in 1990, the overall Roman Catholic share has increased by 8.0 percentage points, from 34.6% in 1990 to 42.6% in 2006. The increase was 8.4 percentage points for males and 7.5 percentage points for females.

The private sector is comprised of three categories, namely manufacturing, construction and services. The services sector remained the largest grouping in 2006, comprising nearly two-thirds (64.8%) of monitored private sector full-time employees, followed by manufacturing with (28.1%), and construction with (7.0%) of employees.

Between 2005 and 2006, monitored employment in services increased by over 5,700 (3.4%), while manufacturing experienced a net loss of over 1,800 employees (2.4%). Jobs in Construction increased by
almost 600 (3.1%). The growth of the service sector since 1992, and the general decline in manufacturing jobs, is illustrated by the graph on page 3.

The decline in manufacturing during 2006 particularly affected Protestants, who accounted for just over ninety percent (92.9%) of net job losses in this sector.

The Part-time Workforce

The monitored Northern Ireland part-time workforce, which includes both public and private sectors, is predominately female, comprising nearly 64,000 females (72.3%) and over 24,000 males (27.7%) - a total of almost 88,000. Overall, there was little change in employment levels during the year. The part-time workforce has grown by nearly a fifth (18.2%) since statutory monitoring began in 2001.

The overall composition of the Northern Ireland part-time workforce in 2006 was 53.0% Protestant and 47.0% Roman Catholic, representing a rise of 0.2 of a percentage point in the Catholic share.

Almost three-quarters (74.8%) of the part-time workforce are concentrated in the lower occupational groups, namely: Personal services (SOC6), Sales and Customer services (SOC7) and Elementary occupations (SOC9). Only one-in-six part-timers (16.4%) are classified as either managerial, professional or associate professional occupations.

Looking at the monitored Northern Ireland workforce as a whole (520,839 employees), less than one-in-ten males (9.7%) work part-time, compared with almost a quarter (23.6%) of their female counterparts.

Applicants and Appointees

In 2006 the Roman Catholic proportion of public sector applicants was 47.3% overall, 48.4% for females and 45.7% for males. In the private sector, the Roman Catholic share was 49.2% overall, 50.6% for females and 49.2% for males.

Among appointees in the public sector, the Roman Catholic share was 50.5% overall, 51.0% for females and 49.5% for males. The Roman Catholic proportion of private sector appointees in 2006 was 50.1% overall, 51.0% for females and 49.2% for males.
Almost two-thirds (66.3%) of public sector appointments were obtained by females, compared with just under half (48.9%) in the private sector.

Looking at trends since 1991, the Roman Catholic share of public sector appointments has increased from 40.3% to 50.5% in 2006. In the larger private sector concerns (251 + employees), the Catholic proportion was 50.4% in 2006 compared with 40.2% in 1991.

**Promotees**

In the public sector, the composition of those promotees for whom a community was determined was 54.1% Protestant and 45.9% Roman Catholic. In the private sector, the composition was 56.2% Protestant and 43.8% Roman Catholic.

**Summary**

In summary, the 2006 Report revealed a small increase in overall employment, which was wholly accounted for by growth in the private sector: in contrast, the public sector experienced a drop in monitored employment for the first time since 1998.

The composition of the monitored workforce in 2006 was 56.3% Protestant and 43.7% Roman Catholic. This represented an overall increase of 0.7 of a percentage point in the Catholic share of employment since 2005.

The public sector contracted slightly during the year by (0.7%) in total, and reported a 0.3 of a percentage point increase in the Roman Catholic share of employment. In the Private sector, overall employment levels increased by (1.4%), notably in service-type industries, while the continuing decline in manufacturing particularly affected Protestants. The Roman Catholic share of private sector employment rose by 0.9 of a percentage point.

The part-time workforce showed little change in 2006.

Continuing the trend of recent years, analysis of appointments reveals that, in both the public and private sectors, the proportion of Roman Catholic appointees was higher than their representation among employees.
Endnotes

1. The fair employment legislation requires certain employers to register with the Equality Commission and to complete an annual monitoring return detailing the community background, employment status, occupation and sex of their workforce. All public sector employers are deemed to be automatically registered with the Commission. In January 1990 all private sector concerns with over 25 employees were required to register. From January 1992, the requirement to register was extended to all concerns with 11 or more employees. Since January 2001 all registered employers are required to monitor the composition of those working less than 16 hours per week (part-time employees).

2. The monitored Northern Ireland workforce is comprised of both full-time and part-time employees in all registered public bodies and private sector concerns in Northern Ireland. Monitoring covers around 73% of employee jobs in Northern Ireland, and does not include those private sector concerns with less than 11 employees, school teachers, the self-employed, the unemployed, nor those on government training schemes.

3. In this summary, figures and percentages relating to community composition are based on Protestants and Roman Catholics only, with the Non-Determined excluded.

4. In all comparisons with 1990, part-time employees and those private sector concerns with 25 or less employees are excluded.

5. The LFS is a sample survey and results are therefore subject to sampling error, i.e. the actual proportion of the population with a particular characteristic may differ from the proportion of the LFS sample with with characteristic. Thus, the variable “religious composition of the economically active (working age) has a confidence interval of +/- 1.8 in the 2005 LFS Report. This means there is a 95% certainty that the actual figure for the Roman Catholic share of the economically active (working age) lies somewhere between 40.4% and 44.0%. Further, please note that while LFS estimates refer to the entire workforce, monitoring data relates only to the monitored workforce, making direct comparisons problematic.

6. Monitored security related employment includes: the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Royal Irish Regiment, the Territorial Army, the Royal Naval Reserve, the Northern Ireland Prison Service and Northern Ireland Policing Board secondee from the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

7. Applicant and appointee figures are collected for both full-time and part-time employees. During the period 1991 – 2000, only those private sector concerns with more than 250 employees were required to submit applicant and appointee data to the Commission. In 2001 this requirement was extended to all registered private sector concerns.

8. Caution is required when making comparisons between the community composition of applicants and appointees. In brief, aggregated applicant and appointee data from individual employers may not necessarily refer to the same recruitment exercise, and in certain circumstances, temporary appointments may not always be recorded by employers.

Copies of the full report can be obtained from the Equality Commission (see address below) or from our web site: www.equalityni.org