

FACTSHEET 1:

AWARENESS OF ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS

This factsheet presents the key findings regarding anti-discrimination laws in Northern Ireland, including understanding, awareness and attitudes towards specific laws.

Key Findings: Awareness of Anti-discrimination Laws

- Awareness of specific equality statutes amongst the general public is generally good, with longer established legislation, such as the Sex Discrimination Order, more widely known than more recent legislation. However, specific awareness levels appear to have decreased since 2005, with the exception of the Sexual Orientation regulations, where awareness has increased. There also appears to have been a decline in the public's self reported general understanding of anti-discrimination laws.
- Awareness of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act has declined over the past three years (from 28% in 2005 to 16% in 2008). However, for those who were aware of Section 75, knowledge of the specific duties placed on public authorities appears to have improved considerably-for example, 80% knew that public authorities were required to develop an equality scheme (compared with 31% in 2005).
- Over three-quarters of those surveyed indicated that equality issues are either just as important (55%) or more important (24%) in 2008 than three years earlier.
- Support for equality laws have remained consistent over time with 92% agreeing on the need for such laws (also 92% in 2005).
- Substantial backing was also evident for a Single Equality Act, with 78% agreeing that the Government should enact a single law to protect against all types of unfair treatment (80% agreed in 2005).
- While 28% agreed that equality laws protect one group at the expense of another, 50% disagreed (32% and 55% respectively in 2005)