

## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

8 December 2014

### **Equality Commission publishes 24<sup>th</sup> Monitoring Report**

The latest fair employment monitoring figures show that the proportions of Protestants and Roman Catholics in the monitored workforce broadly correspond to that in the economically active population.

The twenty fourth Fair Employment Monitoring Report, published today by the Equality Commission, shows that the breakdown of the monitored workforce in 2013, looking at only those workers for whom a community background could be determined, was 53% Protestant and 47% Roman Catholic. This is an increase in the Catholic share of 0.4 percentage points from the previous year.

“It is encouraging to see that, once again, the composition of the monitored workforce broadly corresponds to that in the economically active population in Northern Ireland, for which the best estimates show Protestants at 52.4% and Roman Catholics at 47.6%,” Dr. Michael Wardlow, Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission said. “This has been the case for a few years now, but it is markedly different from the position when Fair Employment monitoring was first introduced in 1990.”

The Monitoring Report is drawn from statistics provided by 126 public authorities and 3,533 private concerns, based on their workforce in the year 2013.

Prior to 2008, the total monitored workforce had been gradually increasing year-on-year. Since 2008, the monitored workforce has decreased by 3.5%. Both the public and private sectors are 4% smaller than their most recent peaks, 2006 in the case of the public sector and 2008 in the private sector. The broad decline continues in the public sector, whilst the private sector has experienced growth in more recent years.

Reflecting broad trends from recent years, Roman Catholics make up a higher and increasing proportion of applicants and appointees. Protestants continue to make up higher proportion of leavers which, while fluctuating annually, has shown an overall decrease over time.

“The work carried out annually on fair employment monitoring allows individual employers to assess their own workforce composition and consider any issues which may be impacting on fair participation for members of the Protestant or Roman Catholic communities. It also increases the more general understanding of the changes and dynamics of the monitored workforce as a whole.” Dr. Wardlow said. “The three yearly reviews carried out by employers, to assess whether their businesses are providing fair participation for Catholics and Protestants throughout their organisation, also have a positive impact on promoting equality in the workplace.”

"The fact that the monitored workforce has declined in recent years – and the potential that there will be further reductions, particularly in the public sector workforce – highlights the continuing importance of this focus on fair participation," Dr. Wardlow said. "The monitoring legislation was introduced because equality of opportunity was recognised as a core value in our society and that remains true whatever the economic circumstances. The data collected and provided by individual employers makes a considerable contribution to that objective."

An overview of high level trends and a summary of the Northern Ireland Monitored Workforce Returns for 2013 (with associated data downloads) can be accessed at [www.equalityni.org/femonreport](http://www.equalityni.org/femonreport)