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31st Fair Employment Monitoring Report published

The 31st Fair Employment Monitoring Report has been published by the Equality Commission.

Chief Commissioner, Geraldine McGahey, said: “Over the last three decades, Fair Employment legislation and monitoring have been fundamental to driving change and ensuring fair participation in our workplaces. Employers have clearly recognised their duties and responsibilities under the Fair Employment law.

“Northern Ireland and its workplaces are much more diverse places than ever before. The inequalities many people face are different now and we need to take account of new challenges.

“Our experiences show that if something is not measured, it is unlikely to be changed. The Commission believes it is time for monitoring requirements to be extended to include nationality and ethnic origin. The new Assembly must take learnings from implementing the Fair Employment Monitoring Regulations over the past 30 years and apply them in today’s context.”

This year’s report shows that the total monitored workforce was 566,495, an increase of 1,669 (0.3%) over the previous year, despite the return rate for monitoring forms being somewhat affected by the pandemic.

- Overall, 246,544 (44.3%) were Protestant, 244,516 (43.9%) Roman Catholic, and 65,435 (11.8%) were Non-Determined. The Non-Determined share increased by 0.8 percentage points (pp) from 2019 (11.0%).
- When Non-Determined category not included, in 2020, Protestants [50.2%] continued to comprise the majority of the workforce. The Roman Catholic share of the monitored workforce increased by [0.3 pp] to [49.8%].
- Roman Catholics comprised more than half of job applicants [53.5%]. In 2020, the Roman Catholic share of applicants to the monitored workforce had increased by [8.7%] from [44.8%] in 2001.
- Roman Catholics represented [53.3%] of appointees to the monitored workforce in 2020. This continues a broad trend of increasing Roman Catholic appointees to the monitored workforce during the period 2001-2020. Overall, their share has increased by [8.5%] from [44.8%] in 2001.
- For the sixth consecutive year, Roman Catholics [52.1%] comprised a greater share of leavers from the monitored workforce.

- In 2020, women accounted for more than half (53.0%) of all monitored employees in Northern Ireland.

Ms McGahey concluded: “As always, we are very grateful to employers for putting in the work on their monitoring returns, especially in 2020, which was an unprecedented situation for us all.”

“Fair employment practices in our workplaces ultimately benefit us all. It’s often only once we’ve left school and gone to work that we meet and work with people who are from different backgrounds to ourselves.

By employers continuing to drive good practice and by continuing to monitor and evidence progress, Northern Ireland’s employers are doing society a significant service.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

- The [31st Annual Monitoring Report](#) (pdf, 2020) presents an aggregate summary of the 3,807 valid monitoring returns from employers received by the Commission between 1 January and 31 December 2020.
- Monitoring covers an estimated 62 - 65% of those in employment and includes all public sector employers and all private sector employers with 11 or more employees.
- Please note, the overall picture for 2020 is subject to the circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic. Analyses based upon the previous year’s (2019) returns from the employers who were unable to submit in 2020 suggests a likely under-reporting of approximately 10,000 employees. It also highlighted that the under-reporting did not affect the workforce composition of the returns for 2020.
- The monitoring reports have reported the percentages for the community background compositions of the workforce in square brackets [] and are based on the Protestant and Roman Catholic community backgrounds only; the Non-Determined are excluded.
- High Level Trends in the Monitored Workforce continue to show a gradual upward trend in the Roman Catholic share of the monitored workforce; this has been evident since 2001. This increase continued in 2020 ([0.3 pp]), although at a lesser degree to that observed in previous years, see Chart 10 on page 21 of the Monitoring Report.
- Full information is available online at www.equalityni.org/femonreport31