

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



# KEY INEQUALITIES IN EMPLOYMENT

**SUMMARY**  
MAY 2018



- 1.1 The *Statement on Key Inequalities in Employment in Northern Ireland* highlights our assessment of inequalities and differences in employment faced by equality groups across the Section 75 equality categories in Northern Ireland.
- 1.2 The Commission’s understanding of the importance of addressing inequalities relating to employment remains:
- “It is generally accepted that improving access to, and progression within, employment is seen in public policy as a key driver of economic and social wellbeing and presents a key route to improved social mobility and inclusion as well as a route out of poverty.”<sup>1</sup>*
- 1.3 In compiling this Statement, the Commission has drawn on a wide range of sources including: research reports from government departments; the community and voluntary sectors; academic research and the Commission’s own research archive. In addition, the Commission undertook a detailed analysis of the Labour Force Survey by each equality ground. The Commission also contracted independent research<sup>2</sup> and associated stakeholder engagement has played a key role.
- 1.4 The Commission also sought the views of Departmental representatives, S75 representatives and community and voluntary sector representatives on its identified key inequalities and data gaps through a series of meetings and a seminar event. In addition, the Commission held a public consultation on its findings. The Statement in its current form, therefore, reflects feedback received following an extensive consultation process with stakeholders.
- 1.5 Alongside a number of differences and wider inequalities, fourteen key inequalities have been identified for participation and sustainability of employment<sup>3</sup>, from data spanning 2007-2016. These are presented below along with short explanations.
- 1.6 An important caveat is that there remain significant and specific data gaps across a number of themes in relation to a number of equality groups, specifically: gender identity and sexual orientation. In

---

<sup>1</sup> ECNI (2007) [Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland](#). ECNI, Belfast, page 8.

<sup>2</sup> Raeside R., McQuaid, R., Canduela, J., Graham, H., Chen, T., Egdell, V. and Pearson, M. (2014) *Employment Inequalities in Northern Ireland*. ECNI: Belfast.

<sup>3</sup> There are opportunities to participate in employment, including economic inactivity and activity, and whether in full-time or part-time employment; and there are few cultural barriers to participating in employment. In addition, the employment is sustainable concerning monetary rewards, is not temporary or precarious in relation to contracted hours; offers opportunity for training and personal development; offers career progression and there are few cultural or other barriers to continuing in/progressing in employment.

addition, there is a lack of data disaggregation in relation to disability; ethnicity; and, dependency status. These shortfalls limit the Commission's ability to draw robust conclusions about inequalities, and/or progress in addressing the same across the full range of equality categories and groups.



## Key Inequalities

- **There is a persistent employment gap between people with and without disabilities.**
- **Women experience a lower employment rate and a higher economic inactivity rate when they have dependents.**
- **Lone parents with dependents experience barriers to their participation in employment.**
- **Carers experience barriers to participating in employment.**
- **Irish Travellers are less likely to be in employment than all other ethnic groups.**
- **Those aged 18-24 years old have higher unemployment rates than those aged 25 years and older.**
- **Those aged 50-64 years old are less likely to be in employment and more likely to be economically inactive than those aged 25-49 years old.**
- **Women, lone parents with dependents and carers who provide less than 49 hours of care are more likely to be in part-time employment.**
- **Women experience industrial segregation in employment.**
- **Women and lone parents experience occupational segregation in employment.**
- **Migrant workers, particularly those from Eastern European countries are subject to industrial and occupational segregation.**
- **Migrant workers and refugees face multiple barriers to employment in Northern Ireland.**
- **Migrant workers are vulnerable to exploitation.**
- **Prejudicial attitudes both within and outside the workplace are experienced by people with disabilities, women, Trans people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, people from minority ethnic groups, migrant workers and those of different religious beliefs.**



## Key Inequality

**There is a persistent employment gap between people with and without disabilities.**

- 1.7 People with a disability are more likely to be not working and not actively looking for work (economically inactive) than people without disabilities<sup>4, 5</sup>; consequently, they are much less likely to be in employment than people without disabilities. In addition, the gap in the employment rate between people with and without disabilities is persistent, having shown little change between 2006 and 2016.
- 1.8 For people with disabilities, gaps in educational attainment may partially account for the large employment gap between people with and without disabilities<sup>6</sup>. However, even when attainment is accounted for, participation in employment is still lower for people with disabilities than non-disabled people with equivalent qualifications<sup>7</sup>.
- 1.9 People with disabilities, however, face wider barriers such as access to transport, the physical environment and limited support in employment, all of which can impact on their ability to participate in employment<sup>8</sup>.
- 1.10 Among people with disabilities, people with mental health issues and/or a learning disability are less likely to be employed<sup>9</sup> compared to people with hidden disabilities, progressive or other disabilities, physical disabilities and / or sensory disabilities.

---

<sup>4</sup> See Raeside, R., McQuaid, R., Canduela, J., Graham, H., Chen, T., Egdell, V. and Pearson, M. (2014) Employment Inequalities in Northern Ireland. ECNI: Belfast.

<sup>5</sup> In addition, 75.5% of those without a disability were employed in Q1 2012 compared to 35.2% of those with a disability; and, 78.5% of those without a disability were employed in Q1 2016 compared to 35.1% of those with a disability in Q1 2016 .

<sup>6</sup> See NISRA (2015) Northern Ireland Labour Market Report, p23. NISRA: Belfast

<sup>7</sup> MacInnes T, Tinson A, Gaffney D, Horgan G and Baumberg B (2014). Disability, long-term conditions and poverty, p33. New Policy Institute

<sup>8</sup> See The Detail (2016) Access Denied: Shortfalls Revealed in Disability provision at Venues Across N.I. The Detail: Belfast and Disability Action (2017): UNCRPD Implementation Shadow Monitoring Report. Disability Action: Belfast. IMTAC (2015) Valuing Pedestrian Journeys – lessons learned from walking audits. IMTAC: Belfast; and Disabled People's Voices (2015): NI Our Lives Our Voices Our Votes Report. Disabled People Voices: Belfast

<sup>9</sup> In Q1 2016 32.6% of those with mental health and/or learning disabilities were in employment, compared to: 40.4% of those with physical and sensory disabilities; 45.7% of those with progressive or other disabilities and 55.1% of those with hidden disabilities.



## Key Inequality

**Women experience a lower employment rate and a higher economic inactivity rate when they have dependents.**

- 1.11 Women experience a lower employment rate<sup>10</sup> and a higher economic inactivity rate<sup>11</sup> when they have dependents.
- 1.12 Factors explaining this are likely to be linked to the disproportionate share of caregiving by women, with gender stereotypes relating to the role of the mother as primary caregiver and father as the earner that may result in higher rates of economic inactivity among women<sup>12</sup>.
- 1.13 Barriers may also be attributed to the cost and availability of childcare<sup>13</sup>, with Northern Ireland having one of the lowest levels of available childcare<sup>14</sup> and being one of the most expensive regions for childcare in the UK<sup>15</sup>. For women, paid work may not be considered worthwhile if a significant proportion of female-generated income is being spent on childcare<sup>16</sup>.
- 1.14 In addition, qualifications and confidence are an issue for women from disadvantaged backgrounds; low-skilled and low-paid jobs often do not allow women to afford paid childcare and may offer lower levels of flexibility to accommodate caregiving<sup>17</sup>. In addition, the current social welfare system may inhibit labour market participation, as women are unsure if work-based income would exceed benefits-based income,

<sup>10</sup> See Raeside, R., McQuaid, R., Canduela, J., Graham, H., Chen, T., Egdell, V. and Pearson, M. (2014) Employment Inequalities in Northern Ireland. ECNI: Belfast. The Commission found the rate of employment for men to be 71.5% in Q1 2012 and 75.1% in Q1 2016. In comparison, the rates for women were 63.8% in Q1 2012 and 63.6% in Q1 2016.

<sup>11</sup> In April - June 2016 the difference between economic inactivity rates for men and women was 11.8 percentage points.

NISRA (2016) Quarterly Supplement to the Labour Market Report April – June 2016 Data Tables. Table QS4.1 Economically inactive.

<sup>12</sup> McQuaid, R., Graham, H. and Shapira, M (2013) Child Care: Maximising the Participation of Women. ECNI: Belfast.

<sup>13</sup> McQuaid, R., Graham, H. and Shapira, M. (2013) Child Care: Maximising the Participation of Women. ECNI: Belfast.

<sup>14</sup> Employers for Childcare (2010) Sizing up: A comparative study of childcare policies within the four regions of the UK. Employers for Childcare: Belfast

<sup>15</sup> In Bashir, N., Crisp, R., Gore, T., Reeve, K. and Robinson, D. (2011) Families and work: Revisiting barriers to employment. DWP: London

<sup>16</sup> McQuaid, R., Graham, H. and Shapira, M (2013) Child Care: Maximising the Participation of Women. ECNI: Belfast.

<sup>17</sup> McQuaid, R., Graham, H. and Shapira, M (2013) Child Care: Maximising the Participation of Women. ECNI: Belfast.

particularly when the cost of childcare and risk of losing housing benefits is taken into account<sup>18</sup>.



### Key Inequality

#### Lone parents with dependents experience barriers to their participation in employment

- 1.15 Lone parents with dependents experience a lower employment rate<sup>19</sup>,<sup>20</sup> and a higher economic inactivity rate<sup>21</sup>, particularly for women who constitute the majority of lone parents. Factors explaining this are similar to that experienced by women with dependents but further compounded for lone parents with dependents who have sole responsibility for the care of their child(ren)<sup>22</sup>.



### Key Inequality

#### Carers experience barriers to participating in employment.

- 1.16 Barriers for carers increase with the volume of care provided. Carers who provide more than 20 hours of care per week are less likely to be in employment<sup>23</sup> and more likely to be economically inactive<sup>24</sup> than those who do not provide care.

<sup>18</sup> McQuaid, R., Graham, H. and Shapira, M (2013) Child Care: Maximising the Participation of Women. ECNI: Belfast.

<sup>19</sup> See Raeside, R., McQuaid, R., Canduela, J., Graham, H., Chen, T., Egdell, V. and Pearson, M. (2014) Employment Inequalities in Northern Ireland. ECNI: Belfast.

<sup>20</sup> The Commission found that, at each time point between 2012-2016, lone parent women had the lowest rates of employment of all genders and dependency groups, with just over half (51.2%) of lone parent women in employment in Q1 2016.

<sup>21</sup> See Raeside, R., McQuaid, R., Canduela, J., Graham, H., Chen, T., Egdell, V. and Pearson, M. (2014) Employment Inequalities in Northern Ireland. ECNI: Belfast. The Commission found that between 2012 and 2016 economic inactivity rates were around twice (e.g. 43.4% in Q1, 2016) of those who were married or cohabiting with dependent children (e.g. 22.7%, Q1, 2016) and those who had no dependent children (e.g. 24.9%, Q1, 2016).

<sup>22</sup> McQuaid, R., Graham, H. and Shapira, M. (2013) Child Care: Maximising the Participation of Women. ECNI: Belfast.

<sup>23</sup> The Commission's analysis of Census 2011 data revealed that those who provided more than 20 hours of unpaid care were less likely to be in employment (54.8%, 20-49 hours of care provided; 36.8%, > 50 hours of care provided) than those who did not provide unpaid care (68.2%).

<sup>24</sup> The Commission's analysis of Census 2011 data revealed that carers are more likely to be economically inactive (4.1%, 1-19 hours of care provided; 13.9%, 20-49 hours of care provided; 21.7%, > 50 hours of care provided) than those who did not provide unpaid care (3.4%).



- 1.17 For carers, a lack of flexibility in the workplace to enable them to manage caring responsibilities<sup>25</sup> and a lack of suitable care services are major barriers to participation<sup>26</sup>. However, attitudinal barriers to carers from employers and work colleagues also represent a barrier to employment<sup>27</sup>.
- 1.18 These factors result in some carers giving up work, the consequence of which is negative impacts on their finances, health and wellbeing<sup>28</sup>.



### Key Inequality

**Irish Travellers are less likely to be in employment than all other ethnic groups.**

- 1.19 Irish Travellers are less likely to be in employment<sup>29</sup> and more likely to be economically inactive<sup>30</sup> than other ethnic groups. Traveller women, in particular, are less likely to participate in employment and are more likely to be economically inactive<sup>31</sup> than women from all other ethnic groups.
- 1.20 Low educational attainment<sup>32</sup> may partially account for the large employment gap between Irish Travellers and other ethnic groups. Another major barrier is prejudice and discrimination both in society and in the workplace with discriminatory attitudes preventing them from participating in employment<sup>33</sup>. In addition, a greater traditional

<sup>25</sup> Jopling K (2016) Walking the tightrope. The challenges of combining work and carer in later life. London: Carers UK and Age UK cited in Devine P and Gray A M (2016). The impact of caring. *Research Update. Number 109*. ARK: Belfast.

<sup>26</sup> Carers UK (2016). State of Caring 2016, p.15. Carers UK: London

<sup>27</sup> See Devine, P. and Gray, A.M. (2016). The impact of caring. *Research Update. Number 109*. ARK: Belfast.

<sup>28</sup> Jopling K (2016) Walking the tightrope. The challenges of combining work and carer in later life. London: Carers UK and Age UK cited in Devine P and Gray A M (2016). The impact of caring. *Research Update. Number 109*. ARK: Belfast.

<sup>29</sup>The Commission's analysis of Census 2011 data revealed that 20.0% of Irish Travellers were employed compared to: 57.6% of White; 64.0% of Asian; 56.7% of Black; 54.4% of Mixed; and, 58.5% of Other ethnic groups.

<sup>30</sup> The Commission's analysis of Census 2011 data revealed that 69.0% of Travellers were economically inactive compared to 33.9% of White; 27.8% of Asian; 26.3% of Black; 29.8% of Mixed; and, 28.3% of Other ethnic groups.

<sup>31</sup> The Commission's analysis of Census 2011 data revealed that, among women, 77.9% of Irish Travellers were economically inactive compared to 38.7% for White; 33.2% for Asian; 32.2% for Black; 30.7% for Mixed; and, 35.6% for Other ethnic groups.

<sup>32</sup> Irwin, J., McAreavey, R. and Murphy, N. (2014). The economic and social mobility of ethnic minority communities in Northern Ireland. Joesph Rowntree Foundation: York

<sup>33</sup> Scullion, G. and Rogers, S. (2014). Traveller Voices for Change. Mapping the view of Irish Travellers on integration and their sense of belonging in Northern Ireland.

emphasis on family and home, as well as cultural resistance to the use of formal childcare present further barriers to the participation of Irish Travellers in employment<sup>34</sup>.



### Key Inequality

**Those aged 18-24 years old have higher unemployment rates than those aged 25 years and older.**

- 1.21 Those aged 18-24 years old have higher unemployment<sup>35</sup> rates than those aged 25 years and older<sup>36</sup>. Youth employment was identified as a key inequality in our previous 2007 Statement on Key Inequalities<sup>37</sup>. Youth unemployment is associated with lifelong problems, such as worklessness, poverty, limited employment opportunities, low wages, lower average life satisfaction and ill health<sup>38</sup>.



### Key Inequality

**Those aged 50-64 years old are less likely to be in employment and more likely to be economically inactive than those aged 25-49 years old.**

- 1.22 Older people, aged 50-64 years also experience age-related inequalities in relation to *participation in employment*, with this age

<sup>34</sup> See: Cemlyn, S., Greenfields, m., Burnett, S., Matthews, Z. and Whitwell, C. (2009). Research Report 12: Inequalities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller Communities: A review; and, McQuaid, R., Graham, H. and Shapira, M. (2013) Child Care: Maximising the Participation of Women. ECNI: Belfast.

<sup>35</sup> The LFS uses the ILO definition of unemployment, which covers people who are: out of work, want a job, have actively sought work in the previous four weeks and are available to start work within the next fortnight; or out of work and have accepted a job that they are waiting to start in the next fortnight. The LFS definition of unemployment may include those who are in full-time education and training if they are actively seeking work, however, many people who are in full-time education and training may not be actively seeking work and will therefore be counted as economically inactive.

<sup>36</sup> See Raeside, R., McQuaid, R., Canduela, J., Graham, H., Chen, T., Egdell, V. and Pearson, M. (2014) Employment Inequalities in Northern Ireland. ECNI: Belfast. The Commission also found that in Q1, 2016 18-24 year olds were more likely to be unemployed (12.4%) than 25-49 year olds (3.8%) and 50-64 year olds (3.8%).

<sup>37</sup> ECNI (2007) Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland. ECNI: Belfast.

<sup>38</sup> McQuaid, R., Hollywood, E., Canduela, J. (2010). Employment Inequalities in an Economic Downturn. ECNI: Belfast.

group less likely to be in employment<sup>39</sup> and more likely to be economically inactive<sup>40</sup> than those aged 25-49 years old.

- 1.23 For older people, the main work-related barriers were viewed to be: '*difficulty in getting a job*'; '*being made redundant*'; and, '*job insecurity*'<sup>41, 42</sup>. However, increases in economic inactivity among this age group may be linked to long-term sickness, rising retirement age and the provision of informal care, such as for children as well as older and/or disabled relatives<sup>43</sup>.



## Key Inequality

**Women, lone parents with dependents, and carers who provide less than 49 hours of care, are more likely to be in part-time employment.**

- 1.24 Women are more likely to be in part-time employment than men<sup>44</sup>. Lone parents with dependent children are more likely to be in employment on a part-time basis<sup>45</sup>. In addition, carers who provide less than 49 hours of unpaid care are more likely to work part-time<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> The Commission found that in Q1, 2016, 64.0% of those aged 50-64 years were in employment compared to 79.5% of 25-49 years, an employment gap of 15.5 percentage points. This gap persisted in the period between 2012 and 2016.

<sup>40</sup> See Raeside, R., McQuaid, R., Canduela, J., Graham, H., Chen, T., Egdell, V. and Pearson, M. (2014) *Employment Inequalities in Northern Ireland*. ECNI: Belfast. The Commission also found that in Q1, 2016, 33.2% of those aged 50-64 years were economically inactive compared to 16.7% of 25-49 year olds, a gap of 16.5 percentage points. This gap persisted in the period between 2012 and 2016.

<sup>41</sup> The respective percentages were: 46.9% 'difficulty in getting a job'; 24.0% 'being made redundant'; and, 18.5% 'job insecurity'.

<sup>42</sup> Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2008) [Awareness of the age regulations and attitudes of the general public in Northern Ireland towards age-related issues](#).

<sup>43</sup> See Magill and Peake (2016) *An anatomy of economic inactivity in Northern Ireland: Working Paper*. University of Ulster Economic Policy Centre: and McMenemy R (2016) *Northern Ireland Childcare Cost Survey*. Employers for Childcare: Belfast.

<sup>44</sup> See Raeside, R., McQuaid, R., Canduela, J., Graham, H., Chen, T., Egdell, V. and Pearson, M. (2014) *Employment Inequalities in Northern Ireland*. ECNI: Belfast. The Commission also found that between 2012 and 2016 the rate of part-time employment was a little under 40% (e.g. 39.3% in Q1, 2016) for women compared to a little under 10% (e.g. 9.5% in Q1, 2016) for men.

<sup>45</sup> See Raeside, R., McQuaid, R., Canduela, J., Graham, H., Chen, T., Egdell, V. and Pearson, M. (2014) *Employment Inequalities in Northern Ireland*. ECNI: Belfast. The Commission also found that between 2012 and 2016, lone parents had the highest rate of part-time employment compared to other dependency groups. For example in Q1, 2016, 63.3% of lone parents with dependent children were in part-time employment compared to 24.1 of those who were married or cohabiting with dependent children; and 17.1% of those with no dependents.

<sup>46</sup> The Commission's analysis of Census 2011 data revealed that 18.3% of those who provided 1-19 hours of care and 15.3% providing 20-49 hours of care worked part-time compared to 12.6% of those who provided no care. Carers who provided over 50 hours per week of unpaid care were proportionately less likely to work full-time and part-time (18.1% and 12.2%) compared to those who were not carers (36.0% and 12.6%

- 1.25 While part-time working is one of a number of means by which women, lone parents, and carers balance employment with caring responsibilities, it can negatively influence progression in employment<sup>47</sup>, with women, lone parents and carers sometimes perceived negatively for asking for flexible working<sup>48</sup>. Women, lone parents and carers working part-time are also at risk of low pay and precarious employment, as many part-time jobs are typically associated with the minimum wage and atypical contracts<sup>49</sup>.



### Key Inequality

**Women experience industrial segregation in employment.**

- 1.26 Women are under-represented in industries associated with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) such as Manufacturing, Transport and Communication, Energy and Water and Construction<sup>50</sup>.
- 1.27 Stereotyping and bias within our culture and particularly within male-dominated engineering and technology sectors, has been cited as one factor presenting barriers for women within these industries<sup>51</sup>.
- 1.28 In addition, young women are less likely to choose to study STEM subjects at further and higher education compared to young men<sup>52</sup>

---

respectively). See Census 2011: Table DC3302NI: Economic Activity by General Health by Provision of Unpaid Care by Sex.

<sup>47</sup> See Employers for Childcare (2015) Striking the Balance: the impact becoming a parent has on employment, working life and career. Employers for Childcare: Belfast.

<sup>48</sup> See Employers for Childcare (2015) Striking the Balance: the impact becoming a parent has on employment, working life and career. Employers for Childcare: Belfast and Carers UK (2016) State of Caring 2016. Carers UK: London.

<sup>49</sup> See HC Women and Equalities Committee (2016) Gender Pay Gap 2<sup>nd</sup> report of session 2015-2016 and Joesph Rowntree Foundation (2010) Cycles of poverty, unemployment and low pay. JRF: York.

<sup>50</sup> The Commission found that between 2012 and 2016, women were under-represented in these industries, while there was a overrepresentation of men within these industries. For example, in Q1, 2016 men represented 81.9% of people employed in the 'Manufacturing' sector and 75.0% of those employed in the 'Transport and Communication' sector.

<sup>51</sup> DEL (2013) Addressing Gender Balance – Reaping the Gender Dividend in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, p11. DEL: Belfast.

<sup>52</sup> Burns, S., Leitch, R., and Hughes, J. (2015) Education Inequalities in Northern Ireland. ECNI: Belfast; and DEL (2013) Addressing Gender Balance – Reaping the Gender Dividend in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, p2. DEL: Belfast

thus decreasing their availability for high-level STEM jobs, where men outnumber women by nearly three to one<sup>53</sup>.



## Key Inequality

### Women and lone parents experience occupational segregation in employment.

- 1.29 Women are under-represented in the highest paid and highest status occupations such as 'Managers and Senior Officials'<sup>54</sup> and are over-represented in occupations that are more likely to be lower status and lower paid, such as 'Administrative and Secretarial', 'Personal Service' and 'Sales and Customer Service'<sup>55</sup>. Moreover, women are more likely to report underemployment in their chosen occupation compared to men<sup>56</sup>.
- 1.30 Lone parents also experience occupational segregation in employment<sup>57</sup>, with lone parents with dependent children mostly employed in 'Personal Service' and 'Elementary' occupations<sup>58</sup>.
- 1.31 Caregiving has been identified as one factor influencing occupational segregation with women and lone parents choosing occupations allowing sufficient flexibility to balance the demands of caregiving<sup>59</sup>. This may have a potential impact on the sustainability of employment, with women and lone parents having to consider pay and career progression with flexibility in employment<sup>60</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> STEM Business Group (2013) Addressing Gender Balance – Reaping the Gender Dividend in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). p1. DEL: Belfast

<sup>54</sup> See Raeside, R., McQuaid, R., Canduela, J., Graham, H., Chen, T., Egdell, V. and Pearson, M. (2014) Employment Inequalities in Northern Ireland. ECNI: Belfast. For example the Commission found that in Q1 2016, men represented 61.6% of those in 'Managers and Senior Officials' occupations.

<sup>55</sup> The Commission found that in Q1, 2016, women represented 73.4% of those in 'Administrative and Secretarial', 77.5% of those in 'Personal Service' and 59.6% of those in 'Sales and Customer Service' occupations.

<sup>56</sup> NISRA (2015) Underemployment in Northern Ireland. NISRA: Belfast.

<sup>57</sup> See Raeside, R., McQuaid, R., Canduela, J., Graham, H., Chen, T., Egdell, V. and Pearson, M. (2014) Employment Inequalities in Northern Ireland. ECNI: Belfast.

<sup>58</sup> The Commission found that 17.1% of lone parents were employed in personal service occupations and 15.0% in Elementary occupations. According to Census 2011, lone parents account for 5.9% of those an employment. In all other sectors, representation of lone parents is too low to report.

<sup>59</sup> See House of Commons (2017) Gender Pay Gap: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2015-2016

<sup>60</sup> Stennett, A. and Murphy, E. (2017) Research Matters. How big is the gender pay gap in NI's public and private sectors?



## Key Inequality

**Migrant workers, particularly those from Eastern European countries, are subject to industrial and occupational segregation.**

- 1.32 Migrant workers, particularly Eastern Europeans are over-represented in low-paid, low status jobs<sup>61</sup> such as ‘Process, Plant and Machine Operatives’ and ‘Elementary’ occupations<sup>62</sup> and in low paid-industry sectors<sup>63</sup> such as the ‘Manufacturing’ industry sector<sup>64</sup> and the ‘Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants’ industry sector<sup>65</sup>.
- 1.33 While migrant workers tended to be working in higher-level occupations in their home country, it has been posited<sup>66</sup> that gaining a lower level job in Northern Ireland is treated as a step toward gaining higher-level employment in the future.



## Key Inequality

**Migrant workers and refugees face multiple barriers to employment in Northern Ireland.**

- 1.34 Migrant workers and refugees face numerous barriers to participating in and sustaining employment in Northern Ireland. Recognition of qualifications is an issue for migrant workers and refugees progressing

<sup>61</sup> See Raeside, R., McQuaid, R., Canduela, J., Graham, H., Chen, T., Egdell, V. and Pearson, M. (2014) Employment Inequalities in Northern Ireland. ECNI: Belfast; and Bell, J., Caughey, A., Hansson, U., Martynowicz, A. and Scully, M. (2009) A Report on the Experiences of Migrant Workers In Northern Ireland

<sup>62</sup> In 2016, 15.2% of those employed in the ‘Process, Plant and machine Operatives’ occupation and 14.2% of those employed in ‘Elementary’ occupations were Eastern European. According to Census 2011, their representation in the population is approximately 2.1% of those 18 years and over.

<sup>63</sup> See Raeside, R., McQuaid, R., Canduela, J., Graham, H., Chen, T., Egdell, V. and Pearson, M. (2014) Employment Inequalities in Northern Ireland. ECNI: Belfast; and, Irwin, J., McAreavey, R. and Murphy, N. (2014) The economic and social mobility of ethnic minority communities in Northern Ireland.

<sup>64</sup> In 2015, 15.2% of those employed in ‘Manufacturing’ industry sector were from Eastern Europe. According to Census 2011, their representation in the population is approximately 2.1% of those 18 years and over.

<sup>65</sup> In 2016, 6.1% of those employed in the ‘Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants’ sector were from Eastern Europe. According to Census 2011, their representation in the population is approximately 2.1% of those 18 years and over.

<sup>66</sup> Bell, J., Caughey, A., Hansson, U., Martynowicz, A. and Scully, M. (2009) A Report on the Experiences of Migrant Workers In Northern Ireland.

in employment<sup>67, 68</sup>. In addition, inadequate language proficiency is a major barrier for migrant workers and refugees qualifying for and participating in employment<sup>69</sup>, particularly where the standard of English proficiency for particular professions is set very high<sup>70</sup>.

- 1.35 Uncertainty among employers about an employee's 'right to work' may create perceived legislative barriers for foreign nationals accessing and sustaining employment in Northern Ireland<sup>71</sup>. In addition, the long transition period between seeking and being granted asylum, represents a long time out of employment, which can deskill refugees<sup>72</sup>. This can create a lack of confidence and may require them to retrain or gain new skills prior to seeking employment.



### Key Inequality

#### Migrant workers are vulnerable to exploitation

- 1.36 Many migrant workers who are agency workers are confined to temporary and irregular work, including zero hour contracts<sup>73</sup>. Many face poorer terms and conditions than local workers and are vulnerable to poor employment practices, including a lack of written contracts, long-working hours, non-payment of wages and problems accessing statutory entitlements such as leave<sup>74, 75</sup>.
- 1.37 In addition, human trafficking is an issue in Northern Ireland, with evidence of practices that constitute forced labour of migrant

<sup>67</sup> See Irwin, J., McAreavey, R. and Murphy, N. (2014) [The economic and social mobility of ethnic minority communities in Northern Ireland](#).

<sup>68</sup> See Murphy F and Vieten U M (2017). Asylum Seekers and Refugees' Experiences of Life in Northern Ireland. QUB: Belfast.

<sup>69</sup> See Rogers, S. and Scullion, G. (2014) [Voices for Change. Mapping the views of black and minority ethnic people on integration and their sense of belonging in Northern Ireland](#) and: Murphy F and Vieten U M (2017). Asylum Seekers and Refugees' Experiences of Life in Northern Ireland. QUB: Belfast

<sup>70</sup> Moore C (2017) The Impact of IELTS 7.0 on the Recruitment of EEA-trained Nurses. Specialist Language Courses: London.

<sup>71</sup> Highlighted in the Law Centre response to the Commission's draft Statement on Key Inequalities in Employment in Northern Ireland.

<sup>72</sup> See Murphy F and Vieten U M (2017). Asylum Seekers and Refugees' Experiences of Life in Northern Ireland. QUB: Belfast.

<sup>73</sup> ECNI (2010) The Role of the Recruitment Sector in the Employment of Migrant Workers. ECNI: Belfast

<sup>74</sup> ECNI (2010) The Role of the Recruitment Sector in the Employment of Migrant Workers. ECNI: Belfast

<sup>75</sup> Bell, J., Caughey, A., Hansson, U., Martynowicz, A. and Scully, M. (2009) A Report on the Experiences of Migrant Workers In Northern Ireland.

workers<sup>76</sup>. Common means of forcing people to work include withholding personal documents and forcing migrant workers to pay off debt incurred from ‘borrowing’ money to secure employment<sup>77</sup>. In addition, migrant workers in tied accommodation are also vulnerable to exploitation<sup>78</sup>.

- 1.38 Factors associated with exploitation include an individual’s legal status, a lack of language skills, limited access to social networks and a lack of local knowledge<sup>79</sup>.



### Key Inequality

**Prejudicial attitudes both within and outside the workplace are experienced by people with disabilities, women, Trans people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, people from minority ethnic groups, migrant workers and those of different religious beliefs.**

- 1.39 People with disabilities are more likely to experience prejudice in employment than those without disabilities<sup>80</sup>. Among people with disabilities, people with mental health issues are most likely to be viewed negatively as a work colleague or boss<sup>81</sup>. This stigma and prejudice may impact on the ability of people with disabilities to sustain employment, with disability-related discrimination complaints representing the highest number of enquiries, with respect to employment, to the Equality Commission’s Discrimination Advice Team<sup>82</sup>.

<sup>76</sup> Allamby, L., Bell, J., Hamilton, J., Hansson, U., Jarman, N., Potter, M. and Toma, S. (2011) Forced labour in Northern Ireland: exploiting vulnerability.

<sup>77</sup> Allamby, L., Bell, J., Hamilton, J., Hansson, U., Jarman, N., Potter, M. and Toma, S. (2011) Forced labour in Northern Ireland: exploiting vulnerability.

<sup>78</sup> Allamby, L., Bell, J., Hamilton, J., Hansson, U., Jarman, N., Potter, M. and Toma, S. (2011) Forced labour in Northern Ireland: exploiting vulnerability.

<sup>79</sup> Jarman *et al.* (2011) [Forced labour in Northern Ireland](#). p1.JRF: York; and Allamby, L., Bell, J., Hamilton, J., Hansson, U., Jarman, N., Potter, M. and Toma, S. (2011) Forced labour in Northern Ireland: exploiting vulnerability.

<sup>80</sup> Raeside, R., McQuaid, R., Canduela, J., Graham, H., Chen, T., Egdell, V. and Pearson, M. (2014) Employment Inequalities in Northern Ireland. ECNI: Belfast.

<sup>81</sup> ECNI (2012) Do you Mean Me? Discrimination: attitudes and experience in Northern Ireland. *Equality Awareness Survey 2011*. ECNI: Belfast; and ARK. Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, 2009. ARK [www.ark.ac.uk/nilt](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt) June 2010;

<sup>82</sup> Between April 2014 and March 2015, the Commission received 1380 legal enquiries on the grounds of disability (excluding SENDO). Enquiries on the grounds of disability represented 40.4% of total enquiries (n=3413) received during this period and the highest number of enquiries received on any of the equality grounds.



- 1.40 Women experience prejudice, discrimination and harassment in the workplace; including discrimination due to pregnancy and maternity<sup>83</sup>. Women have reported negative employment experiences such as: failure to consider the risks to health and safety of pregnant employees; being overlooked for promotion or otherwise side-lined; dilution of work responsibilities; being denied training; actions which impact negatively on earnings such as, changes to working hours, non-payment or reduction of pay rise or bonus payments; and, being subjected to negative or inappropriate comments<sup>84</sup>.
- 1.41 Trans people face prejudice and hostility in employment and are less likely to be open about their gender identity in the workplace<sup>85</sup>. Ignorance of Trans issues from employers and work colleagues is a key issue in Trans people participating in and sustaining employment<sup>86</sup>.
- 1.42 Lesbian, gay and bisexual employees are subject to prejudicial attitudes in the workplace. Lesbian, gay and bisexual people often face negative comments and bullying at work due to their sexuality<sup>87</sup>, and may be reluctant to come out in the workplace due to fears of victimisation<sup>88</sup>. Prejudicial attitudes may impact on the ability of lesbian, gay and bisexual people to participate in employment, sustain employment and progress in employment<sup>89</sup>. Many of the barriers and

---

<sup>83</sup> ECNI (2017) 'Gender Equality: Policy Priorities and Recommendations.' Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Belfast. A recent investigation carried out by ECNI has highlighted experiences of unfair treatment of pregnant workers and mothers in the workplace. In particular, it found that a significant percentage (36%) of women participating in this investigation believed that they had been treated unfairly or disadvantaged at work as a result of their pregnancy or having taken maternity leave. See ECNI (2016) Expecting Equality-Summary Report *A Formal Investigation into the treatment of pregnancy workers and mothers in Northern Ireland workplaces*

<sup>84</sup> See ECNI (2016) Expecting Equality-Summary Report *A Formal Investigation into the treatment of pregnancy workers and mothers in Northern Ireland workplaces*

<sup>85</sup> See O'Doherty J (2016). [OUTstanding in your field: Exploring the needs of LGB&T people in rural Northern Ireland. The Rainbow Project](#): Belfast and; McNeil J, Bailey L, Ellis S and Regan M. (2013) Speaking from the Margins: [Trans Mental health and Wellbeing in Ireland](#). TENI: Ireland.

<sup>86</sup> See Gender Equalities Office (2011) Transgender survey #3 and; McNeil J, Bailey L, Ellis S and Regan M. (2013) Speaking from the Margins: [Trans Mental health and Wellbeing in Ireland](#). TENI: Ireland.

<sup>87</sup> See Mc Dermott, M (2011) Through Our Eyes. Experiences of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People in the Workplace; and, Guasp, A. (2013) Gay in Britain. Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People's Experiences and Expectations of Discrimination. Stonewall: London.

<sup>88</sup> Mc Dermott, M (2011) Through Our Eyes. Experiences of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People in the Workplace

<sup>89</sup> Mc Dermott, M (2011) Through Our Eyes. Experiences of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People in the Workplace

challenges in employment faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and Trans people can be linked back to negative experiences in education<sup>90</sup>.

- 1.43 People from minority ethnic groups and migrant workers are subject to prejudice and discrimination in employment. Prejudicial attitudes have been expressed toward Irish Travellers, migrant workers and minority ethnic groups<sup>91</sup>. Racial prejudice and discrimination can impact on the ability of minority ethnic groups and migrant workers to participate in employment, sustain employment and progress in employment. Racial prejudice has been identified in accessing employment<sup>92</sup> and in experiences of racial harassment and intimidation in workplaces<sup>93</sup>.
- 1.44 Prejudicial attitudes and/or discrimination on the grounds of religious belief may impact on experiences within the workplace. Prejudicial attitudes toward those of different religious beliefs is present in Northern Ireland, particularly sectarianism<sup>94</sup> and islamophobia<sup>95</sup>. Prejudicial attitudes, harassment and, intimidation can create a climate of fear which can impact on a person's ability to sustain employment, particularly where individuals are reluctant to speak out due to fears of further victimisation.

---

<sup>90</sup> O'Doherty J (2016). [OUTstanding in your field: Exploring the needs of LGB&T people in rural Northern Ireland. The Rainbow Project](#): Belfast, Page 54.

<sup>91</sup> ARK. Northern Ireland Life and Time Survey, 2007. Attitudes to Minority Ethnic People. ARK, June 2008; and ARK. Northern Ireland Life and Time Survey, 2015. Attitudes to Minority Ethnic People. ARK, June 2016.

<sup>92</sup> See Wood, C. and Wybron, I. (2015) Entry to, and progression in, work

<sup>93</sup> Rogers, S. and Scullion, G. (2014) Voices for Change. Mapping the views of black and minority ethnic people on integration and their sense of belonging in Northern Ireland

<sup>94</sup> Trademark ICTU Anti-sectarian Unit (2012) Sectarianism in the Workplace. Research on Sectarianism in the Private Sector Workplace. ICTU: Belfast.

<sup>95</sup> ARK. Northern Ireland Life and Time Survey, 2007. Attitudes to Minority Ethnic People. ARK, June 2008 and ARK. Northern Ireland Life and Time Survey, 2015. Attitudes to Minority Ethnic People. ARK, June 2016. See also Weller P (2011) Religious discrimination in Britain: A review of research evidence, 2000-10. EHRC: Manchester.

**Equality Commission**

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

**Equality Commission for Northern Ireland**

Equality House  
7-9 Shaftesbury Square  
Belfast BT2 7DP

**Telephone:** 028 90 500 600

**Textphone:** 028 90 500 589

**Fax:** 028 90 331 993

**Email:** [research@equalityni.org](mailto:research@equalityni.org)

**May 2018**

