

Public Opinion Survey on Equality in Northern Ireland - Summary

Prepared for the Equality Commission NI

Ipsos MORI Northern Ireland
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Ipsos Public Affairs

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

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Executive summary

Awareness and understanding

When asked what the term 'equality' means to participants thinking specifically about NI, the most commonly cited response is that it means the equal treatment of all people (19%).

Just over one in ten participants (12%) hold a negative view about the level of equality in NI or feel that equality is lacking.

Attitudes

The majority of participants agree that there are benefits of having an equal society in NI (87% net agreement) and feel that they care deeply about making NI a fairer place to live (86% net agreement).

Opinions are more mixed in terms of how meaningful the term 'equality' is to people and how much it is thought about day to day. Just under half (48%) of participants disagree that the term 'equality' is meaningless to them in their every day lives, while 28% agree.

Equality status and discrimination

The groups considered to be protected from unlawful discrimination overall are racial and ethnic groups (28%), those of a certain sexual orientation (21%) and those from a certain religious or community background (17%).

Almost one-thirds of participants (32%) said that they do not know any groups protected from unlawful discrimination.

In terms of the settings in which people are protected from unlawful discrimination, 38% stated the workplace. 18% considered people to be protected when accessing public services and 8% mentioned education. Over a third of participants (37%) said they do not know any settings in which people are protected from unlawful discrimination.

Views on equality in NI

Ninety percent of participants overall agree that equality and anti-discrimination laws in NI are necessary, while 73% agree that equality and anti-discrimination laws in NI should be strengthened. A small proportion of participants disagree that these laws are necessary (4%) or that they should be strengthened (9%).

There is less optimism among NI citizens that people can achieve their potential regardless of their personal characteristics; 63% agree that this is the case, however 12% disagree.

Around one-fifth of participants (22%) express no opinion on whether people can achieve their potential regardless of their personal characteristics, showing a degree of ambivalence among some people on this issue.

Three quarters (75%) of the population agree that the people of NI are welcoming to others, while 8% disagree.

The majority of participants agree that workplaces are welcoming and inclusive in NI generally (62%), with 8% disagreeing that this is the case.



Executive summary (cont'd)

Views on equality in NI (cont'd)

While the majority of participants also agree that workers are generally treated with dignity and respect (62%), a higher proportion disagree that this is the case (13%).

Overall, the majority of participants agree that more needs to be done to promote good relations between people of different background (88%) and to promote equality of opportunity (80%).

Personal experiences of unwanted behaviour

The majority of participants stated that they had not personally experienced a situation at work where they were not treated with dignity and respect based on their personal characteristics in the last 12 months (66%). Twelve percent of participants stated that they had not been treated with dignity and respect. Twenty two percent of participants stated that they have not been in a workplace during the last 12 months.

Among those participants who are working, 73% reported that they had not witnessed a situation in the last 12 months where others in their workplace were not treated with dignity and respect based on their personal characteristics. Twenty seven percent of participants said they had witnessed this.

Aspects of life in Northern Ireland

A number of statements were presented to participants covering various aspects of life in NI, including the workplace, in education, the local area and public services.

Workplaces

The level of agreement around aspects of workplaces in NI is mixed. Just over a third of participants (35%) agree that workplaces tend to employ people with disabilities, while almost a quarter (25%) disagree that this is the case.

Once in employment, the majority (53%) agree that employees with disabilities are well supported, while 14% disagree with this.

Almost half of participants (48%) agree that workplaces tend to be family friendly and allow flexible working, however 19% disagree that this is the case.

The most divergent views emerge over the statement that workplaces rarely support employees with mental ill-health. While 29% disagreed, feeling that actually workplaces do support employees with mental ill-health, 35% agree that this support is not there.

Education

Seventy one percent of participants agree that schools are supportive of girls studying science, maths and technology subjects. Seven percent of participants disagree with this.



Executive summary (cont'd)

Aspects of life in Northern Ireland (cont'd)

The majority of participants (62%) agree that bullying in schools tends to be on the basis of a child's personal characteristics, while 16% disagree that this is the case.

Over half of participants (56%) agree that traveller and Roma children tend to receive fewer qualifications than other children, with 12% in disagreement.

There are more mixed views over the idea that children who have recently arrived in NI tend to receive fewer qualifications than other children, with 28% in agreement and 26% in disagreement. However, it should be noted that a quarter of participants (25%) answered 'don't know' to this particular statement. Seventy-one percent of participants agreed that schools are supportive of girls studying science, maths and technology subjects.

Local area

Almost 9 in 10 participants (89%) agree that their local shops are accessible, with 6% in disagreement.

To a lesser extent, the majority of participants also agree that the streets and public spaces are well planned and accessible (76%), while 12% disagree that this is the case.

Participants with a long-term disability or illness are significantly less likely to feel that the streets and public spaces are well planned (70%), while those with no disability or illness are significantly more likely to agree (79%).

Public services

Overall, just under half of participants (48%) agree that the needs of different groups of people are taken into account when planning public services, while 25% disagree.

Less than a quarter of participants (21%) agree that public figures show leadership on equality matters, while over half (54%) disagree with this.



Background to the research

Background to the research

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) wished to measure public opinion on equality in Northern Ireland (NI) among the general public. ECNI commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct a telephone survey in order to:

- **Understand** the level of awareness of equality issues.
- **Gather** views on equality issues in Northern Ireland.
- **Measure** perceptions of Northern Ireland's performance on equality issues.

The results of the survey will be used to support the development of ECNI's corporate and business objectives.

Presentation of the data

Corrective rim weighting has been applied to the data on the region, age, gender and social class quotas to ensure the findings are representative of the population in Northern Ireland.

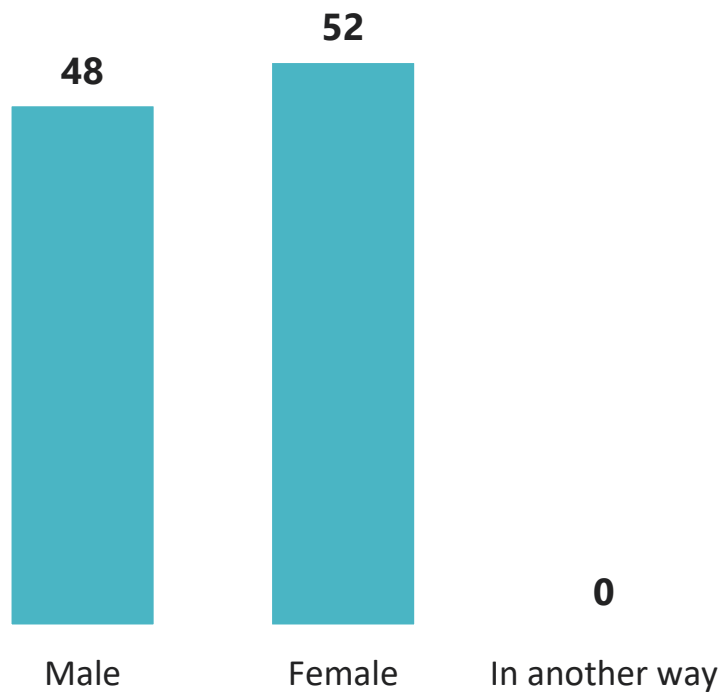
Where results do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of don't knows or not stated responses. Multiple response questions are indicated on the relevant charts.

With the exception of Q7, all questions have a base of 500. When reading data that has been cross-tabulated with demographic information, the base may decrease due to those who refused to answer on a particular demographic question. This is indicated on the charts where applicable.

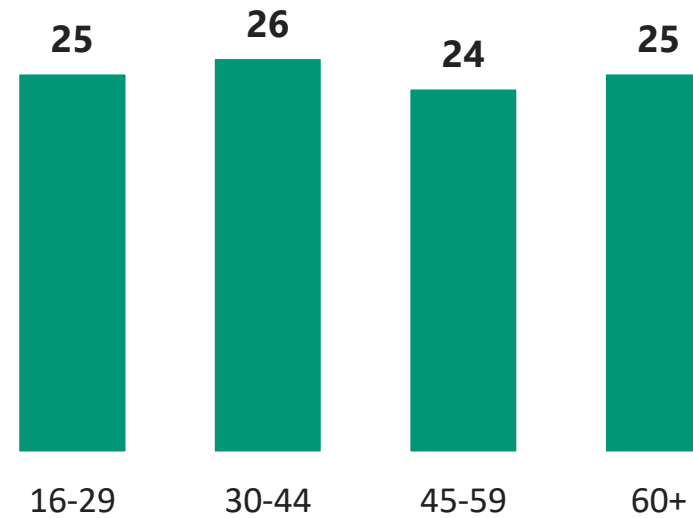
Demographics

Age and gender

Gender (%)

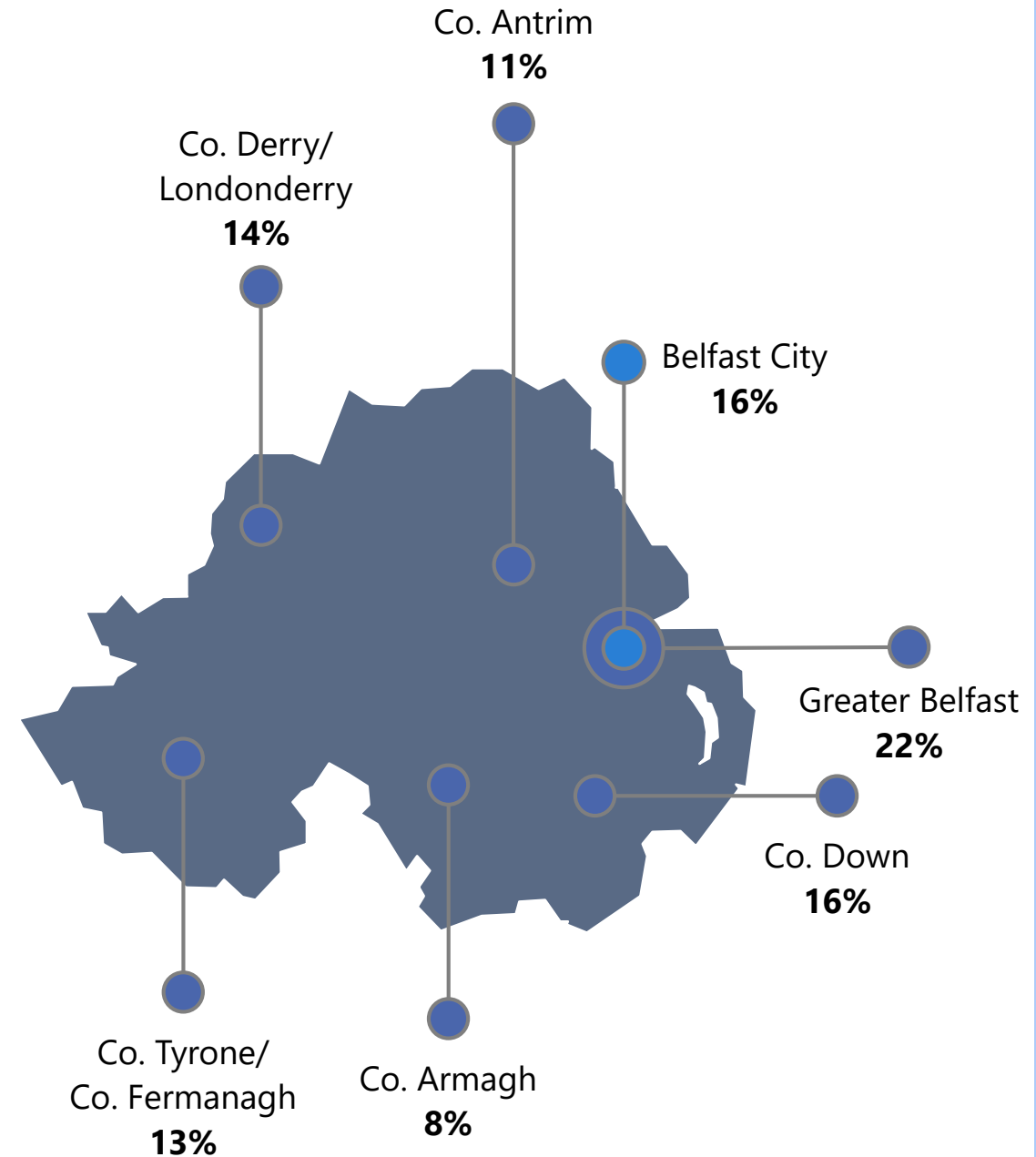
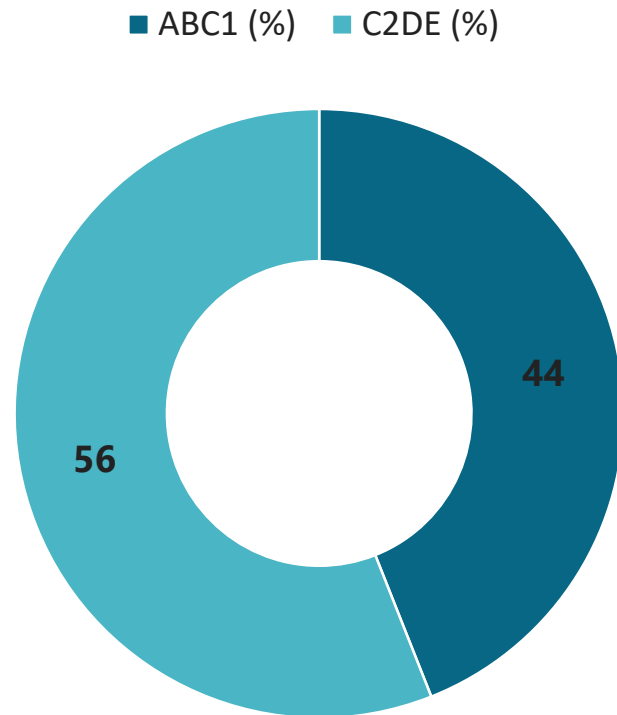


Age (%)



Demographics

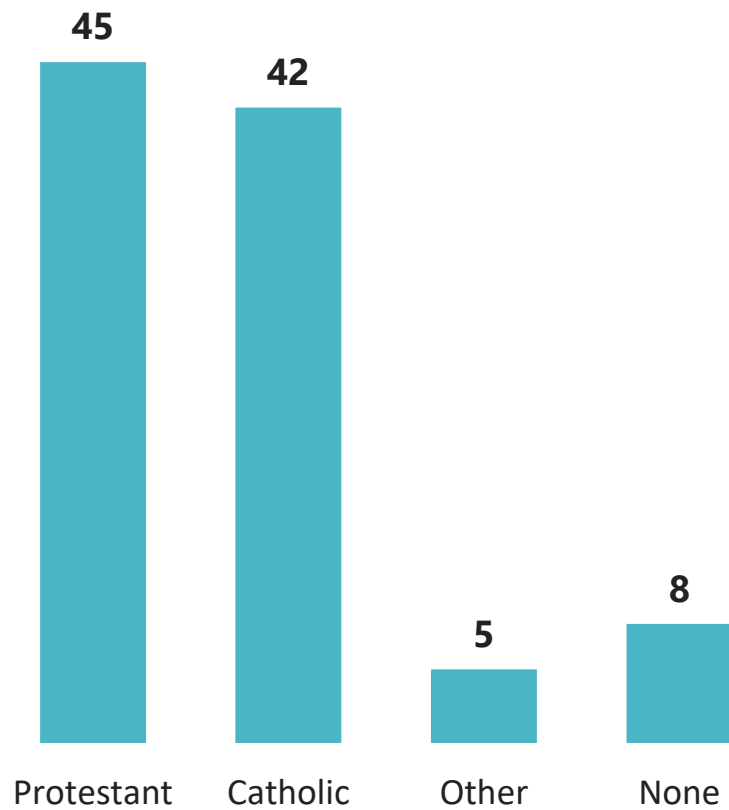
Social class and region



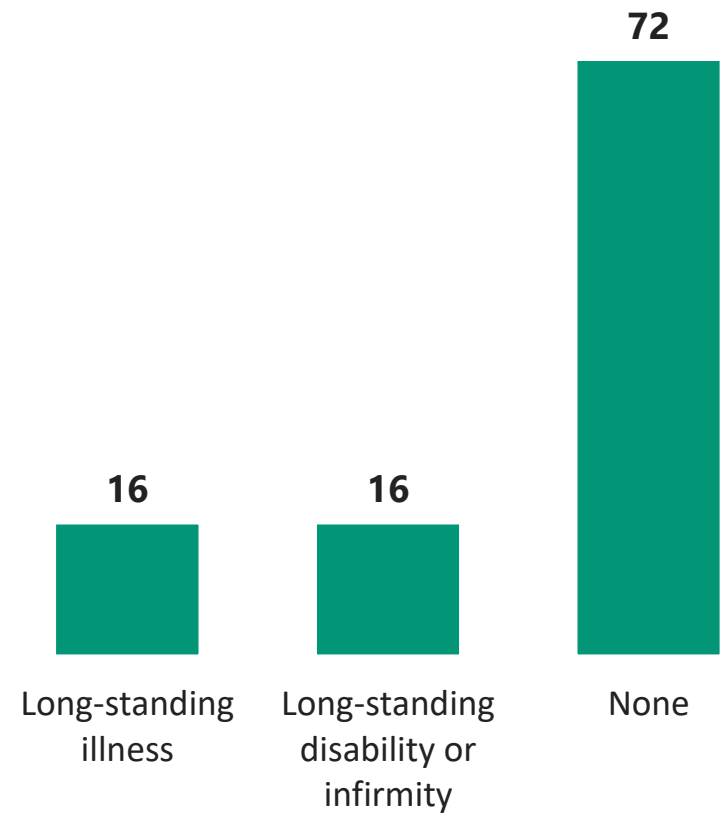
Demographics

Community background and disability

Community background (%)



*Disability (%)

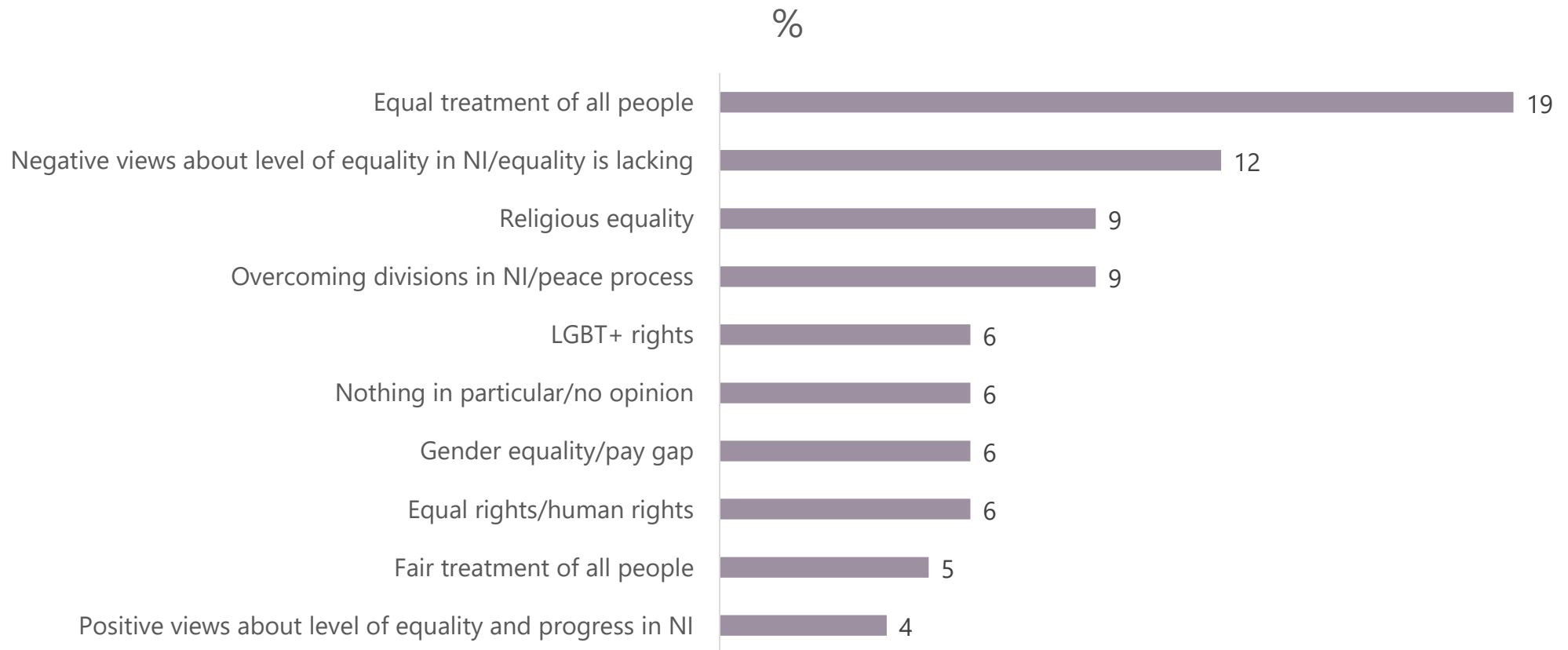


Research findings



Awareness and understanding

Q1. Thinking specifically about Northern Ireland, what do you think of when you hear the term “equality”? (top 10 responses)



Awareness and understanding

Q1. Thinking specifically about Northern Ireland, what do you think of when you hear the term “equality”? (all responses)

Response	%	Response (cont'd)	%
Equal treatment of all people	19	Means different things to different people	2
Negative views about level of equality in NI/equality is lacking	12	Equality for ethnic minority or racial groups	2
Overcoming divisions in NI/peace process	9	Equality for disabled people	1
Religious equality	9	No discrimination	1
Equal rights/human rights	6	Equality has become too PC/has gone too far	1
Gender equality/pay gap	6	Historical issues/troubles	1
Nothing in particular/no opinion	6	Inclusiveness	1
LGBT+ rights	6	Equality in housing	1
Fair treatment of all people	5	Inequality	1
Positive views about level of equality and progress in NI	4	Equality Commission	1
Equality is an ongoing issue/work in progress/improving but room for more improvement	4	Generational differences	1
Not something I think about/not of interest to me	4	Age equality	1
Equality in employment	2	<i>Other</i>	6
Equality is a political/bureaucratic issue	2	<i>Don't know</i>	6



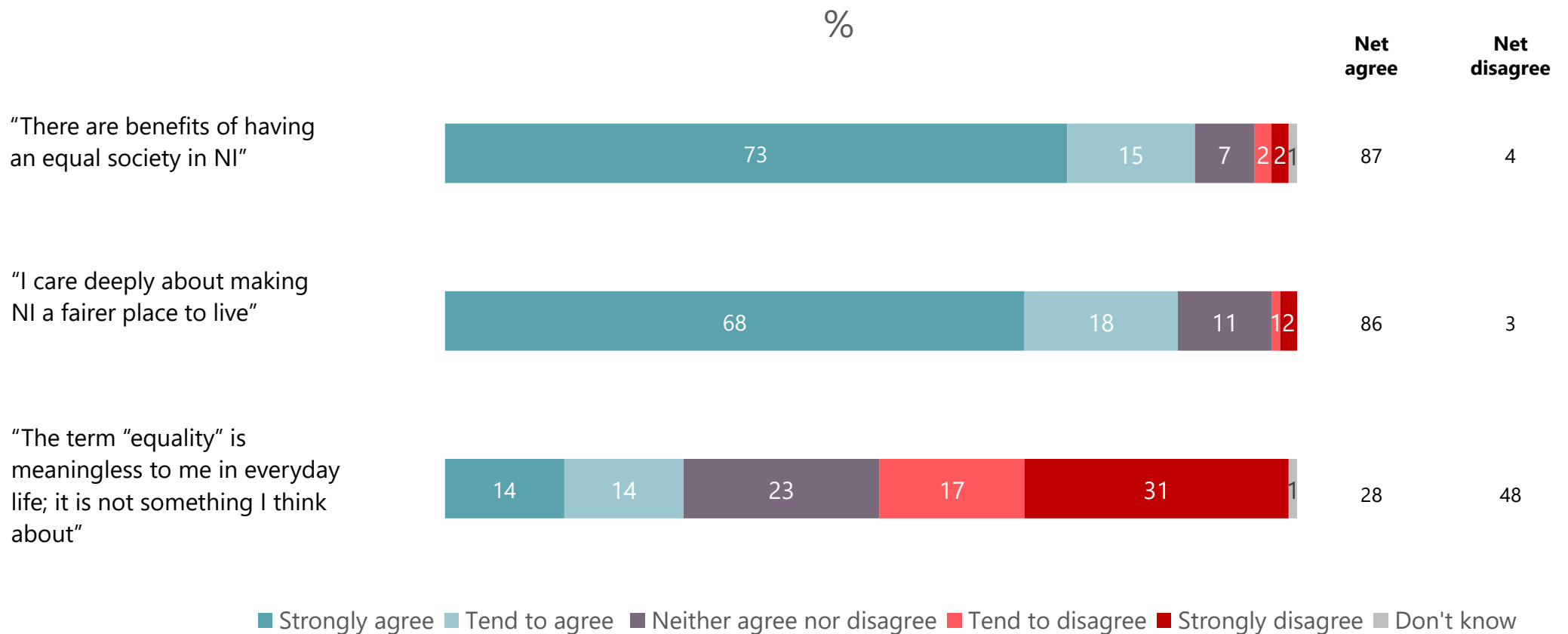
**Northern Ireland is more about
the nationalist/unionist divide,
but there are a number of other
types of equality.**

Female, 30-44, Catholic, Belfast, C2DE



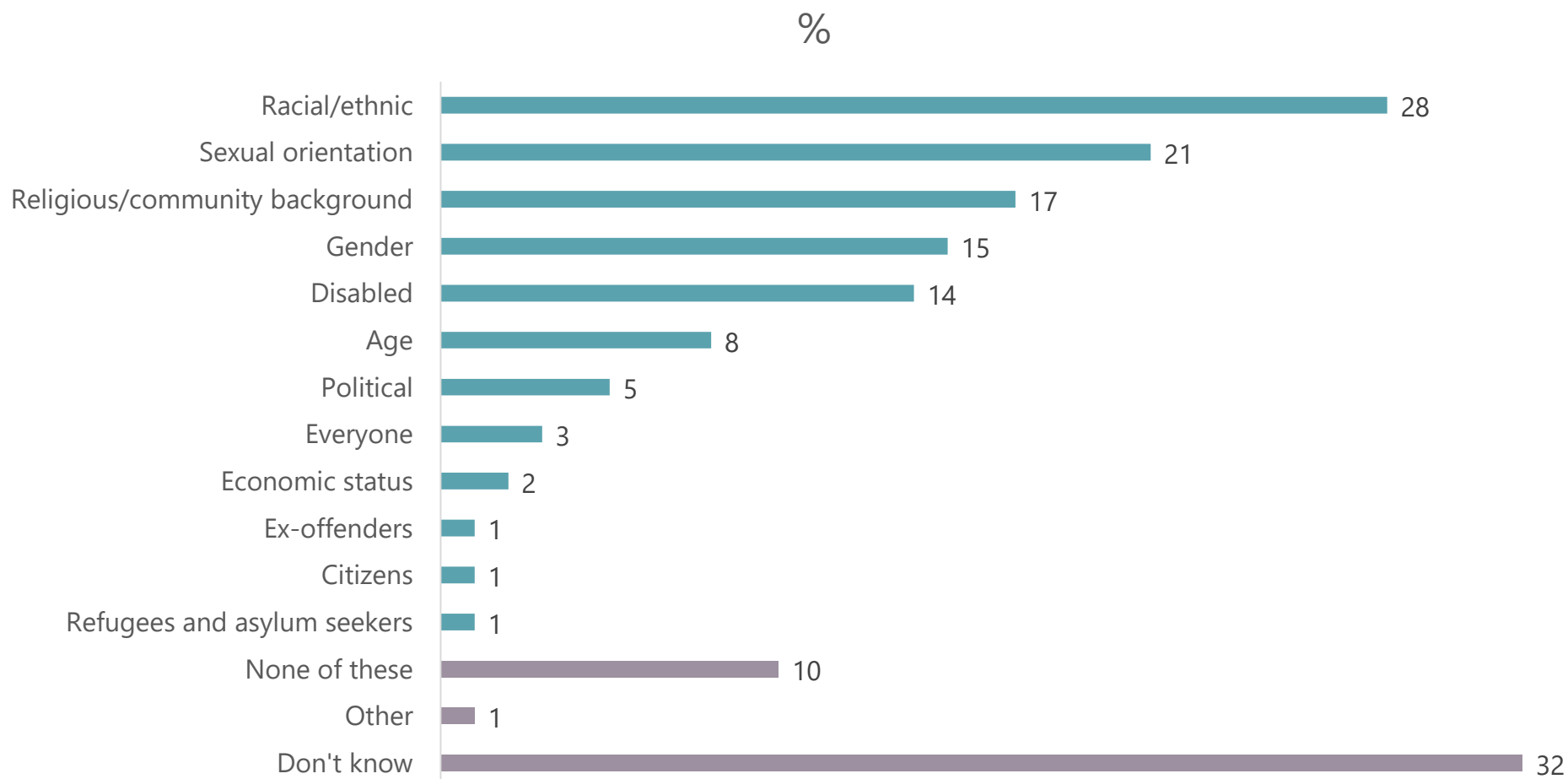
Attitudes

Q2. Thinking of yourself, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:



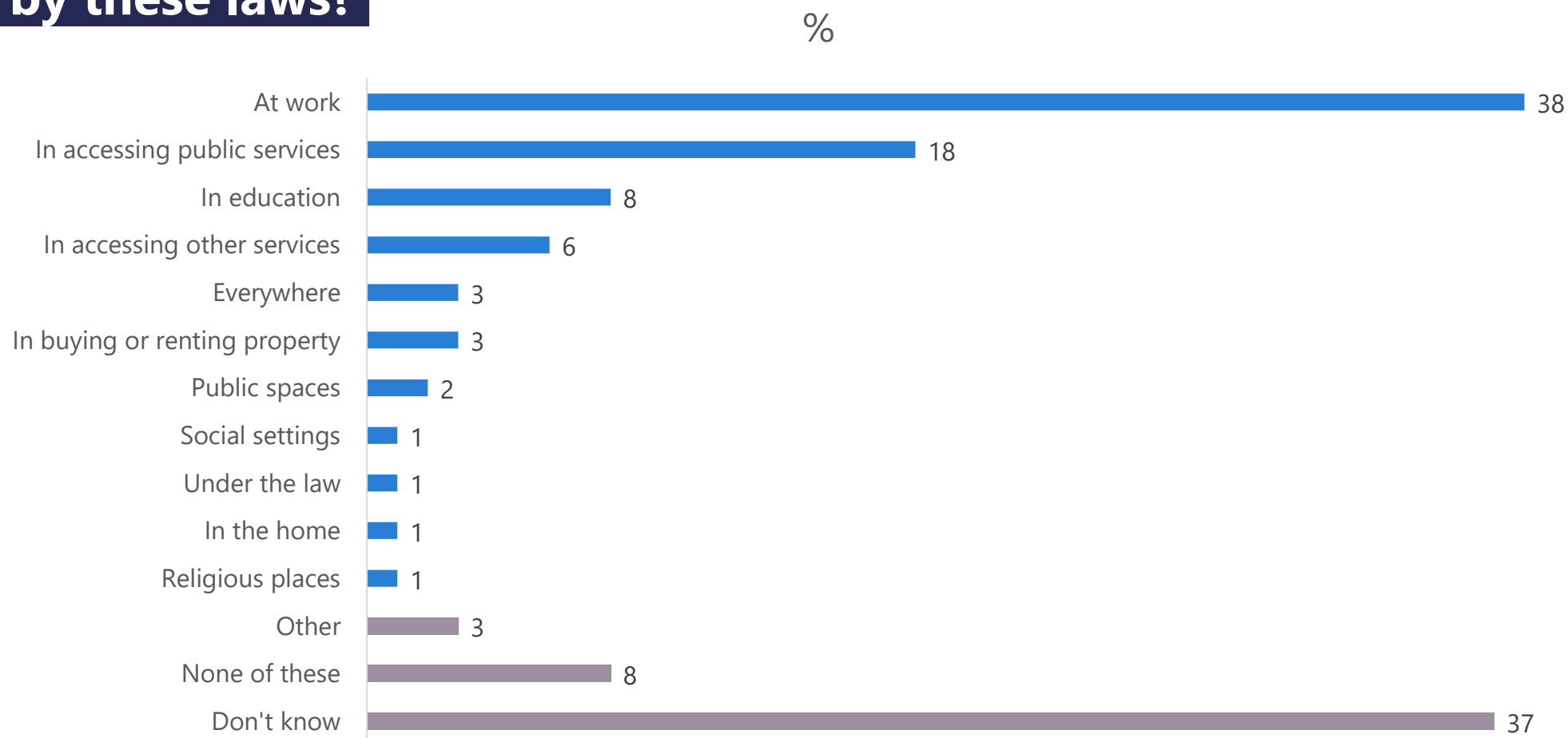
Equality status and discrimination

Q3. Which groups of people, if any, do you think are protected from unlawful discrimination?



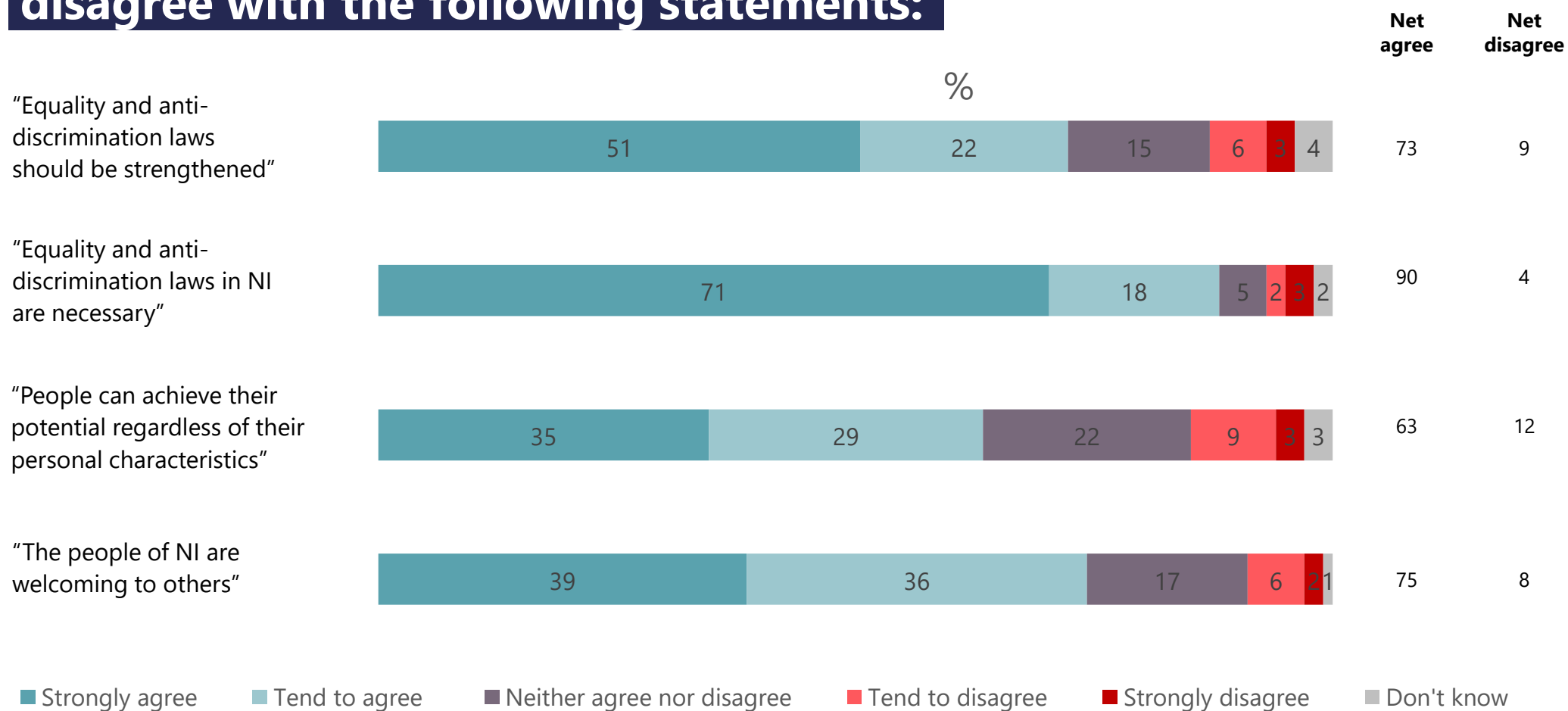
Equality status and discrimination

Q4. And in what settings, if any, do you think people are protected by these laws?



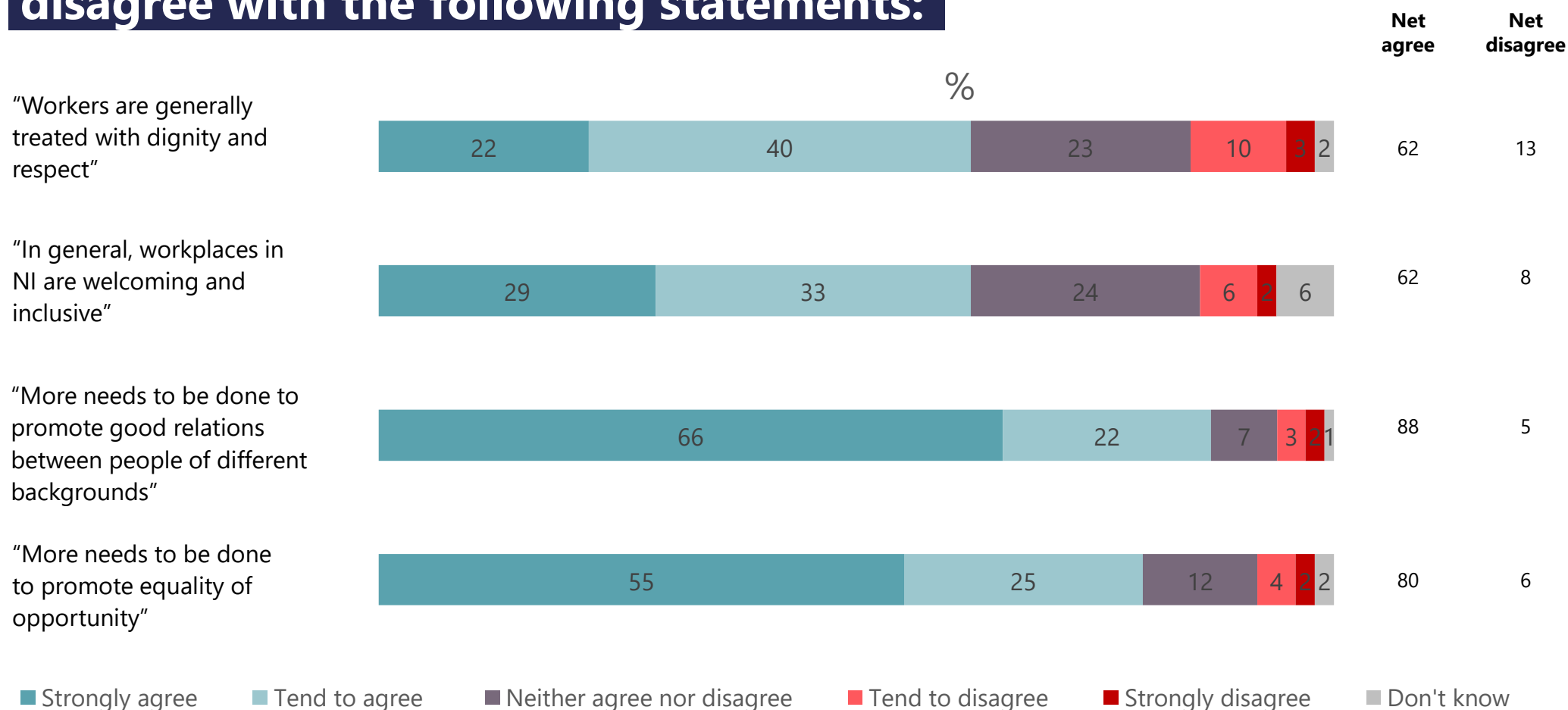
Views on equality in NI

Q5. Thinking about NI today, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:



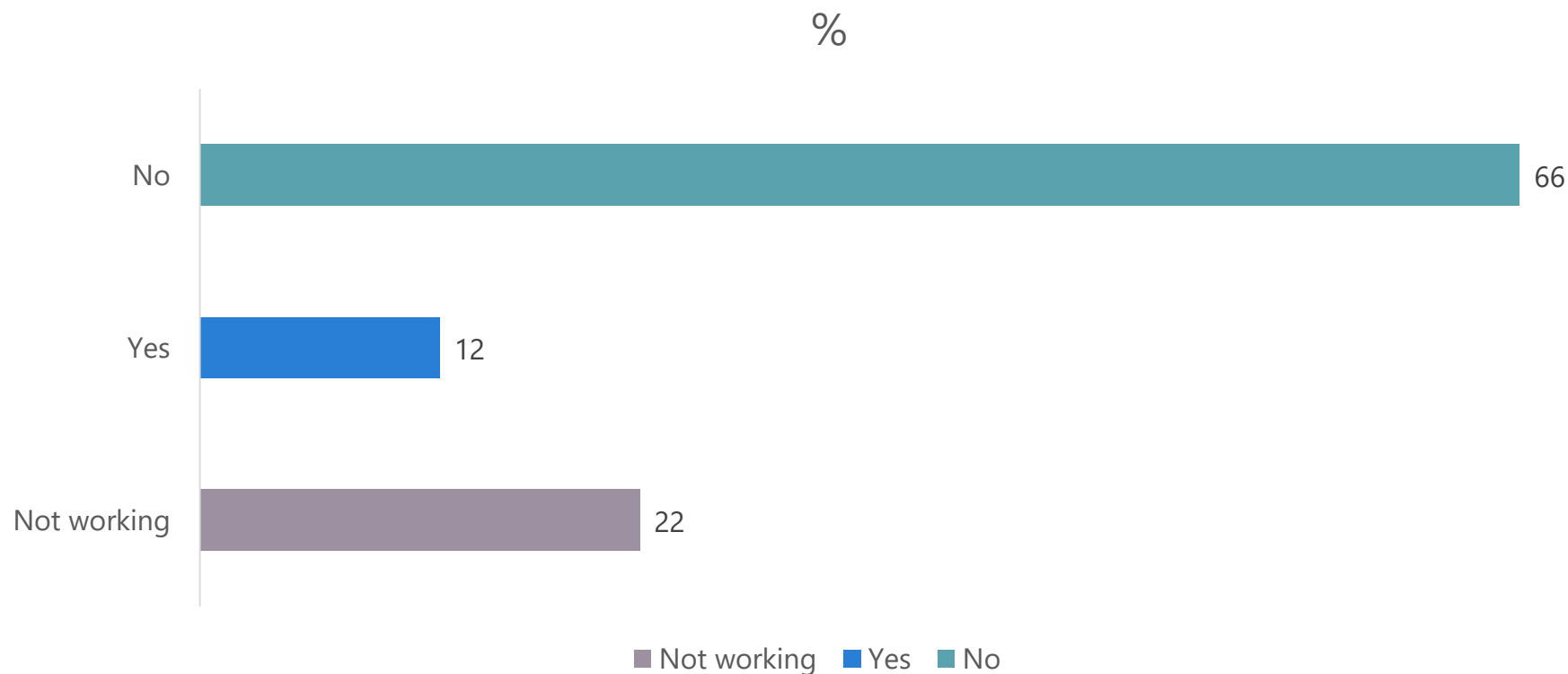
Views on equality in NI

Q5. Thinking about NI today, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:



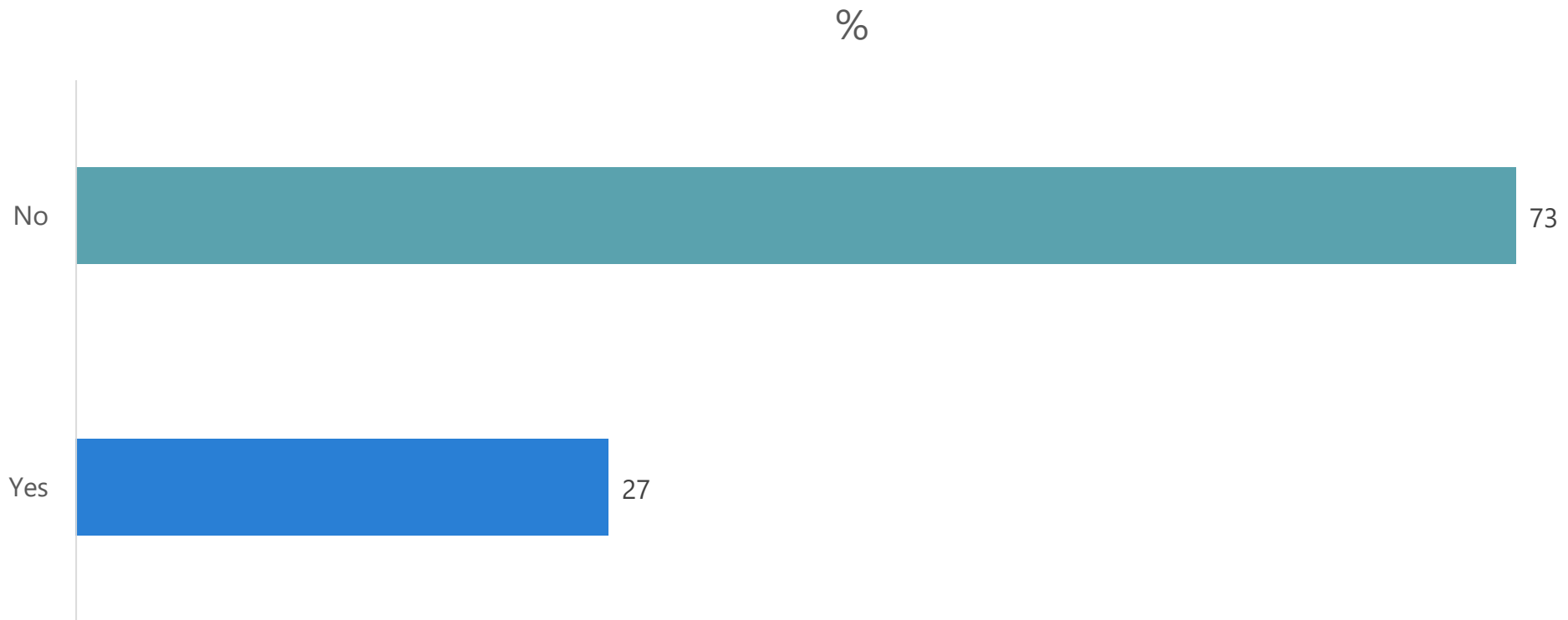
Personal experiences of unwanted behaviour

Q6. During the past 12 months, have you personally experienced a situation where you were not treated with dignity and respect in your workplace based on your personal characteristics?



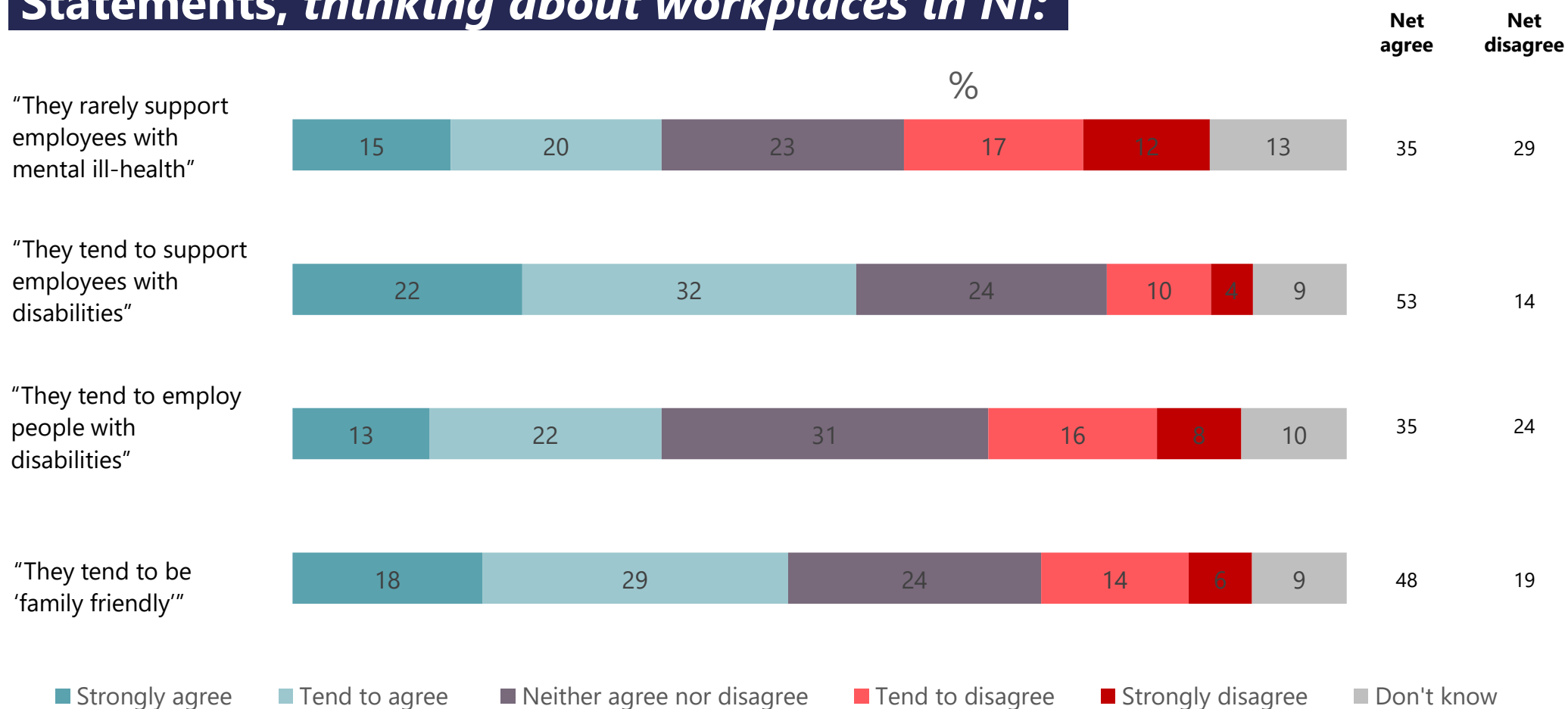
Personal experiences of unwanted behaviour

Q7. During the past 12 months, have you witnessed a situation where others in your workplace were not treated with dignity and respect based on their personal characteristics?



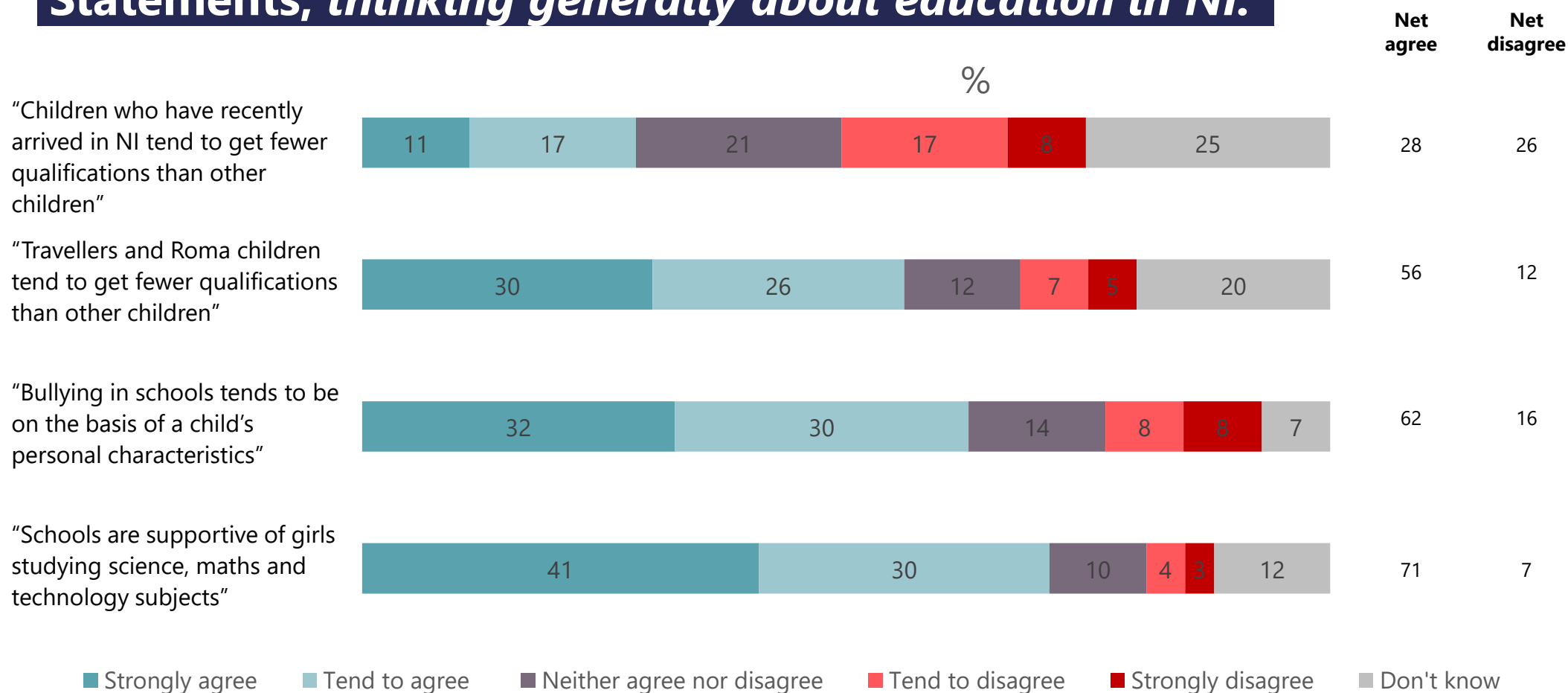
Aspects of life in NI

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following Statements, thinking about workplaces in NI:



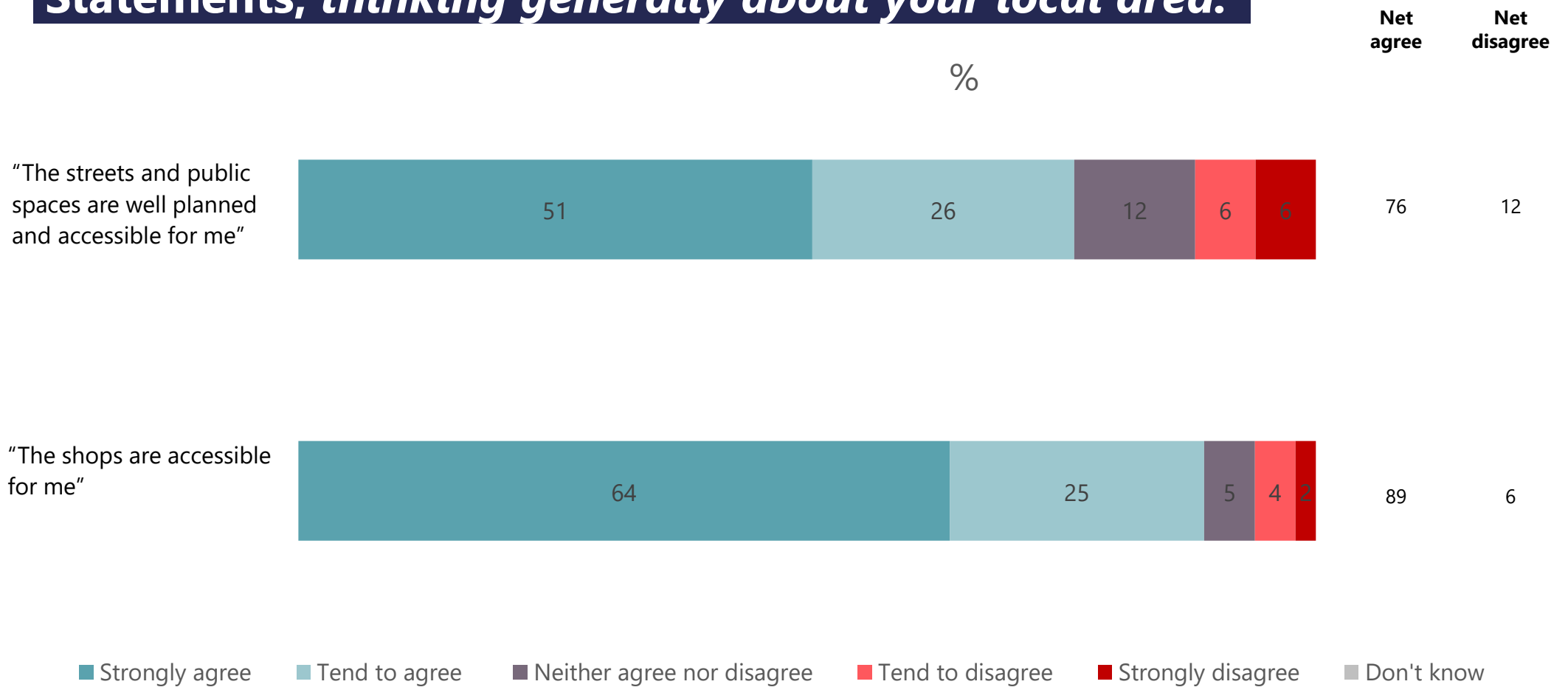
Aspects of life in NI

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following Statements, thinking generally about education in NI:



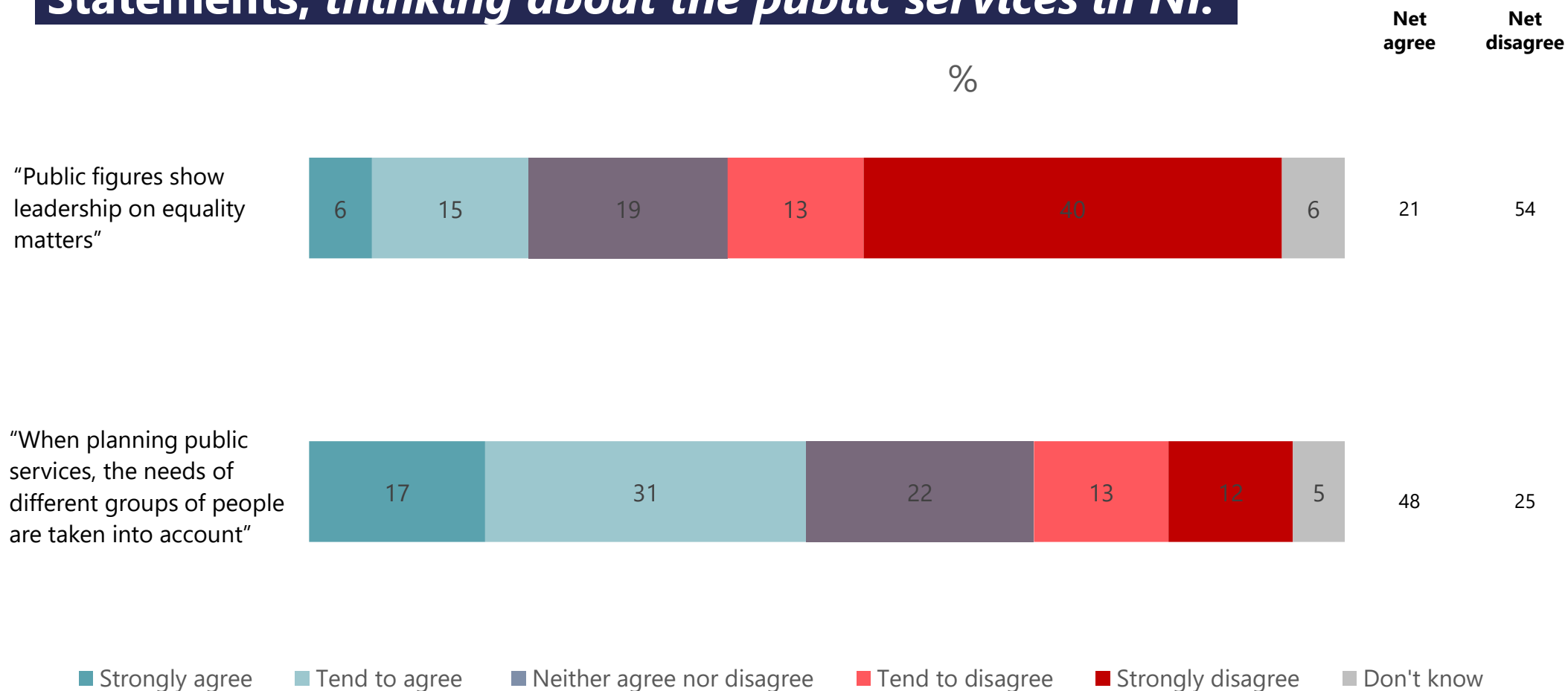
Aspects of life in NI

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following Statements, thinking generally about your local area:



Aspects of life in NI

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following Statements, thinking about the public services in NI:



Research methodology

In order to meet the objectives of the research, Ipsos MORI conducted a telephone survey among a representative sample of people living in Northern Ireland. All interviews were conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) from our Belfast-based telephone centre. In total, 500 interviews were conducted with people from across Northern Ireland. The telephone survey lasted 12 minutes on average.

Ipsos MORI purchased a contact database containing 7,500 records for Northern Ireland. Therefore, a response rate of 7% was achieved from this sample. A summary of sample outcomes is provided in the table below:

Sample outcome	Count	% of sample
Completed interview	500	7%
Refused	687	9%
Unusable	483	6%
No answer/maximum tries/over-quota	5,830	78%
Total	7,500	100%

A quota-based sampling approach was applied to the telephone survey to ensure the results are representative of the Northern Ireland population. The demographic breakdown of participants is provided on pages 8-10.

Ipsos MORI's standards and accreditations

Ipsos MORI's standards and accreditations provide our clients with the peace of mind that they can always depend on us to deliver reliable, sustainable findings. Our focus on quality and continuous improvement means we have embedded a 'right first time' approach throughout our organisation.



ISO 20252:2012

The international market research specific standard that supersedes BS 7911 / MRQSA & incorporates IQCS (Interviewer Quality Control Scheme); it covers the 5 stages of a Market Research project. Ipsos MORI was the first company in the world to gain this accreditation.



ISO 27001:2005

International standard for information security designed to ensure the selection of adequate and proportionate security controls. Ipsos MORI was the first research company in the UK to be awarded this in August 2008.



MRS Company Partnership

By being an MRS Company Partner, Ipsos MORI endorse and support the core MRS brand values of professionalism, research excellence and business effectiveness, and commit to comply with the MRS Code of Conduct throughout the organisation.

Data Protection Act

Ipsos MORI is required to comply with the Data Protection Act; it covers the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy



ISO 9001:2008

International general company standard with a focus on continual improvement through quality management systems. In 1994 we became one of the early adopters of the ISO 9001 business standard.

This work was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the international quality standard for market research, ISO 20252:2012 and with the Ipsos MORI Terms and Conditions.

Ipsos MORI's Business Excellence

System

Ipsos MORI's Business Excellence System (BES) incorporates the requirements of the three international standards, the Data Protection Act, and the MRS Code of Conduct. The Business Excellence System is continually reviewed for effectiveness and improvement – we achieve this in a number of ways:

Business Excellence System (BES) Group:

BES representatives from all areas of the business meet regularly. Their remit includes: promoting and encouraging Business Excellence within their business units; reviewing, developing and maintaining Ipsos MORI's Business Excellence management systems and; learning and sharing best practice.

Ipsos MORI's Internal Audits and Metrics Team:

Ipsos MORI has a large team of trained internal auditors from across the business. Internal audits and spot checks are carried out throughout the year to measure the effectiveness of the company's Business Excellence Systems. Monthly metrics are reported to the UK Management Board and the BES Group. Where necessary corrective and preventative actions are implemented.

BES Training and Communications Team:

A team of BES Reps are responsible for developing effective and engaging training. All staff receive induction and refresher training. Delegate feedback is used to further improve training where appropriate.

External Audits:

An external auditing company visits annually to ensure that Ipsos MORI complies with the international standards we are accredited to. Findings are reported back to the business and corrective and/or preventative measures adopted where necessary.

External Client Satisfaction Monitor:

At the close of each project, an online survey is sent to the client. Returned questionnaires are reviewed and followed up where necessary. Data is used by the Audits and Metrics Team for the monthly UK Management and BES Report.

This work will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the international quality standard for market research, ISO 20252:2012 and with the Ipsos MORI Terms and Conditions.



For more information

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Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND