

Equality Monitoring Report:

Results of the Survey of Complainants to the Police

Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, 2014/15

Contents

Introduction	3
--------------------	---

Survey Findings

Age	4
Gender	4
Age and Gender	5
Marital Status	6
Employment Status	6
Sexual orientation	7
Community Background	7
Racial Group	7
Country of Birth	8
Disability	8
Dependants	8
Political Opinion	8

Appendices:

1. Tables	9
2. Background and Methodology	12

Introduction

The Police Ombudsman's Office (the Office) collects information on each of the categories specified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Every adult¹ that makes a complaint to the Office is asked to complete an equality monitoring form and this is returned to the Statistics and Research Branch within the Office. The information contained within this form is used for statistical purposes only and is not shared with other members of staff within the Office.

The survey findings enable the Police Ombudsman to monitor access to the service provided to the public across the categories specified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and to report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

The questionnaire includes the categories of age, gender, marital status, employment status, sexual orientation, community background, race, country of birth, disability, dependants and political opinion.

This report covers the period from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, during which time we recorded 3,367 complaints, of which 3,312 were made by members of the public².

Official Statistics:

This is an Official Statistics publication. Official Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular data validation checks to ensure that they meet the required standards. They are produced free from any political interference.

¹ In 2015/16 the Police Ombudsman's Office has decided to ask all persons making complaints with the Office to fill out an equality monitoring form, including persons aged under 18.

² The Police Ombudsman also investigates matters of public interest and complaints which have been referred to him by the Chief Constable, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, or Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland. In these cases there is no public complainant and they are therefore excluded from the equality monitoring process.

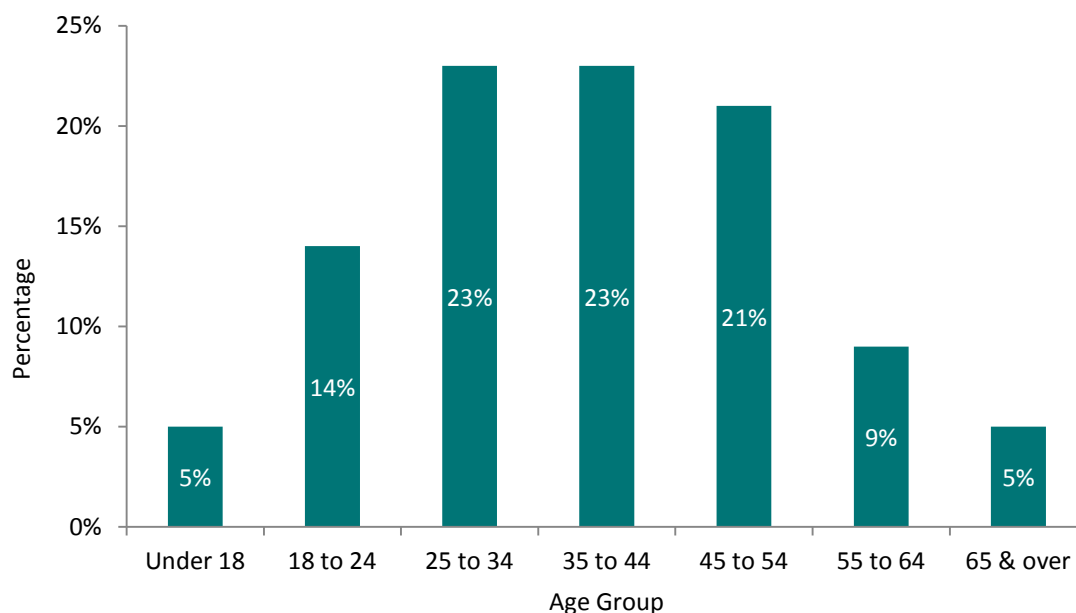
Survey Findings

This section summarises the main findings from the equality monitoring forms completed and returned by complainants. In Appendix 1 the results are displayed in a series of tables.

Age

Nearly one in four complainants were aged between 25 and 34 years old, and a similar proportion were aged between 35 and 44 years old. A smaller proportion of complainants were aged under 18. These results are consistent with previous years (Figure 1, Table 1).

Figure 1: Complainants by age group, 2014/15



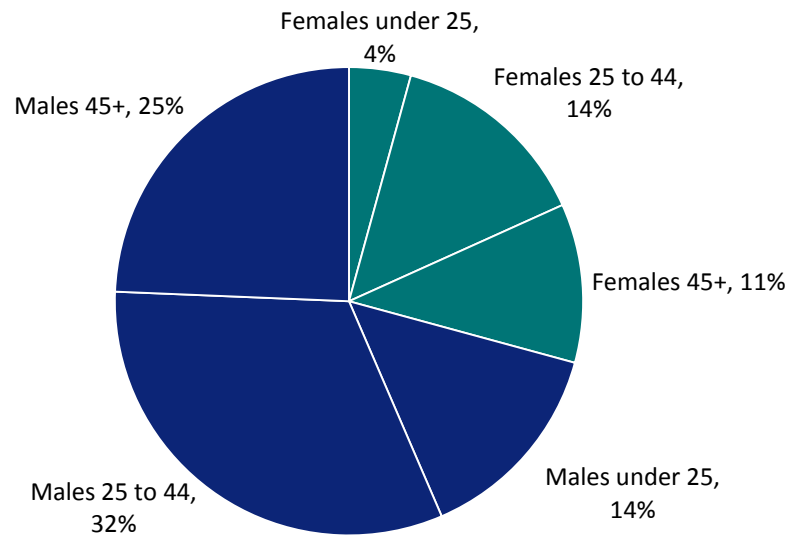
Gender

In 2014/15 males (70%) made more than twice as many complaints as females (30%). This gender profile of complainants is similar to previous years (Table 2).

Age and Gender

In terms of gender and age combined³, more than half of the complaints made in 2014/15 were made by males aged 25 and over, in particular around one third of complaints were made by males aged between 25 and 44 (Figure 2, Table 3).

Figure 2: Gender and Age Group

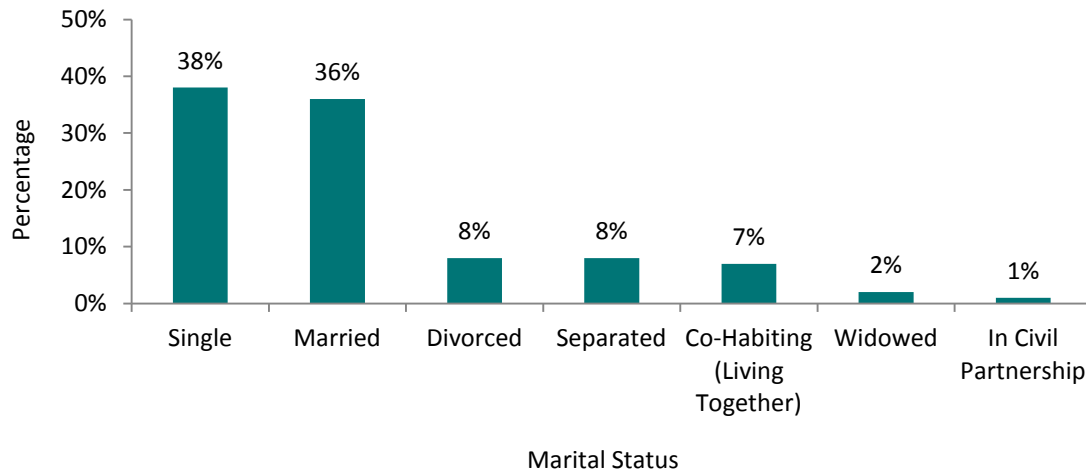


³ For some complainants only age was known and for others only gender was known, resulting in a slightly different age group distribution within gender, as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

Marital Status

In 2014/15 the largest proportion of complaints were made by single people, followed by married people. Other marital statuses such as people who are divorced or separated were less likely to make complaints (Figure 3, Table 4).

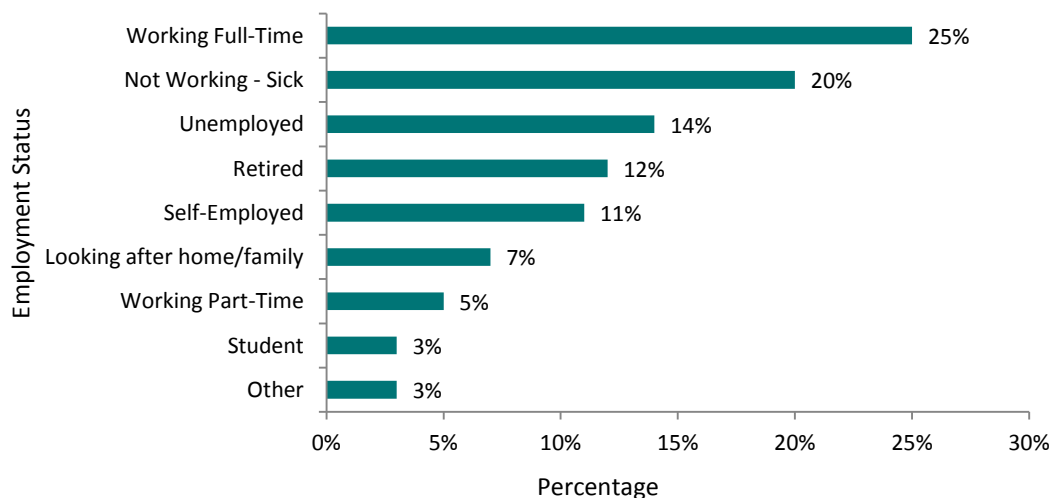
Figure 3: Marital Status, 2014/15



Employment Status

Around two in five (41%) complaints received in 2014/15 were made by a person who reported they were working; either working full-time, part-time or were self-employed (Figure 4, Table 5). Almost one in five were not working as they were permanently sick. Smaller proportions of complaints were made by people who were retired, or by students or by people looking after their home or family.

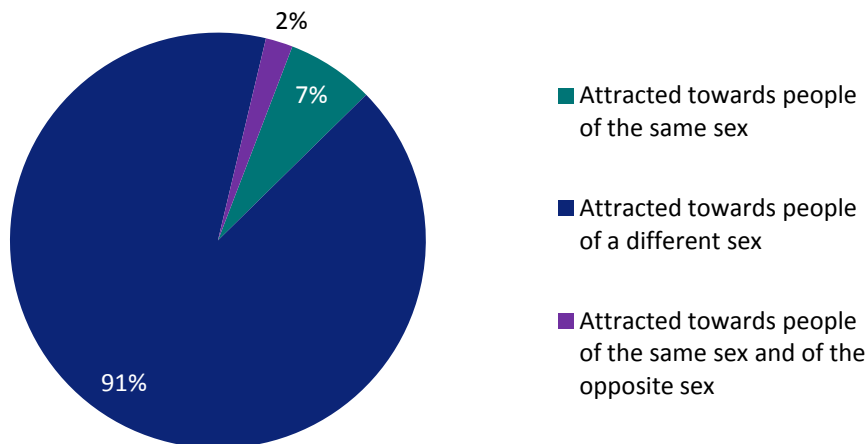
Figure 4: Employment Status, 2014/15



Sexual Orientation

In 2014/15, around nine in ten complaints were made by a person who reported that their sexual attraction was towards people of the opposite sex. A further 9% reported either being sexually attracted to people of the same sex or to people of the same sex and of the opposite sex (Figure 5, Table 6).

Figure 5: Sexual Orientation



Community Background

In 2014/15 the questionnaire was changed from asking respondents about their religious beliefs to asking them about their community background. The results in 2014/15 showed that 46% of complainants that returned a completed equality monitoring questionnaire were from a Protestant community and 38% were from a Catholic community. A further 16% were from neither a Protestant nor Catholic community (Table 7).

Racial Group

The vast majority of complaints were made by people who reported their race to be White (97%). Whilst every effort is made to monitor the main racial groups of complainants, most of the complainants that were of a minority ethnic group reported being of an 'other' race (Table 8).

Country of Birth

More than four in five (86%) respondents in 2014/15 stated that they were born in Northern Ireland. A further 6% were born in England and 3% were born in the Republic of Ireland (Table 9).

Disability

Disability is a complex concept and there are a number of ways of defining it. For monitoring purposes we provided respondents with a description of disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) which is “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities”.

In 2014/15 more than one in three (34%) respondents self-reported that they had a disability and 66% stated they did not have a disability (Table 10).

Dependants

Nearly half (49%) of respondents in 2014/15 stated that they had dependents (Table 11).

Political Opinion

More than half (52%) of respondents who answered the political opinion question on the equality monitoring form in 2014/15 indicated that ‘no political party’ best represented their current political opinion. Around one in five (21%) respondents indicated that a Unionist party best represented their current political opinion, 16% selected a Nationalist party and 12% selected the Alliance party or selected the ‘other’ category (Table 12).

Appendix 1: Tables

Table 1: Age Group, 2014/15

	Percentage
Under 18	5%
18 to 24	14%
25 to 34	23%
35 to 44	23%
45 to 54	21%
55 to 64	9%
65 & over	5%

Table 2: Gender, 2014/15

	Percentage
Female	30%
Male	70%

Table 3: Age group & gender, 2014/15

	Percentage	
	Female	Male
Under 18	1%	4%
18 to 24	4%	10%
25 to 34	6%	17%
35 to 44	8%	15%
45 to 54	7%	14%
55 to 64	3%	6%
65 & over	1%	4%

Table 4: Marital status, 2014/15

	Percentage
Single	38%
Married	36%
Separated	8%
Divorced	8%
Co-Habiting (Living together)	7%
Widowed	2%
In Civil Partnership	1%

Table 5: Employment status, 2014/15

	Percentage
Working full-time	25%
Not working because you are permanently sick	20%
Unemployed	14%
Retired	12%
Self-employed	11%
Looking after home and/or family	7%
Working part-time	5%
Student	3%
Other	3%

Table 6: Sexual Orientation, 2014/15

	Percentage
Attracted to people of a different sex	91%
Attracted to people of the same sex	7%
Attracted to people of the same and of the opposite sex	2%

Table 7: Community Background, 2014/15

	Percentage
Member of the Protestant community	46%
Member of the Catholic community	38%
Member of neither the Protestant nor Catholic community	16%

Table 8: Race, 2014/15

	Percentage
White	97%
Irish Traveller	1%
Other	2%

Table 9: Country of Birth, 2014/15

	Percentage
Northern Ireland	86%
England	6%
Republic of Ireland	3%
Scotland & Wales	1%
Other Country	3%
Other EU Country	1%

Table 10: Disability, 2014/15

	Percentage
Self-reported having a disability	34%
Self reported not having a disability	66%

Table 11: Dependants, 2014/15

	Percentage
Complainant has dependants	49%
Complainant does not have any dependants	51%

Table 12: Political Opinion, 2014/15

	Percentage
No political party	52%
Unionist party	21%
Nationalist party	16%
Alliance party	5%
Other	7%

Appendix 1: Background and Methodology

The Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland was set up by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998 in order to provide an impartial and independent system for investigating complaints against the police in Northern Ireland.

The Office is committed to fulfilling the obligations laid upon it by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) (the “equality duties”). To help us achieve this we send every complainant⁴ a confidential self-completion questionnaire, asking for information relevant to the ten categories specified in Section 75. As we are committed to providing a service to all individuals and socio-economic groups within our society, we also ask a question on the additional category of employment status, which we consider to be a reliable indicator of economic deprivation.

On receipt of returned questionnaires they are input to the Office’s Case Handling System (CHS) with the complaint data. Only the research staff who are directly involved in the processing of the equality monitoring data have data access permissions. Staff involved in the handling and investigation of the complaint do not, at any time, have access to these data.

The equality database is downloaded and analysed using a combination of DI Diver, Microsoft Excel and SPSS packages.

The figures in this statistical report are based on information received between April 2014 and March 2015. During this period, the Office received back 691 completed questionnaires, representing a sample size of 21% of all complainants. There were also larger samples of complainants for whom gender and age information was available from administrative data sources.

Figures in tables may not add up to 100% due to the effect of rounding. Figures may also be subject to minor revision. The Police Ombudsman Revisions Policy is available at http://www.policeombudsman.org/revisions_policy.

⁴ Apart from a very small number who have asked not to be contacted by the office or for whom we have insufficient contact information.

The Office has conducted the Equality Monitoring Survey since it opened in November 2000. All survey findings are published annually and are available on the Office website at <http://www.policeombudsman.org/publications/equality>.

In addition to those respondents who declared their gender on the monitoring form, it was also possible to determine a majority of complainants' genders from their title or salutation, so that there was a total sample of 96% for whom gender was known. It was also possible to determine complainants' ages from their date of birth, where it was provided, giving an overall sample of 73% for whom age was known.

Data use

The data collected are used by the Office to monitor access to the service provided to the public across the categories specified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and to report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. The data may also be used to answer enquiries from the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Department of Justice, Parliament and the public.

Data quality

Equality Monitoring Survey data are considered to be of high quality. Police Ombudsman staff carry out regular quality assurance reviews of all data input into the CHS. For the Equality Monitoring Survey, staff input the data to the CHS and supervisors undertake a 10% data quality check to ensure that transfer of the information is accurate. Where necessary, data may be corrected. There is a possibility of a small number of errors arising from data input, missing data, failure to update data and errors in communication. The Police Ombudsman estimates that the level of error is so small that it has no impact on the quality of statistical reporting. However, where identified, corrections are made to reports as soon as is practicable.

Data limitations

Equality monitoring forms are issued to the vast majority of complainants. However, in some cases forms are not issued, for example when it is impossible to identify the complainant (i.e. the Complaints Officer has recorded the complainant as anonymous), because the complainant's address is not recorded or if only an email address is available. In other cases, complainants may contact the Office to ask to be excluded from future surveys. Whilst Office staff aim to encourage the complainant to complete the survey by explaining its purpose, there are some cases where the complainant still wishes to be excluded. The Police Ombudsman also investigates matters of public

interest and complaints which have been referred to him by the Chief Constable, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland or Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland. In these cases there is no public complainant and therefore forms are not issued.

For additional information please contact:

Information Directorate
Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
New Cathedral Buildings
11 Church Street
Belfast
BT1 1PG

Telephone: 028 9082 8648
Textphone: 028 9082 8756
Witness Appeal Line: 0800 0327 880
Email: info@policeombudsman.org

This publication and other information about the work of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland are also available on the Internet at:

Website: www.policeombudsman.org