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# Survey on Attitudes towards the Equality Grounds Poll

Prepared by the Department of  
Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth  
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## Introduction

In 2022, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth contracted IPSOS to run a poll of attitudes across the equality grounds. This poll covers all of the existing equality grounds covered in Irish legislation and, as far as possible, the proposed new grounds for equality legislation and some intersectional grounds. Due to the large number of potential intersectional grounds, these were limited to areas where either prior literature had suggested there was a particular problem or an advisory group to the project established by the Department highlighted a potential area of concern.

## Background

In June 2021, the Department announced a Review of the Equality Acts as the Equal Status Acts and Employment Equality Act had been in place for over two decades. This review involves a comprehensive review of all of Ireland's existing legislation concerning the promotion of equality and elimination of discrimination. The review also provides an opportunity to review other issues arising, including whether or not further additional equality grounds should be added, whether existing exemptions should be removed or modified and whether or not the existing legislation adequately addresses issues of intersectionality.

There are nine grounds under existing legislation:

1. Gender: the legislative ground refers to whether you are a man or a woman. Under EU law a transgender person who experiences discrimination because of their gender reassignment is also protected under the gender ground.
2. Civil status: includes single, married, separated, divorced, widowed people, civil partners and former civil partners.
3. Family status: this refers to the parent of a person under 18 years old; or the resident primary carer or parent of a person with a disability.
4. Sexual orientation: includes gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual.
5. Religion: means religious belief, background, outlook or lack thereof.
6. Age
7. Disability: includes people with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions.
8. Race: includes race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin.
9. Membership of the Traveller community.

In addition, being in receipt of a Housing Assistance payment ('HAP' ground) was added as an additional ground under the Equal Status Act.

There are several proposals for new grounds (see <https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/066b6-review-of-the-equality-acts/>) and a Programme for Government commitment to introduce a socio-economic ground. The Programme for Government 2020 states that “we will examine the introduction of a new ground of discrimination, based on socio-economic disadvantaged status to the Employment Equality and Equal Status Acts” (see <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7e05d-programme-for-government-our-shared-future/>). The Programme for Government also has a commitment on gender identity to “amend the gender ground in equality legislation, to ensure that someone discriminated against on the basis of their gender identity is able to avail of this legislation.”

Furthermore, under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, there is a requirement for public bodies to assess and report on progress on equality goals.

It is within the context of this ongoing review that the Department contracted IPSOS to look at prevailing attitudes towards the different equality groups currently included in legislation, the proposed equality groups and any relevant intersectional groups where possible. Several attitudes surveys have been conducted before, most notably the National Disability Authority (NDA) and Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) in Ireland and the Eurobarometer and European Social Surveys for cross-national surveys. However, none of these surveys looked at all extant and proposed grounds in a systematically and comparative manner. Therefore the Department determined that a comprehensive, statistically robust survey would be necessary to understand the totality of attitudes towards the different equality groups. Carefully designed survey data on societal attitudes towards groups protected under different Equality Acts and towards rights protected under international agreements can provide important information on the state of equality in Ireland and can potentially provide insights into the processes that produce and reproduce inequalities in Ireland. It is also important for the development of new equality strategies and action plans, and for guiding future expenditure.

This poll complements previous work looking at who felt most discriminated against <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/5d971-minister-ogorman-publishes-discrimination-report-to-inform-equality-policy/>.

## Poll Methodology

The overall nationally representative sample size was 3,008 interviews, providing a robust base for analysis of the poll findings. Two different methods were used to conduct the surveys, to explore potential mode effects in replies. Of the 3,008 total interviews, 1,508 of the interviews were conducted by CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) and 1,500 by CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) where the interview took place face-to-face in the respondent's home.<sup>1</sup>

All 1,508 CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) respondents were selected using random digit dialling to ensure maximum population coverage. All interviews were conducted by trained and experienced IPSOS interviewers from IPSOS research centres located in Dublin and Belmullet.

All 1,500 CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) respondents were identified using stratified random sampling. IPSOS interviewers were sent to 100 locations across Ireland and instructed to take a random route from a random start address to identify respondents for interview. Interviewers were further required to fill quotas by age, gender and socio-economic status, to limit bias in respondent selection at the household level.

At analysis stage, corrective RIM<sup>2</sup> weights (age within gender, socio-economic status and region) were applied separately to the CATI and CAPI data to fully align each sample with the known Irish population aged 16 years and upwards. Subsequent to being weighted individually, the samples were combined to provide a robust picture of national opinion on attitudes to equality.

All interviews were conducted between 7th March and 12th April 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> There was some slight differences in responses by mode, however as these were rarely statistically significant they are not reported separately in this paper. Rather the combined result from all 3008 is reported on below. A sample size of 3,008 allows researchers to analyse and see statistically significant differences with a high degree of accuracy. These are not used below because of the differences in mode. Rather descriptive statistics are reported.

<sup>2</sup> RIM weighting stands for Random Iterative Method. RIM weighting is a form of survey weighting the data supplied by market research respondents.

## Questionnaire design

The survey questionnaire was designed by IPSOS in conjunction with several Government departments and representatives from different civil society groups. These include Pavee Point, NDA, Aslam, Independent Living Movement, the Irish deaf society, National Platform of Self Advocates; Voice of Vision, Impairment Physical Impairment Ireland, Disabled Women Ireland; BelongTo, INAR, MRCI, the ESRI. In addition, several civil society groups were shown the survey and asked for feedback. Laurence Bond the former Director of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission provided expert feedback on question formulation.

The survey asked a series of questions pertaining to demographics of participant, civil and social engagement and attitudinal questions towards various categories.

The demographics questions gathered data regarding gender, age, employment status, socio-economic status, family status, birth country, ethnicity, nationality, size of residential area, renting or owning accommodation, sexual orientation, county of residence and eircode.

The civil and social engagement questions concerned voting, volunteering, holidays, life satisfaction and trust in others.

The attitudinal questions were:

- How comfortable would you be if a \_\_\_\_\_ person was living next door/in the nearest house to where you live?
- How comfortable would you be if one of your children was in/are in a love relationship with a \_\_\_\_\_ person?
- How comfortable would you feel if a \_\_\_\_\_ child was in the same class as your child?
- Would a \_\_\_\_\_ person be at a disadvantage when being hired?
- A series of questions concerning attitudes towards immigration.
- What is the biggest issue facing the world / Ireland?

The ordering of the equality groups was randomised to ensure there was no bias between those asked about first or last.

This report summarises the high level findings of this poll, the department will continue to analyse the results and use the information to guide future policy.

## Results Overview

The following tables detail the responses to the attitudinal questions asked throughout the poll.

Table 1 reports the responses when people were asked about people from the different groups living 'next door' to them. Overall 46 groups were asked about, this included the existing equality groups, some proposed equality groups, some groups that experience discrimination that are not equality groups (for example a person with a criminal record for violence and some intersectional groups). For convenience these will be reported as the 'equality groups' but this is not meant to imply either that they all have statutory protection or that it is proposed.

Overall there was very high comfort with different individuals and families living next door (Table 1). The average score across 46 of the equality groups was 8.7 out of ten. Of the 46 equality groups about which this question was asked - the vast majority of categories (40) either score above the average or the average. In addition the balance of comfortable versus uncomfortable (scoring 8 or 9 or 10 minus scoring 1 or 2 or 3) was positive. For instance, 91% said they were comfortable living next to a man and 1% said they were uncomfortable living next to a man (a net positive score of 90%).

This very high comfort level included people with different genders, sexual orientation, nationalities, ethnicities, disabilities, religious beliefs (and none), or marital statuses. Albeit with some exceptions (see below) people in Ireland are clearly comfortable with having a wide diversity of neighbours.

There were six groups who scored below the average<sup>3</sup> when respondents were asked about their level of comfort of that equality group living next door to them:

- A person who is a Traveller was scored 7.1
- A person who is Roma was scored 7.1
- A person with alcohol addiction issues was scored 6.7
- A person with drug addiction issues was scored 5.1
- A person with a criminal record for violence was scored 4.2
- A person with a criminal record for selling drugs was scored 3.7

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<sup>3</sup> The cut off points for high/medium/low comfort levels can be somewhat arbitrary. In this case and examples below we are guided by statistically significant difference from the mean score and the balance of positive and negative attitudes.



**Table 1.** Attitude towards participant living near someone with a certain characteristic, with 1 being very uncomfortable and 10 being very comfortable

	Comfortable (reported a score of 8 or more out of 10) (%)	Average score out of 10
A person who is Irish	96%	9.6
A person who is old	95%	9.6
A person who is white	95%	9.6
A man and woman married to each other	94%	9.5
A person who is divorced	94%	9.5
Two people cohabiting but not married	94%	9.5
A woman	93%	9.5
A Christian - Church of Ireland family	93%	9.4
A person who is working class	93%	9.5
A person who is middle class	93%	9.5
A Christian - Catholic family	92%	9.4
A person with a physical disability	92%	9.4
A person who is black	92%	9.4
A man	91%	9.3
A person who is young	91%	9.4
A couple with 3 or more children	91%	9.4
A Christian - other family	91%	9.4
A person with an intellectual disability	91%	9.3
A person from another EU country	91%	9.3
An autistic person	90%	9.3
A single woman with 3 or more children	89%	9.3
Two women living together as a couple	89%	9.2
An atheist family	89%	9.3
A person from Eastern Europe	89%	9.3
Two men living together as a couple	88%	9.1
A Hindu family	87%	9.2
A person who is a Ukrainian refugee	87%	9.1
A person who is Indian	87%	9.1
A person who is Chinese	87%	9.1
A person who is unemployed	87%	9.1
A person who is Brazilian	86%	9.1
A Muslim family	85%	9.0
A person getting HAP	83%	8.9
A person who is Moroccan	82%	8.9
A person who is Nigerian	81%	8.8
A person who does not identify as male nor female	80%	8.7
A transgender man	79%	8.6
A transgender woman	79%	8.6
A person who is an asylum seeker	78%	8.6
A person with mental health difficulties	76%	8.6
A person who is a Traveller	53%	7.1
A person who is Roma	53%	7.1
A person with alcohol addiction issues	45%	6.7
A person with drug addiction issues	27%	5.1
A person with a criminal record for violence	16%	4.2
A person with a criminal record for selling drugs	13%	3.7

The question asked was "For each type of person I read out, please tell me how comfortable on a scale from 1 to 10 where '1' is "very uncomfortable" and '10' is "very comfortable? So out of 10, how comfortable would you be if a \_\_\_\_\_ was living next door/in the nearest house to where you live?"

For the first three categories the scores are on balance positive. When respondents were asked how comfortable they would be if a person who is a Traveller or Roma lived next door, the score was 7.1 out of ten. And 53% of people were comfortable if either Travellers or Roma lived next door (a score of 8, 9 or 10 out of 10). Therefore, the majority of people would be comfortable with a person from the Traveller or Roma community living next door. However, 16% of people said they would be uncomfortable (a score of 1, 2 or 3) with a person from the Traveller, or Roma community as a neighbour.

Respondents gave a person with alcohol addiction issues an average score of between 6.7 and only 45% were comfortable if they lived next door.

The final category has much lower scores; between 3.7 and 5.1 out of ten and approximately only a quarter or less of the population are comfortable living next to a person with drug addiction issues, or a criminal record for violence or selling drugs. These groups have net negative scores for comfort – more people are uncomfortable living next to these three groups than are comfortable living next to these groups.

A similar – though not identical – question was asked in the National Disability Authority (NDA) Attitudes Survey in 2017 (<https://nda.ie/publications/2017-public-attitudes-to-disability-in-ireland-survey>). The NDA survey (which studied attitudes towards those with disabilities but also to some other minority groups) asked “On a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is very uncomfortable and 10 is very comfortable, can you indicate how comfortable you would feel if people with the following [groups] were living in your neighbourhood”.

The question in the NDA survey used the term ‘neighbourhood’ rather than ‘next door’. Arguably the latter is a higher standard and we would expect attitudes reported in our survey to be lower – in fact for most categories where a similar characteristic is asked about, answers indicate similar or higher levels of comfort. People express higher levels of comfort living next to people with physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities or Autism than they did in 2017. The NDA survey asked about ‘migrant workers’ who scored 8.8. There is no directly comparable category in the present survey but migrant groups are scoring higher than 8.8. Likewise, the 2017 survey asked about people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, and this group scored 8.8 at the time. The present survey asked about a ‘black’ person and they scored 9.4.

**Table 2.** Attitude towards participant living near someone with a certain characteristic, with 1 being very uncomfortable and 10 being very comfortable – NDA survey results

Characteristic	Average score out of 10
Vision or hearing disabilities	9.3
Physical Disabilities	9.3
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People	9.2
Intellectual disabilities	9.1
Autism	9.1
European Migrant workers	8.8
Black and minority ethnic backgrounds	8.8
Mental Health Difficulties	8.8
Members of the travelling community	7.5

Source: <https://nda.ie/uploads/publications/2017-Main-Report-National-survey-of-public-attitudes.pdf>

Two groups have slight falls from the 2017 survey to this survey (albeit to a higher standard: next door as opposed to in the neighbourhood) – the level of comfort with those with a mental health difficulty has fallen very slightly from 8.8 to 8.6. Against a background of increasing acceptance of diversity it is disappointing to see that the level of comfort with Members of the Travelling Community has fallen from 7.5 to 7.1.

The next table (Table 3) looks at attitudes towards different equality groups being in a 'love relationship' with your child. The question asked them to imagine their response regardless of whether or not they have children. The response categories for both questions range from (1) totally uncomfortable to (10) totally comfortable. There are 32 different equality categories covered.

**Table 3.** Attitude towards participant's child being in a love relationship with someone with a certain characteristic, with 1 being very uncomfortable and 10 being very comfortable

	Comfortable ( a score of 8 or more out of 10)	Average score out of 10
A person who is Irish	95%	9.5
A person who is white	93%	9.5
A person who is Christian - Catholic	89%	9.2
A person who is Christian – Church of Ireland	87%	9.2
A person who is Christian – other	87%	9.1
A person from another EU country	87%	9.1
A person who is black	84%	9.0
A person from Eastern Europe	84%	9.0
A person who is atheist	80%	8.8
A person who is divorced	79%	8.7
A person who is Chinese	79%	8.7
A person who is Indian	78%	8.7
A person who is a Ukrainian refugee	77%	8.7
A person who is Brazilian	77%	8.7
A person with a physical disability	75%	8.5
A person of the same sex as your child	74%	8.3
A person who is Hindu	73%	8.4
A person who is Moroccan	73%	8.4
A person who is Nigerian	72%	8.3
A single man or woman with 3 or more children	68%	8.1
An autistic person	67%	8.1
A person who is Muslim	66%	7.9
A person who is an asylum seeker	66%	7.9
A person who is bisexual	64%	7.7
A person with an intellectual disability	64%	7.9
A person who does not identify as male nor female	55%	7.0
A transgender person	55%	6.9
A person with mental health difficulties	51%	7.0
A person who is Roma	45%	6.4
A person who is a Traveller	43%	6.3
A person with alcohol addiction issues	18%	4.3
A person with drug addiction issues	12%	3.4

The question asked was "This time please tell me, how uncomfortable or comfortable you would feel if one of your children was in a love relationship with a person from one of the following groups. Using the same scale of '1' means that you would feel "very uncomfortable" and '10' that you would feel "very comfortable". So out of 10, how comfortable would you be if one of your children was in/are in a relationship with \_\_\_\_\_?".

When asked how uncomfortable or comfortable they would feel if one of their children was in a love relationship with a person from the different equality groups, high levels of comfort with the different groups were recorded. The average across all the groups was 9.3. The majority of groups (21 out of 32 groups) received a score of 8.1 or higher and over two thirds were comfortable with their child being in a love relationship with that equality group. There are 11 groups that score less than 8 out of 10. A person with an intellectual disability: 7.9

- A person who is an asylum seeker: 7.9
- A person who is Muslim: 7.9
- A person who is bisexual: 7.7
- A person with mental health difficulties: 7.0
- A person who does not identify as male nor female i.e. non-binary person: 7.0
- A transgender person i.e. someone who was born one gender but changed to the other: 6.9
- A person who is Roma: 6.4
- A person who is a Traveller: 6.3
- A person with alcohol addiction issues: 4.3
- A person with drug addiction issues: 3.4

These can be seen as two different groups; a group where approximately half of people are comfortable with their child being in a relationship with someone from that equality group and they score 6.3 out of 10 or more, and a second group of people with alcohol or drug addiction issues who score 4.3 or 3.4 out of 10 and less than 20% are comfortable with their children being in a relationship with an individual with one of these issues. These two groups (alcohol and drug addiction issues) are the only groups with net negative comfort levels (more people are uncomfortable than comfortable having their child in a relationship with these groups).

The Eurobarometer asked a similar question in 2019: "Regardless of whether you have children or not, please tell me, using a scale from 1 to 10, how comfortable you would feel if one of your children was in a love relationship with a person from one of the following groups. '1' means that you would feel "not at all comfortable" and '10' that you would feel "totally comfortable". It is important to note that the average score across all European countries in Table 4 includes a diverse range of countries with very different attitudes to equality and a comparison to the average could

therefore be misleading. Rather Ireland should benchmark itself to a basket of the highest performing countries with a similar legal tradition and level of income to Ireland. For that reason the average Swedish results are explored below as Sweden has some of the highest values reported.

Furthermore the Eurobarometer question was asked in 2019 and attitudes to equality across Europe may have changed since then. Also while this question is identical in both surveys – other questions are different and this might affect the comparison. So while the comparison is interesting not too much weight should be applied to it and we should wait for the next Eurobarometer survey (due in approximately 2024) to see conclusively if the attitudes of people in Ireland have changed.

**Table 4.** Attitude towards participant’s child being in a love relationship with someone with a certain characteristic, with 1 being very uncomfortable and 10 being very comfortable – Eurobarometer survey results

Characteristic	Average across all countries (out of 10) 2019	Sweden average 2019	Average in Ireland (out of 10) 2019
A white person	9.2	9.8	9.4
An atheist person	8.4	9.5	8.5
A black person	7.6	9.2	8.4
An Asian person	7.8	9.4	8.3
A person of the same sex as your child	6.7	8.9	8.1
A transgender person	6.7	8.0	7.0
A person with a disability	6.7	9.2	8.6
A Muslim person	6.6	7.6	7.6
A Christian person	6.6	9.5	9.3
A Roma person	6.3	8.1	7.1

Source: [https://data.europa.eu/data/datasets/s2251\\_91\\_4\\_493\\_eng?locale=en](https://data.europa.eu/data/datasets/s2251_91_4_493_eng?locale=en)

There are several things of note. First Irish attitudes are more positive, sometimes notably so, than the average across Eurobarometer countries. However, in most cases these lag behind the average values reported for Sweden. Second, bearing in mind the comparability issues noted above, positive attitudes have further increased in respect of most groups in Ireland since the 2019 Eurobarometer survey. Again however, they are still behind Swedish averages for all cases with the exception of attitudes to a Muslim being in a love relationship with your child - which are now

higher in Ireland. Third, despite the overall increase, there is notable stagnation in a few categories. The average score for a Roma person in a relationship with your child has seen a large drop from 7.1 to 6.4. The average score for a transgender person in a relationship with your child has gone from 8.1 to 6.9. Eurobarometer asked about a person with a disability and the IPSOS survey asked about different disability categories. Most of these received comparable scores. However, of note is that, when named, explicitly mental health has a lower score (7.0 as opposed to 8.1 for people with a disability).

The next table (Table 5) looks at comfort levels with different equality groups being in the same class as your child. The question asked them to imagine their response regardless of whether or not they have children. 33 equality groups were asked about. (Fewer equality categories are asked about because some are not relevant in a classroom setting).

**Table 5.** Attitude towards someone with a certain characteristic being in the same class as participant's child, with 1 being very uncomfortable and 10 being very comfortable

	Comfortable (a score of 8 or more out of 10)	Average score out of 10
A child who is white	95%	9.6
A child from a middle-class family	95%	9.6
A child who is Christian - Catholic	94%	9.5
A child who is Christian - Church of Ireland	94%	9.5
A child from a working-class family	94%	9.6
Children of the opposite sex to your child	93%	9.5
A child who is Christian - other	93%	9.5
A child who is black	93%	9.5
A child from Eastern Europe	93%	9.5
A child from another EU country	93%	9.5
A child who is Indian	92%	9.4
A child with a physical disability	91%	9.4
A child who is Brazilian	91%	9.4
A child who is a Ukrainian refugee	91%	9.4
A child who is Chinese	91%	9.4
A child whose parents are getting HAP	91%	9.4
A child who is atheist	90%	9.3
A child who is Nigerian	90%	9.3
A child who is Moroccan	90%	9.3
A non-English speaking child	90%	9.3
A child who is Hindu	89%	9.3
A child with an intellectual disability	89%	9.3
A child who is an asylum seeker	89%	9.3
A child who is Muslim	88%	9.2
An Autistic child	88%	9.3
A child from a household where no one works	88%	9.2
A child who is gay	84%	8.9
A child with mental health difficulties	82%	8.9
A child with a parent in prison	82%	8.9
A child who is Roma	80%	8.7
A child who is a Traveller	79%	8.7
A child who does not identify as male nor female	77%	8.6
A child who is transgender	76%	8.5

The question asked was "And this time, using the same 1 to 10 scale, can you indicate how comfortable you would feel if the following children were in the same class as your child?".



Of note, all groups had high levels of acceptance and people were very happy to have a person from that equality group in the classroom with their child. The lowest score was 8.5 out of 10 for a transgender child and 3 out of 4 people were comfortable with a transgender child in class with their child.<sup>4</sup> Of note no equality grouping received a net negative score and the group with the lowest positive score – a child who is transgender – 76% were comfortable and only 8% were uncomfortable.

The NDA (2017) asked a similar question but just limited to children with disabilities: “On a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is very uncomfortable and 10 is very comfortable, can you indicate how comfortable you would feel if the following children with disabilities were in the same class as your child”. For all comparable categories acceptable had increased from the NDA 2017 survey to the IPSOS survey.

**Table 6.** Attitude towards someone with a type of disability being in the same class as participant’s child, with 1 being very uncomfortable and 10 being very comfortable – NDA survey results

Characteristic	Average score out of 10
Children with mental health difficulties	8.7
Children with intellectual disabilities	8.6
Children with Autism	8.1
Children with physical disabilities	8.1
Children with vision or hearing disabilities	7.8

Source: <https://nda.ie/publications/2017-public-attitudes-to-disability-in-ireland-survey>

The next table (Table 7) asks which of a list of equality characteristics would put a person at a disadvantage when being hired.

Respondents were asked that when a company wants to hire someone and has the choice between two candidates with equal skills and qualifications, which characteristics would put a candidate at a disadvantage. There was widespread agreement that Travellers and Roma and people with a disability would be put at a disadvantage. Approximately two out of three people agreed with these groups would experience discrimination. There were lower levels of agreement that people were discriminated against based on age, migrant status, race, nationality or ethnic

<sup>4</sup> Further analysis – not shown – indicates that the result for transgender children in a classroom is not statistically different from the mean score.

origin or an address in a deprived area (40-50%). Approximately a third of people thought people would be at a disadvantage because of their gender, a strong working class accent or family status. Finally, socio-economic background, sexual orientation, living in social housing, religious belief and civic status were only seen as a potential issue by a quarter or fewer people.

**Table 7.** Whether someone with a certain characteristic would be put at a disadvantage in hiring

Characteristic	Report a candidate of this characteristic could be at a potential disadvantage (%)
The fact that they are a Traveller	67%
If they have a disability, including people with physical intellectual learning cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions	65%
The fact that they are Roma	63%
Their age: this does not apply to a person aged under 16	50%
If they are a migrant into the country	45%
Their race including skin colour nationality or ethnic origin	43%
If they have an address in a deprived area	41%
Their gender i.e. whether man woman or transgender	39%
If they have a strong working-class accent	31%
Their family status, maybe as a parent of a person under 18 years or the resident primary carer or parent of a person with a disability	29%
Their socio-economic background whether working or middle class	26%
Their sexual orientation including gay lesbian bisexual and heterosexual	25%
If they live in social housing	23%
Their religion i.e. religious belief background outlook or if not religious	17%
Their civil status i.e. whether single married separated divorced widowed people civil partners and former civil partners	15%

The question asked was "In Ireland, when a company wants to hire someone and has the choice between two candidates with equal skills and qualifications, which of the following criteria may, in your opinion, put one candidate at a disadvantage?"

Eurobarometer asked an identical question but with slightly different equality groups in 2019 Table 8 (sorted by Irish answers).

**Table 8.** Hiring someone with a certain characteristic would be put at a disadvantage – Eurobarometer survey results

Characteristic	EU28	IE
The candidate's age, if they are considered as too young or too old	47%	39%
The candidate's look (manner of dress or presentation)	48%	38%
A disability	41%	37%
The candidate being Roma	38%	35%
The candidate's general physical general appearance (size, weight, face, etc.)	41%	34%
The candidate's way of speaking, his or her accent	33%	31%
The candidate skin colour	37%	28%
The candidate's address	12%	26%
The candidate's ethnic origin	32%	25%
The candidate's gender or sex (man or woman)	28%	23%
The candidate's gender identity (being transgender)	24%	19%
The candidate's name	19%	17%
The candidate's sexual orientation (being gay, lesbian or bisexual)	22%	17%
The expression of a religious belief (e.g. wearing a visible religious symbol)	28%	17%
The candidate's sex characteristics (being intersex)	18%	15%
Other (spontaneous)	3%	6%
None (spontaneous)	5%	5%
DK	5%	5%

Source: [https://data.europa.eu/data/datasets/s2251\\_91\\_4\\_493\\_eng?locale=en](https://data.europa.eu/data/datasets/s2251_91_4_493_eng?locale=en)

This IPSOS survey reported higher scores overall than the previous Eurobarometer survey – this could be due to technical issues such as the ordering of the questions such that people were more attuned to discrimination when asked by IPSOS – or it could reflect that concerns about employment discrimination have increased since 2019. However, in both surveys, people with a disability are highlighted as a group

that faces discrimination. In addition, people who are Roma (Eurobarometer) and people who are a Traveller (IPSOS) are highlighted as groups that's face discrimination in employment. Mid-table ranking in both surveys is skin colour and ethnic origin. Finally, sexuality and gender are seen as less problematic in hiring decisions.

The next table (Table 9) probes attitudes to immigrants from different places: EU, Ukraine or elsewhere.

**Table 9.** Attitude towards immigration from Ukraine, the EU or outside the EU or Ukraine

Statement	Positive attitude (%)
About immigration of people from other EU Member States	85%
About immigration of people from the Ukraine	85%
About immigration of people from outside the EU or Ukraine	73%

The question asked was "For each of the following, please tell me if you are very positive, fairly positive, fairly negative or very negative?".

When respondents were asked about their feeling about immigration – the overwhelming majority reported that they are positive about immigration. Three out of four are positive about immigration from outside the EU and Ukraine, and this increases to seven out of eight people for immigration from Europe or the Ukraine.

Table 10 reports to the answers to a series of attitudinal questions.

**Table 10.** Attitudes towards immigrants, life satisfaction and understanding of the world in Ireland

Statement	Agree (%)
You understand well what is going on in today's world	87%
Ireland should help Ukrainian refugees	87%
Ireland should help asylum seekers	76%
Immigrants contribute a lot to Ireland	72%
You have confidence in the future	63%
Overall regarding your quality of life it was better in the past	45%

The question asked was "For each of the following statements, please tell me if you agree strongly, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or disagree strongly?".

When asked a series of statements and if they agreed with the statement – 72% felt immigrants contributed a lot to Ireland and 87% felt Ireland should help Ukrainian refugees. This falls to 76% for “Ireland should help asylum seekers”, which is still a very high level of support. Overall, only 45% of the respondents felt that their quality of life was better in the past and 63% say they have confidence in the future. Finally 87% of the respondents did report that they understand what is going on in today’s world.

Respondents were then asked what was the most important issue facing the world (Table 11) and what was the most important problem facing Ireland (Table 13).

**Table 11.** Percent reporting a societal issue as the single most serious problem facing the world

Issue	% identifying issue
Climate change	18%
Cost of living	18%
Poverty, hunger and lack of drinking water	16%
Armed conflicts	9%
The economic situation	7%
Deterioration of democracy and rule of law	6%
Deterioration of nature	5%
Racism and discrimination	5%
Proliferation of nuclear weapons	4%
The increasing global population	3%
International terrorism	2%
Health problems due to pollution	2%
Spread of infectious diseases	2%
Other	1%
Not sure	1%
None	0%

The question asked was “Which one of the following do you consider to be the single most serious problem facing the world as a whole?”.

When respondents were asked what the main problem facing the world today is– the top three answers with very similar response rates were climate change, cost of living

and poverty hunger and lack of drinking water. An identical question was asked in a recent Eurobarometer survey (2019) (Table 12).

**Table 12.** Percent reporting a societal issue as the single most serious problem facing the world – Eurobarometer survey results

Issue	EU28	IE
Poverty, hunger and lack of drinking water	45%	41%
International terrorism	39%	36%
Climate change	38%	33%
The economic situation	28%	31%
Spread of infectious diseases	22%	25%
Armed conflicts	33%	25%
The increasing global population	19%	24%
Proliferation of nuclear weapons	20%	16%
Other (spontaneous)	1%	1%
None (spontaneous)	-	1%
Don't know	-	1%

While there is a lot of agreement in the rankings between the two surveys there has been some changes. International terrorism and the spread of infectious diseases are ranked lower in the IPSOS poll. In contrast armed conflicts is ranked higher in the IPSOS poll than in the Eurobarometer poll. However, the climate change and poverty, hunger and lack of drinking water are both still ranked as major problems facing the world.

Respondents were then asked what the main problem facing Ireland today is (Table 13). The options offered were based on Irish answers to previous Eurobarometer polls and so were a subset of the Eurobarometer poll. In addition access to housing and the cost of living were added as options.

**Table 13.** Percent reporting a societal issue as the single most serious problem facing Ireland

Main problem facing Ireland	% identifying issue
Access to housing	36%
Cost of living	27%
Access to healthcare	13%
The economic situation	5%
Climate change	4%
Immigration	4%
Poverty	4%
Racism and discrimination	3%
The increasing population	3%
Other	1%
Not sure	1%
None	0%

The question asked was "Which one of the following do you consider to be the single most serious problem facing Ireland?".

In contrast to problems facing the world – the top response by over a third of respondents - was access to housing. The cost of living was the second most important problem facing Ireland (27%) and the third most important was access to healthcare (13%). Three quarters of respondents listed one of these three problems, all other issues were mentioned by less than 1 in 20 respondents.

## Conclusion

This report is a summary of the main findings of the IPSOS poll and there is a need for further detailed analysis to fully understand attitudes towards the different equality grounds and guide further policy and legislative grounds.

Overall this poll has demonstrated that Ireland is an accepting and welcoming country. Albeit with some exceptions, we are open to having diverse neighbours, our children being in a relationship with a wide variety of different people and different children sitting next to our children in school. Overwhelmingly, people hold positive attitudes across most of the equality groups and towards the newer communities in Ireland. However, problems remain – in particular attitudes towards people with a criminal record or addiction issues are poor. Further analysis (not shown) shows that these attitudes are statistically significantly less accepting than towards the other groups. While people with addiction issues and people with previous criminal records are not included in the existing equality ground categories, nor is their inclusion proposed, this does indicate that people with addiction issues or previous criminal records may find it hard to reintegrate into society.

Between the two groups of attitudes, positive and negative, sit the disappointing attitudes towards Members of the Traveller community and the Roma community. In addition, in some domains – and not always to the level of statistical significance – attitudes to transgender people are also lower than for other equality groups (with the exception of Travellers and Roma). These three groups (Travellers, Roma and Transgender) are protected under existing grounds in the Equality Acts. The introduction of legislation to combat discrimination does not mean that people's attitudes will necessarily follow. This highlights that there is a need for national equality strategies and policy steps generally across all of Government aimed at addressing underlying attitudes and the other factors that give rise to discrimination.



## Appendix: Demographic information of respondents

The following tables display the demographic breakdown of respondents in the survey across a number of grounds.

**Table 14:** Ability to make ends meet

Difficulty	Percentage
With great difficulty	5%
With difficulty	7%
With some difficulty	33%
Fairly easily	29%
Easily	17%
Very easily	8%
Not sure	1%

Note: May not sum to 100 due to rounding

**Table 15:** Class of participants

Class	Percentage
Middle Class	43%
Working Class	51%
Not sure	7%

Note: May not sum to 100 due to rounding

**Table 16:** Highest educational achievement of participants

Highest educational achievement	Percentage
No formal education or training	1%
Primary education (FETAC Level 1 or 2 Cert. or equivalent). NFQ levels 1 or 2	5%
Lower secondary education (Junior/Inter/Group Cert Fetac Level 3 Cert FÁS Introductory Skills NCVA Foundation Cert. or equivalent. NFQ level 3)	11%
Upper secondary education (Leaving Cert. (including Applied and Vocational programmes) or equivalent. NFQ levels 4 or 5)	23%
Upper secondary education (Leaving Cert. (including Applied and Vocational programmes) or equivalent. NFQ levels 4 or 5)	23%
Technical or Vocational FETAC Level 4/5 Cert. NCVA Level 1/2 FÁS National Craft Cert. Teagasc Farming Cert. CERT Professional Cookery Cert. or equivalent. NFQ levels 4 or 5	6%
Advanced Certificate/Completed Apprenticeship FETAC Advance Cert. NCVA Level 3 FÁS National Craft Cert. Teagasc Farming Cert. CERT Professional Cookery Cert. or equivalent. NFQ level 5	5%
Higher Certificate NCEA/HETAC National Cert. or equivalent. NFQ level 6	8%
Ordinary Bachelor's Degree or National Diploma. NFQ Level 7	12%
Honours Bachelor's Degree/Professional qualification or both. NFQ Level 8	14%
Postgraduate diploma Master's Degree or equivalent. NFQ Level 9	14%
Doctorate (Ph.D) or higher. NFQ level 10	1%

Note: May not sum to 100 due to rounding

**Table 17:** Participants with children under 18

Any children under 18?	Percentage
Yes	51%
No	49%

Note: May not sum to 100 due to rounding

**Table 18:** Area of residence of participants

Area of residence	Percentage
A village or rural area (fewer than 3 000 people)	33%
A small town (3 000 to about 15 000 people)	14%
A town (15 000 to about 100 000 people)	14%
A city (100 000+)	37%

Note: May not sum to 100 due to rounding

**Table 19:** Participants born in Republic of Ireland

Born in Republic of Ireland?	Percentage
Yes	78%
No	22%

Note: May not sum to 100 due to rounding

**Table 20:** Ethnicity of participants

Ethnicity	Percentage
Irish Traveller	1%
White Irish	81%
Any other white background	10%
Asian or Asian Irish	3%
Other background	3%
Black or Black Irish	2%

Note: May not sum to 100 due to rounding

**Table 21:** Home ownership status of participants

Home ownership status	Percentage
Own outright (no mortgage)	35%
Own with mortgage	31%
Rent privately	16%
Rent from local authority/housing assoc.	12%
Live rent-free	3%
Other	1%

Note: May not sum to 100 due to rounding

**Table 22:** Sexual orientation of participants

Sexual orientation	Percentage
Heterosexual/straight (attracted to people of the opposite sex)	92%
Bisexual (attracted to people of both sexes)	2%
Gay/lesbian (attracted to people of the same sex)	2%
Other/not sure	2%
Refused	2%

Note: May not sum to 100 due to rounding

**Table 23:** Employment status of participants

Employment status	Percentage
Employed	54%
Self employed	13%
Retired	19%
Unemployed	7%
Full-time Student	3%
Full-time Carer	2%
Other	1%
Refused	0%

Note: May not sum to 100 due to rounding

**Table 24:** Gender of participants

Gender	Percentage
Female	51%
Male	49%

Note: May not sum to 100 due to rounding



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