



# BELFAST

Has COVID-19 changed our city?



Profiling Health, Wellbeing & Prosperity

**PARTICIPATION**

## Acknowledgements

Belfast Healthy Cities would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank Erica Ison, for her commitment and diligence as author of the six chapters in this publication, *BELFAST: Profiling, Health, Well-being and Prosperity: Has Covid -19 changed our city?*

We would also like to wholeheartedly thank Dr Karen Casson, Vice Chair of Belfast Healthy Cities Board of Directors for her meticulous review of the data and her valuable comments on the Chapters.

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# Publications

There are six publications, referred to as chapters, in *BELFAST Profiling Health, Wellbeing & Prosperity: Has Covid-19 changed our city?*

They are based on the 6P framework of Belfast being a member of Phase VII (2019 – 2025) of the World Health Organization European Healthy Cities Network:



# Previous Publications

There are six publications, referred to as chapters, in *BELFAST Profiling Health, Wellbeing & Prosperity*, and a summary document.

They are based on the 6P framework of Belfast being a member of Phase VII (2019 – 2025) of the World Health Organization European Healthy Cities Network:



# Foreword

The Belfast Healthy Cities City Health Profile is an important document that will help set out the challenges and opportunities for us all to improve the Health and Wellbeing of the city into the future going forward.

As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, and we continue to see pressures on the cost of living, the city is clearly in a very different place now and we must take the opportunity to reflect both on the impact of the pandemic and refocus our thoughts as we move forward. This profile, and the key learning within, will help us do that.

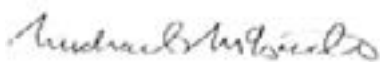
Has COVID-19 changed our city? Undoubtedly the answer is yes. The wider health and social care system had to adapt to meet the challenge of COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, our health and social care system was already facing huge strategic challenges in the form of an ageing population, increasing demand, long and growing waiting lists, workforce pressures and the emergence of new and more expensive treatments. All of these pressures were exacerbated by the pandemic. The Department of Health and the wider service also need to plan for potential further outbreaks of the virus and use the learning from the pandemic to assist this planning.

To support the overall work on recovery, we need to understand what has, and has not, worked in terms in addressing the impact of the pandemic around the world. While no one nation or region will map precisely to our situation, there will be a strong evidence base to draw from.

It is apparent across many areas that there are opportunities to use the new ways of working and opportunities from the current crisis and not simply to return to the way things were done previously. This continues to be a feature of the future thinking on recovery.

I see continued collaboration as key going forward, we can all learn so much from each other, as is evidenced in the Chapters. I whole-heartedly support cross-departmental and cross-agency liaison. This is at the heart of Making Life Better, the Executive's framework for improving health and addressing health inequalities. We all have so much to contribute towards the health of our population and we can do this better together.

I am delighted to be working closely with Belfast Healthy Cities and I commend the organisation on this very important piece of work.



**Prof Sir Michael McBride**  
Chief Medical Officer

# Preface

When compared to those who do not provide care, unpaid carers experience poorer physical and mental wellbeing. They are more likely to have multiple health conditions and are at greater risk of premature death. Unpaid care is in the midst of a public health crisis, as these health inequities grow between carers and non-carers. More and more people are having to take on unpaid care, and unpaid carers are having to provide more and more care, as public services struggle.

Our population is ageing, which is a good thing, as we can all look forward to more years, but with it brings greater levels of ill health as more and more people live into older age with multiple health conditions. These will require help and support. At the same time, we are failing to see the investment and support we need in social care services, particularly, to support not just the ageing population, but the increasing numbers of parent carers looking after children with disabilities.

We need more data, evidence and research to draw upon in order to address the emerging public health crisis that surrounds unpaid carers, so the publication of this chapter, PARTICIPATION, 'BELFAST, Profiling Health, Wellbeing & Prosperity: has COVID-19 changed our city?' is hugely significant. The COVID-19 pandemic had a huge impact on carers in Belfast. The number of people taking on an unpaid caring role increased during the pandemic. Many carers saw the hours they needed to care increase significantly.

We also saw a significant reduction in social care services and support for people and their carers during the pandemic. These service levels have yet to return to that pre-pandemic level, never mind meeting the post-pandemic demand that now exists. This is contributing to why unpaid carers must do more care, often at the expense of their own health and wellbeing.

Participating and supporting others to participate in society is key to improving health and well-being. Social support, especially social relationships with family and friends, is one of the most important factors influencing quality of life among people, including carers. Involving vulnerable populations in designing, delivering and evaluating services, and addressing gender inequities and discrimination supports and promotes improved life opportunities. Unpaid carers are often forgotten in such conversations.

Carers need to be identified, recognised, valued and supported in order to be able to truly participate. They must be included as equal partners in care decisions, and they must be supported in their own right to enable them to be able to fully participate in society.

This chapter offers a wide range of data from various sources, which are presented in an accessible, concise and integrated format, which shows clearly the impact of the pandemic on carers. It provides important insight to those working to improve health and wellbeing across the city, which will enable more people to participate in society and see an improved quality of life. I hope it can be used to support increased participation and to reduce the inequity gap between carers and non-carers over the coming years.

**Richard Meade**  
**Director, Carers Scotland and Carers NI**

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Caring responsibility							
<b>Carers' assessments</b>							
Carers' assessments offered							NI: reasons for declining carers' assessments
Carers' assessments accepted/completed							
Percentage of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed							
<b>Carers' reassessments</b>							
Carers' reassessments offered							
Carers' reassessments accepted/completed							
Percentage of carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed							
<b>Claimants of Carer's Allowance</b>							
Percentage of the eligible population who claimed Carer's Allowance							
Number of claimants of Carer's Allowance							
Number of recipients of Carer's Allowance							
Percentage of claimants of Carer's Allowance who became recipients							
<b>Sense of belonging</b>							
To the local neighbourhood							NI: by sex, age group, and religion
To Northern Ireland							NI: by sex, age group, and religion



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## SECTION 1

# Caring Responsibility

### DATA SOURCE

Information is from the Health Survey Northern Ireland: first results 2021/22.<sup>1</sup>

### YEARS FOR WHICH DATA ARE AVAILABLE WITHIN COVID-19 TIMEFRAME

Financial year 2021/22

### REPORTED IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON DATA COLLECTION

Owing to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, data collection for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 Health Survey Northern Ireland moved from face-to-face interviewing to telephone mode.

There are several factors that users should consider when interpreting the 2021/22 results and care should be taken when comparing these to previously published findings:

- The change in data collection mode from face-to-face to telephone may have altered how people responded to the survey
- The change in data collection mode necessitated a reduction in the number of questions and changes to how some questions were asked or presented, as well as to the response categories associated with them; this may also have affected how people responded to the survey
- The response rate to the telephone survey at 47% was slightly lower when compared with the normal response rate of 55% for the face-to-face survey; this reduced the number of cases at the household and individual levels – the final sample was 3,154 individuals. The precision of survey estimates in 2021/22 was reduced compared with previous findings, particularly when analysed by population subgroups (the response rate in 2020/21 was 18%)

1. Health survey Northern Ireland: first results 2021/22 | Department of Health (health-ni.gov.uk) (Last accessed 7 May 2023)

- The demographic profile of the achieved sample was different from previous years with a greater under-representation of people aged 16-44 years. The 2021/22 results are weighted by sex and age and although the weighting should reduce bias in the results, it cannot eliminate all forms of bias that may be present in the data. The 2020/21 health survey weight was based on sex, age, and Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM) as the sample had fewer households from the most-deprived areas and more households from the least-deprived areas in comparison with previous years, whereas the weights for previous years were based on sex and age<sup>2</sup>

## PROFILE FINDINGS

In 2021/22, after two full years of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT), the percentage of people with caring responsibility<sup>3</sup> was 18% (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 1).

Between 2018/19 and 2021/22<sup>4</sup>, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first two full years of the pandemic, in Belfast HSCT, the percentage of people with caring responsibility increased by 6 percentage points, from 12% to 18% (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 1).

*See pages 42-49, in the Participation Chapter for further detail of the findings before the COVID-19 pandemic.*

## KEY COMPARISONS

### Comparison with Northern Ireland

When compared with Northern Ireland, Belfast HSCT:

- In 2018/19, before the COVID-19 pandemic, had a lower percentage of people with caring responsibility by 2 percentage points, 12% compared with 14%
- In 2021/22, at the end of two full years of the pandemic, had a higher percentage of people with caring responsibility by 1 percentage point, 18% compared with 17% (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 1)

- 
2. Health Survey NI Trend Tables, Impact of Covid-19 tab, at Health survey Northern Ireland: first results 2021/22 | Department of Health (health-ni.gov.uk) or hsni-trend-tables-21-22\_0.xlsx, Impact of Covid-19 tab at hsni-trend-tables-21-22\_0.xlsx (live.com) (Both last accessed 26 June 2023)
  3. Defined as a "person who looks after another person who is sick, disabled or elderly (other than in a professional capacity) for an hour or more each week
  4. The question was not asked in the Health Survey Northern Ireland of 2019/20 and of 2020/21

Between 2018/19 and 2021/22, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first two full years of the pandemic, the percentage of people with caring responsibility increased:

- In Belfast HSCT by 6 percentage points, from 12% to 18% (a percentage increase of 50.00%)
- In Northern Ireland by 3 percentage points, from 14% to 17% (a percentage increase of 21.43%; see COVID-19 Participation Figure 1))

### Comparison with other HSCTs

When compared with other health and social care trusts, Belfast HSCT had:

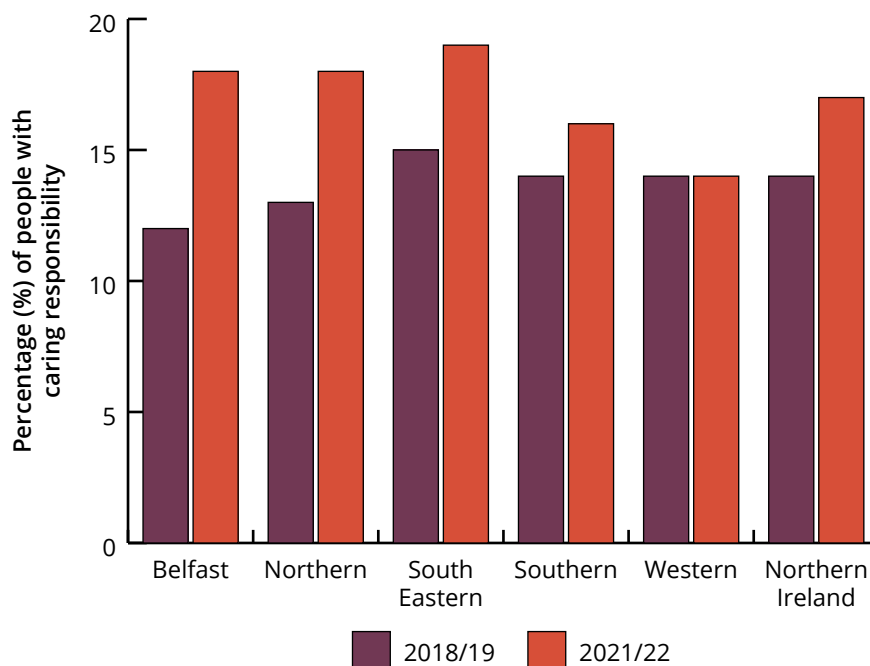
- In 2018/19, before the COVID-19 pandemic, the lowest percentage of people with caring responsibility
- In 2021/22, at the end of two full years of the pandemic, the equal second highest percentage of people with caring responsibility, together with Northern HSCT (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 1)

Between 2018/19 and 2021/22, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first two full years of the pandemic, the percentage of people with caring responsibility:

- Increased overall in 4 health and social care trusts, including Belfast HSCT
- Remained the same overall in one health and social care trust (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 1).

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 1:**

**Percentage (%) of people with caring responsibility by HSCT and Northern Ireland, 2018/19, and 2021/22**



Source: Department of Health, Health Survey Northern Ireland: first results 2021/22, Caring Responsibility tab

**OBSERVATIONS ON THE DATA**

**Comparison with Northern Ireland**

In comparison with Northern Ireland, the percentage of people with caring responsibility in Belfast HSCT:

- In 2018/19, before the COVID-19 pandemic, was lower
- In 2021/22, after two full years of the pandemic, was higher

Between 2018/19 and 2021/22, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first two full years of the pandemic, there was a greater percentage increase in the percentage of people with caring responsibility in Belfast HSCT when compared with Northern Ireland; this greater percentage increase has resulted in Belfast HSCT having a higher percentage of people with caring responsibility than Northern Ireland, whereas before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2018/19 Belfast HSCT's percentage was lower, leading to more negative outcomes for people in Belfast HSCT when compared with Northern Ireland.



## Comparison with other HSCTs

In comparison with other health and social care trusts, the percentage of people with caring responsibility in Belfast HSCT:

- In 2018/19, before the COVID-19 pandemic, was the lowest
- In 2021/22, after two full years of the pandemic, was the equal second highest

Consequently, there was a change in the relative position of Belfast HSCT from lowest to second highest among health and social care trusts.

Between 2018/19 and 2021/22, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first two full years of the pandemic, of the 4 health and social care trusts in which there was an increase in the percentage of people with caring responsibility:

- Belfast HSCT had the greatest percentage increase at 50.00%
- Southern HSCT had the smallest percentage increase at 14.29%

The median percentage increase was 32.57%.

## POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Between 2018/19 and 2021/22, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first two full years, the percentage of people with caring responsibility:

- Increased overall in 4 health and social care trusts, including Belfast HSCT
- Increased overall in Northern Ireland
- Remained the same overall in one health and social care trust

Although the percentage of people with caring responsibility increased in both Belfast HSCT and Northern Ireland, the percentage increase was much greater in Belfast HSCT.

Among health and social care trusts, Belfast HSCT had the lowest percentage of people with caring responsibility before the COVID-19 pandemic, but the equal second highest after the first two full years of the pandemic.

In 2021/22, approaching 2 out of every 10 people in Belfast HSCT had caring responsibility, which was similar to Northern Ireland, but compared with between 1 and 2 out of every 10 people in Western HSCT.

In Belfast HSCT, the COVID-19 pandemic has been associated with an increase in the percentage of people with caring responsibility.

## SECTION 2

# Carers' Assessments

### 2.1 Carers' Assessment Offered

### 2.2 Carers' Assessments Accepted/Completed

### 2.3 Carers' Assessments Offered that were Accepted/Completed

#### DATA SOURCE

Information is from the Department of Health:

- Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2019, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2019
- Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2020, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2020
- Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2021, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2021
- Carers' assessments and reassessments, Current publication, Quarterly carers' statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2022<sup>5</sup>

#### QUARTERLY DATA USED FROM WITHIN COVID-19 TIMEFRAME

- Quarter 3 (Q3), October-December 2020
- Q3, October-December 2021
- Q3, October-December 2022

5. Q3, October-December 2019: Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2019 | Department of Health (health-ni.gov.uk) ; Q3 October-December 2020: Quarterly carers' statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2020 | Department of Health (health-ni.gov.uk); Q3, October-December 2021: Quarterly carers' statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2021 | Department of Health (health-ni.gov.uk) ; Q3, October-December 2022: Carers' assessments and reassessments | Department of Health (health-ni.gov.uk) (All last accessed 14 June 2023)

## REPORTED IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON DATA COLLECTION

Health and social care (HSC) trusts reported a reduction in number of carers' assessments during the time-period 1 April–30 June 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19. The following background to the assessment reduction may apply to all, or only specific, HSC Trusts:

- Carers Assessments Services were impacted due to COVID-19 restrictions, such as social distancing, and staffing capacity issues
- COVID-19 priority of work was redirected to support high-risk service users and carers who provided formal care directly to their relative
- Carers' assessments continued to be offered and completed when requested
- COVID-19 restrictions reduced footfall in clients' homes and the requests for carers' assessments were reduced
- When staff offered carer's assessments, some families did not want them visiting their home or to come into the Health Centre to complete the assessment; some carers requested carers' assessment be postponed until after COVID-19
- Direct contact was maintained by telephone at an increased level, however, the administration of information-gathering work, such as that for carers' assessments, was not prioritised in operational services during the pandemic
- Substantial support was offered to carers facing concerns regarding the continuity of care plans as COVID-19 impacted<sup>6</sup>

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6. Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland (health-ni.gov.uk) (Last accessed 26 June 2023)

### Carers' assessments offered

In Belfast HSCT, in:

- Q3, October-December 2020, 696 carers' assessments were offered, representing 18.56% of the total offered in Northern Ireland in that quarter
- Q3, October-December 2021, 639 carers' assessments were offered, representing 18.75% of the total offered in Northern Ireland in that quarter
- Q3, October-December 2022, 807 carers' assessments were offered, representing 20.18% of the total offered in Northern Ireland in that quarter

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, in Belfast HSCT:

- The number of carers' assessments offered decreased by 38, from 845 to 807
- The percentage share of the total number of carers' assessments offered in Northern Ireland increased by 0.07 percentage points, from 20.11% to 20.18%

### Differences by client group

The percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered varied by client group:

- In Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, the highest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered was to people caring for older people at 38.34%, followed by people caring for a person with mental health problems at 26.04%; the lowest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered was to people caring for the 'Other' client group at 0%, followed by people caring for people with a learning disability at 5.21%
- In Q3, October-December 2020, 7-9 months into the pandemic, the highest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered was to people caring for older people at 32.90%, followed by people with family and child care responsibilities/caring for children with disabilities at 24.71%; the lowest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered was to people caring for the 'Other' client group at 0%, followed by people caring for people with a learning disability at 6.47%

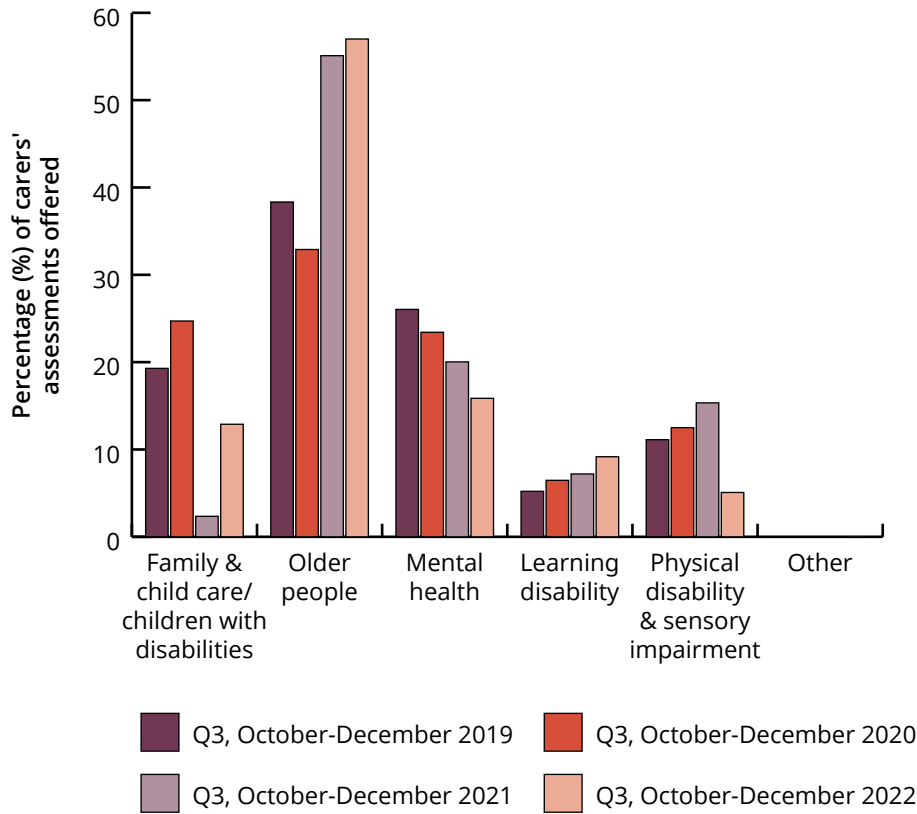
- In Q3, October-December 2021, one year and 7-9 months into the pandemic, the highest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered was to people caring for older people at 55.09%, followed by people caring for a person with mental health problems at 20.03%; the lowest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered was to people caring for the 'Other' client group at 0%, followed by people with family and child care responsibilities/caring for children with disabilities at 2.35%
- In Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, the highest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered was to people caring for older people at 57.00%, followed by people caring for a person with mental health problems at 15.86%; the lowest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered was to people caring for the 'Other' client group at 0%, followed by people caring for people with a physical disability and sensory impairment at 5.08% (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 2)

Between Q3, October-December 2019 , before the CVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, the percentage of Belfast's total number of carers' assessments offered:

- Increased for the client groups 'Older people' and 'Learning disability'
- Decreased for the client groups 'Family and child care/children with disabilities', 'Mental Health', and 'Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment'
- Remained the same for the client group 'Other'

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 2:**

**Percentage (%) of the total number of carers' assessments offered in Belfast HSCT by client group, Q3, October-December 2019, Q3, October-December 2020, Q3, October-December 2021, and Q3, October-December 2022**



Sources: Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2019, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2019, Table 2; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2020, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2020, Table 2; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2021, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2021, Table 2; Department of Health, Carers' assessments and reassessments, Current publication, Quarterly carers' statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2022, Table 2

## Carers' assessments accepted/completed

In Belfast HSCT, in:

- Q3, October-December 2020, 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, 594 carers' assessments were accepted/completed, representing 27.34% of the total number accepted/completed in Northern Ireland in that quarter
- Q3, October-December 2021, one year and 7-9 months into the pandemic, 546 carers' assessments were accepted/completed, representing 26.76% of the total number accepted/completed in Northern Ireland in that quarter
- Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, 641 carers' assessments were accepted/completed, representing 29.22% of the total number accepted/completed in Northern Ireland in that quarter

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, in Belfast HSCT:

- The number of carers' assessments accepted/completed increased by 54, from 587 to 641
- The percentage share of the total number of carers' assessments accepted/completed in Northern Ireland increased by 0.92 percentage points, from 28.30% to 29.22%

## Differences by client group

The percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments accepted/completed varied by client group:

- In Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, of the client groups for which data have not been suppressed, the highest percentage of Belfast's total number of carers' assessments accepted/completed was for people with family and child care responsibilities/caring for children with disabilities at 27.77%, followed by people caring for older people at 23.70%; the lowest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments accepted/completed was for people caring for the 'Other' client group at 0%, followed by people caring for people with a physical disability and sensory impairment at 14.48%
- In Q3, October-December 2020, 7-9 months into the pandemic, of the client groups for which data have not been suppressed, the highest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments accepted/completed was for people caring for older people at 30.81%, followed by people with family and child care responsibilities/caring for



children with disabilities at 27.78%; the lowest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments accepted/completed was for people caring for the 'Other' client group at 0%, followed by people caring for people with mental health problems at 19.53%

- In Q3, October-December 2021, one year and 7-9 months into the pandemic, of the client groups for which data have not been suppressed, the highest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments were accepted/completed for people caring for older people at 48.90%<sup>7</sup>, followed by people caring for a person with mental health problems at 21.61%; the lowest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments accepted/completed was for people caring for people with a learning disability at 8.42%, followed by people caring for people with a physical disability and sensory impairment at 15.20%
- In Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, the highest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments accepted/completed was for people caring for older people at 56.16%, followed by people with family and childcare responsibilities/caring for children with disabilities at 16.22%; the lowest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments accepted/completed was for people caring for the 'Other' client group at 0%, followed by people caring for people with a physical disability and sensory impairment at 4.68% (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 3)

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, the percentage of Belfast's total number of carers' assessments accepted/completed:

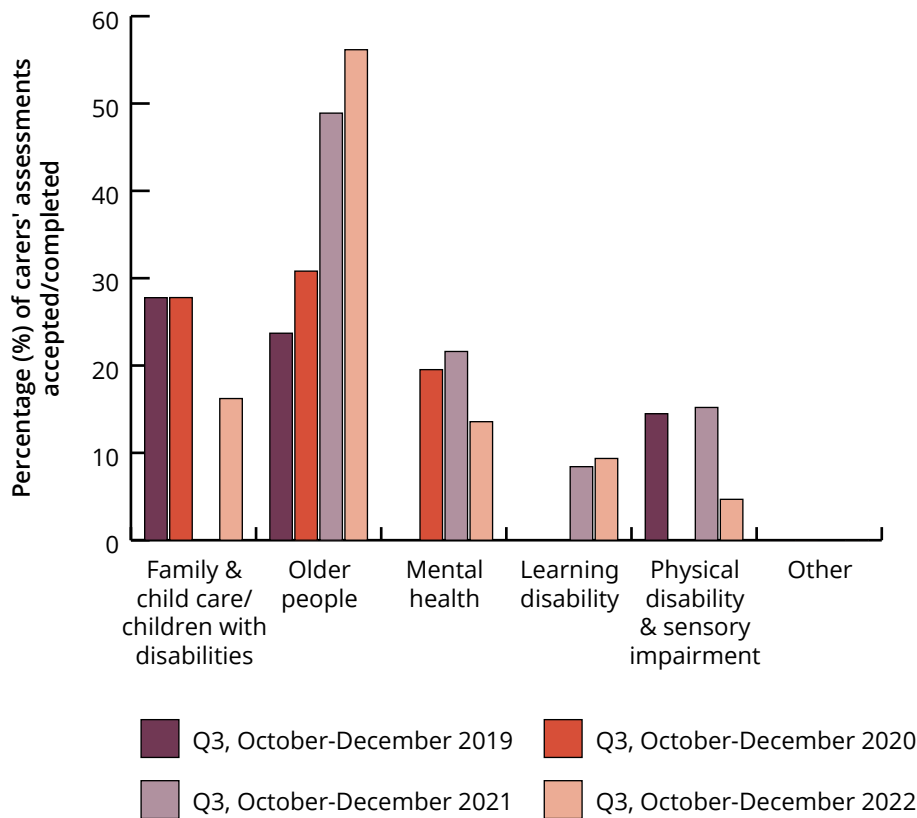
- Increased overall for the client group 'Older people'
- Decreased overall for the client groups 'Family and child care/children with disabilities', and 'Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment'
- Remained the same for the client group 'Other'

7. Although data have been suppressed for the number of people in the client group 'Older people with mental health problems', the client group 'Older people' still has the largest percentage of carers' assessments accepted/completed

In addition, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the percentage of Belfast’s total number of carers’ assessments accepted/completed between:

- Q3, October-December 2020 and Q3, October-December 2022 (covering two years of the pandemic), decreased for the client group ‘Mental Health’
- Q3, October-December 2021 and Q3, October-December 2022 (covering one year of the pandemic), increased for the client group ‘Learning disability’

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 3:**  
**Percentage (%) of the total number of carers’ assessments accepted/completed in Belfast HSCT by client group, Q3, October-December 2019<sup>8</sup>, Q3, October-December 2020<sup>9</sup>, Q3, October-December 2021<sup>10</sup>, and Q3, October-December 2022**



Sources: Department of Health, Quarterly Carers’ Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2019, Quarterly Carers’ Statistics Tables October to December 2019, Table 2; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers’ Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2020, Quarterly Carers’ Statistics Tables October to December 2020, Table 2; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers’ Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2021, Quarterly Carers’ Statistics Tables October to December 2021, Table 2; Department of Health, Carers’ assessments and reassessments, Current publication, Quarterly carers’ statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2022, Table 2

8. In this quarter, data have been suppressed for the client groups ‘Mental Health’, and ‘Learning Disability’ (values <4 were suppressed)
9. In this quarter, data have been suppressed for the client groups ‘Learning Disability’, and ‘Physical Disability & Sensory Impairment’ (values <4 were suppressed)
10. In this quarter, data have been suppressed for the client groups ‘Family & Child Care/Children with Disabilities’ and ‘Other’. NB: There is no information in the data-holder’s spreadsheet about the threshold value beyond which data were suppressed for this quarter

## Carers' assessments offered that were accepted completed

In Belfast HSCT, in:

- Q3, October-December 2020, 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, in Belfast HSCT, 85.34% of carers' assessments that were offered were accepted/completed
- Q3, October-December 2021, one year and 7-9 months into the pandemic, in Belfast HSCT, 85.45% of carers' assessments that were offered were accepted/completed
- Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, in Belfast HSCT, 79.43% of carers' assessments that were offered were accepted/completed

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, in Belfast HSCT, the percentage of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed increased overall by 9.96 percentage points, from 69.47% to 79.43%.

## Differences by client group

The percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed varied by client group:

- In Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, of the client groups for which data have not been suppressed, the highest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed was for people with family and child care responsibilities/caring for children with disabilities at 100.00%, followed by people caring for people with a physical disability and sensory impairment at 90.43%; the lowest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed was for people caring for the 'Other' client group at 0%, followed by people caring for older people at 42.90%
- In Q3, October-December 2020, 7-9 months into the pandemic, of the client groups for which data have not been suppressed, the highest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed was for people with family and child care responsibilities/caring for children with disabilities at 95.93%, followed by people caring for older people at 79.91%; the lowest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed was for people caring for the 'Other' client group at 0%, followed by people caring for people with mental health problems at 71.17%

- In Q3, October-December 2021, one year and 7-9 months into the pandemic, of the client groups for which data have not been suppressed, the highest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed was for people caring for people with a learning disability at 100.00%<sup>11</sup>, followed by people caring for a person with mental health problems at 92.19%; the lowest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed was for people caring for older people at 80.42%, followed by people caring for people with a physical disability and sensory impairment at 84.69%
- In Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, the highest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed was for people with family and child care responsibilities/caring for children with disabilities at 100%, followed by people caring for older people at 83.53%; the lowest percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed was for people caring for the 'Other' client group at 0%, followed by people caring for people with mental health problems at 67.97% (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 4)

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic,<sup>12</sup> the percentage of Belfast HSCT's total number of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed:

- Increased for the client group 'Older people'
- Decreased for the client group 'Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment'
- Remained the same for the client groups 'Family and child care/children with disabilities' and 'Other' (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 4)

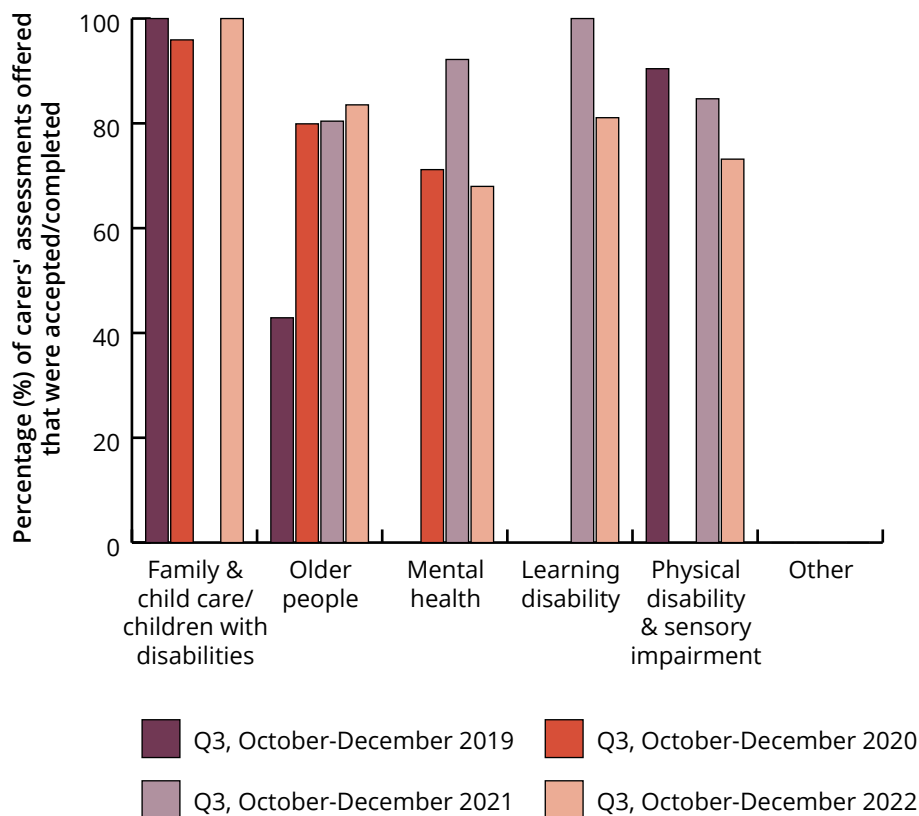
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11. Although data have been suppressed for the number of people in the client group 'Older people with mental health problems', the client group 'Older people' still has the largest percentage of carers' assessments accepted/completed

12. It is not possible to include the following client groups in this analysis because the data were suppressed in Q3, October to December 2019: 'Mental Health' and 'Learning Disability'. For the client group 'Mental Health', the overall trend from Q3, October-December 2020 to Q3, October-December 2022 was a decrease in the percentage over two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, and for the client group 'Learning Disability' the overall trend from Q3, October-December 2021 to Q3, October-December 2022 was a decrease in the percentage over one year of the pandemic

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 4:**

Percentage (%) of the total number of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed in Belfast HSCT by client group, Q3, October-December 2019<sup>13</sup>, Q3, October-December 2020<sup>14</sup>, Q3, October-December 2021<sup>15</sup>, and Q3, October-December 2022



Sources: Data extracted from Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2019, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2019, Table 2; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2020, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2020, Table 2; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2021, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2021, Table 2; Department of Health, Carers' assessments and reassessments, Current publication, Quarterly carers' statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2022, Table 2

See pages 73-81, in the Participation Chapter for further detail of the findings before the COVID-19 pandemic.

13. In this quarter, data have been suppressed for the client groups 'Mental Health', and 'Learning Disability' (values <4 were suppressed)
14. In this quarter, data have been suppressed for the client groups 'Learning Disability', and 'Physical Disability & Sensory Impairment' (values <4 were suppressed)
15. In this quarter, data have been suppressed for the client groups 'Family & Child Care/Children with Disabilities' and 'Other'. NB: There is no information in the data-holder's spreadsheet about the threshold value beyond which data were suppressed for this quarter

### Comparison with Northern Ireland

#### ***Carers' assessments offered***

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3 October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, the number of carers' assessments offered decreased overall in:

- Belfast HSCT by 38, from 845 to 807 (a percentage decrease of 4.50%)
- Northern Ireland by 201, from 4,201 to 4,000 (a percentage decrease of 4.78%)

#### ***Carers' assessments accepted/completed***

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3 October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, the number of carers' assessments accepted/completed increased overall in:

- Belfast HSCT by 54, from 587 to 641 (a percentage increase of 9.20%)
- Northern Ireland by 120, from 2,074 to 2,194 (a percentage increase of 5.79%)

#### ***Carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed***

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the pandemic, and Q3 October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, the percentage of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed increased overall in:

- Belfast HSCT by 9.96 percentage points, from 69.47% to 79.43% (a percentage increase of 14.34%)
- Northern Ireland by 5.48 percentage points, from 49.37% to 54.85% (a percentage increase of 11.10%)

### ***Reasons for declining carers' assessments in Northern Ireland***

In Q3, October-December 2019, before the covid-19 pandemic, in Northern Ireland, 2,127 carers' assessments were declined. The reasons carers gave for declining an assessment were varied. In October-December 2019, the four most common reasons were:

- The carer feels that they do not need any support/ additional support at 36.25%
- The carer does not see themselves as a carer and, therefore, does not see assessment as relevant at 19.09%
- The carer felt that the time/place/environment offered was unsuitable but would like the opportunity to consider an assessment at a later date at 17.07%
- The carer would not give a reason/No reason recorded at 15.51% (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 5)

In Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, in Northern Ireland, 1,806 carers' assessments were declined. The reasons carers gave for declining an assessment were varied. In October-December 2022, the four most common reasons were:

- The carer felt that the time/place/environment offered was unsuitable but would like the opportunity to consider an assessment at a later date at 26.25%
- The carer feels that they do not need any support/ additional support at 25.47%
- The carer would not give a reason/No reason recorded at 21.26%
- The carer does not see themselves as a carer and therefore does not see assessment as relevant at 11.30% (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 5)

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, in Northern Ireland, the percentage of carers who cited their reason for declining an assessment as:

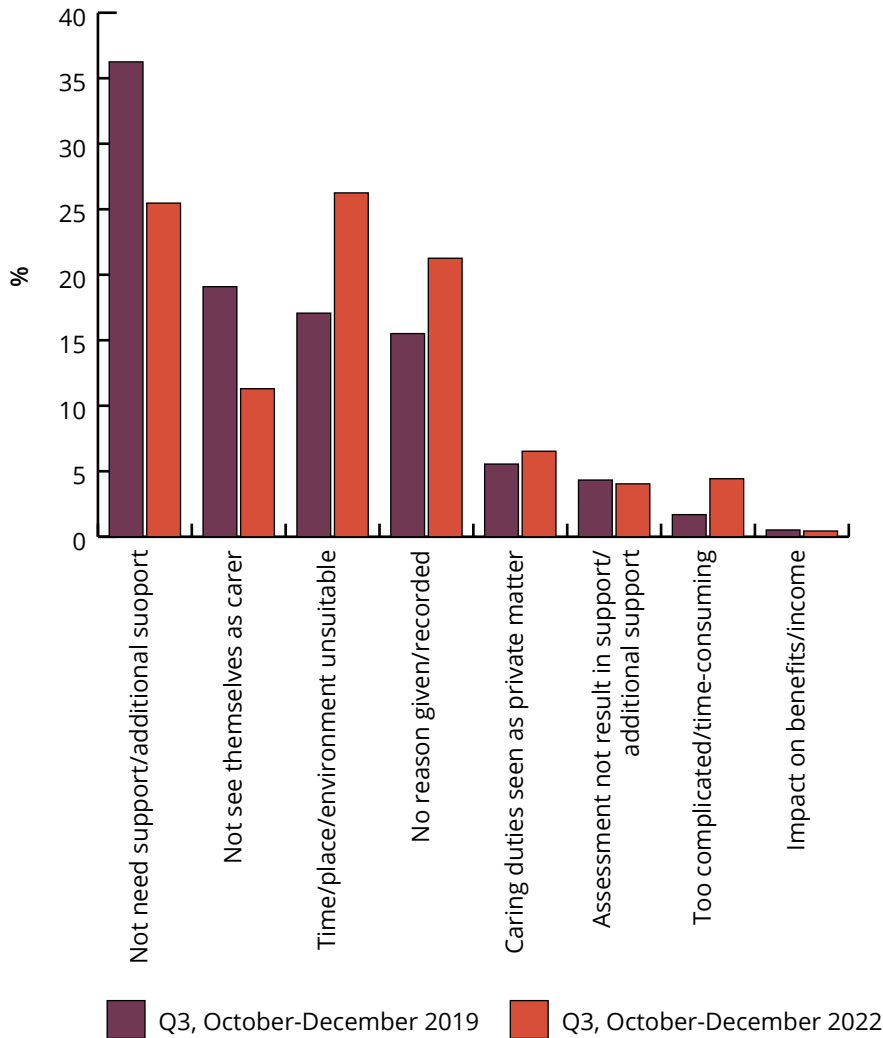
- They felt they did not need any support/additional support decreased by 10.78 percentage points, from 36.25% to 25.47% (a percentage decrease of 29.74%)
- They did not see themselves as a carer and therefore did not see assessment as relevant decreased by 7.79 percentage points, from 19.09% to 11.30% (a percentage decrease of 40.81%)
- They felt the time/place/environment offered was unsuitable but would like the opportunity to consider an assessment at a later date increased by 9.18 percentage points, from 17.07% to 26.25% (a percentage increase of 53.78%)
- They saw their caring duties are a private matter which they preferred not to discuss increased by 0.98 percentage points, from 5.55% to 6.53% (a percentage increase of 17.66%)
- They felt the assessment would not result in additional support/service decreased by 0.29 percentage points, from 4.33% to 4.04% (a percentage decrease of 6.70%)
- They felt that an assessment would be too complicated or time consuming increased by 2.74 percentage points, from 1.69% to 4.43% (a percentage increase of 162.13%)
- They were concerned about the impact on their benefits/income decreased by 0.08 percentage points, from 0.52% to 0.44% (a percentage decrease of 15.38%; see COVID-19 Participation Figure 5)

The percentage of carers who would not give a reason or for whom a reason was not recorded increased by 5.75 percentage points, from 15.51% to 21.26% (a percentage increase of 37.07%).



**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 5:**

**Reasons for declining carers' assessments as a percentage (%) of all carers' assessments declined in Northern Ireland, Q3, October-December 2019, and Q3, October-December 2022**



Source: Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2019, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2019, Table 5; Department of Health, Carers' assessments and reassessments, Current publication, Quarterly carers' statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2022, Table 5

## Comparison with other HSCTs

### ***Carers' assessments offered***

In Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, when compared with other HSCTs:

- Belfast HSCT had the second highest number of carers' assessments offered, and the second highest percentage share of Northern Ireland's total for that quarter
- Northern HSCT had the highest number and highest percentage share
- Western HSCT had the lowest number and lowest percentage share
- Southern HSCT had the median number and median percentage share (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 6)

In Q3, October-December 2020, 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, when compared with other HSCTs:

- Belfast HSCT had the median number of carers' assessments offered, and the median percentage share of Northern Ireland's total for that quarter
- Northern HSCT had the highest number and highest percentage share
- Western HSCT had the lowest number and lowest percentage share (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 6)

In Q3, October-December 2021, one year and 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, when compared with other HSCTs:

- Belfast HSCT had the median number of carers' assessments offered, and the median percentage share of Northern Ireland's total for that quarter
- Northern HSCT had the highest number and highest percentage share
- Western HSCT had the lowest number and lowest percentage share (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 6)

In Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, when compared with other HSCTs:

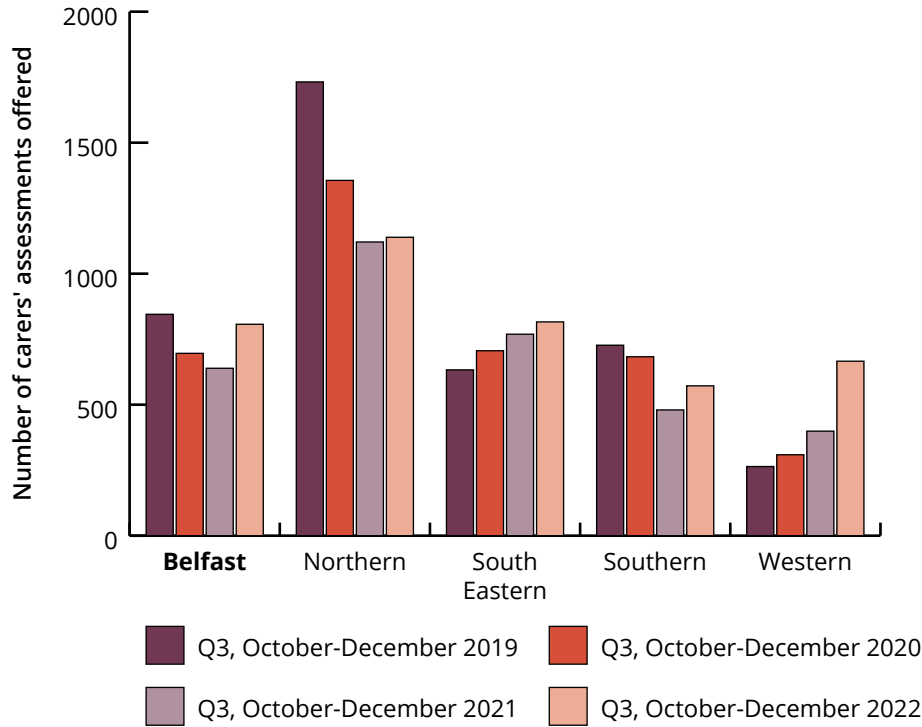
- **Belfast HSCT had the median number of carers' assessments offered, and the median percentage share of Northern Ireland's total for that quarter**
- **Northern HSCT had the highest number and highest percentage share**
- **Southern HSCT had the lowest number and lowest percentage share (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 6)**

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, the number of carers' assessments offered:

- **Decreased overall in 3 health and social care trusts, including Belfast HSCT**
- **Increased overall in 2 health and social care trusts (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 6)**

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 6:**

**Number of carers' assessments offered by HSCT, Q3, October-December 2019, Q3, October-December 2020, Q3, October-December 2021, and Q3, October-December 2022**



Sources: Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2019, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2019, Table 2; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2020, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2020, Table 2; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2021, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2021, Table 2; Department of Health, Carers' assessments and reassessments, Current publication, Quarterly carers' statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2022, Table 2

***Carers' assessments accepted/completed***

In Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, when compared with other health and social care trusts:

- Belfast HSCT had the second highest number of carers' assessments accepted/completed, and second highest percentage share of Northern Ireland's total for that quarter
- Northern HSCT had the highest number and highest percentage share
- Western HSCT had the lowest number and lowest percentage share
- South Eastern HSCT had the median number and median percentage share (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 7)

In Q3, October-December 2020, 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, when compared with other health and social care trusts:

- **Belfast HSCT had the second highest number of carers' assessments accepted/completed, and the second highest percentage share of Northern Ireland's total for that quarter**
- **Northern HSCT had the highest number and highest percentage share**
- **Western HSCT had the lowest number and lowest percentage share**
- **South Eastern HSCT had the median number and median percentage share (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 7)**

In Q3, October-December 2021, one year and 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, when compared with other health and social care trusts:

- **Belfast HSCT had the second highest number of carers' assessments accepted/completed, and the second highest percentage share of Northern Ireland's total for that quarter**
- **Northern HSCT had the highest number and highest percentage share**
- **Western HSCT had the lowest number and lowest percentage share**
- **South Eastern HSCT had the median number and median percentage share (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 7)**

In Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, when compared with other health and social care trusts:

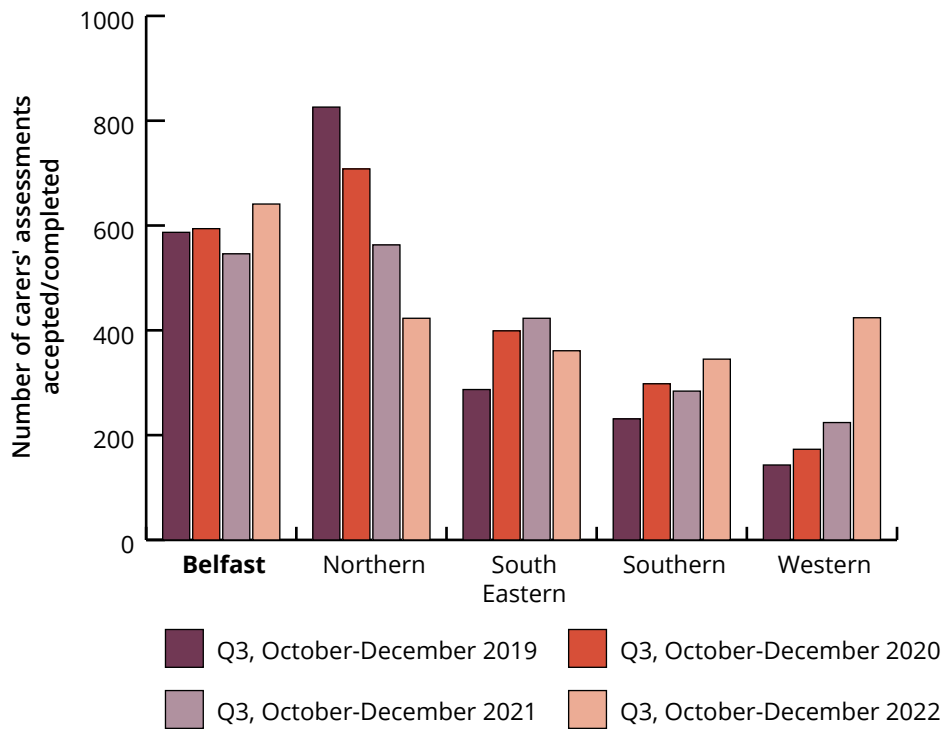
- **Belfast HSCT had the highest number of carers' assessments accepted/completed, and the highest percentage share of Northern Ireland's total for that quarter**
- **Southern HSCT had the lowest number and lowest percentage share**
- **Northern HSCT had the median number and median percentage share (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 7)**

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the CPVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, the number of carers' assessments accepted/completed:

- Increased overall in 4 health and social care trusts, including Belfast HSCT
- Decreased overall in one health and social care trust (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 7)

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 7:**

**Number of carers' assessments accepted/completed by HSCT, Q3, October-December 2019, Q3, October-December 2020, Q3, October-December 2021, and Q3, October-December 2022**



Sources: Data extracted from Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2019, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2019, Table 3; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2020, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2020, Table 3; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2021, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2021, Table 3; Department of Health, Carers' assessments and reassessments, Current publication, Quarterly carers' statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2022, Table 3

### ***Carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed***

In Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, when compared with other health and social care trusts:

- Belfast HSCT had the highest percentage of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed
- Southern HSCT had the lowest percentage
- Northern HSCT had the median percentage (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 8)

In Q3, October-December 2020, 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, when compared with other health and social care trusts:

- Belfast HSCT had the highest percentage of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed
- Southern HSCT had the lowest percentage
- South Eastern HSCT had the median percentage (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 8)

In Q3, October-December 2021, one year and 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, when compared with other health and social care trusts:

- Belfast HSCT had the highest percentage of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed
- Northern HSCT had the lowest percentage
- Western HSCT had the median percentage (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 8)

In Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, when compared with other health and social care trusts:

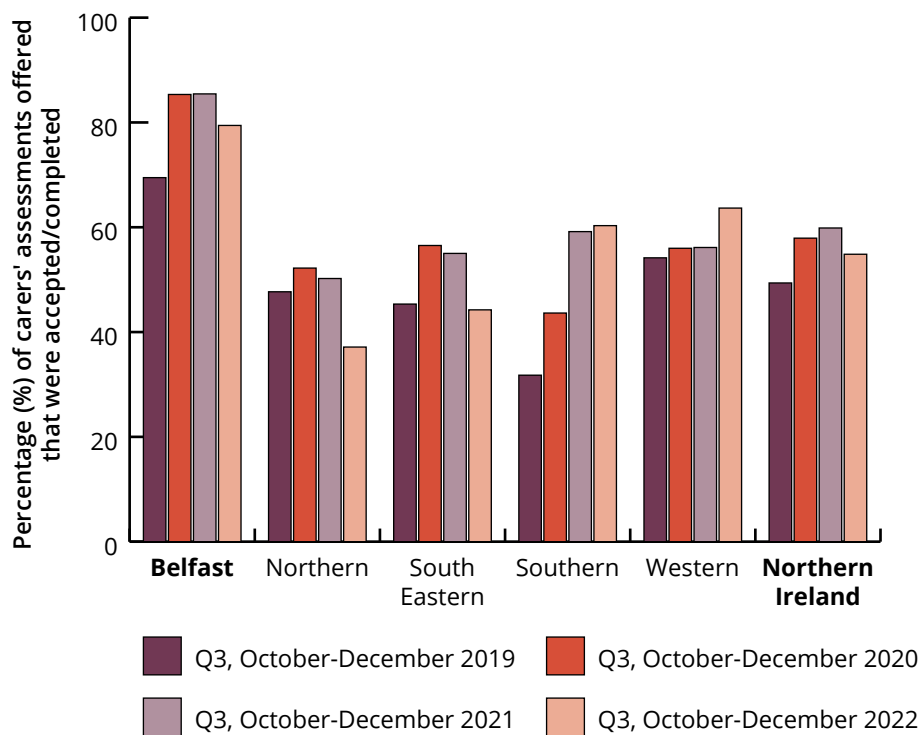
- Belfast HSCT had the highest percentage of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed
- Northern HSCT had the lowest percentage
- Southern HSCT had the median percentage (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 8)

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, the percentage of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed:

- Increased overall in 3 health and social care trusts, including Belfast HSCT
- Decreased overall in 2 health and social care trusts (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 8)

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 8:**

**Percentage (%) of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed by HSCT and Northern Ireland, Q3, October-December 2019, Q3, October-December 2020, Q3, October-December 2021, and Q3, October-December 2022**



Sources: Data extracted from Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2019, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2019, Tables 2 & 3; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2020, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2020, Tables 2 & 3; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2021, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2021, Tables 2 & 3; Department of Health, Carers' assessments and reassessments, Current publication, Quarterly carers' statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2022, Tables 2 & 3



### Comparison with Northern Ireland

In comparison with Northern Ireland, between Q3, October to December 2019, from before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, Belfast HSCT:

- Had a slightly lower percentage decrease in the number of carers' assessments offered, and the gap between Belfast HSCT and Northern Ireland widened
- Had a greater percentage increase in the number of carers' assessments accepted/completed, and the gap between Belfast HSCT and Northern Ireland widened
- Had a greater percentage increase in the percentage of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed, and the gap between Belfast HSCT and Northern Ireland widened, with more favourable outcomes for Belfast HSCT

From Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, to Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 9 months into the pandemic, the four most common reasons for declining carers' assessments were:

- The carer feels that they do not need any support/additional support
- The carer does not see themselves as a carer and therefore does not see assessment as relevant
- The carer felt that time/place /environment offered was unsuitable but would like the opportunity to consider an assessment at a later date
- The carer would not give a reason/No reason recorded (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 5)

In Q3, October-December 2019, the most frequently cited reason was 'The carer feels that they do not need any support/additional support' whereas in Q3, October-December 2022 the most frequently cited reason was 'The carer felt that time/place/ environment offered was unsuitable but would like the opportunity to consider an assessment at a later date'.

## Comparison with other HSCTs

In comparison with other health and social care trusts, Belfast HSCT:

- Had the second highest number of carers' assessments offered before the COVID-19 pandemic, in Q3 October-December 2019, but the median number during Q3 in October-December 2020, 2021, and 2022
- Had the second highest number of carers' assessments accepted/completed before the COVID-19 pandemic in Q3, October-December 2019, and during the pandemic in Q3 in October-December 2020, and 2021, but the highest number in Q3, October-December 2022
- Had the highest percentage of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed both before the COVID-19 pandemic, in Q3 October-December 2019, and during the pandemic in Q3 in October-December 2020, 2021, and 2022

In comparison with other HSCTs, between Q3, October to December 2019 and Q3, October-December 2022:

- Of the 3 health and social care trusts that had a percentage decrease in the number of carers' assessments offered, Belfast HSCT had the smallest percentage decrease
- Of the 4 health and social care trusts that had a percentage increase in the number of carers' assessments accepted/completed, Belfast HSCT had the smallest percentage increase
- Of the 3 health and social care trusts that had a percentage increase in the percentage of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed, Belfast HSCT had the smallest percentage increase

## POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

To interpret these data for carers' assessments, it is important to view them from the perspective that this suite of indicators is one way of highlighting the level of need in the population of carers across Northern Ireland.

In Q3, October-December 2022, before the COVID-19 pandemic, Belfast HSCT accounted for:

- 2 out of every 10 carers' assessments offered in Northern Ireland – this represented a slight increase from before the COVID-19 pandemic
- Approaching 3 out of every 10 carers' assessments accepted/completed in Northern Ireland – a similar level to that from before the pandemic
- 8 out of every 10 carers' assessments that were offered in Belfast HSCT were accepted/completed – this represented an overall increase from before the pandemic

Before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, among health and social care trusts, Belfast HSCT had:

- A relatively high to median number of carers' assessments offered, indicating higher levels of need
- A relatively high number of carers' assessments accepted/completed, indicating high levels of perception of need among carers
- The highest percentage of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed, also indicating high levels of perception of need among carers

For carers in Belfast HSCT, the COVID-19 pandemic has been associated with:

- A decrease overall in carers' assessments offered – this may reflect the reduced opportunity to perform, and therefore offer, carers' assessments during periods of lockdown, as opposed to a reduction in carers' need (a possibility supported by the increase in carers' assessments between Q3, October-December 2021 and Q3, October-December 2022, when the difference in numbers from before the COVID-19 pandemic from that after 2 years and 9 months of the pandemic was only 38)
- An increase overall in the number of carers' assessments accepted/completed – this may reflect increasing need among carers given the additional stresses of caring for vulnerable people during a life-threatening pandemic

- An increase overall in the percentage of carers' assessments offered that were accepted/completed – again, this probably reflects increasing need among carers with the additional stresses of caring for vulnerable people during a life-threatening pandemic

### Inequalities, with the potential for inequity

In October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, of the carers' assessments offered in Belfast HSCT:

- Almost 2 out of every 10 were for people with caring responsibility for family and child care/children with disabilities, whereas two years and 9 months into the pandemic this had decreased to over 1 out of every 10
- Almost 4 out of every 10 were for people with caring responsibility for an older person, whereas two years and 9 months into the pandemic this had increased to approaching 6 out of every 10
- Between 2 and 3 out of every 10 were for people with caring responsibility for a person with mental health problems, whereas two years and 9 months into the pandemic this had decreased to between 1 and 2 out of every 10
- Less than 1 out of every 10 were for people with caring responsibility for a person with learning disability, whereas two years and 9 months into the pandemic this had increased to almost 1 of every 10
- Over 1 out of every 10 was for people with caring responsibility for a person with a physical disability and sensory impairment, whereas two years and 9 months into the pandemic this had decreased to less than 1 out of every 10

In October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, of the carers' assessments accepted/completed in Belfast HSCT:

- Approaching 3 out of every 10 were for people with caring responsibility for family and child care/children with disabilities, whereas two years and 9 months into the pandemic this had decreased to between 1 and 2 out of every 10
- Over 2 out of every 10 were for people with caring responsibility for an older person, whereas two years and 9 months into the pandemic this had increased to between 5 and 6 out of every 10
- Between 1 and 2 out of every 10 was for people with caring responsibility for a person with a physical disability and sensory impairment, whereas two years and 9 months into the pandemic this had decreased to less than 1 out of every 10

It is not possible to give information for carers' assessments accepted/completed for the client groups 'Mental Health' and 'Learning Disability' because the data for the number of carers' assessments accepted/completed in Q3, October-December 2019 in Belfast HSCT were suppressed.

For carers in Belfast HSCT, when compared with other client groups, there has been a noticeable relative increase in the number of carers' assessments offered and carers' assessments accepted/completed for people caring for older people – this may reflect the increasing risk of mortality from COVID-19 with increasing age; as older people are one of the most vulnerable groups to the impact of COVID-19, increased demands may have been placed on carers to protect older people from infection and its consequences. It is also possible that carers for older people, taking account of the additional pressures on them as a result of the pandemic, felt they needed formal support from health and social care services in caring for the older person for whom they were responsible.

### Reasons for declining carers' assessments in Northern Ireland

In October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, in Northern Ireland, of the carers' assessments declined:

- **Between 3 and 4 out of every 10 were declined because the carers felt they did not need any support/additional support, whereas two years and 9 months into the pandemic this had decreased to between 2 and 3 out of every 10**
- **Almost 2 out of every 10 were declined because the carers did not see themselves as carers, whereas two years and 9 months into the pandemic this had decreased to over 1 out of every 10**
- **Approaching 2 out of every 10 were declined because the carers felt the time, place or environment was unsuitable and they would like to consider the opportunity of an assessment at a later date, whereas two years and 9 months into the pandemic this had increased to between 2 and 3 out of every 10**
- **Between 1 and 2 out of every 10 were declined and the carer did not give a reason, or no reason was recorded, whereas two years and 9 months into the pandemic this had increased to over 2 out of every 10**
- **Less than 1 out of every 10 (1 out of every 20) were declined because the carers saw their caring duty as a private matter and did not want to discuss it, and although this increased slightly two years and 9 months into the pandemic it remained at less than 1 out of every 10**

- Much less than 1 out of every 10 (almost 2 out of every 100) were declined because the carers saw assessment as too complicated/time-consuming, and although this increased two years and 9 months into the pandemic it remained at less than 1 out of every 10 (becoming almost 1 out of every 20)
- Less than 1 out of every 10 (almost 1 out of every 20) were declined because the carers believed assessment would not result in additional support/services; this decreased slightly two years and 9 months into the pandemic and remained at less than 1 out of every 10 (approaching 1 out of every 20)

There was very little change, however, in the percentage of carers who declined a carers' assessment because they thought it would have an impact on their benefit/income. In Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, just over 1 out of every 200 carers mentioned this as a reason compared with slightly less than 1 out of every 200 carers in Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic.

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, of the reasons for declining a carers' assessment:

- The greatest percentage increase was for the reason that assessment would be too complicated/time consuming at 162.13% (although this increase was from a very low baseline value)
- The smallest percentage increase was for the reason that carers saw their caring duty as a personal matter at 17.66%

The median percentage increase was 45.43%.

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, of the reasons for declining a carers' assessment:

- The greatest percentage decrease was seen for the reason that carers did not see themselves as carers at 40.81%
- The smallest percentage decrease was for the reason that carers thought that assessment would not result in additional support/services at 6.70%

The median percentage decrease was 22.56%.

For carers in Northern Ireland, the COVID-19 pandemic has been associated with a decrease in the number of carers who declined carers' assessments because they did not see themselves as carers; this may reflect the additional pressure that carers may have felt during the pandemic when caring roles may have expanded with the need to protect loved ones from COVID-19 infection and its consequences.

## SECTION 3

# Carers' Reassessments

- 3.1 Carers' Reassessments Offered**
- 3.2 Carers Reassessments Accepted/Completed**
- 3.3 Carers' Reassessments Offered that were Accepted/Completed**

### DATA SOURCE

Information is from the Department of Health:

- Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2019, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2019
- Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2020, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2020
- Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2021, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2021
- Carers' assessments and reassessments, Current publication, Quarterly carers' statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2022<sup>16</sup>

### QUARTERLY DATA USED FROM WITHIN COVID-19 TIMEFRAME

- Quarter 3 (Q3), October-December 2020
- Q3, October-December 2021
- Q3, October-December 2022

16. Q3, October-December 2019: Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2019 | Department of Health (health-ni.gov.uk) ; Q3 October-December 2020: Quarterly carers' statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2020 | Department of Health (health-ni.gov.uk) ; Q3, October-December 2021: Quarterly carers' statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2021 | Department of Health (health-ni.gov.uk) ; Q3, October-December 2022: Carers' assessments and reassessments | Department of Health (health-ni.gov.uk) (All last accessed 14 June 2023)

## REPORTED IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON DATA COLLECTION

Health and social care (HSC) trusts reported a reduction in number of carers' assessments during the time-period 1 April–30 June 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19. The following background to the assessment reduction may apply to all, or only specific, HSC Trusts:

- Carers Assessments Services were impacted due to COVID-19 restrictions, such as social distancing, and staffing capacity issues
- COVID-19 priority of work was redirected to support high-risk service users and carers who provided formal care directly to their relative
- Carers' assessments continued to be offered and completed when requested
- COVID-19 restrictions reduced footfall in clients' homes and the requests for carers' assessments were reduced
- When staff offered carer's assessments, some families did not want them visiting their home or to come into the Health Centre to complete the assessment; some carers requested carers' assessment be postponed until after COVID-19
- Direct contact was maintained by telephone at an increased level, however, the administration of information-gathering work, such as that for carers' assessments, was not prioritised in operational services during the pandemic
- Substantial support was offered to carers facing concerns regarding the continuity of care plans as COVID-19 impacted<sup>17</sup>

## PROFILE FINDINGS

### Carers' reassessments offered

In Belfast HSCT, in:

- Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, 162 carers' reassessments were offered, representing 13.08% of the total number of reassessments offered in Northern Ireland for that quarter

17. Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland (health-ni.gov.uk) (Last accessed 26 June 2023)



- Q3, October-December 2020, 7-9 months into the pandemic, 44 carers' reassessments were offered, representing 3.79% of the total number of reassessments offered in Northern Ireland for that quarter
- Q3, October-December 2021, one year and 7-9 months into the pandemic, 38 carers' reassessments were offered, representing 3.91% of the total number of reassessments offered in Northern Ireland for that quarter
- Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, 162 carers' reassessments were offered, representing 11.03% of the total number of reassessments offered in Northern Ireland for that quarter (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 9)

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, in Belfast HSCT, the number of carers' reassessments offered remained the same overall at 162 (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 9).

### Carers' reassessments accepted/completed

In Belfast HSCT, in:

- Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, 159 carers' reassessments were accepted/completed, representing 17.19% of the total number of reassessments accepted/completed in Northern Ireland for that quarter
- Q3, October-December 2020, 7-9 months into the pandemic, 35 carers' reassessments were accepted/completed, representing 4.18% of the total number of reassessments accepted/completed in Northern Ireland for that quarter
- Q3, October-December 2021, one year and 7-9 months into the pandemic, 38 carers' reassessments were accepted/completed, representing 5.15% of the total number of reassessments accepted/completed in Northern Ireland for that quarter (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 9)
- Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, the data for carers' reassessments that were accepted/completed have been suppressed

In Belfast HSCT, it is not possible to calculate the difference in the number of carers' reassessments accepted/completed between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic due to data suppression for the number of carers' reassessments accepted/completed in Q3, October-December 2022.<sup>18</sup>

### Carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed

In Belfast HSCT, in:

- Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, in Belfast HSCT, the percentage of carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed was 98.15%
- Q3, October-December 2020, 7-9 months into the pandemic, in Belfast HSCT, the percentage of carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed was 79.55%
- Q3, October-December 2021, one year and 7-9 months into the pandemic, in Belfast HSCT, the percentage of carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed was 100.00% (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 10)
- Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, it has not been possible to calculate the percentage of carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed due to data suppression for the number of carers' reassessments accepted/completed in Q3, October-December 2022

In Belfast HSCT, it has not been possible to calculate the difference between the percentage of carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed in Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and in Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, due to data suppression for the number of carers' reassessments that were accepted/completed in Q3, October-December 2022.

*See pages 73-81, in the Participation Chapter for further detail of the findings before the COVID-19 pandemic.*

18. Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2021, one year and 9 months into the pandemic, the number of reassessments accepted/completed decreased by 121 (a percentage decrease of 76.10%)

## Comparison with Northern Ireland

### ***Carers' reassessments offered***

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3 October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, the number of carers' reassessments offered:

- Remained the same overall in Belfast HSCT at 162
- Increased overall in Northern Ireland by 230, from 1,239 to 1,469 (a percentage increase of 18.56%)

### ***Carers' reassessments accepted/completed***

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3 October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic:

- The number of carers' reassessments accepted/completed increased overall in Northern Ireland by 304, from 925 to 1,229 (a percentage increase of 32.86%)
- It has not been possible to include a comparison with Belfast HSCT because the data for Q3, October-December 2022 in Belfast HSCT were suppressed<sup>19</sup>

### ***Carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed***

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3 October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic:

- The percentage of carers' reassessments offered that were accepted completed increased overall in Northern Ireland by 9.00 percentage points, from 74.66% to 83.66% (a percentage increase of 12.05%)
- It has not been possible to include a comparison with Belfast HSCT because the data for Q3, October-December 2022 in Belfast HSCT were suppressed<sup>20</sup>

19. Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2021, one year and 9 months into the pandemic, in Belfast HSCT, the number of reassessments accepted/completed decreased by 121, from 159 to 38 (a percentage decrease of 76.10%)

20. Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2021, one year and 9 months into the pandemic, in Belfast HSCT, the number of reassessments accepted/completed decreased by 121, from 159 to 38 (a percentage decrease of 76.10%)

## Comparison with other HSCTs

### ***Carers' reassessments offered***

When compared with other HSCTs, in:

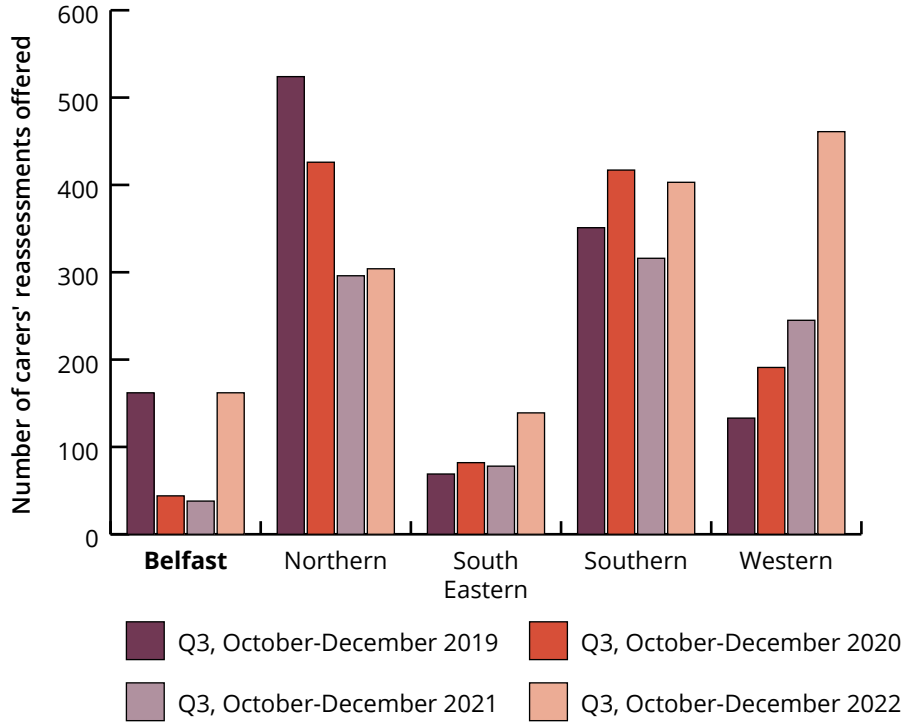
- Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, Belfast HSCT had the median of carers' reassessments offered, Northern HSCT had the highest number, and South Eastern HSCT had the lowest number
- Q3, October-December 2020, 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, Belfast HSCT had the lowest number of carers' reassessments offered, Northern HSCT had the highest number, and Western HSCT had the median number
- Q3, October-December 2021, one year and 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, when compared with other health and social care trusts, Belfast HSCT had the lowest number of carers' reassessments offered, Southern HSCT had the highest number, and Western HSCT had the median number
- Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, when compared with other health and social care trusts, Belfast HSCT had the second lowest number of carers' reassessments offered, Western HSCT had the highest number, South Eastern HSCT had the lowest number, and Northern HSCT had the median number (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 9)

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, the number of carers' reassessments offered:

- Remained the same overall in Belfast HSCT
- Increased overall in 3 HSCTs
- Decreased overall in one HSCT (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 9)

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 9:**

**Number of carers' reassessments offered by HSCT, Q3, October-December 2019, Q3, October-December 2020, Q3, October-December 2021, and Q3, October-December 2022**



Source: Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2019, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2019, Table 7; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2020, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2020, Table 7; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2021, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2021, Table 7; Department of Health, Carers' assessments and reassessments, Current publication, Quarterly carers' statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2022, Table 7

### ***Carers' reassessments accepted/completed***

When compared with other HSCTs, in:

- Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, Belfast HSCT had the median of carers' reassessments accepted/completed, Northern HSCT had the highest number, and South Eastern HSCT had the lowest number
- Q3, October-December 2020, 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, Belfast HSCT had the lowest number of carers' reassessments accepted/completed, Southern HSCT had the highest number, and Western HSCT had the median number
- Q3, October-December 2021, one year and 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, of the HSCTs for which data were not suppressed<sup>21</sup>, Belfast HSCT had the lowest number of carers' reassessments accepted/completed, and Southern HSCT had the highest number; the median was 181
- Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, of the HSCTs for which data were not suppressed<sup>22</sup>, Western HSCT had the highest number of carers' reassessments accepted/completed, Northern HSCT had the lowest number, and Southern had the median number (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 10)

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, of the HSCTs for which data were not suppressed<sup>23</sup>, the number of carers' reassessments accepted/completed:

- Increased overall in 2 HSCTs
- Decreased overall in one HSCT (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 10)

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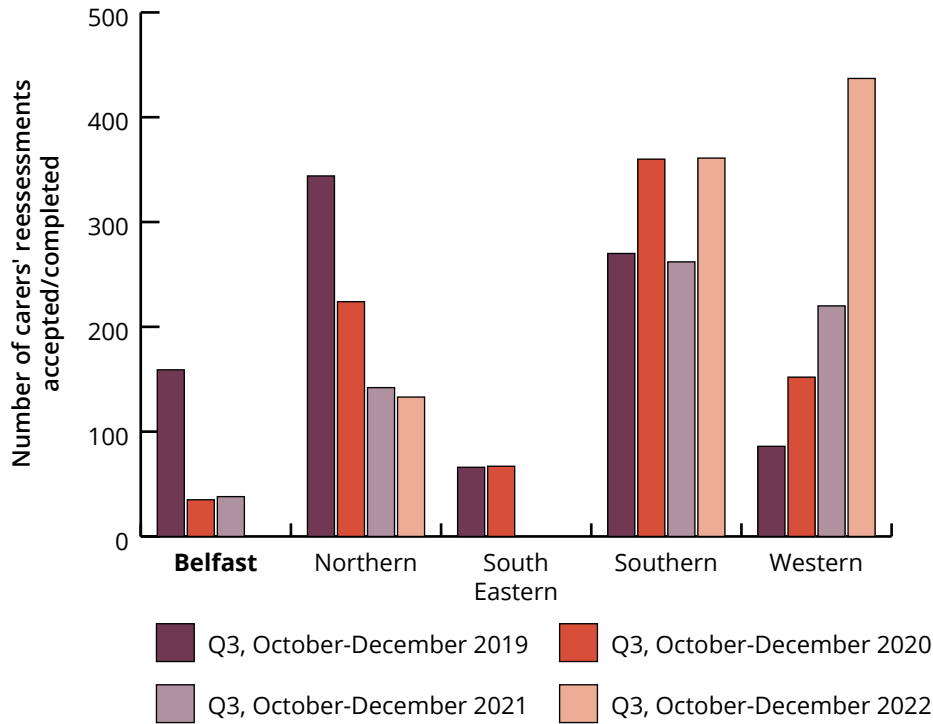
21. Data were suppressed for South Eastern HSCT

22. Data were suppressed for Belfast HSCT and South Eastern HSCT

23. In Q3, October-December 2021 data were suppressed for South Eastern HSCT, and in Q3, October-December 2022 for Belfast HSCT and South Eastern HSCT

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 10:**

**Number of carers' reassessments accepted/completed by HSCT, Q3, October-December 2019, Q3, October-December 2020, Q3, October-December 2021, and Q3, October-December 2022**



Source: Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2019, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2019, Table 7; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2020, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2020, Table 7; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2021, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2021, Table 7; Department of Health, Carers' assessments and reassessments, Current publication, Quarterly carers' statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2022, Table 7

***Carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed***

When compared with other HSCTs, in:

- Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, Belfast HSCT had the highest percentage of carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed, Western HSCT had the lowest percentage, and Southern HSCT had the median percentage
- Q3, October-December 2020, 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, Belfast HSCT had the second lowest percentage of carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed, Southern HSCT had the highest percentage, Northern HSCT had the lowest percentage, and Western HSCT had the median percentage

- Q3, October-December 2021, one year and 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, of the HSCTs for which the data were not suppressed<sup>24</sup>, Belfast HSCT had the highest percentage of carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed, Northern HSCT had the lowest percentage; the median percentage was 86.36%
- Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, of the health and social care trusts for which data were not suppressed<sup>25</sup>, Western HSCT had the highest percentage of carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed, Northern HSCT had the lowest percentage, and Southern HSCT had the median percentage (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 11)

Between Q3, October-December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, of the health and social care trusts for which data were not suppressed<sup>26</sup>, the percentage of carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed:

- Increased overall in 2 HSCTs
- Decreased overall in one HSCT (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 11)

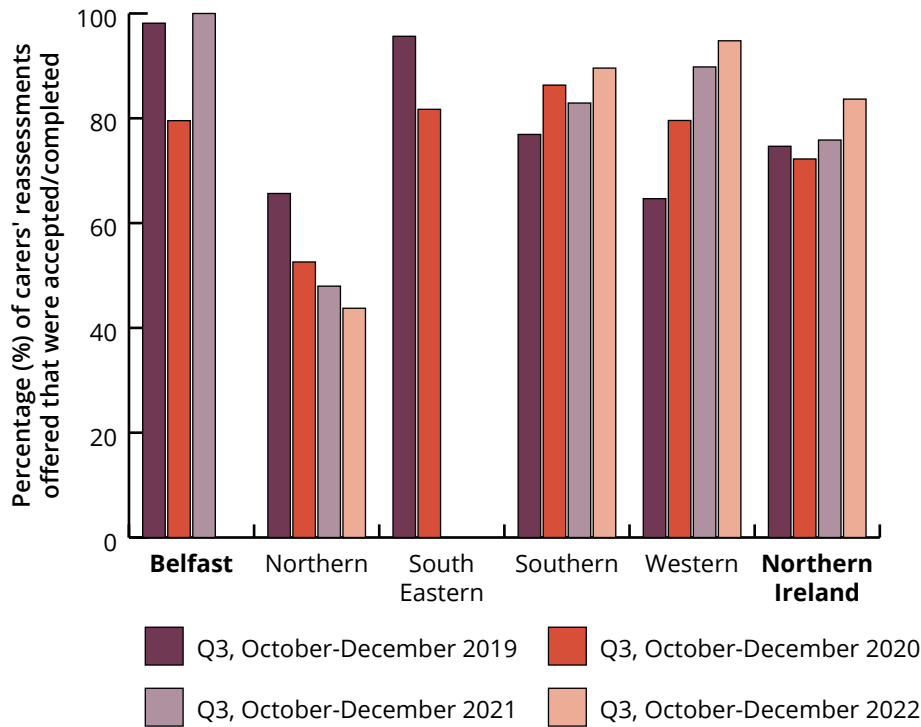
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24. Data were suppressed for South Eastern HSCT  
 25. Data were suppressed for Belfast HSCT and South Eastern HSCT  
 26. Data were suppressed for Belfast HSCT and South Eastern HSCT



**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 11:**

**Percentage (%) of carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed by HSCT and Northern Ireland, Q3, October-December 2019, Q3, October-December 2020, Q3, October-December 2021, and Q3, October-December 2022**



Source: Data extracted from Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2019, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2019, Table 7; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2020, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2020, Table 7; Department of Health, Quarterly Carers' Statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2021, Quarterly Carers' Statistics Tables October to December 2021, Table 7; Department of Health, Carers' assessments and reassessments, Current publication, Quarterly carers' statistics for Northern Ireland October to December 2022, Table 7

**OBSERVATIONS ON THE DATA**

**Comparison with Northern Ireland**

Between Q3, October to December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, in comparison with Northern Ireland, Belfast HSCT remained at the same value overall for the number of carers' reassessments offered, whereas Northern Ireland had an increase.<sup>27</sup>

27. It is not possible to make observations on either the number of carers' reassessments accepted/completed or the percentage of carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed because the data for the number of carers' reassessments accepted/completed in Belfast HSCT were suppressed for Q3, October-December 2022

## Comparison with other HSCTs

In comparison with other health and social care trusts, Belfast HSCT:

- Had the median number of carers' reassessments offered before the COVID-19 pandemic in Q3 October-December 2019, but the lowest number during the pandemic in Q3 October-December 2020, 2021, and 2022
- Had the median number of carers' reassessments accepted/completed before the COVID-19 pandemic in Q3 October-December 2019, but the lowest number during the pandemic in Q3 October-December 2020, and 2021; in Q3, October-December 2022, the data for Belfast HSCT were suppressed<sup>28</sup>

Between Q3, October to December 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 months into the pandemic, in comparison with other health and social care trusts:

- For the number of carers' reassessments, Belfast HSCT retained the same datapoint overall, whereas 3 health and social care trusts had an overall increase, and one health and social care trust had an overall decrease
- For the number of carers' reassessments accepted/offered, the data for Belfast HSCT in Q3, October-December 2022, were suppressed
- For the percentage of carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed, the data for Belfast HSCT in Q3, October-December 2022, were suppressed

## POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

To interpret these data for carers' reassessments, it is important to view them from the perspective that this suite of indicators is one way of highlighting the level of need in the population of carers across Northern Ireland.

In Q3, October-December 2022, two years and 7-9 years into the COVID-19 pandemic, Belfast HSCT accounted for over one out of every 10 carers' reassessments offered in Northern Ireland – a similar level to that from before the COVID-19 pandemic.

28. It is not possible to make observations on the percentage of carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed because the number of carers' reassessments accepted/completed in Belfast HSCT were suppressed in Q3, October-December 2022

Before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, among health and social care trusts, Belfast HSCT had a relatively low number of carers' reassessments offered, reflecting at least in part a relatively high level of offers and acceptances/completions of carers' assessments initially.

For carers' reassessments accepted/completed, and for the carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed, it is not possible to give information on the comparison of Belfast HSCT with other HSCTs because the data for the number of carers' reassessments accepted/completed in Q3, October-December 2022 in Belfast HSCT were suppressed.

For carers in Belfast HSCT, the COVID-19 pandemic has been associated with the number of carers' reassessments offered remaining the same overall – this probably reflects the relatively high level of carers' assessments offered that are accepted in the first place, therefore, there is less need to offer carers' reassessments.

It is not possible to give information for carers' reassessments accepted/completed, and for the carers' reassessments offered that were accepted/completed, because the data for the number of carers' reassessments accepted/completed in Q3, October-December 2022 in Belfast HSCT were suppressed.

## SECTION 4

# Claimants of Carer's Allowance

### DATA SOURCE

Information is from the Department for Communities, Benefits statistics summary, Benefits Statistics Summary Publication (National Statistics), February 2020, February 2021, and February 2022, Carer's Allowance Excel spreadsheets.<sup>29</sup>

### REFERENCE DATES IN YEARS FOR WHICH DATA ARE AVAILABLE WITHIN COVID-19 TIMEFRAME

Reference dates February 2021 and February 2022

### REPORTED IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON DATA COLLECTION

None reported.

### PROFILE FINDINGS

In Belfast LGD, the percentage of the eligible population who claimed Carer's Allowance:

- In February 2021, covering the first 11 months of the COVID-19 pandemic was 5.6%
- In February 2022, covering the first 12-23 months of the pandemic, was 5.6%

29. February 2020: Benefits Statistics Summary Publication (National Statistics) - February 2020 | Department for Communities (communities-ni.gov.uk) February 2021: Benefits Statistics Summary Publication (National Statistics) - February 2021 | Department for Communities (communities-ni.gov.uk) February 2022: Benefits Statistics Summary Publication (National Statistics) - February 2022 | Department for Communities (communities-ni.gov.uk) (All spreadsheets last accessed 7 May 2023)

Between February 2020 and February 2022, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first two years of the pandemic, in Belfast LGD, the percentage of the eligible population who claimed Carer's Allowance decreased by 0.1 percentage points from 5.7% to 5.6%.

## Differences by Belfast assembly area

### ***Claimants of Carer's Allowance***

There was variation in the numbers of claimants of Carer's Allowance across Belfast's assembly areas.

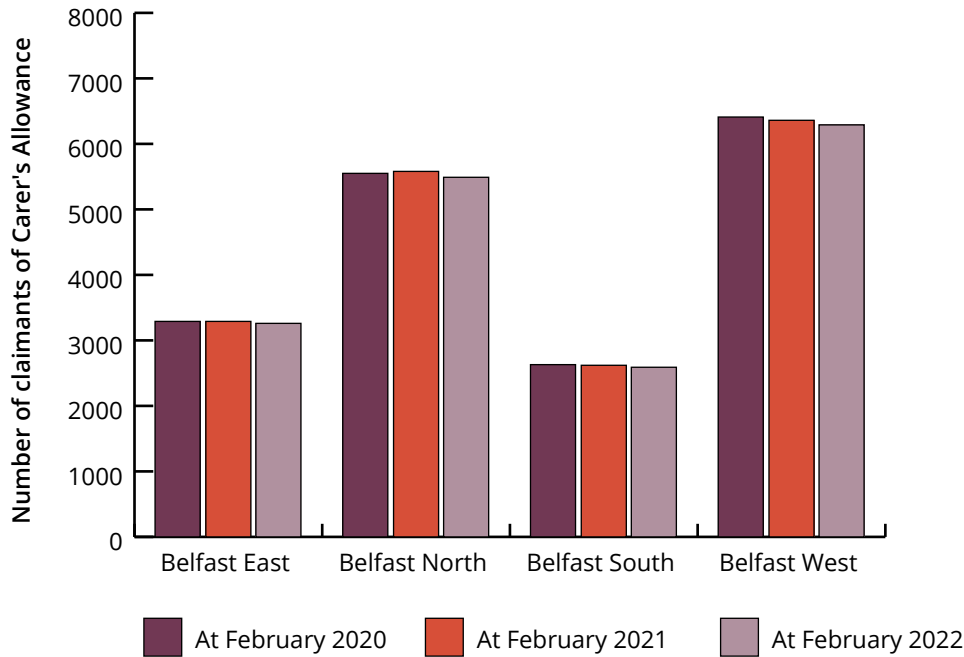
Belfast West had the highest numbers of claimants of Carer's Allowance, relatively closely followed by Belfast North, whereas Belfast South had the lowest numbers, followed by Belfast East, at:

- February 2020, before the COVID-19 pandemic
- February 2021, covering the first 11 months of the pandemic
- February 2022, covering the first 12-23 months of the second year of the pandemic (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 12)

Between February 2020 and February 2022, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first one year and 11 months of the pandemic, the number of claimants of Carer's Allowance decreased overall in all Belfast's assembly areas (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 12).

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 12:**

**Number of claimants of Carer’s Allowance by Belfast’s assembly areas, 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22**



Source: Department for Communities, Benefits statistics summary, Benefits Statistics Summary Publication (National Statistics), February 2022, February 2021, and February 2020, Carer’s Allowance spreadsheets, Table 7 in each spreadsheet.

**Recipients of Carer’s Allowance**

There was variation in the numbers of recipients of Carer’s Allowance across Belfast’s assembly areas.

Belfast West had the highest numbers of recipients of Carer’s Allowance, relatively closely followed by Belfast North, whereas Belfast South had the lowest numbers, followed by Belfast East, at:

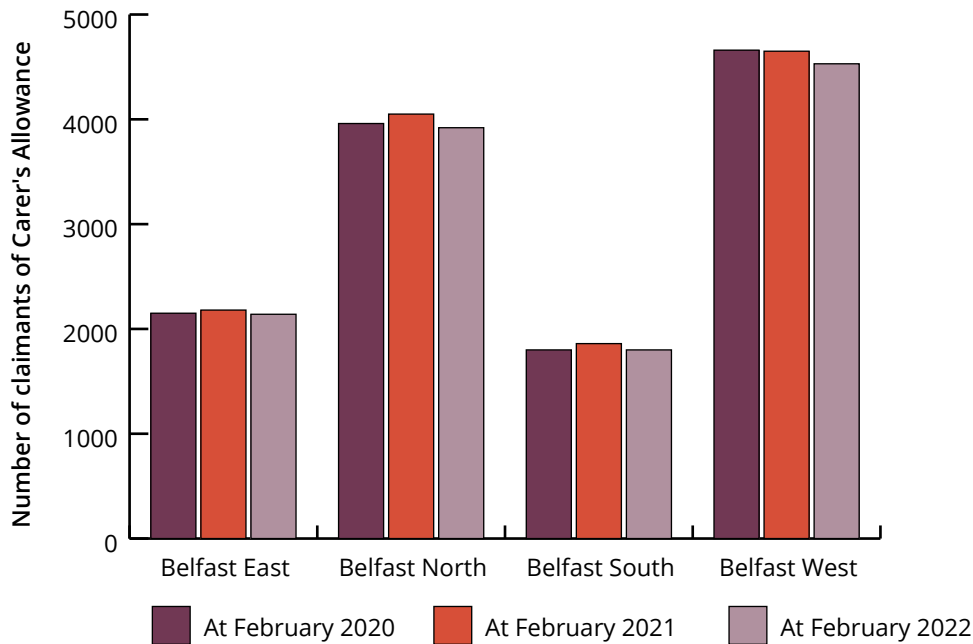
- February 2020, before the COVID-19 pandemic
- February 2021, covering the first 11 months of the pandemic
- February 2022, covering the first 12-23 months the pandemic (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 13)

Between February 2020 and February 2022, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 11 months of the pandemic, the number of recipients of Carer’s Allowance:

- Decreased overall in Belfast East, Belfast North, and Belfast West
- Remained the same overall in Belfast South (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 13)

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 13:**

**Number of recipients of Carer’s Allowance by Belfast’s assembly areas, 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22**



Source: Department for Communities, Benefits statistics summary, Benefits Statistics Summary Publication (National Statistics), February 2022, February 2021, and February 2020, Carer’s Allowance spreadsheets, Table 7 in each spreadsheet.

***Claimants of Carer’s Allowance who become recipients***

There was variation in the percentage of claimants of Carer’s Allowance who became recipients across Belfast’s assembly areas.

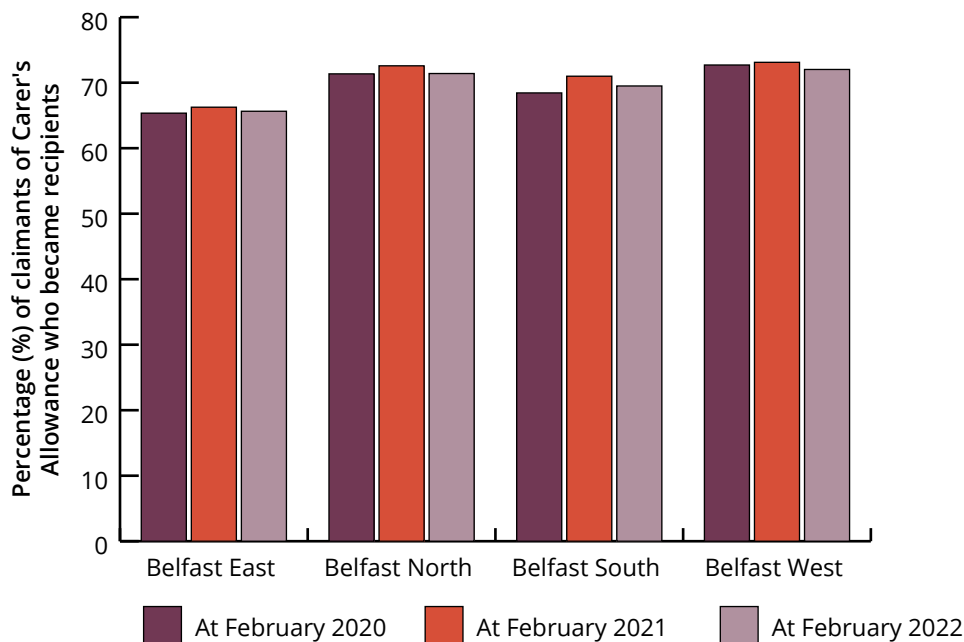
Belfast West had the highest percentages of claimants of Carer’s Allowance who became recipients, relatively closely followed by Belfast North, whereas Belfast East had the lowest percentages, followed by Belfast South, at:

- February 2020, before the COVID-19 pandemic
- February 2021, covering the first 11 months of the pandemic
- February 2022, covering first 12-23 months of the pandemic (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 14)

Between February 2020 and February 2022, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 11 months of the pandemic, the percentage of claimants of Carer’s Allowance who became recipients:

- Increased slightly overall in Belfast East, Belfast North, and Belfast South
- Decreased slightly overall in Belfast West (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 14)

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 14:**  
**Percentage (%) of claimants of Carer’s Allowance who became recipients by Belfast’s assembly areas, 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22**



Source: Department for Communities, Benefits statistics summary, Benefits Statistics Summary Publication (National Statistics), February 2022, February 2021, and February 2020, Carer’s Allowance spreadsheets, data extracted from Table 7 in each spreadsheet to calculate the percentages.

See pages 68-72, in the Participation Chapter for further detail of the findings before the COVID-19 pandemic.



## KEY COMPARISONS

### Comparison with Northern Ireland

Owing to the nature of the data made available by the data-holder, it is not possible to draw any comparison with Northern Ireland.

### Comparison with other LGDs

When compared with other LGDs, Belfast LGD had the second highest percentage of the eligible population who claimed Carer's Allowance, after Derry City & Strabane LGD, at:

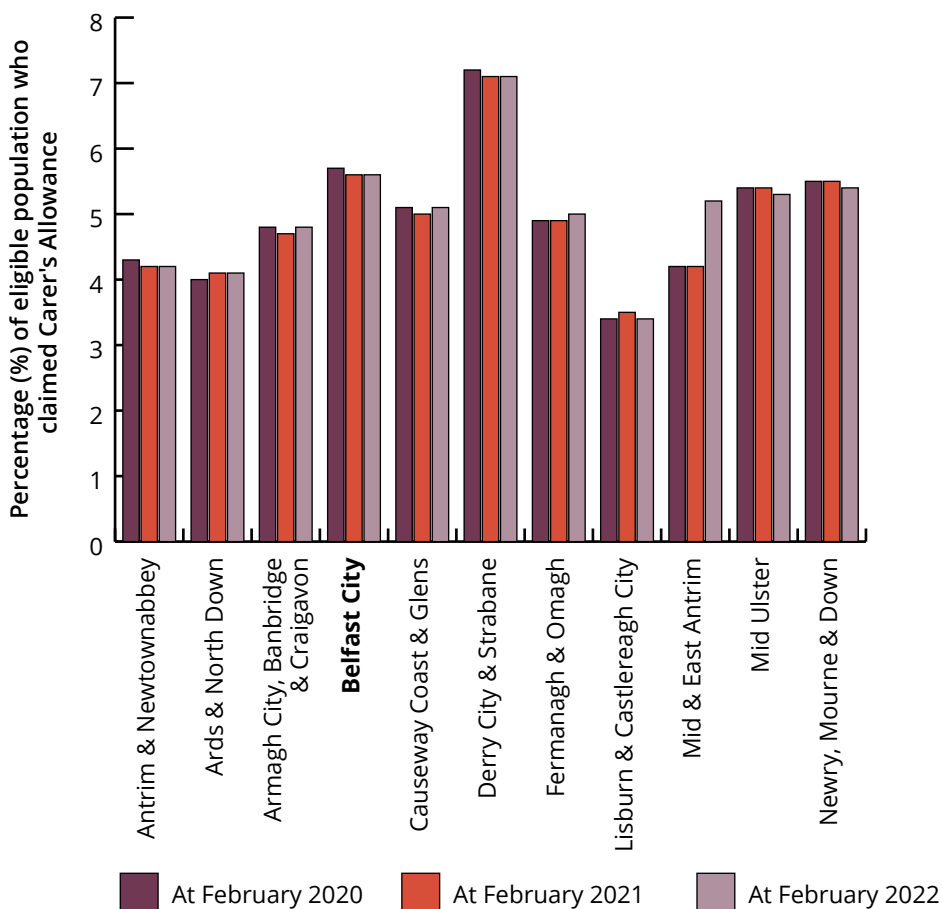
- February 2020, before the COVID-19 pandemic
- February 2021, covering the first 11 months of the pandemic
- February 2022, covering the first 12-23 months of the pandemic (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 15)

Between February 2020 and February 2022, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 11 months of the pandemic, the percentage of the eligible population who claimed Carer's Allowance:

- Decreased overall in 5 LGDs, including Belfast LGD
- Increased overall in 3 LGDs
- Remained the same overall in 3 LGDs (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 15)

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 15:**

**Percentage (%) of the eligible population who claimed Carer's Allowance by LGD, 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22**



Source: Department for Communities, Benefits statistics summary, Benefits Statistics Summary Publication (National Statistics), February 2022, February 2021, and February 2020, Carer's Allowance spreadsheets, Table 8 in each spreadsheet.

**OBSERVATIONS ON THE DATA**

**Comparison with Northern Ireland**

Owing to the nature of the data made available by the data holder, it is not possible to draw any comparison with Northern Ireland.

**Comparison with other LGDs**

Of all LGDs, both before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 11 months, Belfast LGD had the second highest percentage of the eligible population who claimed Carer's Allowance. Consequently, there was no change in the relative position of Belfast LGD among LGDs.

Between February 2020 and February 2022, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 11 months, Belfast LGD was one of 5 LGDs in which the percentage of the eligible population who claimed Carer's Allowance decreased overall:

- Belfast LGD had the second smallest percentage decrease at 1.75% of the pandemic
- Antrim & Newtownabbey LGD had the greatest percentage decrease at 2.33%
- Derry City & Strabane LGD had the smallest percentage decrease at 1.39%
- Newry, Mourne & Down LGD had the median percentage decrease at 1.82%

## POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Between February 2020 and February 2022, from before and during the first year and 11 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the percentage of the eligible population who claimed Carer's Allowance:

- Decreased overall in 5 LGDs, including Belfast LGD
- Increased overall in 3 LGDs
- Remained the same overall in 3 LGDs

Among LGDs, Belfast LGD had the second highest percentage of the eligible population who claimed Carer's Allowance both before the COVID-19 pandemic and during the first year and 11 months of the pandemic.

In February 2022, in all LGDs, including Belfast LGD, less than 1 out of every 10 people in the eligible population claimed Carer's Allowance.

In Belfast LGD, the COVID-19 pandemic has been associated with a small decrease in the percentage of the eligible population who claimed Carer's Allowance.

## Inequalities, with the potential for inequity

### ***Claimants of Carer's Allowance***

Of Belfast's assembly areas, both before and during the first year and 11 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, Belfast West and Belfast North had the highest numbers of claimants of Carer's Allowance.

Between February 2020 and February 2022, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 11 months of the pandemic, the number of claimants of Carer's Allowance decreased in all Belfast's assembly areas. The smallest percentage decrease was in Belfast East at 0.91%, closely followed by Belfast North with a percentage decrease of 1.08%.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been associated with a decrease in the number of claimants of Carer's Allowance in all Belfast's assembly areas.

### ***Recipients of Carer's Allowance***

Of Belfast's assembly areas, both before and during the first year and 11 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, Belfast West and Belfast North had the highest numbers of recipients of Carer's Allowance.

Between February 2020 and February 2022, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 11 months of the pandemic, the number of recipients of Carer's Allowance remained the same in Belfast South, whereas it decreased in Belfast East, Belfast North, and Belfast West. The smallest percentage decrease was in Belfast East at 0.47%, closely followed by Belfast North with a percentage decrease of 1.01%; the greatest percentage decrease was in Belfast West at 2.79%.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been associated with a decrease in the number of recipients of Carer's Allowance in three of Belfast's assembly areas – Belfast East, Belfast North, and Belfast West.

### ***Claimants of Carer's Allowance who became recipients***

Of Belfast's assembly areas, East Belfast had the lowest percentage of claimants of Carer's Allowance who became recipients both before and during the first year and 11 months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Between February 2020 and February 2022, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 11 months of the pandemic, the percentage of claimants of Carer's Allowance who became recipients decreased slightly in Belfast West by 0.94%, whereas it increased slightly in Belfast East at 0.44% and Belfast North by 0.07%.

In February 2022, in Belfast East, between 6 and 7 out of every 10 claimants of Carer's Allowance became recipients compared with approaching 7 out of every 10 in Belfast South, and over 7 out of every 10 in Belfast North and in Belfast West.

Both before and during the first year and 11 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, Belfast North and Belfast West had:

- **The highest numbers of claimants of Carer's Allowance**
- **The highest number of recipients of Carer's Allowance**
- **The highest percentages of claimants who become recipients**

As Belfast East, however, had the lowest percentages of claimants who become recipients, it indicates there could be a greater percentage of carers in Belfast East who felt they needed financial support but who were not awarded Carer's Allowance.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been associated with a decrease in the claimants of Carer's Allowance who became recipients in Belfast West.

## SECTION 5

# Sense of Belonging to the Neighbourhood (Northern Ireland data)

### DATA SOURCE

Information is from ARK, the Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey, Year 2019, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELNGH and Year 2021, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELNGH.<sup>30</sup>

### YEARS FOR WHICH DATA ARE AVAILABLE WITHIN COVID-19 TIMEFRAME

Calendar year 2021

### REPORTED IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON DATA COLLECTION

For the Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey 2021, to achieve the objectives of the research, while considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, a multi-modal approach was used. A large-scale Computer Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) survey was developed, and this was supplemented with Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI).<sup>31</sup>

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30. 2019: NI Life and Times Survey - 2019 : UBELNGH ([ark.ac.uk](http://ark.ac.uk)) ; 2021: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey: 2021 ([ark.ac.uk](http://ark.ac.uk)) (Last accessed 17 May 2023)
31. Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2021, Technical Notes Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2021 ([ark.ac.uk](http://ark.ac.uk)) (Last accessed 26 June 2023)

## PROFILE FINDINGS

In 2021, the first calendar year of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Northern Ireland, the percentage of people who felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood according to the different categories of response was:

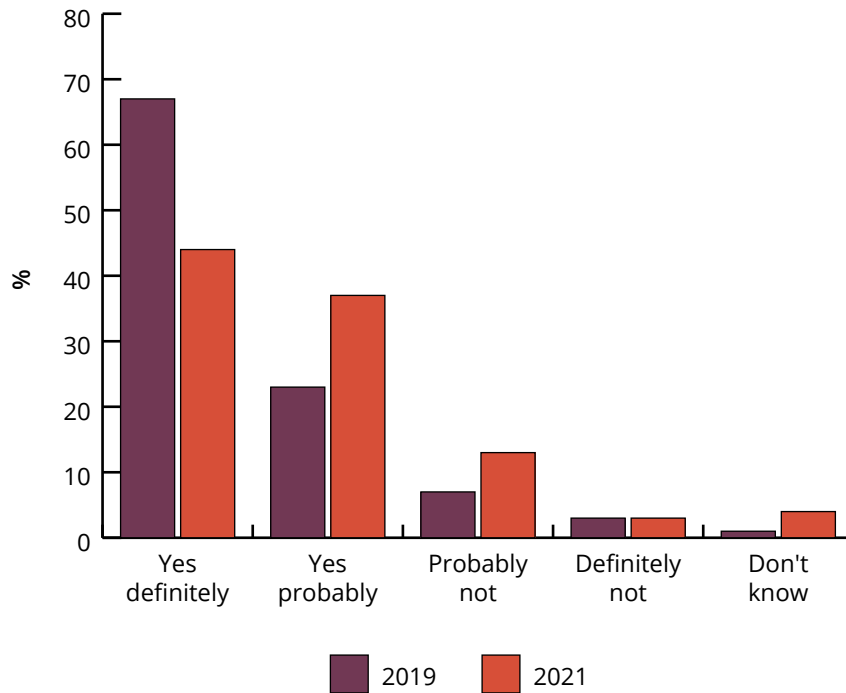
- 44% for 'Yes, definitely'
- 37% for 'Yes, probably'
- 13% for 'Probably not'
- 3% for 'Definitely not'
- 4% for 'Don't know' (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 16)

Between 2019 and 2021, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 9 months of the pandemic, in Northern Ireland, the percentage of people who felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood changed according to the different categories of response. The percentage of people who responded:

- 'Yes, definitely' decreased by 23 percentage points, from 67% to 44% (a percentage decrease of 34.33%)
- 'Yes, probably' increased by 14 percentage points from 23% to 37% (a percentage increase of 60.87%)
- 'Probably not' increased by 6 percentage points, from 7% to 13% (a percentage increase of 85.71%)
- 'Definitely not' remained the same at 3%
- 'Don't know' increased by 3 percentage points, from 1% to 4% (a percentage increase of 300.00%; see COVID-19 Participation Figure 16)

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 16:**

Percentage (%) of people in Northern Ireland who felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood, 2019 and 2021



Source: ARK: Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey, Year 2019, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELNGH, and Year 2021, Module Community Relations, and Variable UBELNGH

## Differences by population group in Northern Ireland

### ***Differences between men and women in Northern Ireland***

In 2021, the first calendar year of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Northern Ireland, the percentages of men and women who felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood varied slightly according to the different categories of response; it was:

- 44% in both men and women for 'Yes, definitely'
- 37% in both men and women for 'Yes, probably'
- 13% in men for 'Probably not', whereas it was 11% in women
- 3% in both men and women for 'Definitely not'
- 2% for 'Don't know' in men, whereas it was 5% in women (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 17)

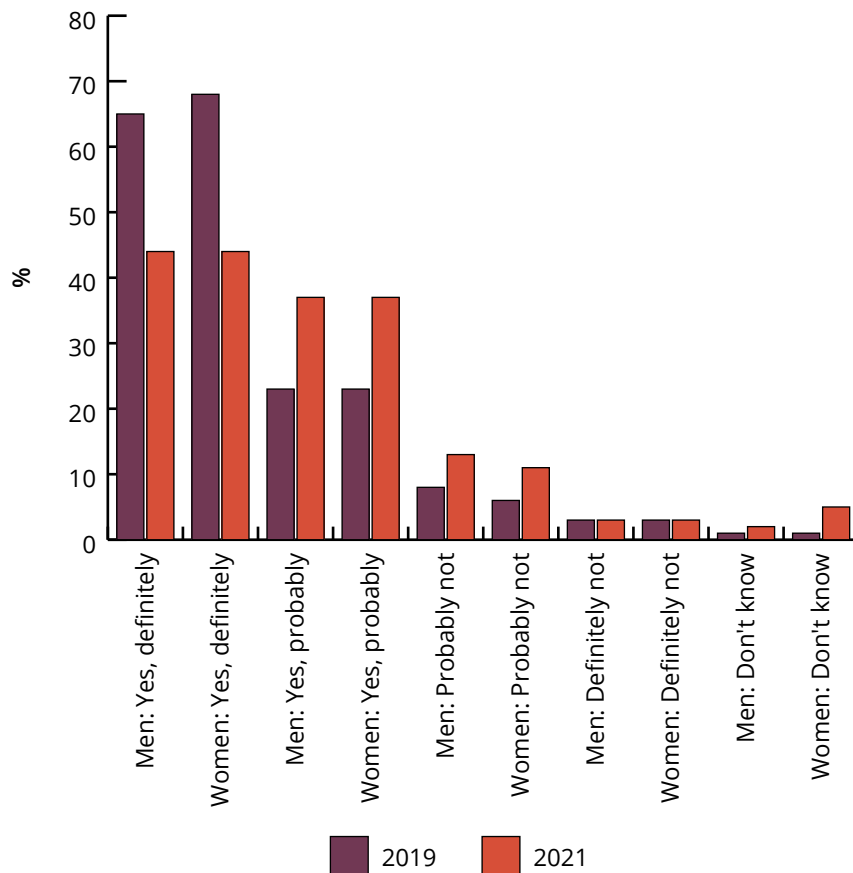


Between 2019 and 2021, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 9 months of the pandemic, in Northern Ireland, the percentages of men and women who felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood changed according to the different categories of response. The percentage who responded:

- 'Yes, definitely' decreased by 21 percentage points in men, from 65% to 44% (a percentage decrease of 32.31%), whereas it decreased by 24 percentage points in women, from 68% to 44% (a percentage decrease of 35.29%)
- 'Yes, probably' increased by 14 percentage points in both men and women, from 23% to 37% (a percentage increase of 60.87% for both)
- 'Probably not' increased by 5 percentage points in men, from 8% to 13% (a percentage increase of 62.50%), and increased by 5 percentage points in women, from 6% to 11% (a percentage increase of 83.33%)
- 'Definitely not' remained the same in both men and women at 3%
- 'Don't know' increased by 1 percentage point in men, from 1% to 2% (a percentage increase of 100.00%), whereas it increased by 4 percentage points in women, from 1% to 5% (a percentage increase of 400.00%; see COVID-19 Participation Figure 17)

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 17:**

**Percentage (%) of men and women in Northern Ireland who felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood according to 5 categories of response, 2019 and 2021**



Source: ARK: Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey: Year 2019, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELNGH; Year 2021, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELNGH

**Differences by age group in Northern Ireland**

In 2021, the first calendar year of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Northern Ireland, the percentage of people from different age groups who felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood varied according to the different categories of response:

- For 'Yes, definitely', it was 36% in the 18-24 years age group, 33% in the 25-34 years age group, 42% in the 35-44 years age group, 44% in the 45-54 years age group, 44% in the 55-64 years age group, and 59% in the 65+ years age group
- For 'Yes, probably', it was 31% in the 18-24 years age group, 37% in the 25-34 years age group, 38% in the 35-44 years age group, 41% in the 45-54 years age group, 42% in the 55-64 years age group, and 32% in the 65+ years age group

- For 'Probably not', it was 19% in the 18-24 years age group, 17% in the 25-34 years age group, 14% in the 35-44 years age group, 10% in the 45-54 years age group, 10% in the 55-64 years age group, and 7% in the 65+ years age group
- For 'Definitely not', it was 9% in the 18-24 years age group, 6% in the 25-34 years age group, 2% in the 35-44 years age group, 1% in the 45-54 years age group, 2% in the 55-64 years age group, and 1% in the 65+ years age group
- For 'Don't know', it was 4% in the 18-24 years age group, 6% in the 25-34 years age group, 5% in the 35-44 years age group, 4% in the 45-54 years age group, 2% in the 55-64 years age group, and 1% in the 65+ years age group (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 18)

Between 2019 and 2021, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 9 months of the pandemic, in Northern Ireland, the percentage of people from different age groups who felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood changed according to the different categories of response. The percentage who responded:

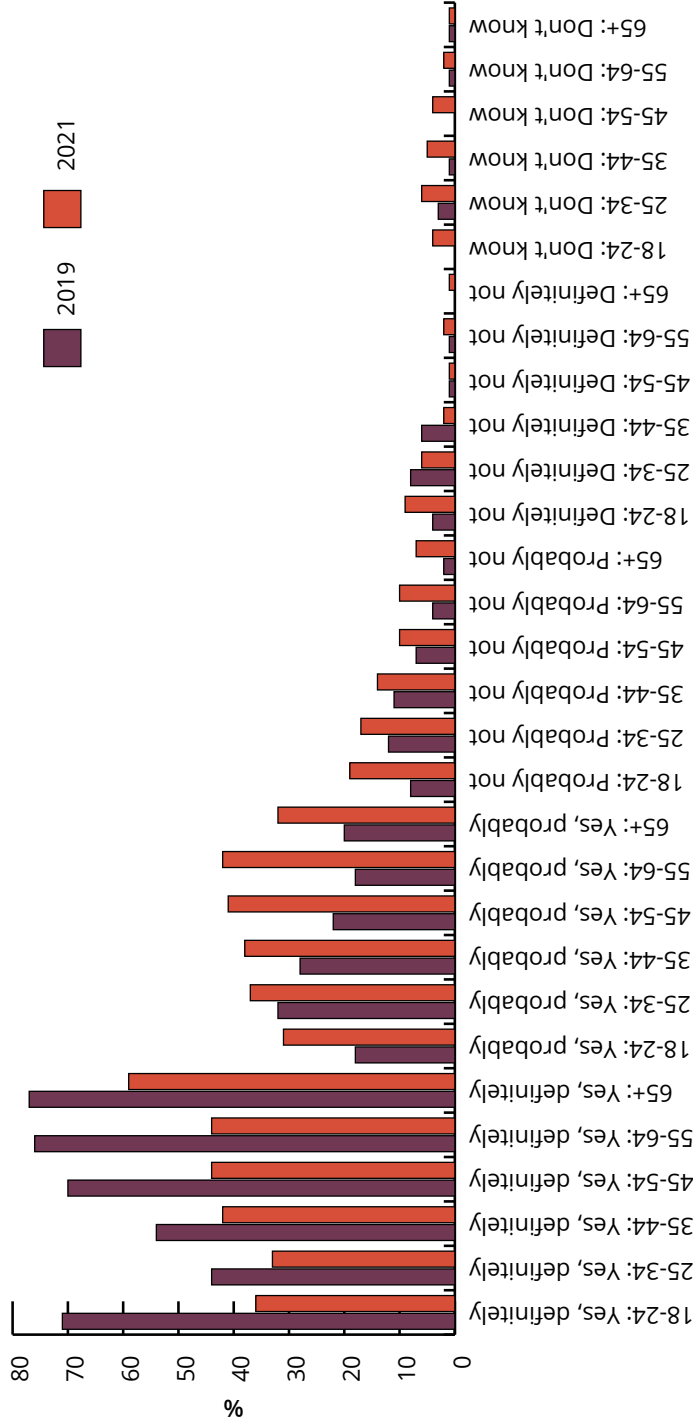
- 'Yes, definitely' decreased in all age groups; in the 18-24 years age group, it decreased by 35 percentage points, from 71% to 36% (a percentage decrease of 49.30%); in the 25-34 years age group, it decreased by 11 percentage points, from 44% to 33% (a percentage decrease of 25.00%); in the 35-44 years age group, it decreased by 12 percentage points, from 54% to 42% (a percentage decrease of 22.22%); in the 45-54 years age group, it decreased by 26 percentage points, from 70% to 44% (a percentage decrease of 37.14%); in the 55-64 years age group, it decreased by 32 percentage points, from 76% to 44% (a percentage decrease of 42.11%); in the 65+ years age group, it decreased by 18 percentage points, from 77% to 59% (a percentage decrease of 23.38%)
- 'Yes, probably' increased in all age groups; in the 18-24 years age group, it increased by 13 percentage points, from 18% to 31% (a percentage increase of 72.22%); in the 25-34 years age group, it increased by 5 percentage points, from 32% to 37% (a percentage increase of 15.63%); in the 35-44 years age group, it increased by 10 percentage points, from 28% to 38% (a percentage increase of 35.71%); in the 45-54 years age group, it increased by 19 percentage points, from 22% to 41% (a percentage increase of 86.36%); in the 55-64 years age group, it increased by 24 percentage points, from 18% to 42% (a percentage increase of 133.33%); in the 65+ years age group, it increased by 12 percentage points, from 20% to 32% (a percentage increase of 60.00%)
- 'Probably not' increased in all age groups; in the 18-24 years age group, it increased by 11 percentage points, from 8% to 19% (a percentage increase of 137.50%); in the 25-34 years age group, it increased by 5 percentage points, from 12% to 17% (a percentage increase of

41.67%); in the 35-44 years age group, it increased by 3 percentage points, from 11% to 14% (a percentage increase of 27.27%); in the 45-54 years age group, it increased by 3 percentage points, from 7% to 10% (a percentage increase of 42.86%); in the 55-64 years age group, it increased by 6 percentage points, from 4% to 10% (a percentage increase of 150.00%); in the 65+ years age group, it increased by 5 percentage points, from 2% to 7% (a percentage increase of 250.00%)

- 'Definitely not' varied across the age groups; in the 18-24 years age group, it increased by 5 percentage points, from 4% to 9% (a percentage increase of 125.00%); in the 25-34 years age group, it decreased by 2 percentage points, from 8% to 6% (a percentage decrease of 25.00%); in the 35-44 years age group, it decreased by 4 percentage points, from 6% to 2% (a percentage decrease of 66.67%); in the 45-54 years age group, it remained the same at 1%; in the 55-64 years age group, it increased by 1 percentage point, from 1% to 2% (percentage increase of 100.00%); in the 65+ years age group, it increased by 1 percentage point, from 0% to 1%
- 'Don't know' increased in 5 of the 6 age groups, and remained the same in one; in the 18-24 years age group, it increased by 4 percentage points, from 0% to 4%; in the 25-34 years age group, it increased by 3 percentage points, from 3% to 6% (a percentage increase of 100.00%); in the 35-44 years age group, it increased by 4 percentage points, from 1% to 5% (a percentage increase of 400.00%); in the 45-54 years age group, it increased by 4 percentage points, from 0% to 4%; in the 55-64 years age group, it increased by 1 percentage point, from 1% to 2% (a percentage increase of 100.00%); in the 65+ years age group, it remained the same at 1% (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 18)

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 18:**

Percentage (%) of people from different age groups in Northern Ireland who felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood according to 5 categories of response, 2019 and 2021



Source: ARK: Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey: Year 2019, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELNGH; Year 2021, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELNGH

### **Differences by religion in Northern Ireland**

In 2021, the first calendar year of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Northern Ireland, the percentage of people from different religions who felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood varied according to the different categories of response:

- For 'Yes, definitely', it was 48% in people from the Catholic community, 50% in people from the Protestant community, and 32% in people of 'No religion'
- For 'Yes, probably', it was 34% in people from the Catholic community, 40% in people from the Protestant community, and 36% in people of 'No religion'
- For 'Probably not', it was 12% in people from the Catholic community, 7% in people from the Protestant community, and 20% in people of 'No religion'
- For 'Definitely not', it was 3% in people from the Catholic community, 1% in people from the Protestant community, and 6% in people of 'No religion'
- For 'Don't know', it was 3% in people from the Catholic community, 2% in people from the Protestant community, and 6% in people of 'No religion' (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 19)

Between 2019 and 2021, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 9 months of the pandemic, in Northern Ireland, the percentage of people from different religions who felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood changed according to the different categories of response. The percentage who responded:

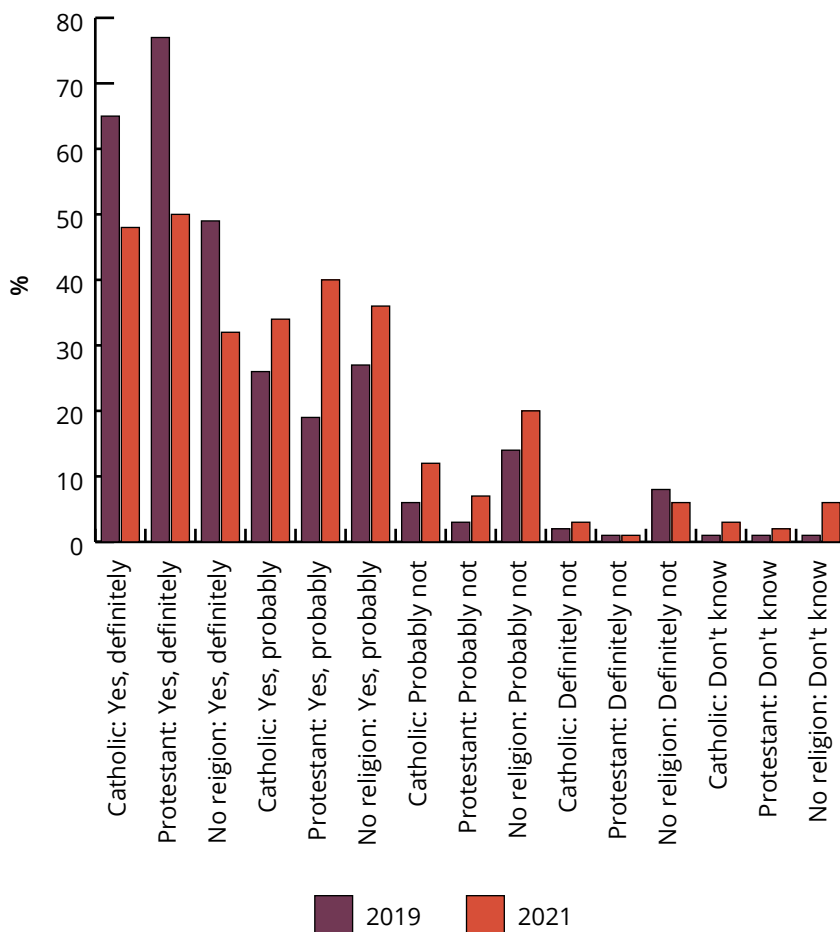
- 'Yes, definitely' decreased in all religious groups; in people from the Catholic community, it decreased by 17 percentage points, from 65% to 48% (a percentage decrease of 26.15%); in people from the Protestant community, it decreased by 27 percentage points, from 77% to 50% (a percentage decrease of 35.06%); in people of 'No religion', it decreased by 17 percentage points, from 49% to 32% (a percentage decrease of 34.69%)
- 'Yes, probably' increased in all religious groups; in people from the Catholic community, it increased by 8 percentage points, from 26% to 34% (a percentage increase of 30.77%); in people from the Protestant community, it increased by 21 percentage points, from 19% to 40% (a percentage increase of 110.53%); in people of 'No religion', it increased by 9 percentage points, from 27% to 36% (a percentage increase of 33.33%)
- 'Probably not' increased in all religious groups; in people from the Catholic community, it increased by 6 percentage points, from 6% to 12% (a percentage increase of 100.00%); in people from the Protestant community, it increased by 4 percentage points, from 3% to 7% (a percentage increase of 133.33%); in people of 'No religion', it increased by 6 percentage points, from 14% to 20% (a percentage increase of 42.86%)
- 'Definitely not' increased in people from the Catholic community by 1 percentage point, from 2% to 3% (a percentage increase of 50.00%),

remained the same in people from the Protestant community at 1%, and decreased in people of 'No religion' by 2 percentage points, from 8% to 6% (a percentage decrease of 25.00%)

- 'Don't know' increased in all religious groups; in people from the Catholic community, it increased by 2 percentage points, from 1% to 3% (a percentage increase of 200.00%); in people from the Protestant community, it increased by 1 percentage point, from 1% to 2% (a percentage increase of 100.00%); in people of 'No religion', it increased by 5 percentage points, from 1% to 6% (a percentage increase of 500.00%; see COVID-19 Participation Figure 19)

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 19:**

**Percentage (%) of people from different religions who felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood according to 5 categories of response, 2019 and 2021**



Source: ARK: Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey: Year 2019, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELNGH; Year 2021, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELNGH

See pages 268-274 in the Peace Chapter for further detail of the findings before the COVID-19 pandemic.

## POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In 2021, after one year and 9 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Northern Ireland:

- **Between 4 and 5 out of every 10 people definitely felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood**
- **Approaching 4 out of every 10 probably felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood**
- **Over 1 out of every 10 probably did not feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood**
- **Much less than 1 out of every 10 definitely did not feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood**
- **Much less than 1 out of every 10 did not know whether they felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood**

Between 2019 and 2021, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 9 months of the pandemic, the percentage of people in Northern Ireland who:

- **Definitely felt a sense of belong to their neighbourhood decreased**
- **Probably felt a sense of belong to their neighbourhood increased**
- **Probably did not feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood increased**
- **Definitely did not feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood remained the same**
- **Did not know whether they felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood increased**

For people in Northern Ireland, the COVID-19 pandemic has been associated with a decrease in the percentage of people who definitely feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood, with concomitant increases in the percentages of people who probably feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood, people who probably do not feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood, and people who don't know. There could be several explanations for this increase in uncertainty about a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood; it may reflect the periods of lockdown in which people:

- **Lacked freedom and the ability to congregate, which may have loosened people's connections to the neighbourhood and its community**
- **Were restricted in their movement and may have experienced greater dissatisfaction with the local environment to which they were confined**



## Inequalities, with the potential for inequity in Northern Ireland

In 2021, after one year and 9 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the population groups in Northern Ireland who had a greater percentage decrease in definitely feeling a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood were:

- Women
- People in the 18-24 years age group
- People in the 45-54 years age group
- People in the 55-64 years age group
- People in the Protestant community
- People of 'No religion'

The greatest percentage decrease in people who definitely felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood was in the 18-24 years age group.

In 2021, after one year and 9 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the population groups in Northern Ireland who had a greater percentage increase in probably feeling a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood were:

- People in the 18-24 years age group
- People in the 45-54 years age group
- People in the 55-64 years age group
- People in the Protestant community

The greatest percentage increase in people who probably felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood was in the 55-64 years age group, followed by people in the Protestant community (both population groups had percentage increases over 100%).

In 2021, after one year and 9 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the population groups in Northern Ireland who had a greater percentage increase in probably not feeling a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood were:

- People in the 18-24 years age group
- People in the 55-64 years age group
- People in the 65+ age group
- People in the Catholic community
- People in the Protestant community

The greatest percentage increase in people who probably did not feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood was in the 65+ years age group, followed by people in the 55-64 years age group, although people in the Protestant community and people in the 18-24 years age group also had percentage increases over 100%.

In 2021, after one year and 9 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the population groups in Northern Ireland who had a greater percentage increase in definitely not feeling a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood were:

- **People in the 18-24 years age group**
- **People in the 55-64 years age group**
- **People in the Catholic community**

The greatest percentage increase in people who definitely did not feel a sense of belonging to their local neighbourhood was in the 18-24 years age group (although all percentage increases were from a relatively low baseline).

In 2021, after one year and 9 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the population groups in Northern Ireland who had a greater percentage increase in not knowing whether they felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood were:

- **Women**
- **People in the 35-44 years age group**
- **People of 'No religion'**

The greatest percentage increase in people who did not know whether they felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood was in people of 'No religion' (although all percentage increases were from a relatively low baseline).

In Northern Ireland, after one year and 9 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the population groups who appear to have experienced the greatest changes in their sense of belonging to their neighbourhood are people in the 18-24 years age group and people in the 55-64 years age group, followed by people in the Protestant community.

People in the 18-24 years age group also experienced the greatest changes in their sense of belonging to Northern Ireland (see pages 000-000).

## SECTION 6

# Sense of Belonging to Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland data)

### DATA SOURCE

Information is from Ark, the Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey, Year 2019, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELNI and Year 2021, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELNI.<sup>32</sup>

### YEARS FOR WHICH DATA ARE AVAILABLE WITHIN COVID-19 TIMEFRAME

Calendar year 2021

### REPORTED IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON DATA COLLECTION

For the Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey 2021, to achieve the objectives of the research, while considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, a multi-modal approach was used. A large-scale Computer Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) survey was developed, and this was supplemented with Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI).<sup>33</sup>

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32. 2019: NI Life and Times Survey - 2019 : UBELNI ([ark.ac.uk](http://ark.ac.uk)) ; 2021: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey: 2021 ([ark.ac.uk](http://ark.ac.uk)) (Last accessed 18 May 2023)
  33. Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2021, Technical Notes Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2021 ([ark.ac.uk](http://ark.ac.uk)) (Last accessed 26 June 2023)

## PROFILE FINDINGS

In 2021, the first calendar year of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Northern Ireland, the percentage of people who felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland according to the different categories of response was:

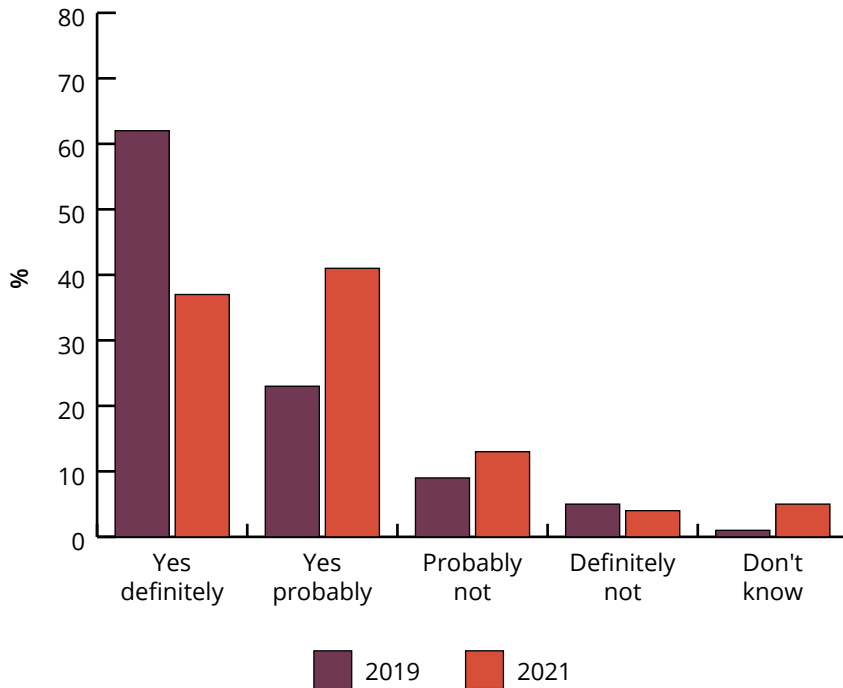
- 37% for 'Yes, definitely'
- 41% for 'Yes, probably'
- 13% for 'Probably not'
- 4% for 'Definitely not'
- 5% for 'Don't know' (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 20)

Between 2019 and 2021, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 9 months of the pandemic, in Northern Ireland, the percentage of people who felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland changed according to the different categories of response. The percentage of people who responded:

- 'Yes, definitely' decreased by 25 percentage points, from 62% to 37% (a percentage decrease of 40.32%)
- 'Yes, probably' increased by 18 percentage points from 23% to 41% (a percentage increase of 78.26%)
- 'Probably not' increased by 4 percentage points, from 9% to 13% (a percentage increase of 44.44%)
- 'Definitely not' decreased by 1 percentage point, from 5% to 4% (a percentage decrease of 20.00%)
- 'Don't know' increased by 4 percentage points, from 1% to 5% (a percentage increase of 400.00%; see COVID-19 Participation Figure 20)

**COVID19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 20:**

**Percentage (%) of people who felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland, 2019 and 2021**



Source: Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey, Year 2019, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELNI, and Year 2021, Module Community Relations, and Variable UBELNI

**Differences by population group in Northern Ireland**

***Differences between men and women in Northern Ireland***

In 2021, the first calendar year of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Northern Ireland, the percentage of men and women who felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland varied according to the different categories of response; it was:

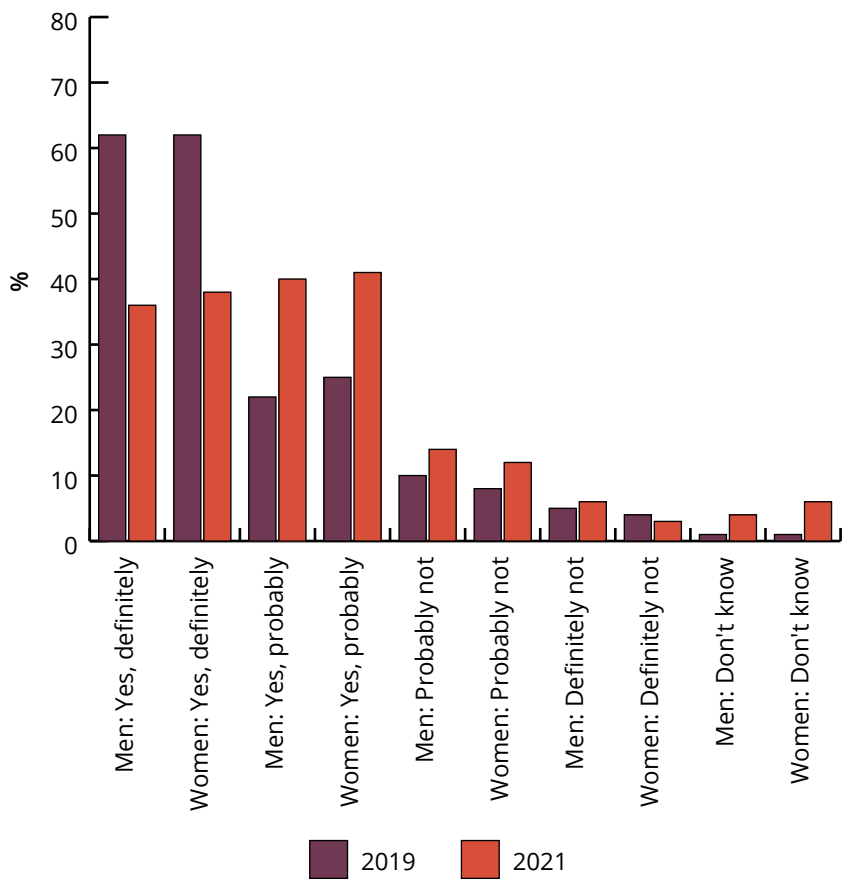
- 36% for 'Yes, definitely' in men, whereas it was 38% in women
- 40% for 'Yes, probably' in men, whereas it was 41% in women
- 14% for 'Probably not' in men, whereas it was 12% in women
- 6% for 'Definitely not' in men, whereas it was 3% in women
- 4% for 'Don't know' in men, whereas it was 6% in women (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 21)

Between 2019 and 2021, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 9 months of the pandemic, in Northern Ireland, the percentage of men and women who felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland changed according to the different categories of response. The percentage who responded:

- 'Yes, definitely' decreased by 26 percentage points in men, from 62% to 36% (a percentage decrease of 41.94%), whereas it decreased by 24 percentage points in women, from 62% to 38% (a percentage decrease of 38.71%)
- 'Yes, probably' increased by 18 percentage points in men, from 22% to 40% (a percentage increase of 81.82%), whereas it increased by 16 percentage points in women, from 25% to 41% (a percentage increase of 64.00%)
- 'Probably not' increased by 4 percentage points in men, from 10% to 14% (a percentage increase of 40.00%), and by 4 percentage points in women, from 8% to 12% (a percentage increase of 50.00%)
- 'Definitely not' increased by 1 percentage point in men, from 5% to 6% (a percentage increase of 20.00%), whereas it decreased by 1 percentage point in women, from 4% to 3% (a percentage decrease of 25.00%)
- 'Don't know' increased by 3 percentage points in men, from 1% to 4% (a percentage increase of 300.00%), whereas it increased by 5 percentage points in women, from 1% to 6% (a percentage increase of 500.00%; see COVID-19 Participation Figure 21)

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 21:**

**Percentage (%) of men and women in Northern Ireland who felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland according to 5 categories of response, 2019 and 2021**



Source: Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey: Year 2019, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELNI; Year 2021, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELNI

**Differences by age group in Northern Ireland**

In 2021, the first calendar year of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Northern Ireland, the percentage of people from different age groups who felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland varied according to the different categories of response:

- For 'Yes, definitely', it was 31% in the 18-24 years age group, 26% in the 25-34 years age group, 32% in the 35-44 years age group, 37% in the 45-54 years age group, 41% in the 55-64 years age group, and 52% in the 65+ years age group
- For 'Yes, probably', it was 36% in the 18-24 years age group, 45% in the 25-34 years age group, 46% in the 35-44 years age group, 42% in the 45-54 years age group, 41% in the 55-64 years age group, and 34% in the 65+ years age group
- For 'Probably not', it was 20% in the 18-24 years age group, 16% in the 25-34 years age group, 13% in the 35-44 years age group, 12% in the 45-54 years age group, 11% in the 55-64 years age group, and 8% in the 65+ years age group

- For 'Definitely not', it was 3% in the 18-24 years age group, 7% in the 25-34 years age group, 1% in the 35-44 years age group, 7% in the 45-54 years age group, 5% in the 55-64 years age group, and 3% in the 65+ years age group
- For 'Don't know', it was 9% in the 18-24 years age group, 5% in the 25-34 years age group, 7% in the 35-44 years age group, 3% in the 45-54 years age group, 2% in the 55-64 years age group, and 2% in the 65+ years age group (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 22)

Between 2019 and 2021, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 9 months of the pandemic, in Northern Ireland, the percentage of people from different age groups who felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland changed according to the different categories of response. The percentage who responded:

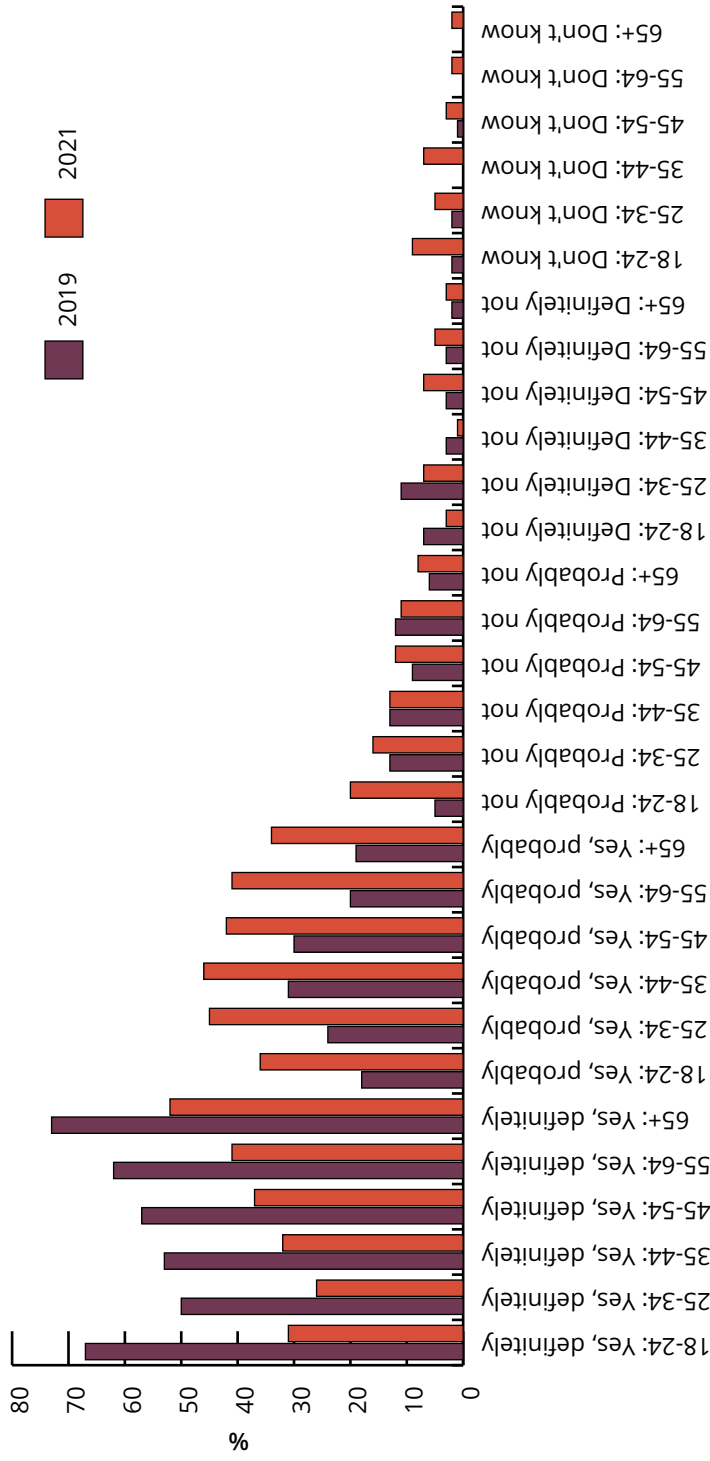
- 'Yes, definitely' decreased in all age groups; in the 18-24 years age group, it decreased by 36 percentage points, from 67% to 31% (a percentage decrease of 53.73%); in the 25-34 years age group, it decreased by 24 percentage points, from 50% to 26% (a percentage decrease of 48.00%); in the 35-44 years age group, it decreased by 21 percentage points, from 53% to 32% (a percentage decrease of 39.62%); in the 45-54 years age group, it decreased by 20 percentage points, from 57% to 37% (a percentage decrease of 35.09%); in the 55-64 years age group, it decreased by 21 percentage points, from 62% to 41% (a percentage decrease of 33.87%); in the 65+ years age group, it decreased by 21 percentage points, from 73% to 52% (a percentage decrease of 28.77%)
- 'Yes, probably' increased in all age groups; in the 18-24 years age group, it increased by 18 percentage points, from 18% to 36% (a percentage increase of 100.00%); in the 25-34 years age group, it increased by 21 percentage points, from 24% to 45% (a percentage increase of 87.50%); in the 35-44 years age group, it increased by 15 percentage points, from 31% to 46% (a percentage increase of 48.39%); in the 45-54 years age group, it increased by 12 percentage points, from 30% to 42% (a percentage increase of 40.00%); in the 55-64 years age group, it increased by 21 percentage points, from 20% to 41% (a percentage increase of 105.00%); in the 65+ years age group, it increased by 15 percentage points, from 19% to 34% (a percentage increase of 78.95%)
- 'Probably not' was varied across the age groups; in the 18-24 years age group, it increased by 15 percentage points, from 5% to 20% (a percentage increase of 300.00%); in the 25-34 years age group, it increased by 3 percentage points, from 13% to 16% (a percentage increase of 23.08%); in the 35-44 years age group, it remained the same at 13%; in the 45-54 years age group, it increased by 3 percentage points, from 9% to 12% (a percentage increase of 33.33%); in the 55-64 years age group, it decreased by 1 percentage point, from 12% to 11% (a percentage decrease of 8.33%); in the 65+ years age group, it increased by 2 percentage points, from 6% to 8% (a percentage increase of 33.33%)



- 'Definitely not' decreased in the 3 younger age groups and increased in the 3 older age groups; in the 18-24 years age group, it decreased by 4 percentage points, from 7% to 3% (a percentage decrease of 57.14%); in the 25-34 years age group, it decreased by 4 percentage points, from 11% to 7% (a percentage decrease of 36.36%), in the 35-44 years age group, it decreased by 2 percentage points, from 3% to 1% (a percentage decrease of 66.67%); in the 45-54 years age group, it increased by 4 percentage points, from 3% to 7% (a percentage increase of 133.33%); in the 55-64 years age group, it increased by 2 percentage points, from 3% to 5% (percentage increase of 66.67%); in the 65+ years age group, it increased by 1 percentage point, from 2% to 3% (a percentage increase of 50.00%)
- 'Don't know' increased in all age groups; in the 18-24 years age group, it increased by 7 percentage points, from 2% to 9% (a percentage increase of 350.00%); in the 25-34 years age group, it increased by 3 percentage points from 2% to 5% (a percentage increase of 150.00%); in the 35-44 years age group, it increased by 7 percentage points, from 0% to 7%; in the 45-54 years age group, it increased by 2 percentage points, from 1% to 3% (a percentage increase of 200.00%); in the 55-64 years age group, it increased by 2 percentage points, from 0% to 2%; in the 65+ years age group, it increased by 2 percentage points, from 0% to 2% (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 22)

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 22:**

Percentage (%) people from different age groups in Northern Ireland who felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland according to 5 categories of response, 2019 and 2021



Source: Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey: Year 2019, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELN1; Year 2021, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELN1

### **Differences by religion in Northern Ireland**

In 2021, the first calendar year of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Northern Ireland, the percentage of people from different religions who felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland varied according to the different categories of response:

- For 'Yes, definitely', it was 28% in people from the Catholic community, 55% in people from the Protestant community, and 25% in people of 'No religion'
- For 'Yes, probably', it was 45% in people from the Catholic community, 36% in people from the Protestant community, and 44% in people of 'No religion'
- For 'Probably not', it was 18% in people from the Catholic community, 6% in people from the Protestant community, and 16% in people of 'No religion'
- For 'Definitely not', it was 5% in people from the Catholic community, 1% in people from the Protestant community, and 8% in people of 'No religion'
- For 'Don't know', it was 3% in people from the Catholic community, 2% in people from the Protestant community, and 7% in people of 'No religion' (see COVID-19 Participation Figure 23)

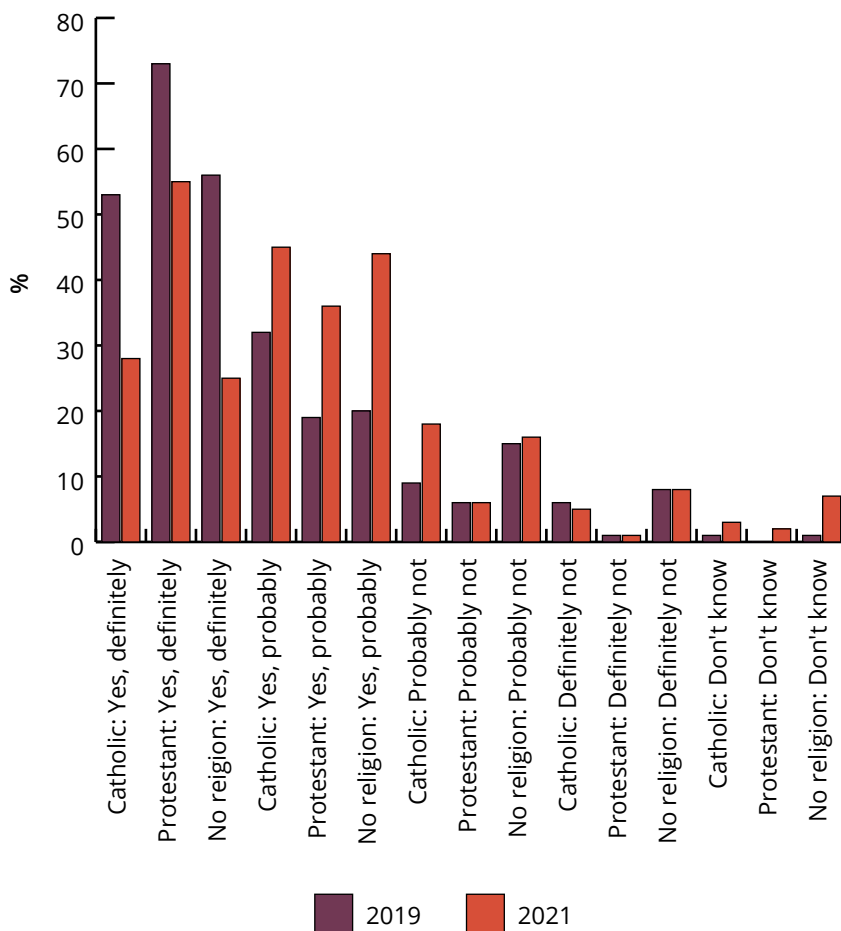
Between 2019 and 2021, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 9 months of the pandemic, in Northern Ireland, the percentage of people from different religions who felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland changed according to the different categories of response. The percentage who responded:

- 'Yes, definitely' decreased in all religious groups; in people from the Catholic community, it decreased by 25 percentage points, from 53% to 28% (a percentage decrease of 47.17%); in people from the Protestant community, it decreased by 18 percentage points, from 73% to 55% (a percentage decrease of 24.66%); in people of 'No religion', it decreased by 31 percentage points, from 56% to 25% (a percentage decrease of 55.36%)
- 'Yes, probably' increased in all religion groups; in people from the Catholic community, it increased by 13 percentage points, from 32% to 45% (a percentage increase of 40.63%); in people from the Protestant community, it increased by 17 percentage points, from 19% to 36% (a percentage increase of 89.47%); in people of 'No religion', it increased by 24 percentage points, from 20% to 44% (a percentage increase of 120.00%)
- 'Probably not' increased in 2 religion groups and remained the same in one; in people from the Catholic community, it increased by 9 percentage points, from 9% to 18% (a percentage increase of 100.00%); in people from the Protestant community, it remained the same at 6%; in people of 'No religion', it increased by 1 percentage point, from 15% to 16% (a percentage increase of 6.67%)

- 'Definitely not' decreased in one religion group and remained the same in two; in people from the Catholic community, it decreased by 1 percentage point, from 6% to 5% (a percentage decrease of 16.67%); in people from the Protestant community, it remained the same at 1%; in people of 'No religion', it remained the same at 8%
- 'Don't know' increased in all religion groups; in people from the Catholic community, it increased by 2 percentage points, from 1% to 3% (a percentage increase of 200.00%); in people from the Protestant community, it increased by 2 percentage points, from 0% to 2%; in people of 'No religion', it increased by 6 percentage points, from 1% to 7% (a percentage increase of 600.00%; see COVID-19 Participation Figure 23)

**COVID-19 PARTICIPATION FIGURE 23:**

**Percentage (%) of people from different religion groups who felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland according to 5 categories of response, 2019 and 2021**



Source: Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey: Year 2019, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELNI; Year 2021, Module Community Relations, Variable UBELNI

See pages 268 -274, in the Peace Chapter for further detail of the findings before the COVID-19 pandemic.

## POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In 2021, after one year and 9 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Northern Ireland:

- Approaching 4 out of every 10 people definitely felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland
- Over 4 out of every 10 probably felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland
- Over 1 out of every 10 probably did not feel a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland
- Much less than 1 out of every 10 (approaching 1 out of 20) definitely did not feel a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland
- Much less than 1 out of every 10 (1 out of every 20) did not know whether they felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland

Between 2019 and 2021, from before the COVID-19 pandemic and covering the first year and 9 months of the pandemic, the percentage of people in Northern Ireland who:

- Definitely felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland decreased
- Probably felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland increased
- Probably did not feel a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland increased
- Definitely did not feel a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland decreased
- Did not know whether they felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland increased

For people in Northern Ireland, the COVID-19 pandemic has been associated with a decrease in the percentage of people who definitely feel a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland, with concomitant increases in the percentages of people who probably feel a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland, people who probably do not feel a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland, and people who don't know. This increase in uncertainty about a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland may reflect the periods of lockdown in which people may have felt isolated or 'cut off' from the life of Northern Ireland due to restrictions on movement and the freedom to congregate with others, thereby loosening their feelings of connection to Northern Ireland. Alternatively, it could reflect a feeling of dis-satisfaction with confinement to Northern Ireland during periods of lockdown.

## Inequalities, with the potential for inequity in Northern Ireland

In 2021, after one year and 9 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the population groups in Northern Ireland who had a greater percentage decrease in definitely feeling a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland were:

- Men
- People in the 18-24 years age group
- People in the 25-34 years age group
- People in the Catholic community
- People of 'No religion'

The greatest percentage decrease in people who definitely felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland was in people of 'No religion', followed by people in the 18-24 years age group.

In 2021, after one year and 9 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the population groups in Northern Ireland who had a greater percentage increase in probably feeling a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland were:

- Men
- People in the 18-24 years age group
- People in the 25-34 years age group
- People in the 55-64 years age group
- People in the 65+ years age group
- People in the Protestant community
- People of 'No religion'

The greatest percentage increase in people who probably felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland was in people of 'No religion', followed by people in the 55-64 years age group and in the 18-24 years age group.

In 2021, after one year and 9 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the population groups in Northern Ireland who had a greater percentage increase in probably not feeling a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland were:

- **Women**
- **People in the 18-24 years age group**
- **People in the Catholic community**

The greatest percentage increase in people who probably did not feel a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland was in the 18-24 years age group.

In 2021, after one year and 9 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the population groups in Northern Ireland who had a percentage increase in definitely not feeling a sense of belonging to their local neighbourhood were:

- **Men**
- **People in the 45-54 years age group**
- **People in the 55-64 years age group**
- **People in the 65+ years age group**

The greatest percentage increase in people who definitely did not feel a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland was in the 45-54 years age group (although all percentage increases were from a relatively low baseline).

In 2021, after one year and 9 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the population groups in Northern Ireland who had a greater percentage increase in not knowing whether they felt a sense of belonging to their local neighbourhood were:

- **Women**
- **People of 'No religion'**

The greatest percentage increase in people who did not know whether they felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland was in people of 'No religion' (although all percentage increases were from a relatively low baseline).

In Northern Ireland, after one year and 9 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the population groups who appear to have experienced the greatest changes in their sense of belonging to Northern Ireland are men, people in the 18-24 years age group, and people of 'No religion'. People in the 18-24 years age group also experienced the greatest changes in their sense of belonging to their neighbourhood (see pages 000-000).



# Belfast

A World Health Organization

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