**Good Relations**

The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILT)[[1]](#footnote-1) deals with the attitudes, values and beliefs of the people in Northern Ireland on a wide range of issues, including relations between Protestant and Catholics.

The NILT survey asks respondents:

* What about relations between Protestants and Catholics? Would you say they are better than they were 5 years ago, worse, or about the same now as then?
* And what about in 5 years time? Do you think relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better than now, worse than now, or about the same as now?

For the combined years of 2019, 2020 and 2021, just over 80% of respondents in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough believe that relations between Protestants and Catholics are better (39.8%) or about the same (40.7%) as they were 5 years ago. Approximately 12% of respondents believed that relations were worse now than they were 5 years ago. Although this figure has fallen slightly from the previous combined years, it still remains significantly higher than 2016-2018 results when just 3.3% of respondents believed that relations were worse now than they were 5 years ago. In Northern Ireland overall, 38% of respondents believe that relations between Protestants and Catholics are better now than they were 5 years ago, slightly lower than Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. A higher proportion of respondents in Northern Ireland overall, 44.1%, believe relations are about the same as 5 years ago. The proportion of respondents who believe relations are worse now than 5 years ago is the same in Northern Ireland and the borough at 12.3%.

For the combined years of 2019, 2020 and 2021 the largest proportion of respondents (35.4%) in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough believe that relations between Protestants and Catholics will be about the same in 5 years time. 33.8% of respondents in the borough believe relations will be better while 14.8% believe that relations will be worse in 5 years time. Over 15% of respondents in the borough responded don’t know to this question. In Northern Ireland overall 31.7% of respondents believe relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in 5 years time, slightly less than the borough. A higher proportion of respondents in Northern Ireland (39%) than the borough believe relations will be about the same 5 years from now while 14.4% believe relations will be worse. 13.3% of Northern Ireland respondents answered don’t know.

|   | Relations between Protestants and Catholics |
| --- | --- |
|   | 5 years ago | In 5 years time |
| ABC | NI | ABC | NI |
| Better | 39.8% | 38.0% | 33.8% | 31.7% |
| Worse | 12.3% | 12.3% | 14.8% | 14.4% |
| About the same | 40.7% | 44.1% | 35.4% | 39.0% |
| Other | 0.4% | 0.6% | 0.8% | 1.6% |
| Don’t know | 6.6% | 4.8% | 15.2% | 13.3% |

*Table 1: Percentage of people who think relations between Protestants and Catholics are better, worse, or about the same as 5 years ago and 5 years from now in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2019 - 2021. Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ARK).*

*Figure 1: Percentage of people who think relations between Protestants and Catholics are better, worse, or about the same as 5 years ago and 5 years from now in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2019 to 2021. Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ARK).*

The NILT survey also asks:

* In some areas the communities are divided and Protestant and Catholics tend to go to different local shops or use different GP surgeries and other services. Thinking about this area, would you say this happens a lot, a little or not at all?

Respondents to the survey in the combined years of 2019, 2020 and 2021 in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough believe that Protestants and Catholics tend to go to different local shops, GP surgeries and other services a lot (24.2%) or a little (28.3%). This has increased from the previous reported results for the combined years 2018-20 where 18% of respondents said this happened a lot and 26.2% said this happened a little. The proportion who felt this does not happen at all has fallen from 44.7% in 2018-20 to 32% in 2019-21. In Northern Ireland overall, a higher portion of respondents reported that this does not happen at all (38.7%) while 19.1% believe it happens a lot and 28.8% a little.

|   | ABC | NI |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A lot | 24.2% | 19.1% |
| A little | 28.3% | 28.8% |
| Not at all | 32.0% | 38.7% |
| Don’t know | 15.0% | 13.3% |

*Table 2: Percentage of people who think Protestants and Catholics use different local shops, GP surgeries and other services in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2019-2021. Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ARK).*

*Figure 2: Percentage of people who think Protestants and Catholics use different local shops, GP surgeries and other services in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2019-2021. Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ARK).*

The NILT survey further asks:

* Do you think leisure centres in this area are ‘shared and open’ to both Protestants and Catholics?
* Do you think that parks in this area are ‘shared and open’ to both Protestants and Catholics?
* Do you think that libraries in this area are ‘shared and open’ to both Protestants and Catholics?
* Do you think that shopping centres in this area are ‘shared and open’ to both Protestants and Catholics?

In Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 73% of respondents to the combined years of the 2019, 2020 and 2021 survey think that leisure centres are definitely ‘shared and open’ while 13.5% think they are probably ‘shared and open’. This compared to 61.8% of respondents in Northern Ireland overall answering that leisure centres are definitely ‘shared and open’ while 22.7% think they are probably ‘shared and open’.

When respondents in the borough were asked about parks, 70.3% answered that they are definitely and 16.5% probably ‘shared and open’. Comparing these to Northern Ireland overall responses were 64.2% and 22.2% respectively.

Agreement that libraries are definitely and probably ‘shared and open’ to both Protestants and Catholics was higher in Northern Ireland than in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough.

Shopping centres are thought to be ‘shared and open’ by 88.7% of respondents in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough (76.9% yes definitely, 11.8% yes probably). This is slightly lower than the responses for Northern Ireland overall (90.3%).

|   | . . . . . in this area are ‘shared and open’ to both Protestants and Catholics |
| --- | --- |
|   | **Leisure Centres** | **Parks** | **Libraries** | **Shopping Centres** |
|   | **ABC** | **NI** | **ABC** | **NI** | **ABC** | **NI** | **ABC** | **NI** |
| Yes definitely | 73.0% | 61.8% | 70.3% | 64.2% | 76.9% | 67.3% | 76.9% | 71.0% |
| Yes probably | 13.5% | 22.7% | 16.5% | 22.2% | 11.6% | 22.5% | 11.8% | 19.2% |
| No probably not | 1.6% | 5.4% | 3.3% | 5.5% | 2.3% | 2.7% | 0.7% | 1.8% |
| No definitely not | 1.2% | 1.7% | 1.0% | 1.8% | 0.2% | 0.6% | 0.2% | 0.4% |
| None in this area | 7.8% | 5.3% | 6.7% | 4.0% | 6.6% | 4.4% | 8.7% | 5.6% |
| Don’t know | 2.4% | 2.9% | 1.7% | 2.1% | 1.8% | 2.3% | 1.2% | 1.7% |

*Table 3: Percentage of people who think, in their area, leisure centres, parks, libraries and shopping centres are ‘shared and open’ to both Protestants and Catholics in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2019 - 2021. Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ARK).*

*Figure 3: Percentage of people who think, in their area, leisure centres, parks, libraries and shopping centres are ‘shared and open’ to both Protestant and Catholics in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2019-21. Source: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ARK).*

Further information can be found via the following links:

<https://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/>

<https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/Home.aspx> and type Northern Ireland Life and Times into the search bar.

1. Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ARK) - <https://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)