SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT SURVEY 2024:

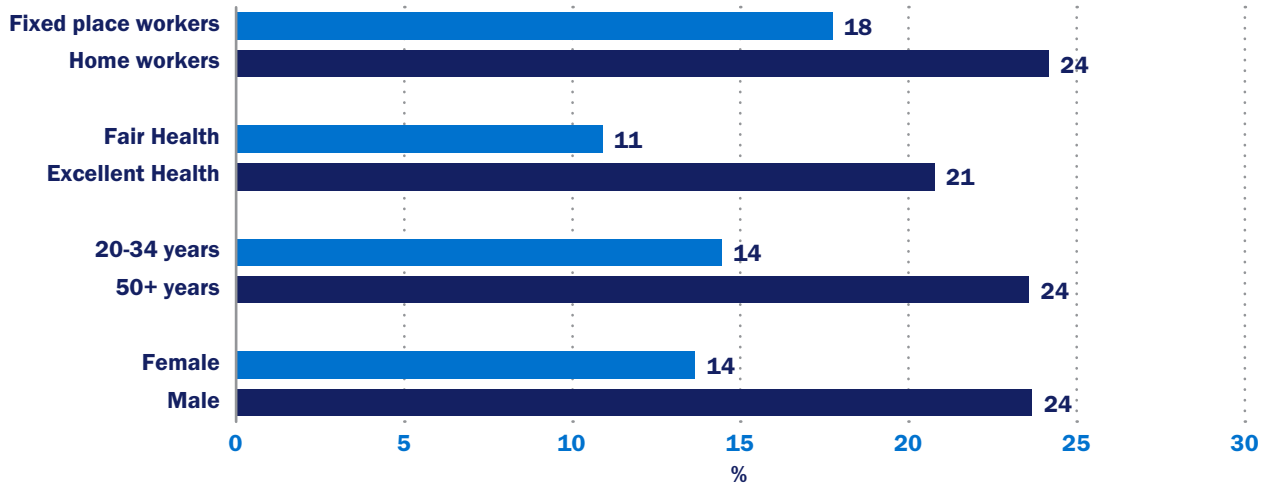
VOICE AND REPRESENTATION

Department for the Economy
An Roinn Geilleagair
www.economy-ni.gov.uk

The SES is a national study of adults aged 20-65 years old in paid employment and focuses on the work that people do and how working life has changed over time. The survey offers a unique worker-level assessment on a number of themes such as work conditions, trade union activity, pay, job security, flexibility, work intensity, artificial intelligence and meaningful work. This infographic focuses on voice and representation.

ORGANISATIONAL PARTICIPATION

WORKERS WITH A SAY IN DECISIONS THAT CHANGED THEIR JOB



Management in NI are 8pps less likely to hold meetings where workers can express their views than in the UK, at 60% and 68% respectively.

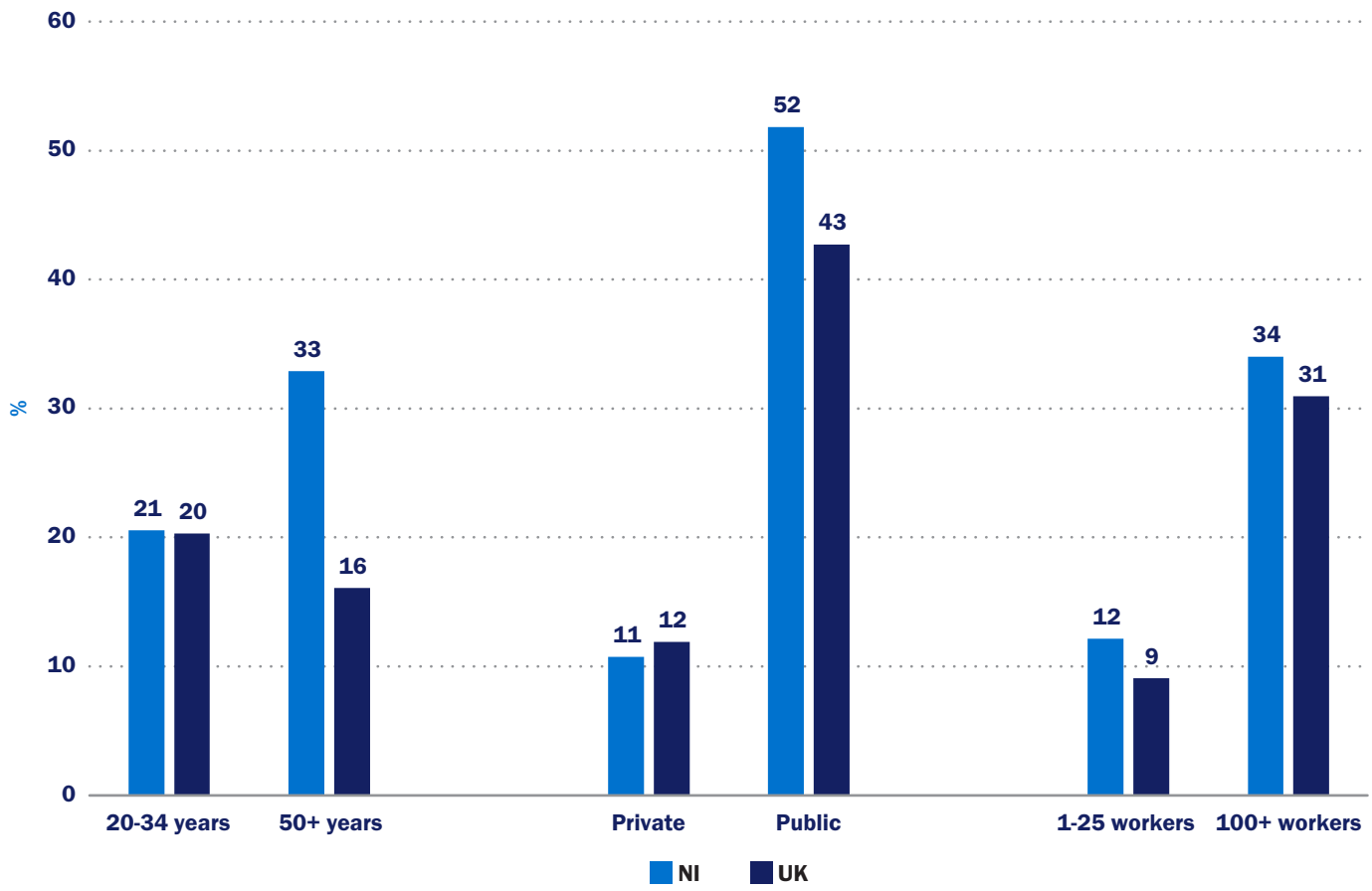
In NI, large differences in involvement in management meetings favour full time workers (+22.4pps), businesses with large numbers of workers (+16pps), hybrid compared to fixed place workers (+39.3pps) and those with higher level qualifications and working in the ICT, finance and real estate sector.

Males, older workers, those with excellent health, those in smaller workplaces and home workers are all more likely to have a say in decisions which affect their job.

Females, older workers, those with lower levels of health, limiting ill-health or disability and businesses with larger workers all would like more say in decisions that affect their work.

TRADE UNION PRESENCE, MEMBERSHIP AND COVERAGE

TRADE UNIONS HAVE AT LEAST A GREAT DEAL OR A FAIR AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE OVER ORGANISATION OF WORK



The rate of union presence and coverage is estimated to be 51% and 47% in NI compared to 46% and 41% in the UK.

In NI 33% of employees are members of trade unions compared to just under a quarter of employees (23%) across the UK.

The largest difference in trade union presence is between public (88%) and private sector workers (27%).

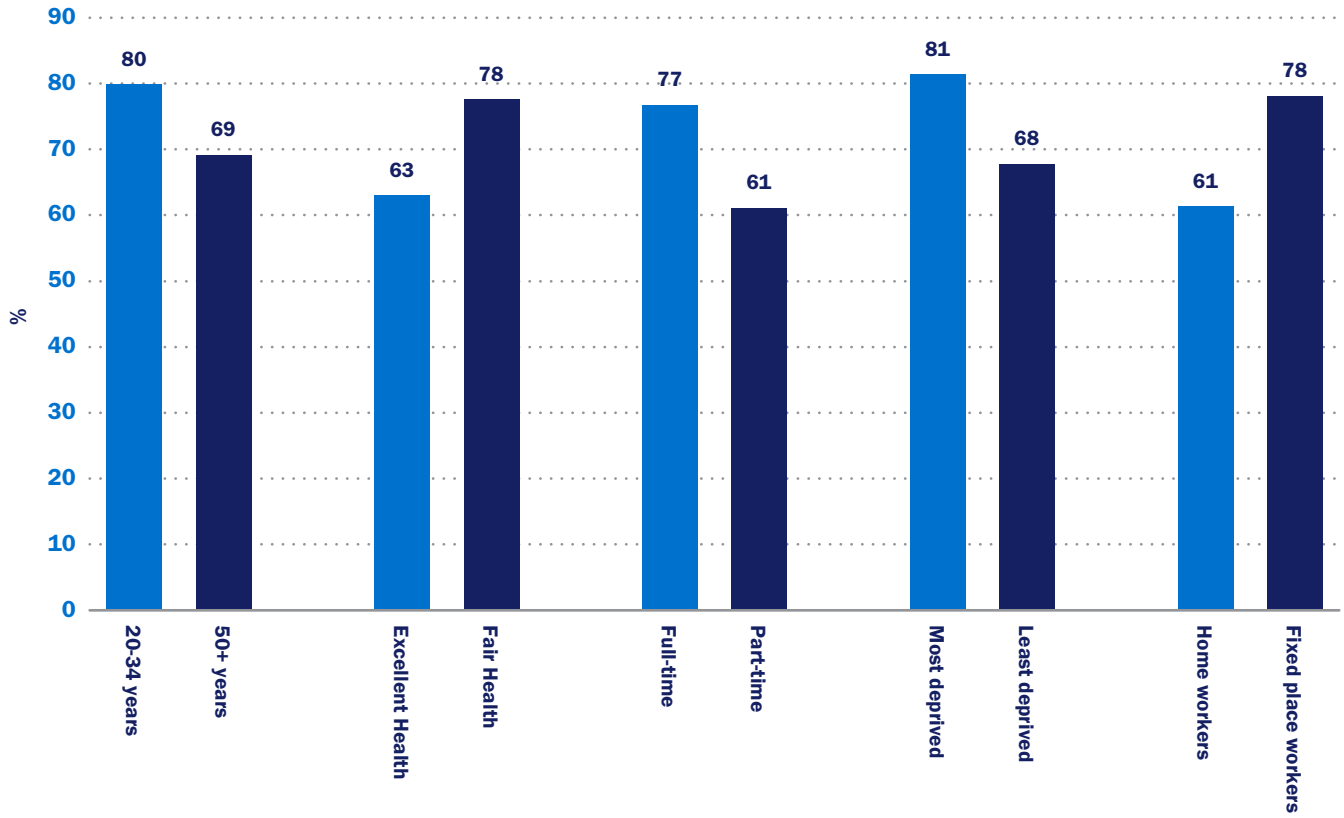
Presence, coverage and membership are all higher in older workers, larger workplaces, higher qualified, and favours those in Education and Health sector roles.

Workers in NI were more likely to agree that trade unions had at least a great deal or fair amount of influence over organisation of work than in the UK overall, at 26% and 20%, respectively.

Older workers, public sector workers and larger workplaces were more likely to agree that trade unions had influence over organisation of work.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS UNIONS

WORKERS THAT WOULD VOTE TO KEEP A TRADE UNION



Younger workers are more likely to express positive attitudes towards unions. Within NI, 80% of employees in unionised workplaces aged 20-34 would vote to keep a union compared to 69% of employees aged 50 and over.

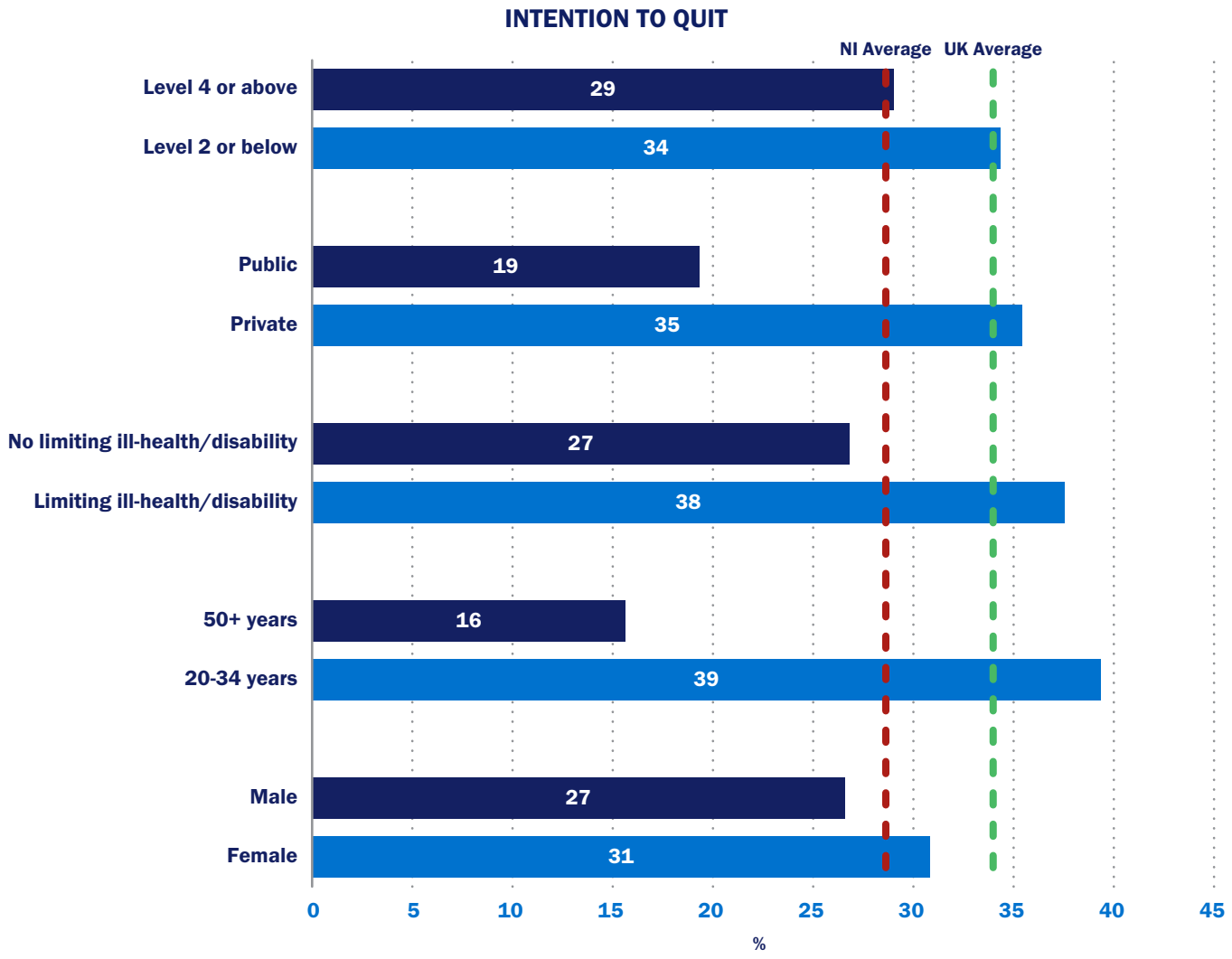
On keeping an existing trade union, NI workers were 6pps more likely to vote yes than in the UK.

Those with fair health, full-time workers, workers in the most deprived quintile and fixed place workers were much more likely to vote to keep a trade union.

Attitudes towards establishing a trade union differed most by workplace size: support in larger workplaces (100+ workers) was 22pps higher than in smaller workplaces (1–25 workers). The next-largest difference was between the least and most deprived quintiles, at 20pps.

Females, private sector workers, those with fair health and part-time workers are more likely to want to establish a trade union.

INTENTION TO QUIT



An alternative course of action for workers who feel that their voices are not heard by management is to quit their jobs.

The intention to quit is much lower in NI than the UK at 29% and 34%, respectively.

Older workers aged 50+ are less than half as likely to intend to quit than 20-34 year olds (16% vs 39%).

Males, those with no limiting ill-health or disability, public sector and those with level 4 or above qualifications have a lower intention to quit than their counterparts.

In all of these subgroups, the intention to quit is much lower for NI compared with its equivalent across the UK.