

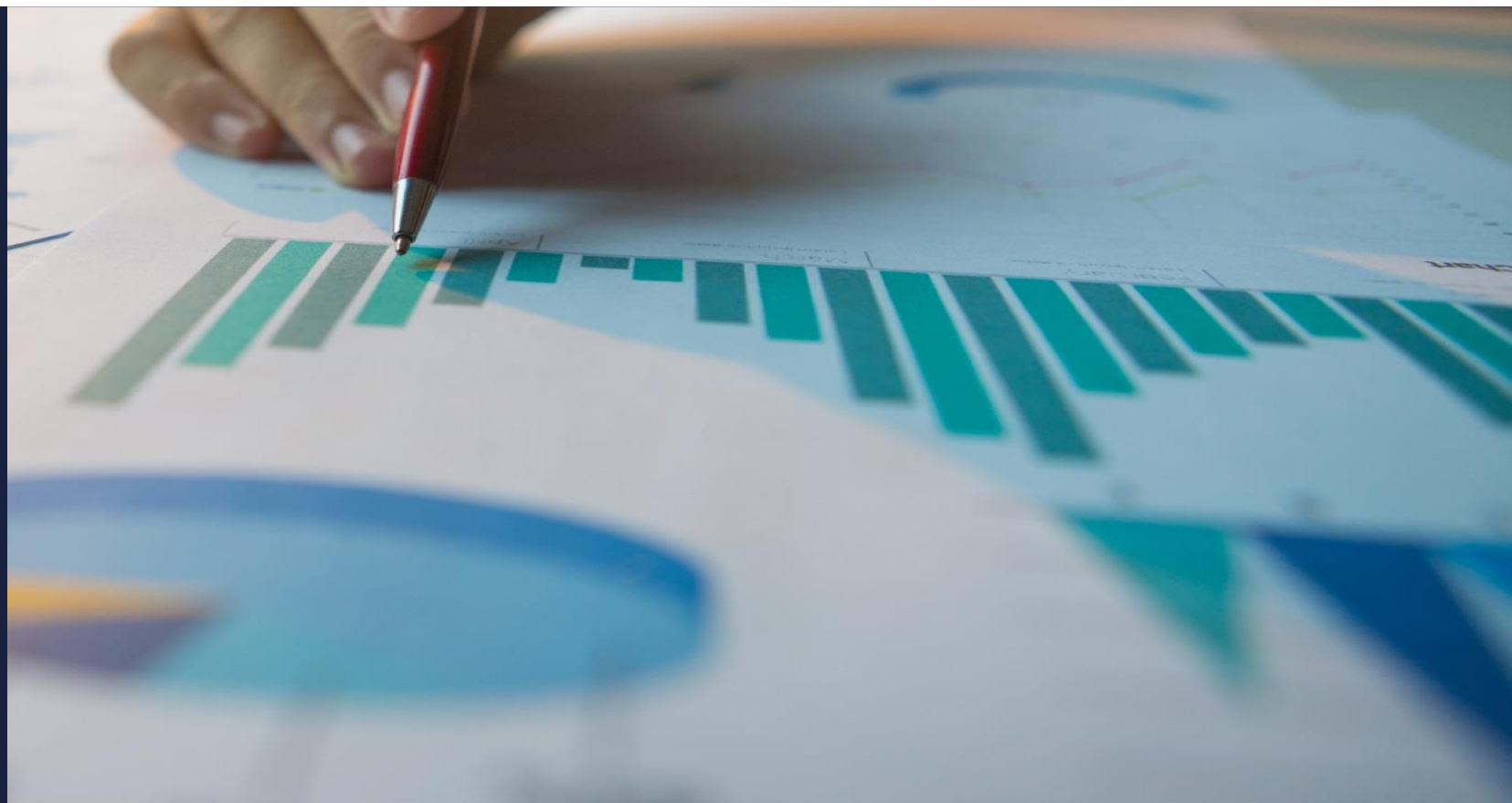
Gender and Labour Market Inclusion on the Island of Ireland

DATE

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RESEARCH TEAM

Garance Hingre
Helen Russell
Emer Smyth
Frances McGinnity



Motivation

- Inequalities in the labour market are an important indicator for wider gender equality
- Persistent gender inequalities in the labour market in all OECD countries
 - Employment levels, hours of work, occupations, pay and other conditions
- Yet scale of differences vary across countries and comparisons can help to highlight factors behind gender inequalities
- Previous research highlights the role of policy (tax, welfare, childcare etc.), education, demographics and gender role attitudes in shaping gender differences across countries
 - (Blau & Kahn, 2003; Hegewisch and Gornick, 2011; Steiber and Haas, 2012; Ferragina, 2017; Keck and Saraceno, 2013; Kaliskova 2020; Budig et al., 2014; Gash, 2009)

Research Questions

- How do patterns of labour force participation differ for men and women in IE and NI?
- Do same groups have difficulty accessing labour market?
- How do gender differences in quality of employment compare in IE and NI?
 - Hours, low pay, occupational position, working from home.
- What factors are behind these differences?
- Implications for policy?

Methods

- Analysis of labour force surveys for IE and NI 2022
- Consultation with stakeholders
 - NGOs, government departments, researchers; Trade Unions, Employers' orgs; training organisations.

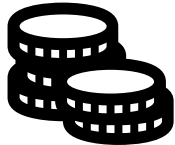


Context

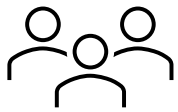
Significant differences between NI and IE



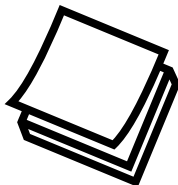
- Educational profile of the working-age population (Smyth et al. 2022; Devlin et al 2023)



- Economic context - GDP, industrial profile, productivity (FitzGerald and Morgenroth 2019; O'Connor and Shortall ,1999; Bergin & McGuinness, 2022)



- Demographic profile of working-age population – higher proportion of migrants in IE. Higher % living alone in NI. Higher % couple with children



- Policy context

Differences in **Childcare Provision & Support for Lone Parents**

- Ireland and UK usually feature in the bottom end of international comparisons of childcare affordability
- Variation in duration of pre-school provision (longer in Ireland) and in subsidies for low-income families (Curristan et al. 2022)
- Differences in lone parent provision - greater conditionality and earlier activation in NI than IE

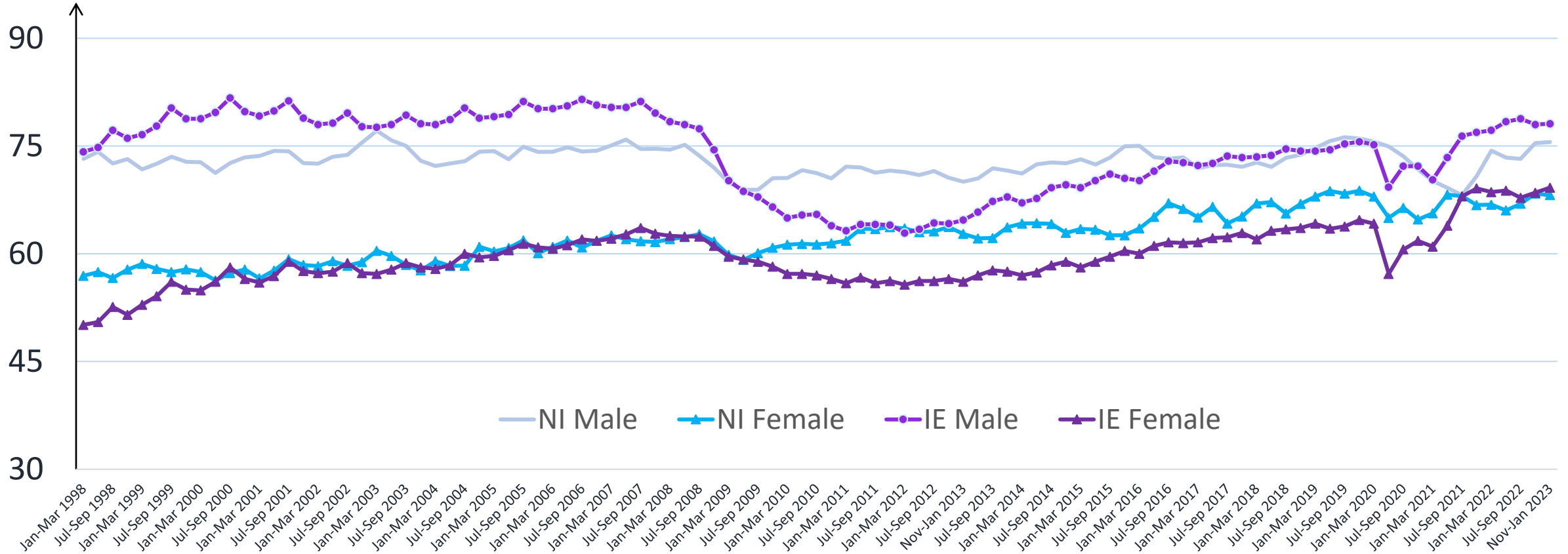
Care cost & availability: Stakeholder views

Childcare, ... both in Ireland and in Northern Ireland... the costs are very high, particularly for low-income families or where there's a two-income family where it can make financially more sense for one of the members of the family to **leave work**. And that's often the woman.” (Stakeholder group NI & IE)

“if you’re on **Universal Credit** here like it's a benefit you can claim up to 84% of your childcare allowance. Now the problem with it is it's **paid retrospectively**. So you're always in arrears.” (Stakeholder, NI)

Trends in Employment 1998-2023

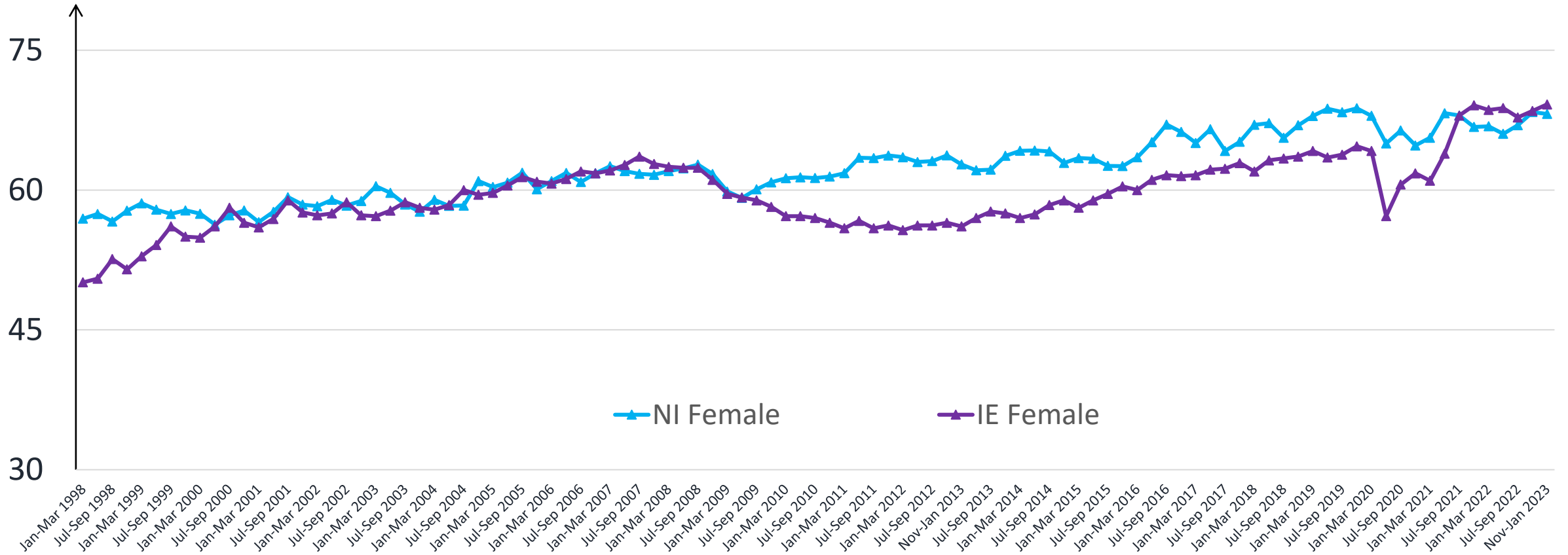
Gender gap wider in IE for most of the period

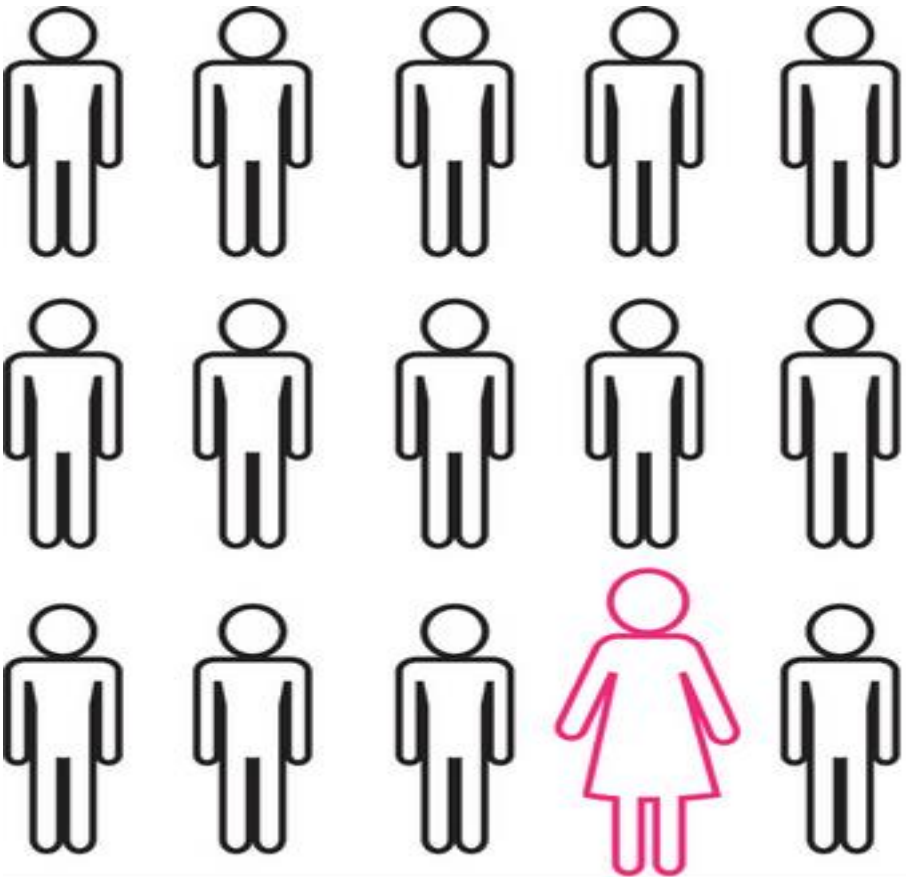


Female employment rates

Higher in NI for much of post-recession period.

Higher in IE post-pandemic

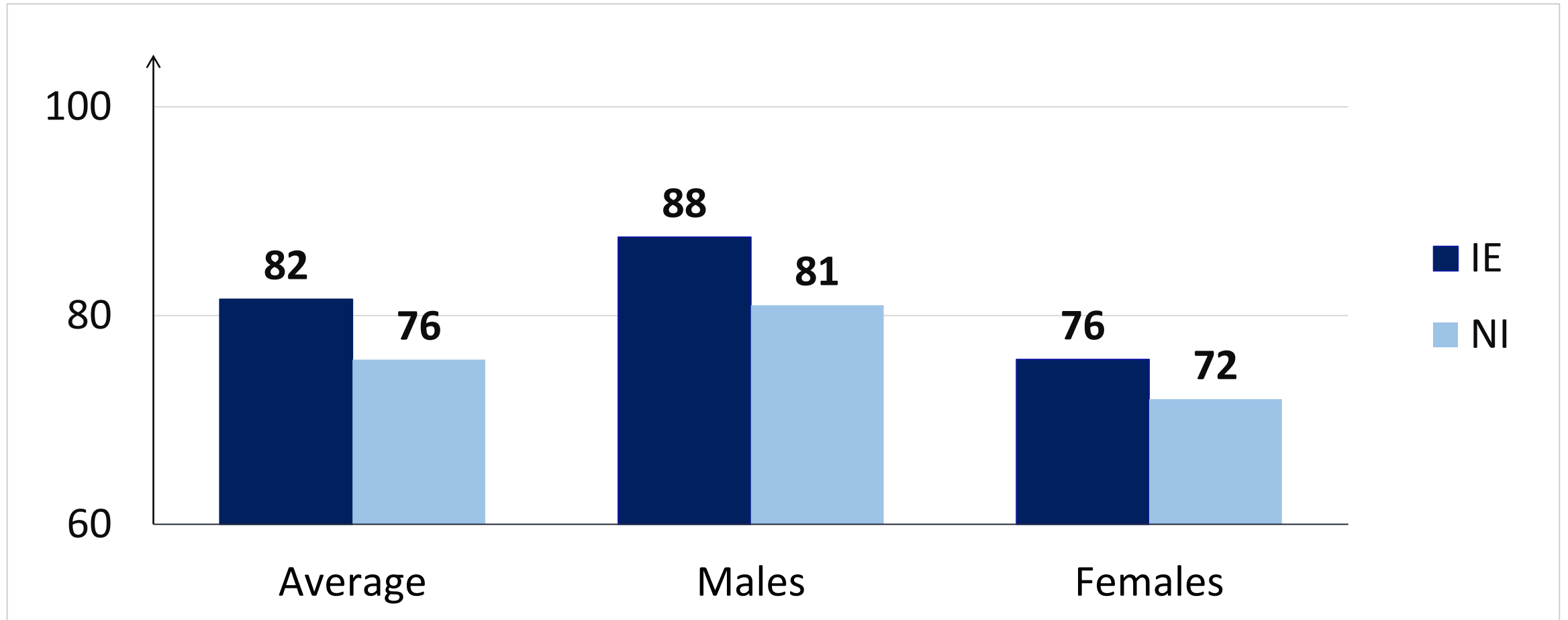




Labour market outcomes in Northern Ireland and Ireland, 2022

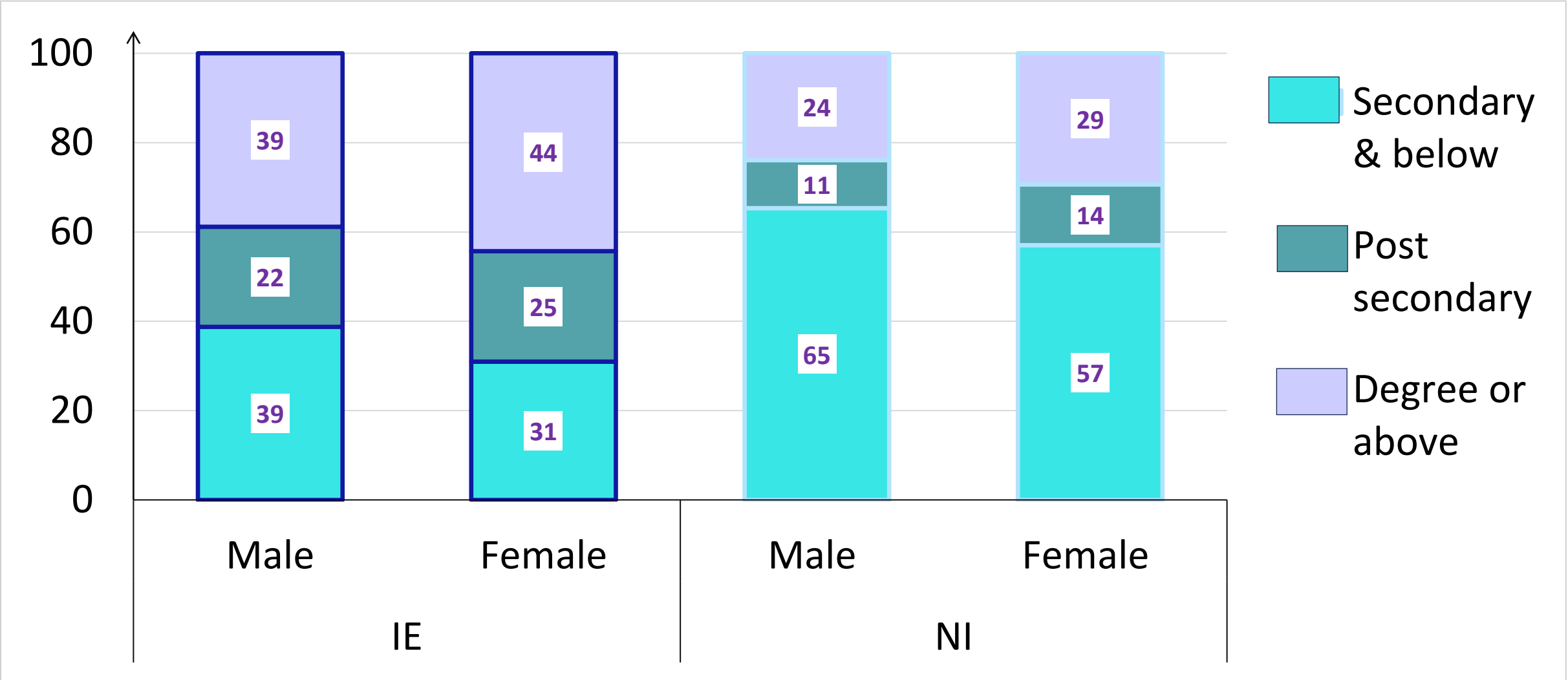
Labour force participation (2022)

The share of the working-age population (individuals aged between 20 and 64 years old) that engage actively in the labour market, by working or looking for work



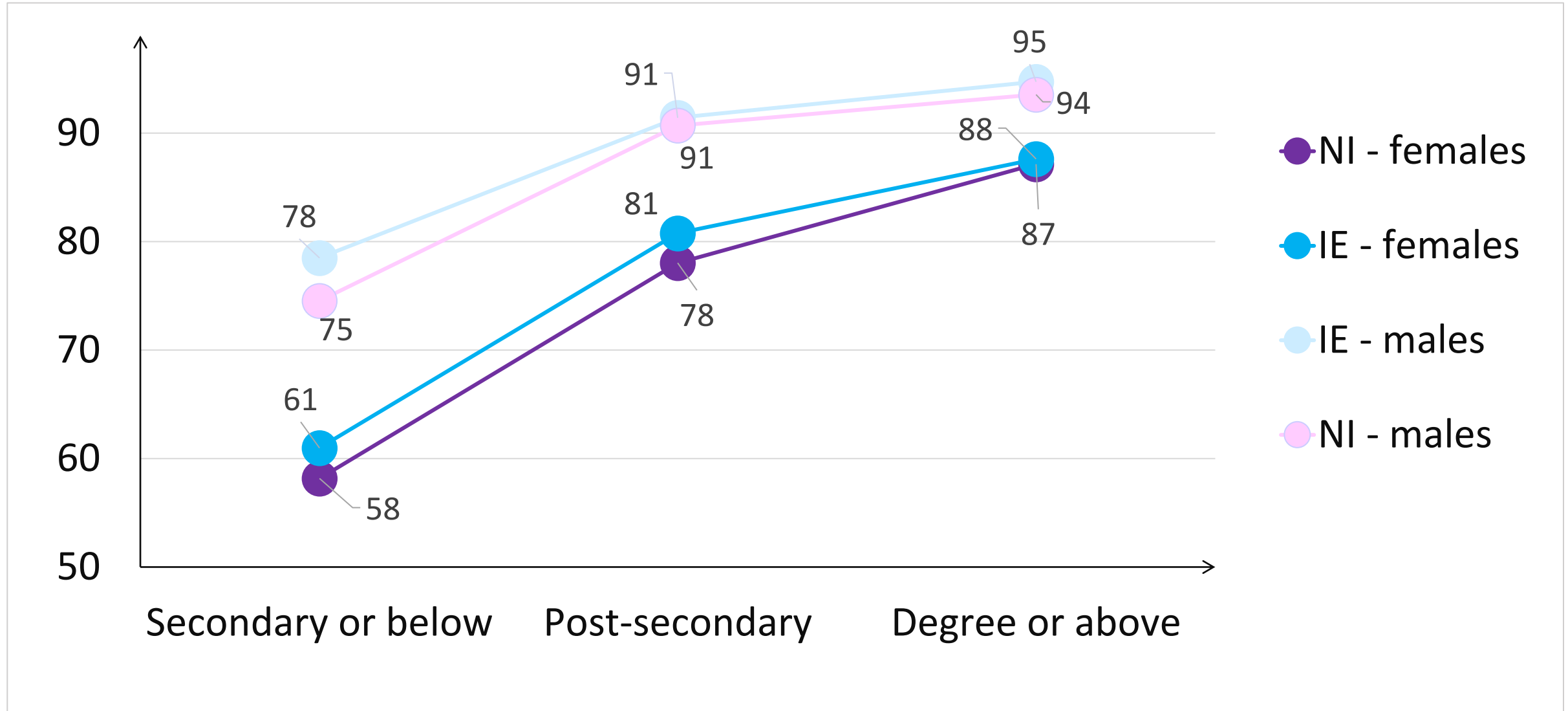
Education

Higher educational attainment in IE compared to NI and for females compared to males



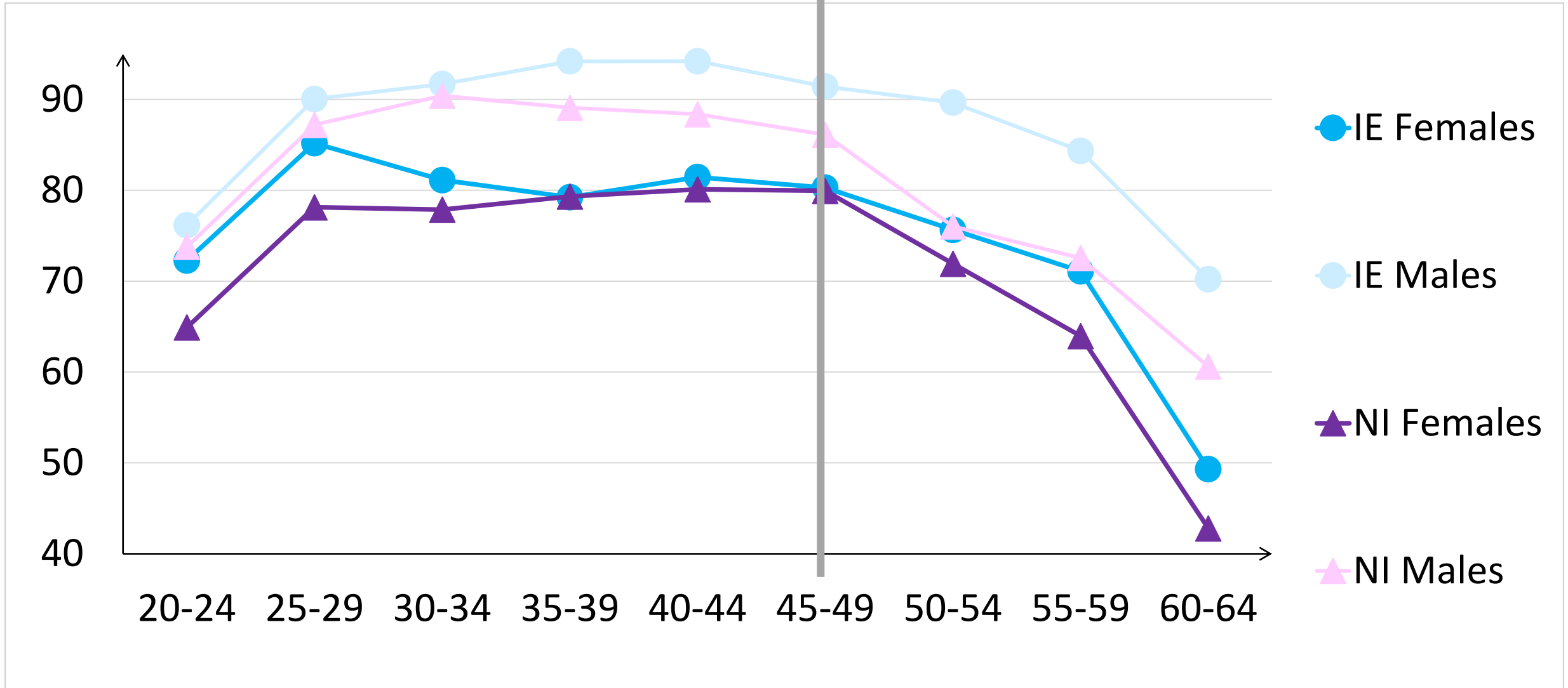
Education

The highest the educational level, the highest the labour force participation



Age

Older age acts as a barrier to labour force participation, especially in Northern Ireland



Statistical models: labour force participation....

Without controls...

... females in **IE** are more likely to participate than females in **NI**

... males in **IE** are more likely to participate than males in **NI**

... **females** are less likely to participate than **males** in IE and NI

With education controls....

.... females in **NI** are more likely to participate than females in **IE**

.... the jurisdiction gap for males is smaller

Education accounts for most of the differences in **female** labour force participation across jurisdictions

Factors influencing labour force participation

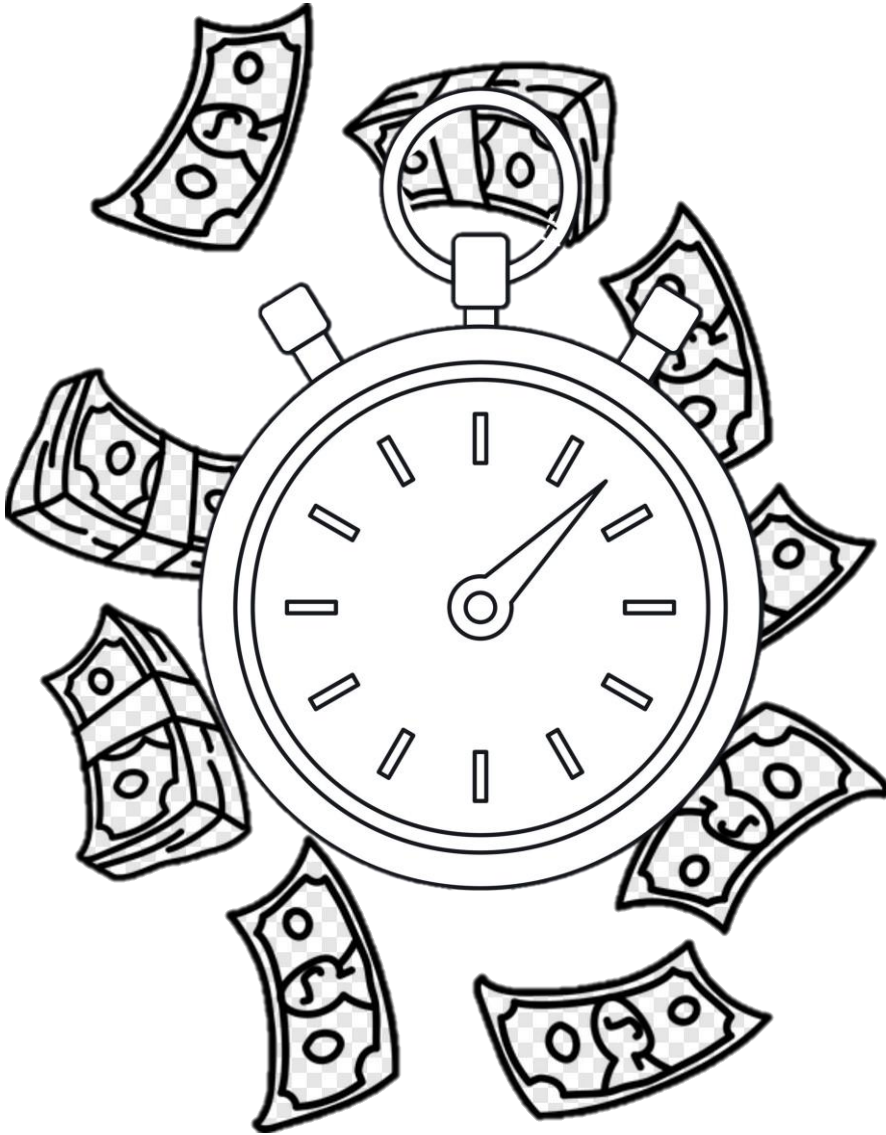
Low educational attainment

Older age (50-64), especially for **females**, stronger effect in **Northern Ireland**

Females with younger children (<5years)

Lone parents, particularly for **females** in **Northern Ireland**

Females living alone in **Northern Ireland**

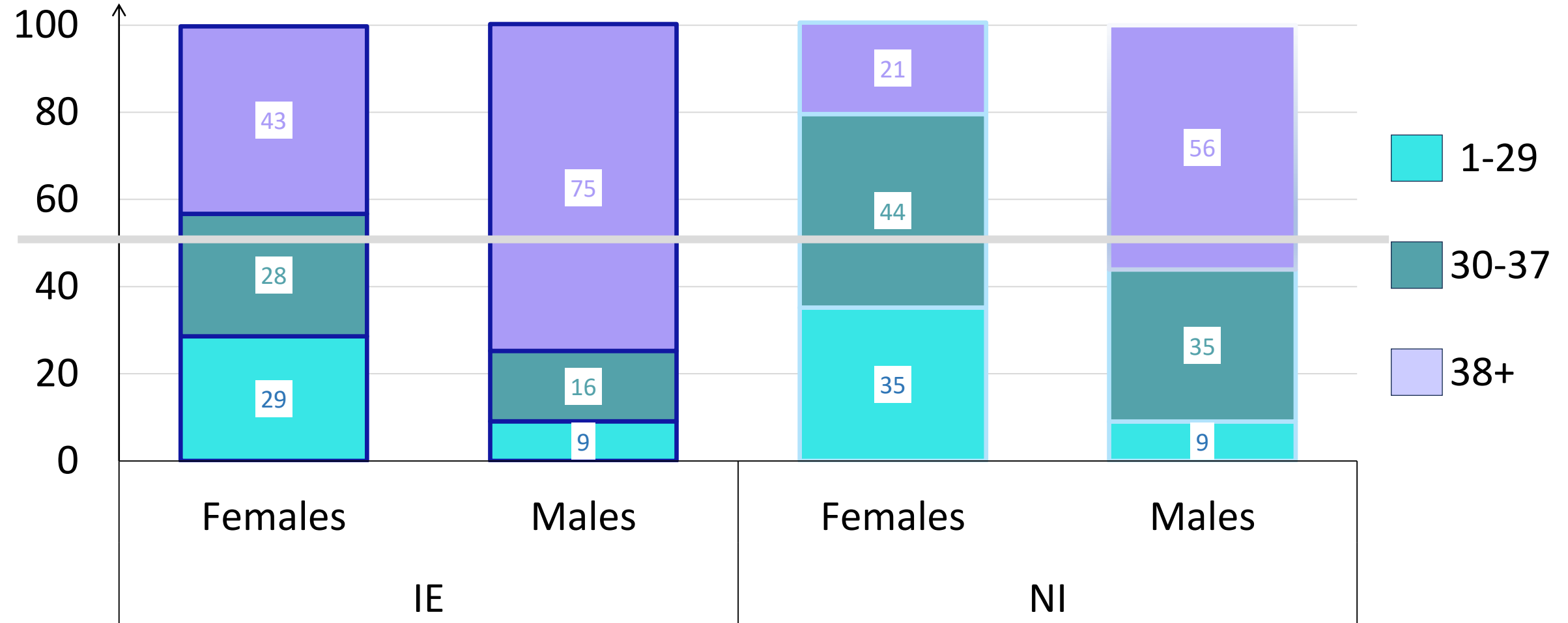


Quality of Work: working time and low pay

Working hours

Females are more likely than males to work part-time.

In Ireland, the employed population works longer hours than in Northern Ireland.



Statistical model: part-time....

Without controls...

... females in NI have a higher probability of working part-time than females in IE

... females are more likely than men to work part-time

With controls....

.... females in NI and in IE have the **same** probability of working part-time

.... males in NI and in IE have the **same** probability of working part-time

.... females are 21pp more likely than men to work part-time

Therefore, with controls there is a **gender effect** but no Jurisdiction effect

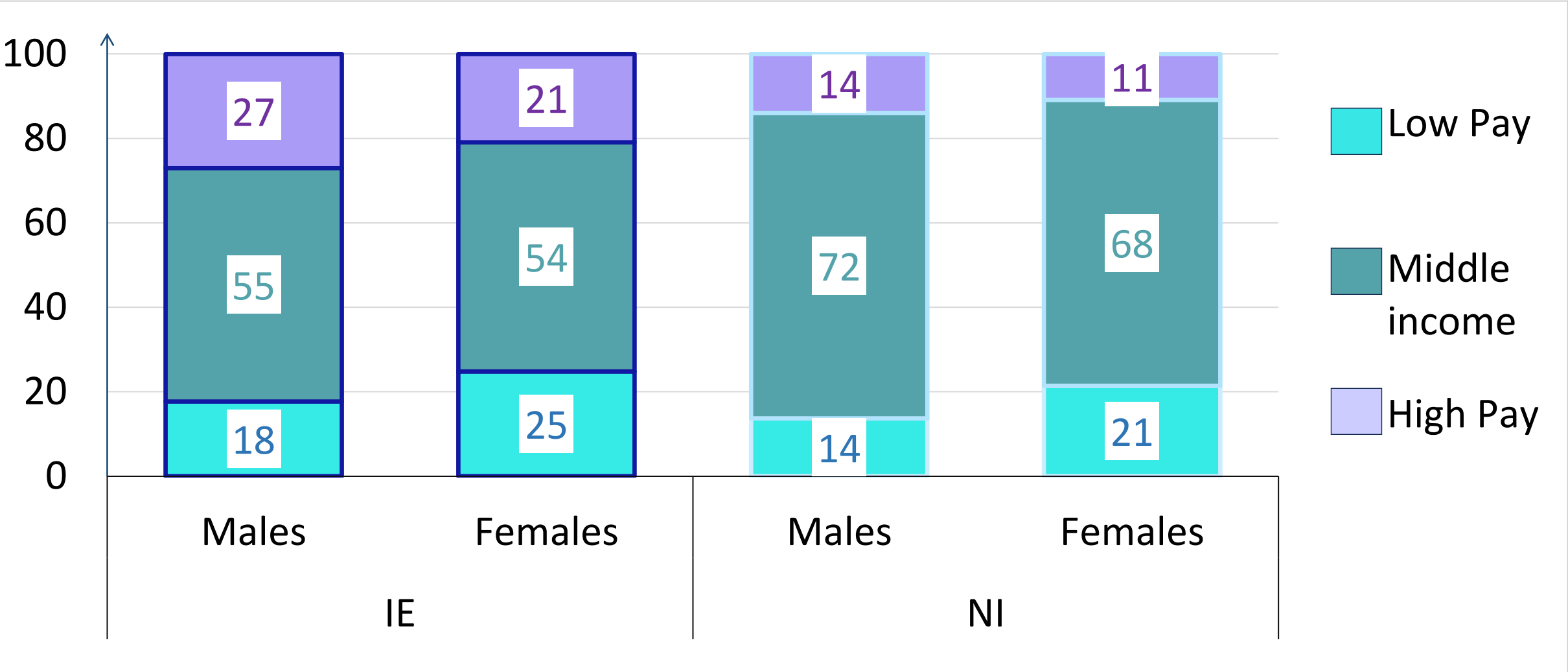
Factors influencing part-time employment

Strongest factors	
Low educational attainment	especially for females, particularly for females in Ireland
Living alone, as a single parents, and in couple with children	
Having multiple children	
Other factors	
Older age (50-64)	
Working in the public sector	
Being self-employed	

Gross hourly wage

Low paid: share of workers earning less than two-thirds of median earnings

High paid: share of workers earning more than one-and-a-half times median earnings



Factors influencing **females** low-paid

Key factors

Low educational attainment

Young age (20-34)

Working part-time

Other factors

Migrant in **Ireland**

Lone mothers in **Ireland**

Working in the private sector

Conclusions and policy implications – education

Low education associated with lower participation (NI+), part-time (IE+), and low-paid

Lower participation and educational qualifications in NI than IE

Age and household characteristics as barriers to participation and full-time work (IE+)

People who have caring responsibilities, they're time-poor... Women who have caring responsibilities can't access lifelong learning, and **lifelong learning** is very important for career progression.

When you lose that moment of **access** [to education], then you have barriers into career pathways.

The **content of courses** is maybe not aligning to either what people want, need or what resonates with particularly marginalised groups. And one of the other things is not only courses, but the lack of access to adult **career guidance** that's fit for purpose.

Conclusions and policy implications – childcare

Having **multiple children** is a barrier to labour force participation and full-time employment (IE+)

Having **younger children** is barrier to labour force participation

Being a **lone mother** is a barrier to participation (NI+), full-time employment (IE+), and low pay (IE)

One of the things that can help people in the workforce is having access to **informal care** rather than formal childcare because it can give you more **flexibility**.

They are put in a position where they care and responsibilities come along and they have to **disengage** from the labour market [because of] the very **high costs** of childcare in Ireland and in Northern Ireland

Commuting to urban centres for women who live in rural areas and how that relates to childcare issues and **access to childcare**.

We need to fundamentally address the issues about care being **valued** and that reflected at a **remuneration**.

Thanks for listening and thanks to all the stakeholders who contributed to the consultation.

Report available to download at

<https://www.esri.ie/publications/gender-and-labour-market-inclusion-on-the-island-of-ireland>

Any questions?