

## Short Report:

# Perceived discrimination in minority and matched non-minority adolescents in Ireland

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## Introduction

Young people belonging to some population sub-groups are more likely to face discrimination than their peers who are not (Grollman, 2012). Children and adolescents are more vulnerable to the negative consequences of discrimination than adults (Schmitt, Branscombe, Postmes, & Garcia, 2014). Experiences of discrimination in adolescence are associated with poor psycho-social adjustment, school adjustment and academic performance (Hood, Bradley, & Ferguson, 2017). The grounds of discrimination include, among others, sexual orientation (Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar, & Azrael, 2009), disability or chronic conditions (Heary, Hennessy, & Swords, 2014), immigrant status or belonging to a racial minority (Mesch, Turjeman, & Fishman, 2008), and belonging to ethnic or cultural minority groups such as Roma (Kolarcik, Geckova, Reijneveld, & Van Dijk, 2015). Young people from certain population sub-groups, or minorities, are not only more likely to be discriminated on the basis of being in that group, but also experience discrimination on other grounds. For instance, sexual minority children in Ireland were significantly more likely than their non-minority peers to report discrimination not only because of their sexual orientation but also because of their place of birth, gender, age, disability status, race, or religion (Költő et al., 2021). However, to our knowledge there have been no comprehensive studies that documented perceived discrimination among adolescents in Ireland. In this short report, we present the rates of perceived discrimination on various grounds in adolescents aged 12-17, participating in the 2018 data collection round of the nationally representative Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study.

The HBSC is a cross-national research study conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office for Europe and runs on a four-year cycle. In 2018, Ireland participated for the sixth time in the HBSC study ([www.nuigalway.ie/hbcs](http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbcs)). The overall aims of the

HBSC study are to gain new insight into, and increase our understanding of young people's health and well-being, health behaviours and their social context. HBSC collects data on key indicators of health, health attitudes, and health behaviours, as well as the context of health for young people. The study is a school-based survey with information collected from students through self-completion questionnaires in classrooms. HBSC Ireland 2018 was funded by the Department of Health. Further information on the HBSC Ireland can be found at [www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc](http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc) or at [www.hbsc.org](http://www.hbsc.org), the International HBSC website.

The most recent HBSC Ireland study was conducted in 2018. The methods employed comply with the International HBSC protocol and are detailed in the national report from the 2018 survey (Költő et al., 2020). This report presents the frequency of perceived discrimination on the basis of (1) where they, their parents or grandparents were born, (2) they are a boy or a girl, (3) their age, (4) their disability, (5) their race, (6) their sexual orientation, (7) their religion, and (8) being member of the Traveller community, by age group, gender, and social class. Frequency of perceived discrimination among minority groups and their non-minority peers are also compared. Minority and non-minority youth were matched by age, gender and social class, to ensure differences in these socio-demographic characteristics do not confound the comparisons.

## Method

This short report presents findings from adolescents aged 12-17 years who answered the items on perceived discrimination ( $5995 \leq n \leq 6034$ ). Frequency of perceived discrimination based on the eight different grounds was assessed with individual Likert-type questions. Children were asked how often they were treated unfairly or negatively because of their place of birth or that of their parents or grandparents, their age, gender, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, religion and membership of the Traveller community<sup>1</sup>. The response options ranged from 'Never' =1 to 'Very often' = 5.

The associations between frequency of perceived discrimination and age group, gender and social class were investigated in the full sample, and are presented below.

To compare the rates of perceived discrimination in minority and non-minority children, an iterative case-control matching technique was applied. In order to eliminate the potential confounding effect

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<sup>1</sup> Children were also asked whether they have ever been discriminated based on any other grounds, and they were provided with a text box to give the reason(s). This basis of discrimination is not included here.

of sociodemographic differences, adolescents who had reported being a member of a minority group ('cases') were matched with a non-minority peer of the same age group, gender and social class ('controls'). First, we tried to identify the non-minority matched peer within the same school class. If there was no suitable match, we searched for a matched control in the same school. If no match was identified within the school, we extended the search to the same county. If no match was found within the county, we continued the search within the respective geographical region. If no match was found within the same region, the case was deemed unmatched.

Four matched datasets were created for adolescents who reported (a) belonging to sexual minority, (b) living with a disability or chronic condition, labelled as 'disability' below (c) first generation immigrant status, labelled 'immigrant' below, and (d) membership of the Traveller community, labelled 'Traveller' below.

The associations between frequency of perceived discrimination and membership of the four minority groups were investigated and are presented below. The associations were tested using Chi-square tests. The threshold of statistical significance was set at  $p < .05$ . To demonstrate the magnitude of the effects, we calculated Cramér's  $V$  effect sizes. Following Cohen's (1988) guidelines, effects  $V \leq .10$  interpreted as negligible,  $V$  between .10 and .29 as small,  $V$  between .30 and .49 as medium and  $V \geq .50$  as large.

## Findings

### *Perceived discrimination based on place of birth of the respondent, their parents or grandparents*

**Table 1** presents the associations between frequency of perceived discrimination on the basis of birthplace of the participant, parents or grandparents and sociodemographic factors in the overall sample. In sum, 25.9% of the children reported ever being discriminated against on the basis of their, their parents' or grandparents' place of birth. Age group was not significantly associated with perceived discrimination. A significant association was found with gender: slightly more boys than girls reported ever being discriminated on this basis, but the effect size was negligible. Similarly, children from lower social class groups were more likely to report discrimination than their peers from higher social classes, but the effect size was negligible.

**Table 2** presents associations between perceived discrimination on the basis of birthplace of the participant, their parents or grandparents and belonging to different minorities. Sexual minority children were significantly more likely to report discrimination on the basis of birthplace than their non-minority peers, but the effect size was small. Discrimination was not significantly associated

with living with a disability or chronic condition, or being a member of the Traveller community. Immigrant children were more likely than their non-immigrant peers to report ever being discriminated on the basis of their birthplace or that of their parents or grandparents and the effect size was medium.

## Perceived discrimination on the basis of place of birth of the respondent, their parents or grandparents

**Table 1.** Rates of perceived discrimination on the basis of place of birth of self, parent or grandparent across sociodemographic groups in the overall sample

	Never % (n)	Hardly ever % (n)	Sometimes % (n)	Often % (n)	Very often % (n)	n	p	V
All	74.1% (4471)	13.9% (841)	7.9% (477)	2.2% (135)	1.8% (108)	6032		
Age group							.929	.012
12-14	74.7% (1639)	13.5% (296)	7.9% (174)	2.2% (49)	1.7% (37)	2195		
15-17	73.8% (2832)	14.2% (545)	7.9% (303)	2.2% (86)	1.9% (71)	3837		
Gender							<b>.013</b>	<b>.046</b>
Boy	72.3% (1980)	14.9% (408)	8.3% (226)	2.7% (75)	1.8% (50)	2739		
Girl	75.8% (2475)	13.1% (428)	7.5% (246)	1.8% (59)	1.7% (56)	3264		
Social class							<b>.004</b>	<b>.046</b>
1-2	76.5% (2244)	12.9% (379)	7.3% (214)	2.1% (61)	1.2% (36)	2934		
3-4	73.6% (1341)	14.7% (268)	7.7% (140)	2.3% (42)	1.6% (30)	1821		
5-6	69.2% (382)	15.2% (84)	9.4% (52)	3.1% (17)	3.1% (17)	552		

Note. Sample sizes across sociodemographic groups may differ due to missing responses. Significant associations ( $p < .05$ ) are highlighted in bold.

**Table 2.** Rates of perceived discrimination on the basis of place of birth of self, parent or grandparent across cases and controls in the matched subsamples

	Never % (n)	Hardly ever % (n)	Sometimes % (n)	Often % (n)	Very often % (n)	n	p	V
Sexual minority							<b>.011</b>	<b>.112</b>
Sexual minority	67.6% (352)	17.3% (90)	10.0% (52)	3.3% (17)	1.9% (10)	521		
Non-minority	76.4% (398)	12.5% (65)	7.5% (39)	1.3% (7)	2.3% (12)	521		
Disability							.207	.047
Disability	71.4% (938)	14.9% (196)	8.7% (114)	2.7% (35)	2.3% (30)	1313		
No disability	75.0% (985)	14.2% (187)	6.9% (91)	2.1% (27)	1.8% (23)	1313		
Immigrant							<b>&lt; .001</b>	<b>.394</b>
Immigrant	47.8% (400)	25.4% (213)	18.2% (152)	5.1% (43)	3.5% (29)	837		
Non-immigrant	83.8% (701)	11.8% (99)	3.0% (25)	0.5% (4)	1.0% (8)	837		
Traveller							.097	.185
Traveller	57.4% (66)	20.0% (23)	14.8% (17)	3.5% (4)	4.3% (5)	115		
Non-Traveller	74.8% (86)	11.3% (13)	9.6% (11)	1.7% (2)	2.6% (3)	115		

Note. Sample sizes across matched groups differ due to the different size of minority groups. Significant associations ( $p < .05$ ) are highlighted in bold.

### *Perceived discrimination based on gender*

**Table 3** presents the associations between frequency of perceived discrimination on the basis of the respondent's gender in the overall sample. In sum, 38.9% of the children reported ever being discriminated against on the basis of their gender. Age group was significantly associated with perceived discrimination, with older children more likely to report discrimination, but the effect was negligible. A significant association was found with gender: more girls than boys reported ever being discriminated on this basis, with a medium effect size. Discrimination on the basis of gender was not significantly associated with social class.

**Table 4** presents associations between perceived discrimination on the basis of gender and belonging to different minorities. Sexual minority children were significantly more likely to report discrimination on the basis of gender, but the effect size was small. Children with disabilities and chronic conditions and immigrant children were also significantly more likely to report discrimination on the basis of their gender than their non-minority counterparts, but the effect sizes were negligible. Discrimination on the basis of gender was not significantly associated with Traveller status.

### Perceived discrimination on the basis on the respondent's gender

**Table 3.** Rates of perceived discrimination on the basis of gender in the overall sample

	Never % (n)	Hardly ever % (n)	Sometimes % (n)	Often % (n)	Very often % (n)	n	p	V
All	61.1% (3685)	19.0% (1146)	825 (13.7%)	4.2% (254)	2.1% (124)	6034		
Age group							<b>&lt; .001</b>	<b>.074</b>
12-14	65.5% (1441)	17.4% (383)	11.1% (245)	4.1% (91)	1.8% (39)	2199		
15-17	58.5% (2244)	19.9% (763)	15.1% (580)	4.3% (163)	2.2% (85)	3835		
Gender							<b>&lt; .001</b>	<b>.361</b>
Boy	80.0% (2191)	11.7% (321)	5.5% (152)	1.6% (43)	1.2% (32)	2739		
Girl	45.2% (1477)	25.2% (822)	20.5% (669)	6.4% (210)	2.7% (89)	3267		
Social class							.089	.036
1-2	58.9% (1728)	20.5% (602)	14.5% (426)	4.2% (124)	1.8% (54)	2934		
3-4	62.5% (1144)	17.7% (324)	13.1% (239)	4.5% (82)	2.2% (40)	1829		
5-6	63.3% (348)	18.9% (104)	11.8% (65)	3.5% (19)	2.5% (14)	550		

Note. Sample sizes across sociodemographic groups may differ due to missing responses. Significant associations ( $p < .05$ ) are highlighted in bold.

**Table 4.** Rates of perceived discrimination on the basis of gender across cases and controls in the matched subsamples

	Never % (n)	Hardly ever % (n)	Sometimes % (n)	Often % (n)	Very often % (n)	n	p	V
Sexual minority							<b>&lt; .001</b>	<b>.160</b>
Sexual minority	42.1% (219)	22.3% (116)	21.7% (113)	8.7% (45)	5.2% (27)	520		
Non-minority	54.0% (281)	23.7% (123)	15.6% (81)	3.7% (19)	3.1% (16)	520		
Disability							<b>.001</b>	<b>.085</b>
Disability	57.5% (754)	19.1% (251)	14.2% (186)	6.3% (82)	3.0% (39)	1312		
No disability	63.3% (830)	17.9% (235)	13.6% (178)	3.4% (44)	1.9% (25)	1312		
Immigrant							<b>.032</b>	<b>.079</b>
Immigrant	63.4% (531)	18.6% (156)	10.9% (91)	5.1% (43)	1.9% (16)	837		
Non-immigrant	61.1% (511)	19.5% (163)	14.9% (125)	3.5% (29)	1.1% (9)	837		
Traveller							.448	.126
Traveller	57.3% (67)	19.7% (23)	14.5% (17)	3.4% (4)	5.1% (6)	117		
Non-Traveller	65.8% (77)	19.7% (23)	10.3% (12)	2.6% (3)	1.7% (2)	117		

Note. Sample sizes across matched groups differ due to the different size of minority groups. Significant associations ( $p < .05$ ) are highlighted in bold.

### *Perceived discrimination based on age*

**Table 5** presents the associations between frequency of perceived discrimination on the basis of the respondent's age in the overall sample. In sum, 47.3% of the children reported ever being discriminated against on the basis of their age. Age group was significantly associated with perceived discrimination, with older children more likely to report discrimination, but the effect was negligible. A significant association was found with gender: more girls than boys reported ever being discriminated on this basis, with a medium effect size. Discrimination on the basis of age was not significantly associated with social class.

**Table 6** presents associations between perceived discrimination on the basis of age and belonging to different minorities. Sexual minority children were significantly more likely to report discrimination on the basis of age, but the effect size was small. Children living with disabilities or chronic conditions were also significantly more likely to report discrimination on the basis of their age than their non-minority counterparts, but the effect size was negligible. Discrimination on the basis of age was not significantly associated with immigrant or Traveller status.

## Perceived discrimination on the basis on the respondent's age

**Table 5.** Rates of perceived discrimination on the basis of age in the overall sample

	Never % (n)	Hardly ever % (n)	Sometimes % (n)	Often % (n)	Very often % (n)	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
<b>All</b>	52.7% (3173)	19.3% (1160)	18.5% (1113)	7.1% (425)	2.5% (153)	6024		
<b>Age group</b>							<b>&lt; .001</b>	<b>.069</b>
12-14	56.8% (1248)	18.8% (412)	16.1% (354)	5.9% (130)	2.4% (53)	2197		
15-17	50.3% (1925)	19.5% (748)	19.8% (759)	7.7% (295)	2.6% (100)	3827		
<b>Gender</b>							<b>&lt; .001</b>	<b>.254</b>
Boy	66.0% (1802)	16.5% (451)	11.7% (320)	4.2% (114)	1.6% (44)	2731		
Girl	41.5% (1356)	21.6% (704)	24.2% (789)	9.5% (309)	3.2% (106)	3264		
<b>Social class</b>							.151	.034
1-2	51.2% (1499)	20.5% (599)	19.1% (559)	7.2% (211)	2.0% (60)	2928		
3-4	53.9% (983)	18.1% (331)	18.0% (329)	7.4% (135)	2.6% (47)	1825		
5-6	53.7% (297)	19.7% (109)	18.1% (100)	5.2% (29)	3.3% (18)	553		

**Table 6.** Rates of perceived discrimination on the basis of age across cases and controls in the matched subsamples

	Never % (n)	Hardly ever % (n)	Sometimes % (n)	Often % (n)	Very often % (n)	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
<b>Sexual minority</b>							<b>&lt;.000</b>	<b>.161</b>
Sexual minority	37.3% (194)	22.3% (116)	22.9% (119)	11.5% (60)	6.0% (31)	520		
Non-minority	51.5% (268)	20.0% (104)	15.0% (78)	10.6% (55)	2.9% (15)	520		
<b>Disability</b>							<b>.032</b>	<b>.063</b>
Disability	50.1% (656)	17.9% (234)	19.6% (256)	8.6% (113)	3.8% (50)	1309		
No disability	54.4% (712)	18.8% (246)	17.4% (228)	7.0% (91)	2.4% (32)	1309		
<b>Immigrant</b>							.862	.028
Immigrant	54.5% (454)	19.6% (163)	16.4% (137)	6.6% (55)	2.9% (24)	833		
Non-immigrant	54.0% (450)	20.0% (167)	17.5% (146)	6.2% (52)	2.2% (18)	833		
<b>Traveller</b>							.446	.127
Traveller	51.3% (59)	20.9% (24)	15.7% (18)	6.1% (7)	6.1% (7)	115		
Non-Traveller	61.7% (71)	18.3% (21)	11.3% (13)	6.1% (7)	2.6% (3)	115		

Note. Sample sizes across matched groups differ due to the different size of minority groups. Significant associations ( $p < .05$ ) are highlighted in bold.

### *Perceived discrimination based on disability*

**Table 7** presents the associations between frequency of perceived discrimination on the basis of the respondent's disability in the overall sample. In sum, 9.7% of the children reported ever being discriminated against on the basis of their disability. Age group was not significantly associated with perceived discrimination. A significant association was found with gender: more boys than girls reported ever being discriminated on this basis, but the effect size was negligible. Discrimination on the basis of disability was not significantly associated with social class.

**Table 8** presents associations between perceived discrimination on the basis of disability and belonging to different minorities. Sexual minority was not significantly associated with discrimination on the basis of disability. Children with disabilities or chronic conditions were significantly more likely to report discrimination on the basis of their disability than their non-minority counterparts, but the effect size was small. Discrimination on the basis of disability was not significantly associated with immigrant status. Children belonging to the Traveller community were significantly more likely than their non-Traveller counterparts to be discriminated based on disability, with a small effect size.

## Perceived discrimination on the basis on the respondent's disability

**Table 7.** Rates of perceived discrimination on the basis of disability in the overall sample

	Never % (n)	Hardly ever % (n)	Sometimes % (n)	Often % (n)	Very often % (n)	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
All	90.3% (5415)	4.3% (256)	3.5% (208)	0.9% (55)	1.0% (61)	5995		
<b>Age group</b>								
12-14	90.0% (1968)	4.3% (95)	3.6% (79)	1.0% (22)	1.1% (23)	2187	.960	.010
15-17	90.5% (3447)	4.2% (161)	3.4% (129)	0.9% (33)	1.0% (38)	3808		
<b>Gender</b>							<b>.043</b>	<b>.041</b>
Boy	89.2% (2427)	5.0% (135)	3.7% (101)	0.9% (24)	1.2% (33)	2720		
Girl	91.3% (2964)	3.7% (120)	3.2% (105)	1.0% (31)	0.8% (26)	3246		
<b>Social class</b>							.207	.032
1-2	91.8% (2860)	3.8% (112)	2.9% (84)	0.8% (22)	0.8% (22)	2920		
3-4	90.5% (1643)	4.2% (76)	3.6% (66)	0.8% (15)	0.9% (16)	1816		
5-6	88.5% (486)	4.6% (25)	4.2% (23)	0.9% (5)	1.8% (10)	549		

Note. Sample sizes across sociodemographic groups may differ due to missing responses. Significant associations ( $p < .05$ ) are highlighted in bold.

**Table 8.** Rates of perceived discrimination on the basis of disability across cases and controls in the matched subsamples

	Never % (n)	Hardly ever % (n)	Sometimes % (n)	Often % (n)	Very often % (n)	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
<b>Sexual minority</b>							.051	.096
Sexual minority	86.5% (442)	4.9% (25)	5.1% (26)	2.0% (10)	1.6% (8)	511		
Non-minority	91.2% (466)	4.5% (23)	2.2% (11)	0.8% (4)	1.4% (7)	511		
<b>Disability</b>							<b>&lt; .001</b>	<b>.175</b>
Disability	81.7% (1057)	7.0% (90)	6.9% (89)	2.5% (32)	1.9% (25)	1293		
No disability	93.2% (1205)	2.9% (38)	2.8% (36)	0.6% (8)	0.5% (6)	1293		
<b>Immigrant</b>							.326	.053
Immigrant	89.1% (735)	4.5% (37)	4.0% (33)	1.2% (10)	1.2% (10)	825		
Non-immigrant	92.0% (759)	3.8% (31)	2.7% (22)	0.7% (6)	0.8% (7)	825		
<b>Traveller</b>							<b>.004</b>	<b>.263</b>
Traveller	77.0% (87)	9.7% (11)	4.4% (5)	1.8% (2)	7.1% (8)	113		
Non-Traveller	93.8% (106)	1.8% (2)	3.5% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.9% (1)	113		

Note. Sample sizes across matched groups differ due to the different size of minority groups. Significant associations ( $p < .05$ ) are highlighted in bold.

### *Perceived discrimination based on race*

**Table 9** presents the associations between frequency of perceived discrimination on the basis of the respondent's race in the overall sample. In sum, 14.2% of the children reported ever being discriminated against on the basis of their race. Age group, gender and social class were not significantly associated with perceived discrimination on the basis of the respondent's race.

**Table 10** presents associations between perceived discrimination on the basis of race and belonging to different minorities. Children identifying as sexual minority, and those living with disability or chronic condition did not report significantly different rates discrimination on the basis of race than their matched non-minority peers. Discrimination on the basis of race was significantly associated with immigrant status: immigrant children were more likely to report discrimination on this basis than their matched counterparts, with a medium effect size. Discrimination on the basis of race was significantly associated with being a member of the Traveller community: Traveller children were more likely to report discrimination on this basis than non-Traveller children, with a small effect size.

## Perceived discrimination on the basis on the respondent's race

**Table 9.** Rates of perceived discrimination on the basis of race in the overall sample

	Never % (n)	Hardly ever % (n)	Sometimes % (n)	Often % (n)	Very often % (n)	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
All	85.8% (5159)	6.1% (365)	4.7% (281)	1.8% (111)	1.6% (99)	6015		
Age group							<b>.473</b>	<b>.024</b>
12-14	84.8% (1857)	6.6% (144)	5.1% (112)	1.8% (39)	1.7% (38)	2190		
15-17	86.3% (3302)	5.8% (221)	4.4% (169)	1.9% (72)	1.6% (61)	3825		
Gender							<b>.734</b>	<b>.018</b>
Boy	85.4% (2330)	6.3% (173)	4.7% (127)	1.8% (48)	1.8% (49)	2727		
Girl	86.1% (2806)	5.8% (189)	4.7% (153)	1.9% (63)	1.5% (48)	3259		
Social class							<b>.221</b>	<b>.032</b>
1-2	87.0% (2550)	5.6% (163)	4.7% (137)	1.5% (45)	1.2% (35)	2930		
3-4	87.3% (1593)	5.6% (103)	3.3% (60)	1.9% (35)	1.8% (33)	1824		
5-6	85.8% (470)	6.0% (33)	4.9% (27)	1.5% (8)	1.8% (10)	548		

Note. Sample sizes across sociodemographic groups may differ due to missing responses. Significant associations ( $p < .05$ ) are highlighted in bold.

**Table 10.** Rates of perceived discrimination on the basis of race across cases and controls in the matched subsamples

	Never % (n)	Hardly ever % (n)	Sometimes % (n)	Often % (n)	Very often % (n)	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
Sexual minority							<b>.203</b>	<b>.076</b>
Sexual minority	81.0% (421)	6.3% (33)	6.5% (34)	3.5% (18)	2.7% (14)	520		
Non-minority	85.2% (443)	6.0% (31)	5.6% (29)	1.5% (8)	1.7% (9)	520		
Disability							<b>.273</b>	<b>.044</b>
Disability	84.6% (1099)	6.4% (83)	4.8% (63)	1.8% (23)	2.4% (31)	1299		
No disability	86.6% (1125)	6.0% (78)	4.0% (52)	2.0% (26)	1.4% (18)	1299		
Immigrant							<b>&lt; .001</b>	<b>.331</b>
Immigrant	66.7% (555)	14.3% (119)	12.1% (101)	3.4% (28)	3.5% (29)	832		
Non-immigrant	93.1% (775)	3.6% (30)	2.0% (17)	0.5% (4)	0.7% (6)	832		
Traveller							<b>.001</b>	<b>.296</b>
Traveller	61.9% (70)	15.9% (18)	8.0% (9)	4.4% (5)	9.7% (11)	113		
Non-Traveller	85.8% (97)	5.3% (6)	5.3% (6)	2.7% (3)	0.9% (1)	113		

Note. Sample sizes across matched groups differ due to the different size of minority groups. Significant associations ( $p < .05$ ) are highlighted in bold.

### *Perceived discrimination based on sexual orientation*

**Table 11** presents the associations between frequency of perceived discrimination on the basis of the respondent's sexual orientation in the overall sample. In sum, 11% of the children reported ever being discriminated against on the basis of their sexual orientation. Age group was not significantly associated with perceived discrimination on this basis. There was a significant association with gender: girls were more likely than boys to report being discriminated against on the basis of their sexual orientation, but the effect size was negligible. No significant association was found between discrimination on this basis and social class.

**Table 12** presents associations between perceived discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and belonging to different minorities. Sexual minority status was significantly associated with discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation: minority children were more likely to report being discriminated against, with a large effect size. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation was not significantly associated with having a disability or chronic condition. A significant association was found with immigrant status: immigrant children were more likely to be discriminated against on the basis of their sexual orientation, but the effect was negligible. Traveller children were also more likely to report discrimination on this basis than non-Traveller children, with a small effect size.

## Perceived discrimination on the basis on the respondent's sexual orientation

**Table 11.** Rates of perceived discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the overall sample

	Never % (n)	Hardly ever % (n)	Sometimes % (n)	Often % (n)	Very often % (n)	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
All	89.0% (5350)	4.7% (283)	3.6% (214)	1.3% (79)	1.4% (85)	6011		
Age group							.683	.020
12-14	88.2% (1929)	5.0% (109)	3.9% (86)	1.4% (30)	1.5% (32)	2186		
15-17	89.4% (3421)	4.5% (174)	3.3% (128)	1.3% (49)	1.4% (53)	3825		
Gender							<b>&lt; .001</b>	<b>.061</b>
Boy	90.5% (2471)	3.8% (103)	2.8% (77)	1.2% (32)	1.7% (46)	2729		
Girl	87.9% (2859)	5.5% (178)	4.1% (134)	1.4% (46)	1.1% (35)	3252		
Social class							.099	.036
1-2	90.3% (2643)	4.4% (129)	3.3% (97)	1.1% (33)	0.9% (25)	2927		
3-4	88.6% (1610)	4.9% (89)	3.3% (60)	1.4% (26)	1.8% (33)	1818		
5-6	89.6% (493)	4.2% (23)	3.5% (19)	0.7% (4)	2.0% (11)	550		

Note. Sample sizes across sociodemographic groups may differ due to missing responses. Significant associations ( $p < .05$ ) are highlighted in bold.

**Table 12.** Rates of perceived discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation across cases and controls in the matched subsamples

	Never % (n)	Hardly ever % (n)	Sometimes % (n)	Often % (n)	Very often % (n)	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
Sexual minority							<b>&lt; .001</b>	<b>.526</b>
Sexual minority	44.0% (231)	18.3% (96)	20.4% (107)	8.8% (46)	8.6% (45)	525		
Non-minority	92.8% (487)	3.6% (19)	1.5% (8)	1.0% (5)	1.1% (6)	525		
Disability							.054	.060
Disability	86.0% (1120)	5.7% (74)	4.5% (58)	1.7% (22)	2.2% (28)	1302		
No disability	89.7% (1168)	4.6% (60)	3.1% (41)	1.3% (17)	1.2% (16)	1302		
Immigrant							<b>.010</b>	<b>.089</b>
Immigrant	86.7% (723)	4.9% (41)	3.6% (30)	2.5% (21)	2.3% (19)	834		
Non-immigrant	91.0% (759)	4.8% (40)	2.2% (18)	1.1% (9)	1.0% (8)	834		
Traveller							<b>.006</b>	<b>.251</b>
Traveller	73.0% (84)	8.7% (10)	7.8% (9)	2.6% (3)	7.8% (9)	115		
Non-Traveller	91.3% (105)	3.5% (4)	2.6% (3)	1.7% (2)	0.9% (1)	115		

Note. Sample sizes across matched groups differ due to the different size of minority groups. Significant associations ( $p < .05$ ) are highlighted in bold.

### *Perceived discrimination based on religion*

**Table 13** presents the associations between frequency of perceived discrimination on the basis of the respondent's religion in the overall sample. In sum, 12.3% of the children reported ever being discriminated against on the basis of their religion. Age group, gender and social class were not significantly associated with perceived discrimination on the basis of the respondent's race.

**Table 14** presents associations between perceived discrimination on the basis of religion and belonging to different minorities. Sexual minority status was significantly associated with discrimination on the basis of religion: minority children were more likely to report being discriminated against on this basis, with a small effect size. Discrimination on the basis of religion was not significantly associated with having a disability or chronic condition. A significant association was found with immigrant status: immigrant children were more likely to be discriminated against on the basis of their religion, with a small effect size. No significant association was detected between Traveller status and discrimination on the basis of religion.

## Perceived discrimination on the basis on the respondent's religion

**Table 13.** Rates of perceived discrimination on the basis of religion in the overall sample

	Never % (n)	Hardly ever % (n)	Sometimes % (n)	Often % (n)	Very often % (n)	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
All	87.7% (5277)	6.2% (373)	3.7% (225)	1.1% (68)	1.3% (77)	6020		
Age group							<b>.596</b>	<b>.021</b>
12-14	88.1% (1933)	6.1% (133)	3.4% (74)	1.3% (29)	1.2% (26)	2195		
15-17	87.4% (3344)	6.3% (240)	3.9% (151)	1.0% (39)	1.3% (51)	3825		
Gender							<b>.458</b>	<b>.025</b>
Boy	88.0% (2400)	5.9% (162)	3.6% (98)	1.0% (27)	1.5% (40)	2727		
Girl	87.4% (2853)	6.4% (208)	3.9% (127)	1.3% (41)	1.1% (35)	3264		
Social class							<b>.550</b>	<b>.025</b>
1-2	87.7% (2569)	6.6% (194)	3.6% (106)	1.2% (36)	0.8% (23)	2928		
3-4	89.3% (1626)	5.4% (98)	3.4% (61)	0.9% (16)	1.0% (19)	1820		
5-6	88.2% (486)	6.5% (36)	2.9% (16)	1.1% (6)	1.3% (7)	551		

Note. Sample sizes across sociodemographic groups may differ due to missing responses. Significant associations ( $p < .05$ ) are highlighted in bold.

**Table 14.** Rates of perceived discrimination on the basis of religion across cases and controls in the matched subsamples

	Never % (n)	Hardly ever % (n)	Sometimes % (n)	Often % (n)	Very often % (n)	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
Sexual minority							<b>.007</b>	<b>.116</b>
Sexual minority	79.8% (414)	10.0% (52)	6.2% (32)	2.1% (11)	1.9% (10)	519		
Non-minority	87.7% (455)	5.2% (27)	4.2% (22)	1.0% (5)	1.9% (10)	519		
Disability							<b>.055</b>	<b>.060</b>
Disability	84.9% (1106)	7.2% (94)	4.4% (57)	1.6% (21)	1.9% (25)	1303		
No disability	88.4% (1152)	5.4% (71)	4.1% (53)	0.9% (12)	1.2% (15)	1303		
Immigrant							<b>&lt;.001</b>	<b>.163</b>
Immigrant	78.9% (658)	9.7% (81)	7.1% (59)	2.3% (19)	2.0% (17)	834		
Non-immigrant	90.3% (753)	5.6% (47)	2.5% (21)	0.7% (6)	0.8% (7)	834		
Traveller							<b>.141</b>	<b>.173</b>
Traveller	81.0% (94)	6.9% (8)	4.3% (5)	1.7% (2)	6.0% (7)	116		
Non-Traveller	88.8% (103)	3.4% (4)	6.0% (7)	0.9% (1)	0.9% (1)	116		

Note. Sample sizes across matched groups differ due to the different size of minority groups. Significant associations ( $p < .05$ ) are highlighted in bold.

### *Perceived discrimination based on membership of the Traveller community*

**Table 15** presents the associations between frequency of perceived discrimination on the basis of the respondent's membership of the Traveller community. In sum, 3.2% of the children reported ever being discriminated against on the basis of membership of the Traveller community. Age group was not significantly associated with perceived discrimination on the basis of the respondent's membership of the Traveller community. Boys were more likely to be discriminated on this basis than girls, but the effect size was negligible. No significant association was found between discrimination based on this basis and social class.

**Table 16** presents associations between perceived discrimination on the basis of membership of the Traveller community and belonging to different minorities. Children identifying as sexual minority, immigrant children and those living with disability or chronic condition did not report significantly different rates discrimination on the basis of membership of the Traveller community than their matched peers. Membership of the Traveller community was significantly associated with discrimination: children belonging to the Traveller community were more likely to report discrimination due to their Traveller community membership than their non-Traveller counterparts, with a large effect size.

## Perceived discrimination on the basis on the respondent's membership of the Traveller community

**Table 15.** Rates of perceived discrimination on the basis of membership of the Traveller community in the overall sample

	Never % (n)	Hardly ever % (n)	Sometimes % (n)	Often % (n)	Very often % (n)	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
All	96.8% (5716)	1.3% (75)	0.9% (51)	0.4% (21)	0.7% (41)	5904		
Age group							.066	.039
12-14	96.1% (2508)	1.8% (38)	0.9% (19)	0.3% (7)	0.9% (19)	2141		
15-17	97.2% (3658)	1.0% (37)	0.9% (32)	0.4% (14)	0.6% (22)	3763		
Gender							<b>.006</b>	<b>.050</b>
Boy	96.0% (2586)	1.6% (43)	1.0% (27)	0.4% (11)	1.0% (26)	2693		
Girl	97.6% (3107)	0.9% (29)	0.8% (24)	0.3% (9)	0.4% (13)	3182		
Social class							.173	.033
1-2	98.0% (2803)	1.0% (28)	0.6% (17)	0.2% (5)	0.3% (8)	2861		
3-4	97.1% (1736)	1.4% (25)	0.7% (12)	0.3% (5)	0.5% (9)	1787		
5-6	96.9% (529)	1.1% (6)	0.9% (5)	0.0% (0)	1.1% (6)	546		

Note. Sample sizes across sociodemographic groups may differ due to missing responses. Significant associations ( $p < .05$ ) are highlighted in bold.

**Table 16.** Rates of perceived discrimination on the basis of membership of the Traveller community across cases and controls in the matched subsamples

	Never % (n)	Hardly ever % (n)	Sometimes % (n)	Often % (n)	Very often % (n)	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
Sexual minority							.173	.080
Sexual minority	96.2% (479)	0.6% (3)	1.6% (8)	0.2% (1)	1.4% (7)	498		
Non-minority	97.0% (483)	1.4% (7)	0.4% (2)	0.4% (2)	0.8% (4)	498		
Disability							.531	.036
Disability	95.9% (1203)	1.8% (22)	1.0% (13)	0.4% (5)	1.0% (12)	1255		
No disability	96.7% (1214)	1.0% (12)	1.0% (12)	0.5% (6)	0.9% (11)	1255		
Immigrant							.417	.050
Immigrant	94.5% (744)	2.5% (20)	1.1% (9)	0.6% (5)	1.1% (9)	787		
Non-immigrant	96.4% (759)	1.7% (13)	0.6% (5)	0.6% (5)	0.6% (5)	787		
Traveller							<b>&lt;.001</b>	<b>.520</b>
Traveller	48.7% (55)	10.6% (12)	13.3% (15)	8.8% (10)	18.6% (21)	113		
Non-Traveller	94.7% (107)	3.5% (4)	0.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.9% (1)	113		

Note. Sample sizes across matched groups differ due to the different size of minority groups. Significant associations ( $p < .05$ ) are highlighted in bold.

## Discussion

To our knowledge, this is the first comprehensive report of perceived discrimination among Irish schoolchildren, in a nationally representative sample of children aged 12-17 as well as in four minority groups: sexual minority children, children with a disability or chronic condition, first-generation immigrant children, and children belonging to the Traveller community. Children belonging to the four minority groups were compared to a non-minority sample matched for age, gender, social class and location.

The general pattern of the results show that perceived discrimination was associated with socio-demographic characteristics, especially gender, although many of these effects had negligible or low effect sizes. Girls were more likely than boys to report being discriminated against based on six of the eight grounds, with gender and age being particularly salient basis for discrimination against them. This pattern highlights the power imbalance and the gender injustice that pervades Irish society (Mooney Cotter, 2016).

In minority children, we also observed multiple discrimination, not only based on the grounds on their own minority (e.g. Travellers being discriminated on the basis of membership of the Traveller community) but on several other grounds. Sexual minority children were more likely than their peers to report discrimination based on not only their sexual orientation, but also on the basis of place of birth, gender, age and religion. In addition to being discriminated against due to disability, children with a disability or chronic condition were more likely than their matched peers to report discrimination based on gender and age. First generation immigrant children, in addition to being discriminated due to their (or their ascendants') place of birth, were also more likely than non-immigrant children to report discrimination based on their gender, race, sexual orientation and religion. Traveller children, on the top of being discriminated against based on their Traveller status, were also more likely than non-travellers to report discrimination based on their disability and race. This phenomenon reflects a 'negative halo effect', meaning that one characteristic seen as negative or undesirable sheds a negative light on the whole person (Költő et al., 2021). The results presented here mark the vulnerability of girls and minority children to being discriminated against.

We believe that the study is strengthened by the nationally representative sample and the established HBSC methodology, which has guided the HBSC Ireland Team's work since 1997 (Gavin, Költő, Kelly, Molcho, & Nic Gabhainn, 2021). A limitation to the study, however, is that the matched non-minority groups are not cleaned for other minorities (i.e. a non-immigrant child selected as a control for a matched immigrant child could be sexual minority or have a disability or chronic

condition). Such data cleaning would probably would have resulted in even lower subsample sizes, and less stable analysis outcomes.

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