

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Equality for **all**



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Outline

- **Role of the Equality Commission**
- **Fair Employment legislation in Northern Ireland**
- **Positive/affirmative action in religion**
- **Impact on employment composition**
- **Lessons from Northern Ireland experience**



Background to the Fair Employment Legislation

- **Inequalities in Employment**
- **Inequalities in Housing**
- **Voting rights**
- **Education**
- **The Civil unrest**
- **Political pressure to bring about change**



The Fair Employment (NI) Act 1976

- **The Fair Employment Agency**
- **Complaints of discrimination**
- **Investigations**
- **Declaration of Principle and Intent**
- **SACHR Review 1987**



1989 Act: Pro Active Practice of Equality on Grounds of Religious Belief and Political Opinion

- **Registration**
- **Statutory monitoring**
- **Regular reviews of employment policies practices and procedures**
- **Fair participation**
- **Affirmative Action**
- **Goals and timetables**



Monitoring

- **Annual Return By standard occupational classification, gender and community background (religion)**
- **No legal obligation on individuals to complete questionnaire**
- **Very high levels of compliance**



Monitoring

Who should be monitored?

- **Employees (part-time and full-time)**
- **Applicants**
- **Appointees**
- **Apprentices**
- **Public Authorities & 250 + employers**
 - **promotees**
 - **leavers**



Article 55 Reviews

- **Review of Monitoring Data**
- **Review of employment practices**
- **Assessment of “fair participation”**
- **Role of Employer/Equality Commission**



Positive/Affirmative Action

Mechanism for change. Action designed to secure fair participation in employment by members of the Protestant or Roman Catholic community by means including

- Adopting practices encouraging such participation**
- Modifying or abandoning practices that have or may have the effect of restricting discouraging such participation.**



Affirmative Action

- **Encouraging Applications**
- **Redundancy**
- **Targeted Training** (Located in specific area but open to both communities)
- **Recruitment from those not in employment**
- **Religion Specific Training**

(Section 76 of FETO 1999) Permission needed from Equality Commission).

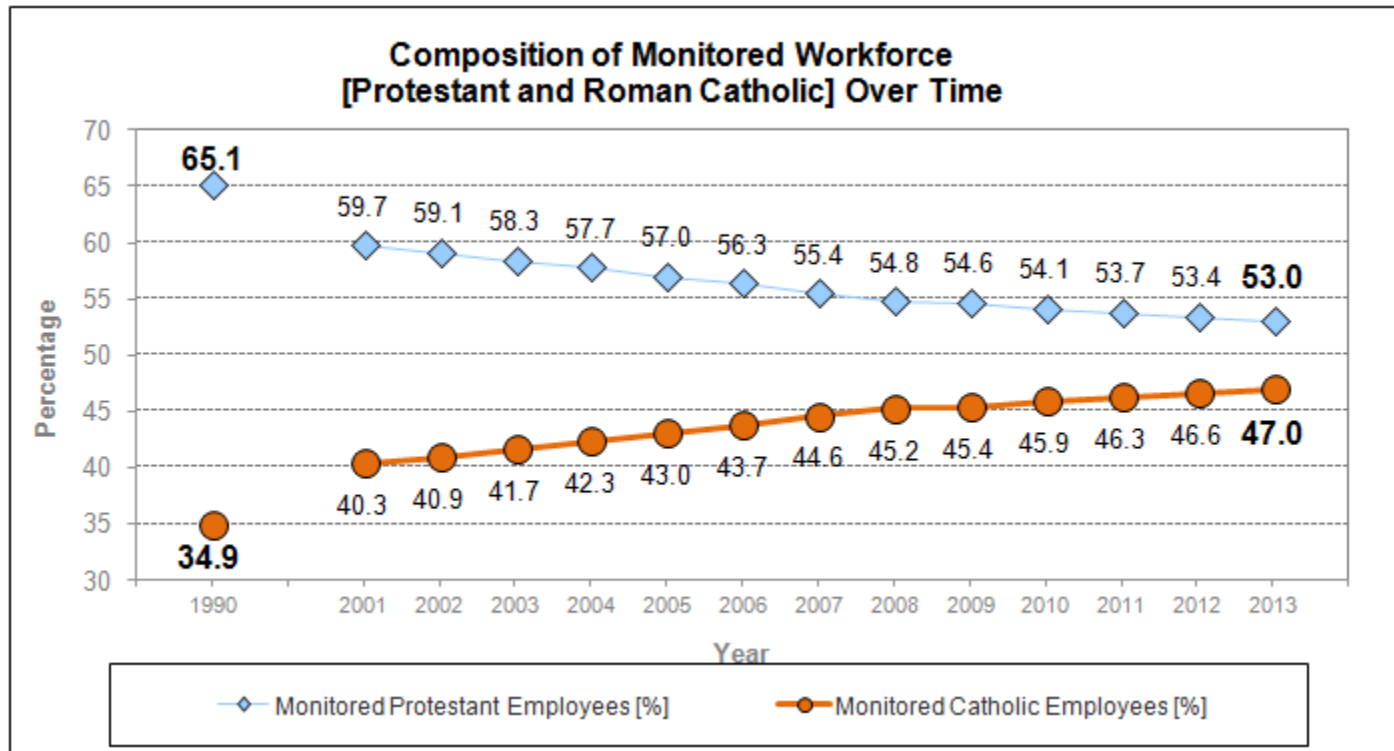


Employer Support

- **Training Programmes**
- **Employer Networks**
- **Links to Employer Organisations**
- **Working with individual employers**
- **Working with other public sector organisations**
- **E-zines**
- **Enquiry line**
- **Website**
- **Good practice publications**



Chart 1: Composition of the monitored workforce over time (since 2001, with 1990 data for illustrative purposes)





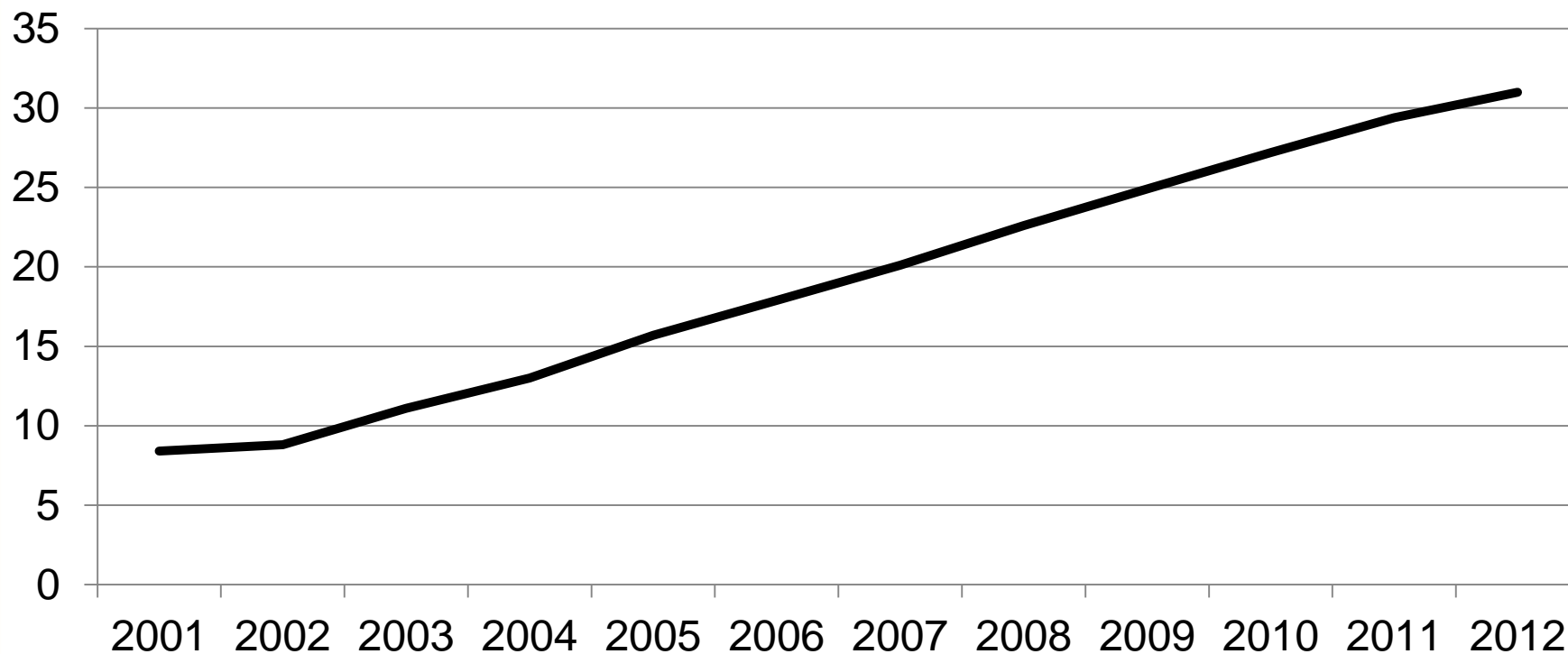
Case Study: Policing

- **Historic under-representation of Roman Catholics**
- **Lack of progress using permitted outreach**
- **Patten Report**
- **Culture, ethos, symbols, name**
- **50/50 recruitment for 10 years**
- **Results?**
- **Challenges for PSNI post 50/50?**



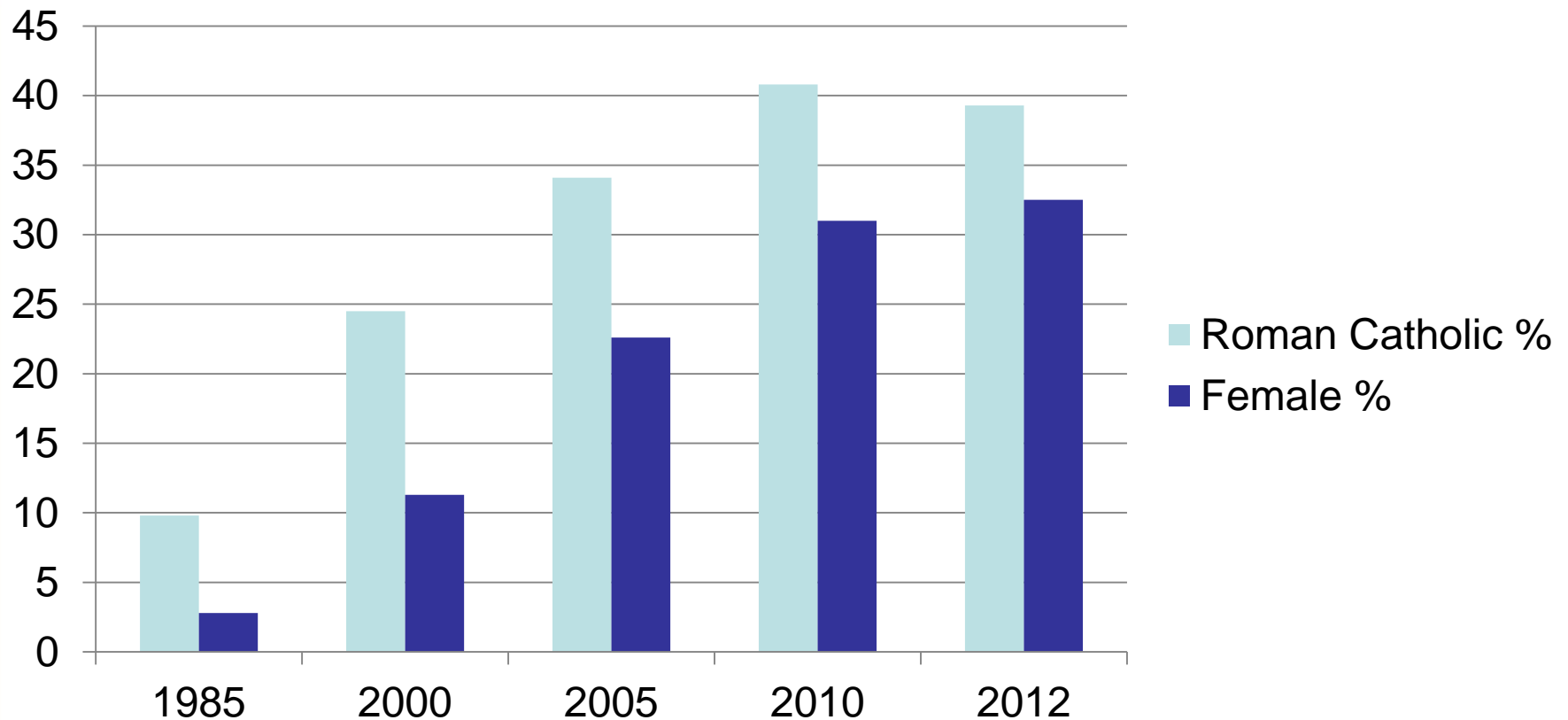
Police Service for Northern Ireland

% Roman Catholic Police Officers





Roman Catholic & Female Shares of Senior Civil Service Posts





Compositional Changes in Private Sector Employers

	1991	2013
Ulster Carpet Mills Ltd	[7.1%]	[19.7%]
Charles Hurst Ltd	[15.3%]	[25.6%]
Balcas Timber Ltd	[29.4%]	[50%]



Impact

- **High levels of compliance with the duties**
- **Decrease in segregated workplaces**
- **More integrated and balanced workforces**
- **Improvement in employment practices**
- **Some pockets of under-representation remain**
- **Roman Catholic share of aggregate workforce close to what might be expected**



Lessons from Northern Ireland

- **Strong legislation**
- **Commitment from senior management and building relationships**
- **Affirmative/positive action to attract applicants**
- **Monitoring and reporting on progress**
- **Policies, practices and procedures which promote equality, particularly those related to recruitment and selection (a rising tide lifts all boats!)**
- **Equality training for managers and supervisors**
- **Good and harmonious working environment**