

**Promoting Social Inclusion
Consultation on Future Priorities**

CLOSING DATE – 31 AUGUST 2001

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Foreword

Poverty and exclusion blight the lives of so many people in so many ways. We, and all Ministers, are determined to tackle this blight and to stop future problems before they start.

In our draft Programme for Government we promised to tackle the causes of poverty as well as its effects and to work to ensure that there can be real inclusion for all our people.

While there is much that our individual Departments can do, and are doing, we believe that some problems of poverty and exclusion are best tackled when Departments work together and in partnership with experts from the wider community.

We will do this through the Promoting Social Inclusion element of our New Targeting Social Need Policy – by concentrating on specific problems and working together to find solutions which work.

We will soon be considering what new issues we should address under Promoting Social Inclusion. We want to make our work count by focusing first on the most pressing problems and the groups with the most pressing needs.

We ask you to help us promote social inclusion by contributing through your comments to our development of priorities.

RT HON DAVID TRIMBLE MP MLA
First Minister

SEAMUS MALLON MP MLA
Deputy First Minister

1. Our Commitment

- 1.1 The **Programme for Government**¹ sets out the Executive's priorities for 2001-2002 and for the future. It highlights Ministers' commitment to combat the problems of poverty and social exclusion which so many people in our community face – and to deal with the causes of poverty as well as its effects.
- 1.2 One of the important ways Ministers will work to improve the lives of the most deprived people is through the **Promoting Social Inclusion** initiative.
- 1.3 Promoting Social Inclusion is an important element of the wider **New Targeting Social Need** (New TSN) policy.
- 1.4 New TSN means Departments using more of their existing resources to benefit the most disadvantaged people, groups and areas. It is also about changing the way things are done so that programmes and services are organised and delivered in ways that are more helpful to disadvantaged people².
- 1.5 New TSN, including the Promoting Social Inclusion element was originally launched under Direct Rule. The Executive has carefully considered the initiative carefully and agreed its own approach.
- 1.6 This document describes the Promoting Social Inclusion initiative. It invites people's views about how the initiative should be taken forward in the future.

2 Promoting Social Inclusion

2.1 Social Exclusion

2.1.1 Our concern is with the people in our community who are in greatest social need and who are most marginalised. People who are in social need can be disadvantaged in many ways. They may, for example, be poorly skilled, unemployed, living on a low income or coping with difficult home circumstances. They might live in poor housing or areas blighted by crime. They may have difficulties accessing services that others take for granted.

2.1.2 Some people are subject to combinations of problems and the effects of these are so severe that it is impossible for them to lead what most people would consider to be normal everyday lives.

2.1.3 The term “**social exclusion**” is used to describe what can happen to people who are subject to the most severe problems. Social exclusion has to do with poverty and joblessness – but it is more than that. It is about being cut off from the social and economic life of our community.

2.2 Tackling Social Exclusion

2.2.1 The factors that cause social exclusion do not always fit comfortably within the areas of responsibility of individual Government Departments. This can lead to duplication in some areas and gaps in others.

2.2.2 Furthermore, there are some groups within our community whose members tend to be less well-off or more at risk of exclusion than others and whose needs must be addressed by Departments and other agencies in a coherent way.

2.2.3 Among these groups are Travellers and other people from ethnic minority backgrounds, young people with limited skills, homeless people and older people on low incomes.

2.3 Promoting Social Inclusion

2.3.1 The Executive has agreed that Promoting Social Inclusion should involve Departments working together and with social partners:

- to identify and tackle factors which can contribute to social exclusion; and
- to undertake positive initiatives to improve and enhance the life and circumstances of the most deprived and marginalised people in our community.

2.3.2 Promoting Social Inclusion will tackle a series of issues, focusing on a small number of priority issues at a time. It emphasises prevention, co-ordination and evidence-based decision making.

2.4 Our Approach

2.4.1 Promoting Social Inclusion is not just about tackling today's problems. It is also about addressing underlying causes. It involves thinking ahead and seeking to recommend lasting solutions that could prevent further difficulties arising in the future.

2.4.2 Ministers have emphasised the importance of co-ordination, sharing and joint working. This can mean Departments working more closely together and greater partnership with other organisations.

2.4.3 The work on Promoting Social Inclusion priorities must be guided by sound evidence. This will include research and other available evidence, and the views of experts.

2.4.4 Listening to the views of people who are directly affected by the problems of social need and exclusion will be an important aspect of the work.

2.4.5 Voluntary and other organisations have particular insight and expertise. Ministers greatly appreciate the contribution such organisations have already made to Promoting Social Inclusion. They are determined that partners outside Government should have an opportunity to contribute in the future.

2.5 Our Achievements So Far

2.5.1 Since Devolution, Ministers have built on work started under direct rule and are addressing the needs of those at risk of exclusion.

2.5.2 Ministers in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister published for consultation a report prepared by a Promoting Social Inclusion Working Group on Travellers. Ministers will consider the report's recommendations and views expressed in the consultation and publish a strategic response by March 2002³.

2.5.3 Ministers in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister recently launched a new fund to support ethnic minority voluntary organisations and projects. This was one of the practical suggestions made by a Promoting Social Inclusion Working Group on Ethnic Minorities⁴. The report of this Working Group will be published in due course.

2.5.4 The Minister for Health and Social Services has published for consultation, the report of a Promoting Social Inclusion Working Group on the problems of teenage parenthood, and is now considering the way forward⁵.

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3. Future Priorities

- 3.1 Ministers will soon be considering the priority areas which Promoting Social Inclusion should focus on in the future. They would like their decisions to be informed by inclusive and open consultation.
- 3.2 We are therefore asking people to tell us what they think our future priorities should be.
- 3.3 Details of how you can let us know your views are provided on pages 10 and 11.
- 3.4 A committee comprising representatives of all Northern Ireland Departments and a representative nominated by NICVA (to represent the voluntary and community sector) will carefully consider all the views expressed in the consultation. They will prepare a report for Ministers setting out the points raised and highlighting issues which:
- Are within the remit of the devolved administration.
 - Fit with the Executive's policies and priorities.
 - Cut across Departmental boundaries and can effectively be addressed through the Promoting Social Inclusion approach.
 - Are not already being addressed through cross-Departmental work.
- 3.5 Ministers will decide on the next Promoting Social Inclusion priorities and the terms of reference for each. They will announce their decisions in the Autumn.

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4. Driving Forward the Work

4.1 The Executive

4.1.1 The Executive takes a close interest in all aspects of New TSN, including Promoting Social Inclusion.

4.1.2 It will agree aims and objectives, terms of reference and timetables for driving forward work on each Promoting Social Inclusion priority. It will also decide which Department should have lead responsibility for each of the priorities. Ministers will consider the final report on the priorities and decide on consultation arrangements.

4.1.3 Ministers will consider recommendations in the Promoting Social Inclusion report and views expressed in consultation in developing policies and initiatives to tackle the problems of exclusion. The final set of new priorities for Promoting Social Inclusion will be decided by the Executive.

4.2 Terms of Reference

4.2.1 The terms of reference for each priority will need to be especially tailored to the issues in hand. In general, however, it is envisaged that those involved in each exercise will need to:

- Use existing research and other evidence and the advice of experts (including representatives of those most directly affected by the problem) to analyse the issues and develop an understanding of the problem and its causes
- Consider Departments' roles and responsibilities in relation to the issue, including the effectiveness of any existing policies, programmes and structures with a view to identifying elements which work well and should be developed and areas where things could be done differently

- Identify and examine options for the way forward (this may include examining models of good practice which exist elsewhere), including preventative measures
- Making recommendations to Ministers as to what requires to be done, by whom, and within what timescale, and the measures including performance measures to be put in place to ensure progress and monitor effectiveness.

4.3 Lead Responsibility

4.3.1 Work on each of the priorities will be led by the most appropriate Department.

4.3.2 A senior official will make sure that appropriate arrangements are put in place to fulfil the terms of reference. This will include arrangements for involving people from outside the Executive, including for example, setting up and chairing Working Groups. Included in any Working Groups established, will be people directly concerned within the priority areas selected, or their representatives.

4.3.3 From time to time the lead official will report to or seek the views of the cross-departmental New TSN Steering Group and of Ministers. He or she will also be responsible for preparing a final report to Ministers.

5. Letting Us Know Your Views

5.1 We would like you to tell us:

- What the factors are which contribute to social exclusion and which should be tackled as part of Promoting Social Inclusion – and why
- Which groups you think are the most deprived and marginalised – and why
- Your views on the general terms of reference set out at pages 8 and 9.

5.2 How to Contribute

5.2.1 Please send your comments **by 31 August 2001** to:

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Text Phone: 028 9052 2526

5.2.2 It would be helpful if you could express your points as concisely as possible – you may wish, for example to use short notes.

5.2.3 Please tell us your name and address at the beginning. If you are commenting on behalf of an organisation, please tell us its name and what it does. If you have consulted other people or organisations, please let us know.

5.3 Confidentiality

5.3.1 Please tell us if your views are to be considered confidential. If you do not tell us this, your comments may be mentioned in reports or other documents, published by Ministers or placed in the library of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

5.4 After We Hear From You

5.4.1 We will let you know that we have received your comments; however, it will not be possible for us to reply on an individual basis to points raised.

5.5 Further Information and Copies of this Document

5.5.1 This document is on the **Internet** at www.newtsnni.gov.uk. Please contact Alison Nightingale at the New TSN Unit if you wish to discuss the consultation or would like:

- More copies of this document – or if you would like it in Word or on tape
- Summaries in Chinese (Cantonese), English, Hindi, Irish, Ulster Scots or Urdu
- If these formats do not suit your needs, and you would like us to make alternative arrangements.

5.6 Thank you

5.6.1 Thank you for reading this document – we look forward to knowing your views.

Notes and References

1 The **Programme for Government** published in February 2001 sets out Ministers' commitments for financial year 2001-2002 and beyond. It is available on the Internet at www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk or from OFMDFM Economic Policy Unit, telephone 02890 522088

2. **Making it Work: the New TSN Action Plans Report**, OFMDFM 2001, describes New TSN and includes Action Plans showing how each Northern Ireland Department is implementing the policy.

It is on the Internet at www.newtsnni.gov.uk and copies priced at £5 are available from Corporate Document Services 028 9047 1600.

Contact Alison Nightingale on telephone 028 9052 3251 for summaries and alternative formats.

3 **Consultation on the PSI Working Group on Travellers Report**, OFMDFM, 2000.

Available on the Internet at www.newtsnni.gov.uk or from Alison Nightingale at the New TSN Unit on telephone 028 9052 3251.

Consultation closes on April 31, 2001.

4 Further information on the Internet at www.newtsnni.gov.uk or from Alison Nightingale at the New TSN Unit on telephone 028 9052 3251.

5 **Myths and Realities**, [Report of the Working Group on Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood. Consultation document issued by DHSSPS November 2000 inviting comments by 31 March 2001. Tel 028 9052 0532.](#)

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