

**promoting the social  
inclusion of older people**

# **Ageing in an Inclusive Society**

**a consultation document**



Office of the

**First Minister and  
Deputy First Minister**

[www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk)

**priorities**

**principles**

**ideas**



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## Ministerial Foreword

When the Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) group on older people was set up in 2002, the Government was fulfilling one of the commitments given in the first Programme for Government. I am very pleased to present this consultation document, which reflects views and opinions of this wide-ranging group.

Within the broad category of older people, lie several generations with different life experiences and different sets of expectations. The first principle, then, of serving an older population is to recognise the great diversity that exists and to be conscious of the dangers of stereotyping.

'Ageing in an Inclusive Society' is a strategic approach by Government to promote and support the inclusion of older people in Northern Ireland. In preparation of this consultation the PSI group have considered factors which cause older people to be at risk of social exclusion and they have worked together to produce a series of ideas on how we might tackle the social exclusion of older people.

The consultation period will extend until 19th November 2004, to allow officials to consult as widely as possible. The proposals here are intended to develop an agreed strategy for tackling the social exclusion of older people and ultimately to turn ideas into actions. I welcome your views.

Rt Hon John Spellar MP  
Equality Minister  
June 2004



## 1 Introduction

This Consultation Document aims to stimulate discussion on promoting the social inclusion and participation of older people in civic life, measures to tackle and prevent potential discrimination, and remove obstacles older people may face in achieving this. It highlights amongst other things how ageing cuts across the generations through, for example, the need for financial planning for retirement; challenges attitudes that younger people may have about older people; and the need for society to value and use the expertise of the older community.

While the United Nations' definition of an older person is aged 50 years and over, it would be unhelpful for the purposes of this document to take any cut off point as an age above which measures to promote inclusion might apply and below which they wouldn't. It is also important to recognise that there is a spectrum of needs which changes from, for example, an employment focus for people in their fifties and sixties to a greater possible health and leisure focus for those in their seventies and eighties. In the next 40 years the number of people aged 50 and over may increase by over 55%, the number aged 60 and over may increase by nearly 80% and the number aged 70 and over may increase by almost 110%. People are living longer and healthier lives and consequently are developing more diverse needs and expectations. This draft strategy aims to reflect the diverse needs of older people, as well as the need to develop positive attitudes to ageing among the wider community.

### The role of the PSI Working Group

The Programme for Government has given a commitment to open new channels of communication with organisations which represent older people to identify developing requirements of older people; and that the provision of services should be provided in the most appropriate and accessible way to meet those requirements. It states that this should be taken forward within the context of the Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) element of the New Targeting Social Need policy. This followed a consultation exercise on future PSI priorities to be tackled, which identified older people as one of several groups most vulnerable to social exclusion. A PSI Working Group on older people, comprising Government and its

relevant social partners, was established to inform the development of a strategy to identify and tackle factors, which can contribute to social exclusion of older people; and to undertake measures to improve and enhance their life and circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

The Working Group included a wide range of perspectives and it was not possible to address all the priorities raised by members, particularly where they related to policy formulated at a UK level.

The Report has been prepared by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) drawing on the expertise of the *Promoting Social Inclusion Working Group on Older People*. It attempts to set out a practicable agenda that aims to have a positive impact on the lives of older people over a five-year period.

### Bringing the strategy together

This consultation document has been informed by a wide range of research, strategy and campaigning documents prepared by the age sector, Government and industry, as follows:

- Help the Aged 2003 research into the lives of older people in Northern Ireland<sup>2</sup>;
- Age Concern mapped out an *Agenda for the Age in 2000*, which highlights the economic, health and environmental challenges of an ageing society<sup>3</sup>.
- a statistical report published in 2003 describing the socio-economic and demographic conditions of older people<sup>4</sup>; and
- a major report published in 2003 on poverty in Northern Ireland, which looks in particular at the issue confronting older person households<sup>5</sup>.
- A review in 2001 of the human rights of older people in NI, which identified potential discrimination in laws, policies and practices<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The terms of reference and membership of the Group are described in Annex II and Annex III respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Evason, E. (2003) *Older People in Northern Ireland*, Help the Aged and OFMDFM.

<sup>3</sup> Age Concern (2000) *Agenda for the Age: the Road Ahead for Older People in Northern Ireland*, Belfast, Age Concern.

<sup>4</sup> NISRA (2003) *A Statistical Profile of Older People in Northern Ireland*, Belfast, NISRA.

<sup>5</sup> Economic Research and Evaluation Consultants (2003) *New TSN Household Profile*, Belfast, OFMDFM.

<sup>6</sup> NIHRC (2001) *Human Rights and Older People in Northern Ireland*, Belfast, p.1



These reports can be accessed on website:

<http://www.ageinginni.gov.uk>

The content of this Report is also influenced by the wider UK and European Action Plans relating to older people, [also accessible on the above website,] namely:

- The United Kingdom *National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2003-05*, which describes how Government will address the needs of the older community and in particular the way in which the new Pensions Credit will lift the incomes of the poorest people; and
- The application in Northern Ireland of the United Nation's *International Plan of Action on Ageing*, which describes the need for integrated programmes on health and nutrition, consumer protection, housing, family support, social security income, employment and education; and the principles set out by the UN, to include *independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity*.

### Social exclusion, multiple identities, discrimination and older people

The PSI Working Group on Older People is particularly concerned about the way in which older people experience more than one form of exclusion from the services and facilities that many of us take for granted. This report highlights the need to understand these links better and to integrate action in order to tackle them, especially, but not exclusively, through/by equality legislation. The equality agenda gives us an opportunity to look at the varied aspects of older people's lives and at how many experience exclusion because of the connections between the multiple aspects of disadvantage, outlined later in this report.

This Report suggests that a holistic approach is needed to address the multiple needs of older people and the processes that cause them to experience exclusion.

The final Strategy *Ageing in an Inclusive Society* will aim to ensure that the discrimination older people may face in the provision of goods, facilities and services are addressed, and aims to help to support the legislative framework designed to protect older people's employment rights.

### Format of the report

This report draws the available evidence together to assist in the formulation of strategic objectives, and sets out *ideas for discussion*. It seeks views on the policy approach and ideas, and invites suggestions on other initiatives or projects that could be included in the final Strategy.

The Report is divided into four sections:

- **Section 2** provides evidence of the exclusion described by Professor Alan Walker at Sheffield University, and identifies a number of research reports that have helped to assemble a picture of older people's lives in Northern Ireland.
- **Section 3** describes the vision, objectives and principles for the Strategy, and asks for your views on these.
- **Section 4** contains ideas for discussion on an integrated approach to tackling exclusion of older people.
- **Section 5** describes the arrangements for the consultation, how comments can be made, and how the final Strategy will be implemented and monitored.



## 2 Older people's lives

As highlighted in Section 1, this Report draws on a range of research and policy documents in developing the draft Strategy, and these can be accessed from the website <http://www.ageinginni.gov.uk>. Collectively this research highlights that older people face multiple exclusions, and underscores the need for an integrated plan of action to promote their inclusion in society. In particular, it suggests a need to prioritise a series of broad-based integrated *economic, social and financial* actions to be taken forward.

Ageing is a dynamic process and one that is relevant to all of us. Older people are captains of industry, innovators and leading professionals in their field. Yet older people are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion in a number of specific key areas. They can experience poverty and diminishing savings; feel abandoned and isolated; live in fear of crime; experience illness and disability. Many have lived through 30 years of violence, and the hurt, trauma and pain still live on, often silently, in their memories.

### Why do older people experience exclusion?

The reasons why some older people are excluded and how they experience exclusion are complex and multi-faceted. The ability to build up sufficient financial resources or assets, such as homes during working age and family support networks in later life, help to explain why many older people enjoy a decent standard of living. However, for those without these resources, reliance on social security benefits can become the main source of income. Other forms of exclusion, such as isolation from friends, relatives, services and facilities exist independently as well as because of a lack of financial resources. Location is also relevant, as older people living in remote areas or on disadvantaged housing estates have difficulty accessing the sorts of opportunities that most people in society can often



take for granted. Professor Alan Walker, University of Sheffield, identified in a 2003 report five dimensions to older people's exclusion<sup>7</sup>:

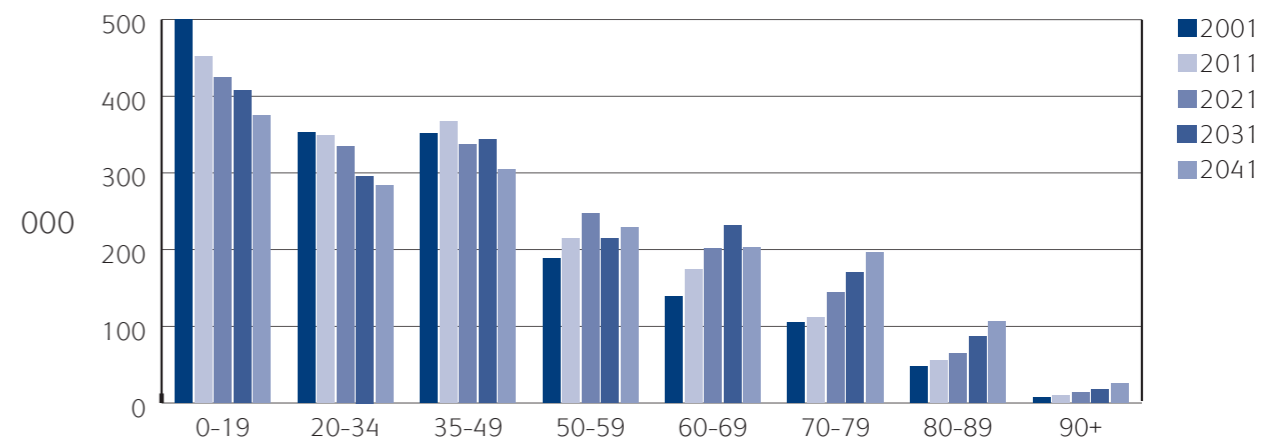
- **Insufficient income** to be able to participate in society, especially for the very elderly;
- **Where a person lives** has a bearing on exclusion, for example, research shows that older women living in more remote rural areas experience some of the highest rates of exclusion, as do older people living in disadvantaged urban housing estates;
- **Discrimination** affects people's access to services and their ability to earn income independently over a longer period of their life. The European Union Employment Framework Directive will help to protect older people in the workplace and enhance the income and satisfaction that employment can often bring;
- the incidence of **ill-health and disability** is progressive with age, and curtails independence that can be crucial to feeling a valued and valuable member of a family, community or society;
- **lack of access to transport**, which is vital to get to and from services and facilities that everyone needs for a decent standard of life.

### Population change in Northern Ireland

Population trends indicate that there will be a substantial age shift towards older people over forthcoming years. This will inevitably have an impact on the labour market, and provision of goods, facilities and services and resources needed to ensure older people enjoy a decent standard of later life. For example, population projections contained in Figure 1 shows that between 2001 and 2041 the number of people aged 50 and over in Northern Ireland will increase by 56% from 485,000 to 759,000 people. Figure 1 also demonstrates that the older age groups of over 70 year olds will more than double during the same period from 158,000 to 327,000 people.

<sup>7</sup> Walker, A. (2003) *Social Exclusion and Growing Older*, Ageing in an Inclusive Society Conference, Europa Hotel, 28th March 2003.

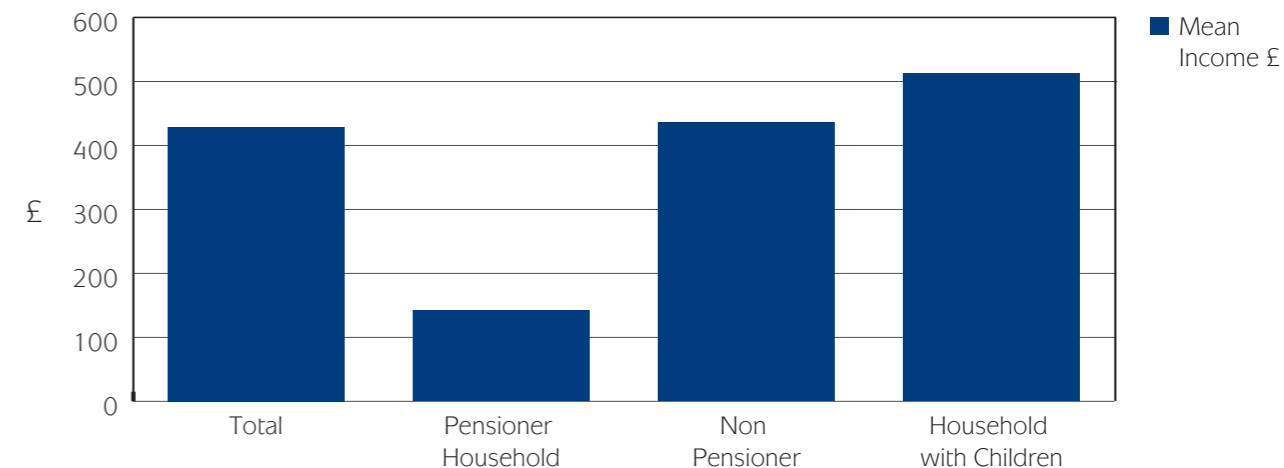
Figure 1 Population change in Northern Ireland



Source; Government Actuary's Department 2001 Based Population Projections.

Older people have lower incomes, are more benefit dependent and spend more on necessities than the rest of the population. Figure 2 below shows the lower gross normal weekly income that older people receive. Research also indicates that pensioner households spend 42% of their weekly household expenditure on necessities (housing, food, fuel, clothing and footwear) compared with 29% for the population as a whole. Results from the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey found that nearly half of the pensioners surveyed (46%) stated that they were just about managing their financial position, whilst 9% said they were finding it difficult to make ends meet.

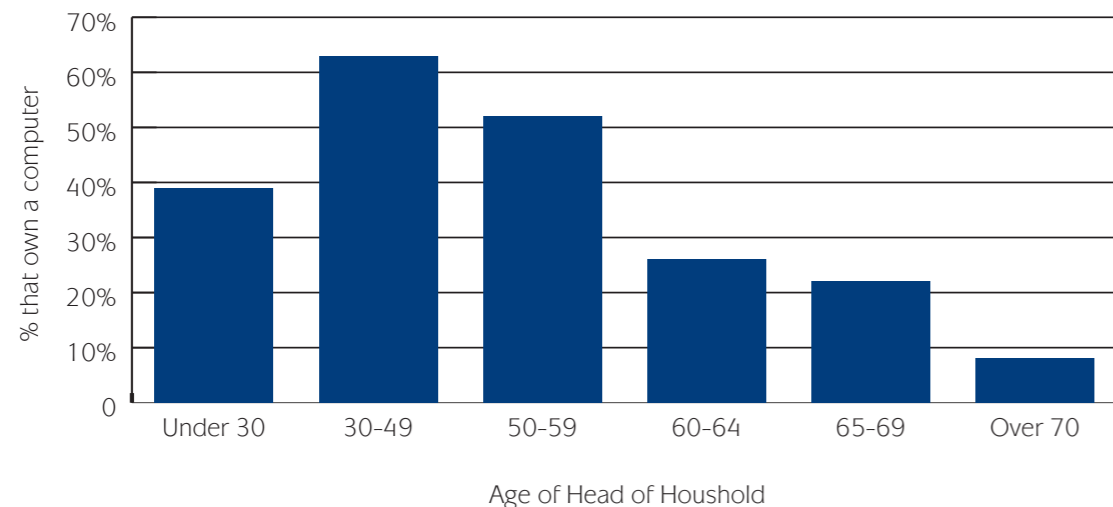
Figure 2 Gross normal weekly income by household type



Source; NISRA, Expenditure and Food Survey 2001/2002

There is clear evidence that older people have a high degree of interest in lifelong learning, training and getting access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) yet Figure 3 below shows ownership of a computer declines with age. Whilst more services are available online or require some competency with information technology, responses to the NI Life and Times Survey showed that 17% of people between 18-24 years would use the internet to find out about a health problem, but only 3% of 55-64 year olds, and no-one over 65 were likely to do this.

**Figure 3 Ownership of a computer by age**

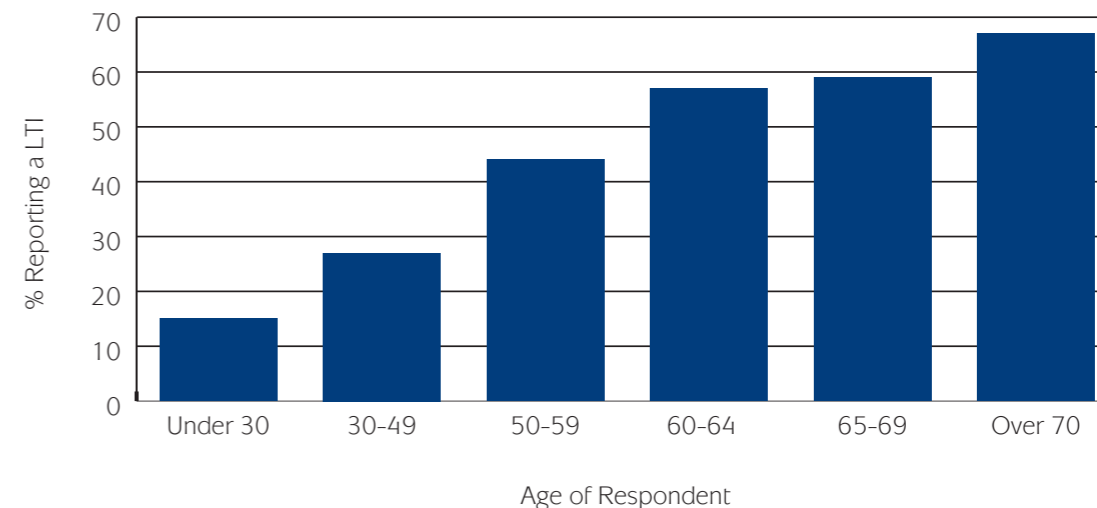


Source; NISRA Continuous Household Survey 2001/2002

It is widely recognised that older people are more likely than the rest of the population to experience a long-standing illness or disability, visit a GP or experience mobility problems. Older people also tend to have a preference to live in their own homes. Figure 4 shows that people experiencing a long-term illness rises progressively with age. Other findings of the Continuous Household Survey indicate that 19% of people aged over 50 years have mobility problems compared with 10% of the population as a whole; and 87% of persons aged 65 and over feel happy in their own home.



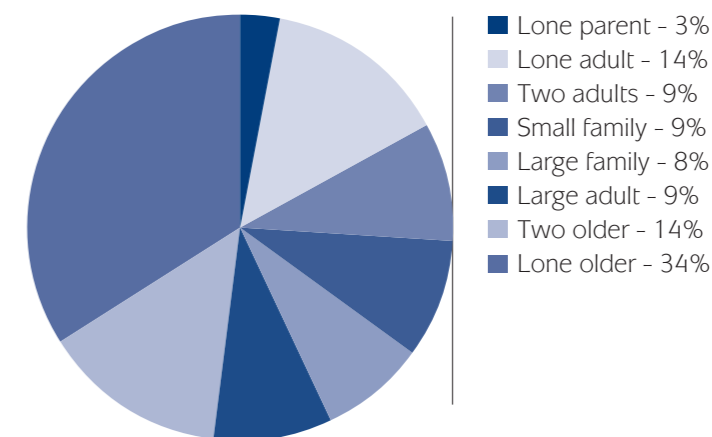
**Figure 4 Proportion of people reporting a Long-Term Illness (LTI)**



Source; NISRA Continuous Household Survey 2001/2002

The Household Condition Survey found that older people are more likely to live in unfit housing and dwellings in disrepair, and experience the social and health effects of living in fuel poverty. 2.8% of the Northern Ireland housing stock is unfit, which amounts to about 17,120 occupied dwellings. Figure 5 below shows that 48% of the unfit dwellings are occupied by older people, 34% of whom are living alone.

**Figure 5 Households living in the unfit housing stock**

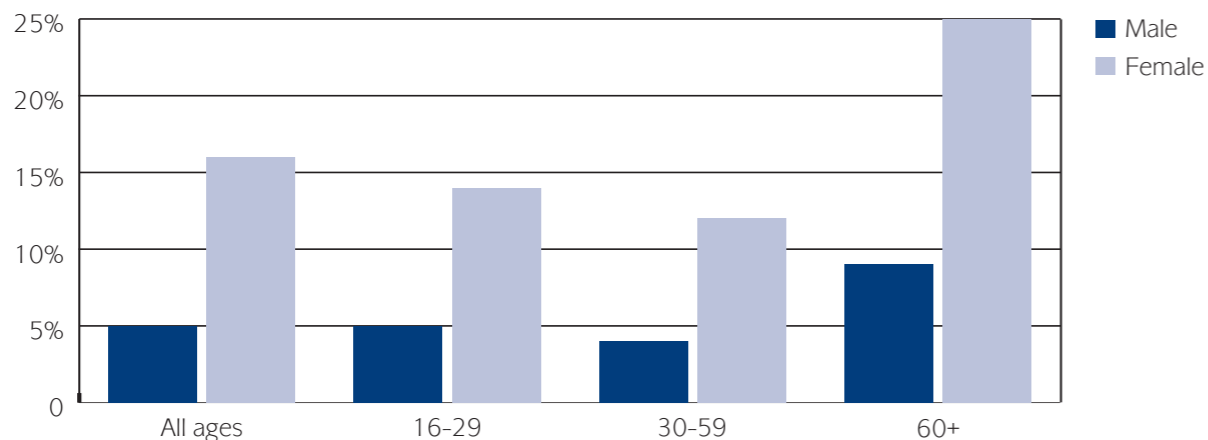


Source; NIHE, House Condition Survey 2001



Older people are more likely to feel insecure and vulnerable about their personal safety both inside and outside their home, which has increased with time. Figure 6 below shows that the proportion of people feeling unsafe walking alone in their area after dark rises with age. It also shows significant gender differences, with women feeling more vulnerable than men across the main age groups. The Northern Ireland Crime Survey found that this is especially pronounced among people aged 60 and over, with 9% of men and 25% of women feeling unsafe walking alone in their own area after dark. In addition, results from the Continuous Household Survey indicate that nearly two-thirds, i.e. 65%, of people aged 65 and over cannot use public transport without assistance. Also, statistics from the Police Service of Northern Ireland shows that people aged 65 and over comprised 5.3% (3,553) of all road traffic collision casualties between 1997-2001, but they made up 13.7% (105) of all deaths over the same period.

**Figure 6 Percentage of people feeling unsafe walking alone in their area after dark**

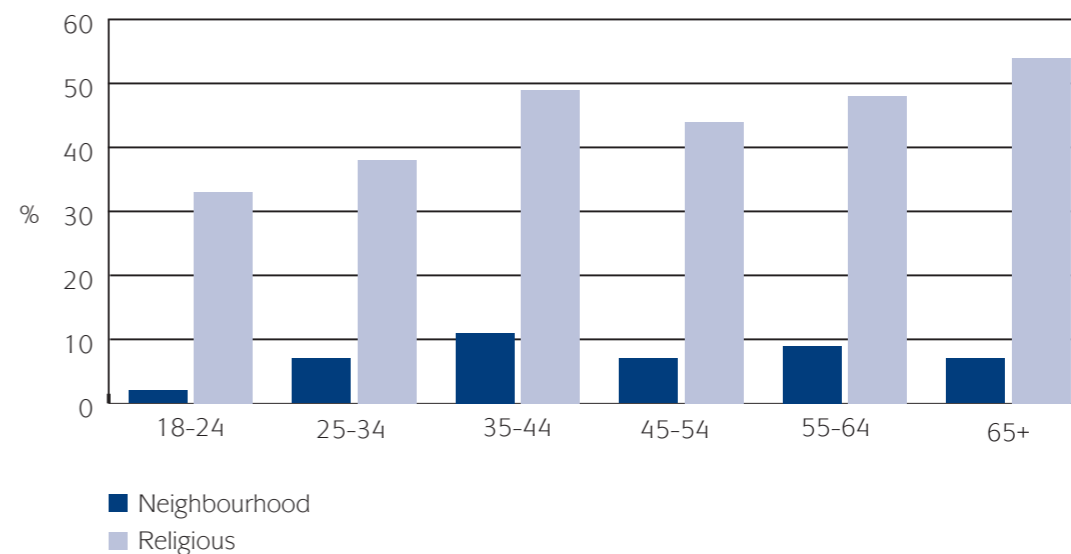


Source; NIO, Northern Ireland Crime Survey 2001

There is information to demonstrate that older people are actively involved in, and have valuable experience of, knowledge and resources needed for local regeneration, volunteering and community development. For example, Figure 7 shows that older people are members of neighbourhood based and church-based organisations. In the 12 months prior to the survey (September 2003 – December 2003) 7% of people

aged 65 and over were members of neighbourhood groups and 54% belonged to church organisations. In addition, Help the Aged indicate that older people benefit from a large and diverse community and voluntary sector<sup>8</sup>. The Senior Network includes 800 groups, approximately 80% of which involve older people's organisations, 190 of which participate in networking, campaigning and direct involvement with policy and research.

**Figure 7 Activity in neighbourhood and religious based organisations**



Source; ARK, Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2001.

**Do you feel that we have analysed the needs and priorities of older people correctly? Are there issues that you think we should include in our assessment of need when establishing priorities?**

8 Help the Aged (2003) *The Age Sector Infrastructure*, Belfast.



### 3 The vision, strategic objectives and principles

This section sets out the proposed approach to the Strategy. It outlines a vision, the proposed strategic objectives aimed at realising the vision, and outlines broad principles that will underpin the overall strategy.

#### Vision

*To ensure that age related policies and practices create an enabling environment, which offers everyone the opportunity to make informed choices about active, healthy and positive ageing.*

#### Strategic objectives

In order to turn this vision into reality five strategic objectives are proposed:

1. Address comprehensively the economic and financial inclusion of older people;
2. Develop and deliver health and social services that address the distinctive and complex needs of older people;
3. Increase the safety of older people and ensure that they have access to the facilities and services that meet their needs and wishes;
4. Promote equality of opportunity for older people and their full participation in civic life, and challenge age discrimination wherever it is found;
5. Ensure that Government works in a co-ordinated fashion inter-departmentally and with its social partners to improve services for older people.

#### Principles

The principles that underpin this approach are to:

- prioritise social need and the way in which older people face more than one form of exclusion;
- promote the esteem and dignity of older people;
- aim to ensure that there is equality of treatment for older people;

- respect the desire of older people to live independent and self-fulfilling lives;
- encourage a partnership approach involving all the stakeholders in the design and delivery of the Strategy.

**Are the vision, strategic objectives and principles appropriate, and do they reflect your priorities for the development of a Strategy for older people?**



## 4 Promoting the inclusion of older people

This section defines five strategic objectives identified with the aim of tackling inter-related financial, social and economic poverty experienced by older people. It describes how these objectives can be achieved, whilst adhering to the underpinning principles of working in partnership with older people, the community, voluntary and private business sectors; promoting equality of opportunity; and having respect for older people's wishes to maintain independent and self-fulfilling lives.

### Objective 1: To address comprehensively the economic and financial inclusion of older people.

It is known that more people are living longer, and the limitations of state and occupational pensions have recently been widely publicised. It is also known that where older people live affects their quality of life.

The introduction in October 2003 of the Pensions Credit Scheme should help to tackle poverty amongst those on very low incomes. Implementation of the age provisions of the EU Employment Framework, by making it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of age in employment and training, will also provide protection for older people, and others, against discrimination. Existing area-based programmes such as urban and rural development initiatives too will play an important role in promoting older people's inclusion in isolated or disadvantaged areas. In addition, OFMDFM is developing an anti-poverty strategy to tackle financial, social and economic exclusion, which will target programmes for especially vulnerable groups, including older people.

The following are a series of ideas for discussion designed to support these policies and practices, and to ensure that they have a positive impact on the most marginalised older people in Northern Ireland.

### Idea 1.1: Ensure that the pension system works as effectively and efficiently as possible for older people in social need

The main areas of economic concern for older people relate to having sufficient resources in later life, finance for long-term care, pension and taxation issues, and the role and policies of the public and voluntary sectors. Age Concern point out in their consultation on their 2000 Report: *Agenda for the Age; the Road Ahead for Older People in Northern Ireland*, that without exception respondents have demanded that the link between pension and average earnings should be restored, and for rigorous lobbying by organisations in the age sector on the issue. The Age Concern report also argues that an increase in the pension is necessary to give older people a decent standard of living.

Government values the role that voluntary groups in the age sector play in highlighting issues for older people, and their work through national networks campaigning for change.

#### Proposals:

- Government and voluntary sector organisations will continue to work together to ensure that the existing pension system and the Pension Credit works effectively to target the most marginal older people.
- OFMDFM will work with the Department for Social Development to ensure that the new Pension Credit is well understood and maximised by those entitled to use them, eg a community development approach involving the Senior Network might help to extend take-up of the benefit.
- Improved advice to people who are approaching retirement on the criteria for accessing Income Support and other benefits.
- Initiatives to encourage people to make greater financial provision for retirement whilst in work.
- Incorporate in the school curriculum improved education about managing finances.

**Idea 1.2: Promote employment opportunities and entrepreneurship among older people**

Current levels of entrepreneurship among the upper age groups in Northern Ireland fall below those in Great Britain, and the skills and experiences of older people are not being utilised as fully as they could.

Guideline 5 of the EU Employment Guidelines emphasises the need to promote active ageing by fostering working conditions conducive to job retention. A target has been set for all EU Member States to achieve an employment rate of 50% for older workers, who are defined as aged between 55–64 years. The 2001 *Report of the Northern Ireland Ageing Population Panel*<sup>9</sup>, which sought to identify the opportunities as well as the challenges faced as a result of the ongoing age shift in society, also identified the need to capitalise on the business opportunities afforded by the age shift, eg specialist house construction; making full use of the skills and experiences within the older population; and supporting mentoring in the workforce.

**Proposals:**

- Departments to work with agencies involved in training and employment and the business community to address issues set out in the Report of the NI Ageing Population Panel, in particular the implementation of a Code of Practice for an age diverse workforce; training for employers and trade unions; and the need to adjust recruitment practices and work patterns to attract and retain older employees.
- The Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment (DETI) *Age Positive Campaign*, launched in January 2004 to promote the business benefits of an age diverse workforce, will formally report to the PSI Working Group on Older People.
- The PSI Working Group on Older People will continue as the Group to implement an integrated Strategic Action Plan (see section 5).
- Invest Northern Ireland's Accelerating Entrepreneurship Strategy, in line with New Targeting Social Need and Equality policies, will proactively promote entrepreneurship to under-represented groups, including older people.

9 Foresight and Age Concern (2001) *Northern Ireland Ageing Population Panel Report*, Belfast.

**Idea 1.3: Promote the role of older people in the Social Economy in order to develop business opportunities, employment and services relevant to older people**

A DETI led Inter-Departmental Steering Group has recently consulted on Government's three-year Strategic Action Plan for developing the social economy; and a Social Economy Network is currently in place to assist the development of the sector, which could provide a forum for older people to contribute and influence future policies and programmes.

**Proposals:**

- DETI to work with the Social Economy Network to ensure that groups representing older people are invited to join and express their views on how they can contribute to the development of the sector.
- DETI and the Social Economy Network to promote the sector by highlighting opportunities for older people through engagement with the voluntary and community sector, wider social economy sector and mainstream economic interests, inside and outside Government.

**Idea 1.4: Develop opportunities for lifelong learning and skills in Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**

As indicated earlier, research has shown that older people are less likely to own a computer or to access the Internet than the rest of the population. They are also more likely to have a disability or experience mobility problems.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the Internet open up a range of communicative opportunities for people who are often physically isolated or immobile. They also bring skills that can be used to access services, training and jobs or simply new opportunities for self-expression and learning.

**Proposals:**

- Departments and agencies to review their Freedom of Information strategies to take account of older people who may not have access, or have the skills to use computers.
- Universities and Further Education Colleges to develop their *widening access* policies to address the specific needs of older people in the teaching programmes they offer at the planning stages, and consider their relevance to the interests of older learners.
- In delivering mainstream training and employment schemes, relevant Departments and agencies shall not make assumptions about the willingness and capability of older people to participate, and remove any obstacles that older people specifically face in accessing training opportunities.

**Idea 1.5: Enhance the role of Neighbourhood Renewal in tackling the specific needs of older people in areas of high disadvantage**

It was highlighted earlier that where an older person lives can exacerbate their exclusion from society. The Department for Social Development's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, entitled *People and Place*, is designed to tackle the most disadvantaged areas of our towns and cities. Neighbourhood Renewal will be implemented through separate strategies for Belfast, the North West and regional towns, and will provide a framework for articulating older peoples needs, and bringing them into mainstream development programmes for their particular areas.

**Proposals:**

- Area based strategies in both urban and rural areas should prioritise older people in the development of plans and the delivery of projects.
- Neighbourhood Renewal programmes should prioritise older people in its analysis of needs, the development of proposals, and methodology for involving older residents in the decision-making arrangements, including Neighbourhood Partnership Boards.
- Consultation processes generally should reach individual older people, not only representative organisations, in developing policies and programmes across Government.

**Idea 1.6: Encourage the targeting of the rural development programmes on the needs of older dwellers living in physical and social isolation**

OFMDFM has recently commissioned Rural Community Network to undertake research into the needs of older people in rural communities. The research sought the views of voluntary and community groups that served older people in rural areas.

The groups with older people as their beneficiaries highlighted the following key disadvantages for older people living in rural communities;

- A fear of crime;
- Lack of access to public transport;
- Isolation;
- Decline in local services and;
- Income levels/benefit take-up.

The research also undertook qualitative methods including interviews, focus groups and large group discussions with older people living in rural communities. The key issues reported by those people taking part were;

- Crime and personal safety;
- Transport;
- Access to services and;
- Health care issues.

As outlined above, there was a high degree of overlap between voluntary and community groups serving older people in rural areas and the responses of the older people themselves around key disadvantages.

**Proposals:**

- Rural Community Network research should provide a platform for the agencies and interests to come together to review the progress that has been made on delivering programmes in rural areas, identifying strategic gaps in service provision, and tailoring programmes to the specific needs of older people.

**Idea 1.7: Build on progress made in tackling fuel poverty in partnership with key agencies and the age sector**

The term fuel poverty is the situation whereby a household cannot be heated adequately because of the cost that would entail. This has been recognised as due to a combination of low household income, high fuel costs or the use of expensive types of fuel, and poor energy efficiency. Fuel poverty is defined by the Department for Social Development (DSD) as 'the situation in which a household would have to spend more than 10% of its income on all fuel use to maintain an acceptable level of temperature throughout the home.

This report acknowledges progress made on tackling fuel poverty. In particular, the establishment of the Northern Ireland Fuel Partnership Forum and the Warm Homes Scheme funded by DSD complements the work undertaken by the Housing Executive to improve energy-efficiency across all tenures. This is vital work that needs to ensure that housing design, resources and information improves the quality of life of older people in their homes. In addition, the outcome of deliberations in GB on the practicalities of extending lifetime standards to private dwellings will be given due consideration to amending equivalent legislation in Northern Ireland. Also, the Department for Social Development will shortly issue a Fuel Poverty Strategy that will set targets and milestones aimed at the systematic eradication of fuel poverty in vulnerable groups, including households that contain a person aged 60 years or more.

**Proposals:**

- DSD will work with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and the private house building industry to improve the supply of lifetime homes, especially where they address the distinctive energy priorities of older people.
- Following the outcome of deliberations on the practicalities of extending lifetime standards to private dwellings in GB, OFMDFM will be encouraging the introduction of similar standards in Northern Ireland.
- Link campaigns to address fuel poverty with activities that improve the take-up of the Pensions Credit.



- Involve the Senior Network and organisations in the age sector in helping to target programmes at those most in need.

**Objective 2: Develop and deliver health and social services that address the distinctive and complex needs of older people**

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety's (DHSSPS) 20-year Regional Strategy for Health and Social Services will focus on the specific needs of older people in Northern Ireland. This will include consideration of the recommendation to develop and consult on a strategy for older people in health and social care matters. The Strategy will recognise developmental work in Health and Social Services Boards and Trusts, within the DHSSPS, and in inter-departmental groups such as the Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) for Older People Working Group. The DHSSPS recognises that it is vital that the development of integrated, responsive services, which is central to the new Regional Strategy, drives forward comprehensive improvements in services impacting on the lives of older people over the next twenty years and beyond.

**Idea 2.1: Ensure that health and social services for older people are comprehensive and integrated**

It is recognised that the biggest challenge is not how to manage increasing health and social services costs for the older population – though this will be significant – but how to ensure that older people have the best quality of life possible. It is also recognised that there is a need to bring together services that older people require, such as the key services of housing and transport, alongside health and social services.

Future decisions about planning and delivery of services will include working outside of the DHSSPS's structures and barriers that currently exist, aimed at bringing together a full range of services that will ensure that older people have easy access to equitable, safe and uncomplicated service provision. Central to this challenge is the effective involvement of older people in the development of high quality services.

The Regional Strategy for health and social services will address issues relating to community care; abuse of vulnerable adults; dementia services; and functional mental illness. There will be a particular focus on active ageing and self care, and the promotion of dignity and independence for older people.

**Proposal:**

Proposed PSI Older People Implementation Group to keep in close contact with DHSSPS on progress of DHSSPS Regional Strategy for Health and Social Services, and other related integrated activities.

**Idea 2.2: Prioritise the concerns of older people in the development and delivery of health and social services in Northern Ireland**

DHSSPS has sought and received a wide range of views on services for older people from health and social care staff, representative organisations working with older people, community groups, and older people themselves. The responses received can be concentrated into a number of over-arching themes. These themes will form the foundation for future strategic direction for the development of services for older people in Northern Ireland. They show that older people need:

- Person Centred Care, with a single point of access to a full range of public services which include health, social care, housing and benefits advice; and a single assessment of their care needs with standards of care which will monitor services and ensure high standards;
- Access to a range of integrated Health and Social Services that promote their physical health and well being so that they can play as active a part as possible in the community and society in which we live;
- Active participation in planning services and continuous feedback to encourage and recognise their contribution;
- Specific training and support and advocacy services to meet the needs of older people from different minority ethnic groups;



- Access to a range of innovative care options to meet needs;
- Leadership/Champions to drive forward changes and improvements to service provision for older people.

**Idea 2.3: Listen to older people in the development of health and social services planning in Northern Ireland**

It is clearly necessary to listen to the views of older people if their needs are to be met, and if services are to be improved upon. An overall approach of comprehensive forms of consultation, analysis of research and action is necessary if lessons for the future are to be learnt.

DHSSPS will work closely with other Departments to identify and address those issues that prevent older people enjoying a safe, healthy and active life. The development of the Regional Strategy for health and social services is nearing the end of the first phase of public consultation and a draft strategy will be available for consultation from mid 2004.

**Idea 2.4: Promote the dignity of older people in hospital care**

For many people, including older people, isolation and loneliness can compound their medical conditions in busy wards.

**Proposals:**

- The national Help the Aged *Dignity on the Ward Campaign* should be broadened within Northern Ireland, especially for very old people in hospital care.
- Government should work in partnership with Health Boards, Health and Social Services Trusts and voluntary agencies to determine the most suitable package of support that brings additional attention, stimulation and interest to older patients.
- Develop strategies and provide resources to ensure that all staff are adequately trained, re-trained and remunerated.

**Idea 2.5: Support and develop strategies for independent living among older people**

There is an acknowledgement that the longer a person can live on their own, the more likely they are to experience good health and a positive attitude to ageing.

DHSSPS is committed to help people live on their own, as set out in its strategy *Community Care Review, First Report* (2002). One of the seven pilot projects being rolled out is the initiative Enabling People to Live in their Own Homes, which brings together key agencies and resources to achieve this task. Also, the *PSI Working Group on Carers* is currently looking at training support for the sector, as is the Northern Ireland Social Care Council, and it will be important to set out how this area of work will be integrated.

Strategies to support independent living also extend to actions outside care provision. The Housing Executive's Private Sector Grant Regime and assistive technologies (such as fall detectors and community alarms) have had considerable success in helping householders to stay in their own homes by addressing unfitness, disrepair, disabled facility adaptations, enhancing energy efficiency through the provision of insulation and non-manual central heating systems. The Supporting People legislation implemented by the Department for Social Development has extended the range and level of services that householders can avail of, with the NIHE leading on the Supporting People Programme in Northern Ireland.

**Proposals:**

- Projects such as mobile clinics could be piloted which would benefit not only older people but also others who have difficulty in keeping appointments.
- Training support should be provided to carers to help older people to maintain their pattern of independent living as long as they wish to do so, to include an understanding of the competencies required of carers.



- PSI Working Group on Older People to work with the *PSI Working Group on Carers* to reinforce each others efforts to ensure that health and social care systems are shaped around the needs of older people and their carers, and ultimately, that they are holistic.
- Work to be undertaken by the key agencies to provide a comprehensive package of support for people who want to remain in their own homes.

**Idea 2.6: Develop a more open debate about decisions around the end of life by older people**

This is a difficult area for older people, families and health and care staff, but it is important that, when someone wants to, an open conversation about decisions around the end of their life is facilitated.

**Proposals:**

- Health and care staff to be trained to ensure that older people's desires about planning for their death and funeral arrangements, and decisions about their will, are discussed, should they so wish.

**Objective 3: To increase the safety of older people and to ensure that they have access to the facilities and services that meet their needs and wishes**

Analysis of available research has shown that much of the exclusion experienced by older people is related to the lack of adequate housing, transport, rural services and safety.

**Idea 3.1: Help to identify the needs of older people in Transportation Strategies and policy delivery in Northern Ireland**

The Regional Transportation Strategy 2002 (RTS) indicated that the Department for Regional Development (DRD) would prepare an Accessible Transport Strategy for Northern Ireland by March 2005 which



would, among other things, examine the scope for a more co-ordinated approach to the planning and provision of transport for people with disabilities and older people. Changes as a result will include:

- improving the design of existing transport services or reduce or eliminate the barriers they contain;
- suggesting new services that are more user-friendly or appropriate;
- making sure that the services provided work in an integrated way and that people can access the transport information that is appropriate to their needs.

This Strategy offers an opportunity to address the mobility needs of older people in Northern Ireland.

The Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002 (RTS) sets the context for implementation plans on the Regional Transport Network across Belfast and the sub-region, i.e. main towns and rural areas.

This Report commends the preparation of an Accessible Transport Strategy for Northern Ireland. It acknowledges the work DRD in conjunction with Translink has done to make its services more accessible in the provision of low floor buses, real time information and accessibility at bus and train stations.

This Report also acknowledges that the DRD enhanced concessionary fares scheme, which provides free travel for people aged 65 and over on all bus and rail services has removed an important financial barrier to the use of public transport, and in turn has increased mobility and reduced the social isolation experienced by many older people.

It is important that the Regional Transportation Strategy implementation plans address the distinctive needs of older people, and set out the implications of older people's mobility when drawing up all the different modal forms for road-based transportation, including walking, cycling, buses, taxis and railways.



### Proposals:

- PSI Working Group on Older People will give a commitment to work with DRD in ensuring that consultation is open and inclusive, that older people's views are registered effectively; that advice and examples of good practice are offered; that the delivery of actions, especially where they combine community and locally based transport solutions, involves the participation of older people.
- The Regional Transport Strategy Implementation Plans should draw attention to:
  - the need for accessible walking strategies, e.g. appropriate pavement and kerb design; and
  - for road planning to take account of the safety of older people, especially given the health benefits of cycling and walking.

### Idea 3.2: Need to maximise the potential of community, flexible and Demand Responsive Transport options, in meeting the needs of older people in the region

DRD has identified an indicative sum of £31.6m for the development of the Demand Responsive Transport initiative, which is an innovative service developed for older people, managed mostly by voluntary and community groups. The initiative will be assessed through strategically important pilot projects, and includes the use of minibuses and Social Care Schemes, which have provided flexible alternatives for older people to get to services, including shopping, entertainment and hospital, as well as an opportunity for mixing and socialising.

The results of the pilot schemes and normal government budgetary processes and priorities will dictate the extent of any future roll-out of Demand Responsive Transport.

The PSI Older People Working Group acknowledges the impact of the Rural Transport Fund and indeed the Transport Programme for People with Disabilities, which support door-to-door services for affiliated groups, which it recognises are expensive services that should be used efficiently.

**Proposal:**

- OFMDFM will work with DRD to consider the impact of the pilot projects on older people, and to highlight the effects of Demand Responsive Transport on addressing their isolation, especially in rural areas.
- Ensure wider social benefits are taken into consideration in any formal evaluation of pilot projects involving older people who are socially or physically isolated.

**Idea 3.4: Ensure that older people have access to education, cultural and leisure facilities that can help them live fulfilling lives**

Access to libraries, museums, arts venues, sporting and leisure facilities are vital to the quality of older people’s lives. It is important to encourage a co-ordinated approach to the development of their use, whilst taking into account the specific obstacles that older people experience.

Library services are a good example of the way in which progress has been made in delivering services for older people. Research carried out by the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) into the use of libraries in 2002 showed that seven libraries in Belfast had an average of 32% of users aged 65 and over. Moreover, the Gateways Project on community access to lifelong learning showed high participation and completion rates among older people.

Museums in Northern Ireland through The National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland (MAGNI) provide a range of services targeted specifically at older people. These include:

- intergenerational work, bringing older and young people into direct contact;
- reminiscence work with people with varying degrees of memory loss;
- talks and special leisure activities, including art based workshops;
- outreach activities, for example work with a local Fold;
- lectures to Probus groups.



There has also been advancement in the development of services for and by older people in the area of housing. This includes:

- bringing Supporting People assistance to nearly 9,000 older residents, and the funding of services in sheltered and very sheltered dwellings;
- the development of assistive technologies in Supported Housing for people with dementia;
- specific assistance to remote rural dwellers under the Housing Executive’s Rural Housing Strategy *Places for People*; and
- the development of integrated approaches to community safety on housing estates.

This emphasises the need for innovation in both bringing services to older people and bringing older people to services.

**Proposals:**

- Extend methodology of developing services relating to access to education, culture and leisure that older people want, at times and places that suit them, and in an environment that they are comfortable with.
- Ensure that older people are made aware of the opportunities for training in and free use of computers in public libraries.
- OFMDFM will work with statutory organisations to ensure that they set out more clearly how their objectives are to be achieved in the routine provision of facilities and services, and that these are described robustly in Section 75 Equality Plans.

**Idea 3.5: Improve safety and help reduce the fear that some older people experience in Northern Ireland**

Concerted action is needed at regional and local level to address crime and fear of crime among older people. It is considered that local community safety partnerships have a vital role to play in supporting older people in their homes and streets in areas where they are most likely to feel anxious.

A *Community Safety Strategy for Older People* is being prepared by the Northern Ireland Office for public consultation.

**Proposals:**

- Prioritise concerns and fears of older people, and ensure that the fear that many older people experience in their home and community is addressed.
- Involve Community Safety Partnerships in describing the actions to be taken to address the needs and rights of older people, to support them, and to make them feel more secure.
- Organise concerted and co-ordinated campaigns involving older people, Government, the voluntary sector and community groups, to improve crime awareness among older residents.
- provide education about crime prevention and avoidance behaviour.

**Idea 3.6: Help make the environments of neighbourhoods safer places for older people**

Older people in isolated rural areas feel especially vulnerable, and it is important that community networks are used to support those living in remote locations.

The Housing Executive and Housing Associations have worked hard to promote safe areas and to design housing estates and new building schemes in ways that reduce the chances of crime and anti-social behaviour. In some areas, initiatives such as closing off communal alleys have had a significant impact on reducing crime and vandalism. The NIHE also provide a neighbourhood warden service targeted on the most deprived estates with particular responsibility for dealing with anti-social behaviour, and providing reassurance with regard to the fear of crime for elderly residents.



**Proposals:**

- NIHE initiatives should dovetail into the Strategy on Neighbourhood Renewal in order to develop comprehensive approaches to the needs of older people living in high-risk areas.
- The Strategy on Neighbourhood Renewal should be implemented in partnership with key Government Departments, the NI Police Service, the Rural Development Council, and Rural Community Network, to develop a programme dealing with the safety of older people in rural areas.
- The Rural Support Networks should play a vital role in co-ordinating the delivery of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy at a more local level, in conjunction with Community Safety Partnerships where relevant.

**Idea 3.7: Develop positive links between schools and older people in order to improve inter-generational understanding**

Inter-generational Programmes (IPs) are gaining increasing recognition for the contribution they can make to building vibrant, inclusive and safer communities. They are identified as such in the United Nations Global Strategy on Ageing, and are being developed and supported by organisations at national and international level. Inter-generational Programmes fit many agendas, including those of education (including, but not exclusive to, citizenship education), community safety and the investment for health initiative. They also build social capital.

A Northern Ireland Inter-generational Steering Group has been established led in partnership between Age Concern Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Youth Council. This has evolved out of the projects and good practice developed over a number of years, and has gained recognition in Britain, Ireland and the International Consortium for the quality and pioneering nature of the work undertaken. The Steering Group's aims include:

- encouraging the development of Inter-generational Programmes in Northern Ireland;

- spreading good practice; and
- maintaining standards of excellence.

**Proposals:**

- Include Inter-generational Programmes in the personal and social education section of the curriculum for *Education for Citizenship* to encourage young people to understand the personal social and economic aspects of ageing.
- OFMDFM will work with Government Departments to examine a structure whereby older people can support schools in management administration and participation in the classroom.

**Objective 4: To promote equality of opportunity for older people and their full participation in civic life, and challenge ageism wherever it is found**

In carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland a public authority shall have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity-

1. between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
2. between men and women generally;
3. between persons with a disability and persons without; and
4. between persons with dependants and persons without.

*Social Capital* is a concept which maintains that the 'health' of a community can be measured by the quantity and quality of a sense of belonging and safety individuals feel in the community, the links the community has with other communities, and the links the community has with Government and statutory agencies, in other words the skills and infrastructure that aid in social progress.

The *Social capital* concept has been recognised as an effective contribution towards the development of local areas and neighbourhoods, through its participation of local communities, activities and organisations, for which older people have a valuable contribution to make should they so wish.



Older people have a diverse range of expertise and experience that not only can be utilised fully in addressing their own needs but also the needs of others. Equally, older people should be supported in developing and enhancing their skills to assist in the participation in civic life as fully as they wish.

One of the potential barriers to the participation of older people in civic life is discrimination. It is considered that older people are likely to face discrimination in two ways:

- where older people are treated differently than other people seeking the same service or facility; and
- where older people are treated the same as other people when their distinctive priorities should be taken into account.

The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) has recently completed a consultation on implementing the age strand of the European Employment Framework Directive in Northern Ireland. A copy of the consultation document is available for information on the Department's website <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/equality>. This age-specific employment and training legislation will subsequently become part of a Single Equality Bill in Northern Ireland, currently being developed, also by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

The legislative protection for older people will be strengthened by the age employment and training regulations that implement the European Employment Framework Directive, as well as by the planned Single Equality Bill. Age Concern recently conducted research into the impact of Section 75 on public authorities<sup>10</sup>. The survey showed that agencies had good links with the age sector, valued their input into equality planning and had changed policies and procedures as a result.

<sup>10</sup> Age Concern (2003) *Report on the Analysis of Questionnaires on the Impact of Section 75 on Public Authorities and Older People*, Belfast, Age Concern.

**Idea 4.1: Ensure that the Single Equality Bill protects older people from discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services**

OFMDFM is currently consulting on the Single Equality Bill, which aims to harmonise existing anti-discrimination legislation as far as practicable taking account of emerging equality law elsewhere.

**Proposal:**

- OFMDFM will consult on the issue of older people being protected from discrimination in the area of goods, facilities and services. This will follow on from age legislation, which will provide protection in the field of employment, including older people.

**Idea 4.2: Make greater efforts to understand the problems of older people facing multiple forms of exclusion, and take action to address these on a collective basis**

Older people can face a number of forms of discrimination, which can be accentuated by other aspects of their identities and lifestyles. It is important that more is known about the way in which these issues work together to further exclude and marginalise older people.

**Proposal:**

- OFMDFM to develop further work with the Equality Commission for NI to undertake research into multiple identities and exclusion.

**Idea 4.3: Ensure that implementation of Section 75 Statutory Duty promotes equality of opportunity for older people in Northern Ireland**

Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) are vital instruments for taking account of issues affecting older people in key decisions, programmes and major policies.



We intend carrying out work to develop and disseminate best practice in ensuring they do this as well as possible.

In addition to taking account of the needs of older people as a group it is important that EQIA recognise the different needs of different groups of older people. Such as men and women or those with a disability or those from ethnic minority or other socially excluded groups. We propose bringing forward work to consider how we can do this most effectively.

**Proposals:**

- Government, the age sector and the Equality Commission to work together to develop guidance for Departments and agencies on how to address, involve and mainstream older people's concerns within the Section 75 Statutory Duty. The guidance could also encourage Departments and agencies to think more creatively about promoting good relations between older people, other key equality groups and mainstream society.
- Work should be done to develop best practice in the way in which they address older people's needs. The age sector to work with public sector bodies, including the Equality Commission in preparation of methodological guidance for Departments and agencies, aimed at making account for and evaluation of any discriminatory effects of policies on older people, and the mitigating options open to decision makers.
- We will also develop work to consider how best to take into account the needs of different groups of older people within the EQIA methodology.

This will tie in with the holistic approach of this strategy.

**Idea 4.4: Support the implementation of a strategy to support community relations among older people**

Research by Help the Aged on older people and community relations highlighted the distinctive problems that have been faced by older people during the Troubles, as well as in the emergence from conflict<sup>11</sup>. The research shows that many people have grown old throughout the conflict and that many exhibit denial, bitterness, loss of religious faith and a long-term inability to move on with their lives. The research also shows that older people have more positive attitudes to community relations and the political future of Northern Ireland than the rest of the population.

The Help the Aged report highlighted the need:

- for training within District Councils, the Community Relations Council and central Government on older people and community relations, and the development of specific programmes to support the Age sector in Northern Ireland;
- to recognise and support the capacity of local church networks in the provision of services, pastoral care and for meeting people;
- for health and social services providers to understand the long-term effects of trauma and bereavement on older people as a result of the Troubles;
- for specific community relations programmes, including single identity projects and cross-community initiatives, supported by the Community Relations Council and other funders.

**Proposal:**

- OFMDFM will ensure that recommendations contained in the Help the Aged (2000) *Too Easy to Ignore?: Older People and community relations in NI* are implemented in full, and urge all the agencies identified in the report to work together to support older people.

<sup>11</sup> Help the Aged (2000) *Too Easy to Ignore?: Older People and Community Relations in Northern Ireland*, Belfast, Help the Aged.



**Idea 4.5: Ensure that Government policy for the development of the voluntary and community sector identifies older people as a strategic priority**

Consideration should be given to the infrastructure requirements of the voluntary and community sector in order to support their current and projected work with older people. The needs and issues affecting older people should be given appropriate consideration in the review and revision of Action Plans.

**Proposals:**

- Departments to assess and make recommendations as to the contribution they can make to the development of the capacity of the voluntary and community sectors to meet the needs of older people.

**Idea 4.6: It is important that the sector supporting the needs of older people is sustained in the long-term**

The Task Force on Resourcing the Voluntary and Community Sector is looking at the longer-term needs of the sector, especially with the potential for depleting or restructuring of EU Structural Funds after 2006. The flow of Structural Funds coming into the voluntary sector has not benefited older people in the same way as other important interests in Northern Ireland. This is an important issue facing the sector, Government and older people, and it is crucial that linkages among older people's groups, and the wider voluntary and community sector are maintained and developed.

**Proposal:**

- The Task Force on Resourcing the Voluntary and Community Sector to consider the distinctive needs of the sector dealing with older people in a way that can help move towards long-term sustainability, and the viability of programmes that need time to impact on the lives of vulnerable people, e.g. mutual visits and exchanges between older people's groups and other groups, and their involvement in local umbrella groups.

**Idea 4.7: Promote volunteering and community participation among older people**

Older people can face specific obstacles to volunteering including the cost of and access to transport and it is important that these are recognised in the design and delivery of volunteering initiatives.

The Compact between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector defines volunteering as “the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside one’s immediate family. It is undertaken freely and by choice without concern for financial gain”.

The DSD Community Volunteering Scheme specifically targets older people as an under-represented group in the volunteering population, and funds a number of projects, which aim to recruit and support older volunteers. In addition, DSD provides funding under the Active Community Initiative to the Voluntary Service Bureau “Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme.” This project aims to promote active age for those over 50 by utilising the knowledge and skills gained during the volunteer’s lifetime of work.

New governance arrangements in the form of Local Strategic Partnerships, Neighbourhood Partnerships and Tenant Consumer Panels are also important bodies where older people bring a huge wealth of experience, knowledge and learning. It is important that the capacity of older people on these groups are given distinctive support.

**Proposals:**

- Government and the voluntary sector to work in partnership to develop the capacities of older people, their participation in volunteering and their distinctive needs as volunteers.
- OFMDFM will work to ensure that the efforts that are being invested in volunteering by older people are facilitated and co-ordinated.



**Idea 4.8: Develop the capacities of older people in the delivery of locally based regeneration programmes**

As mentioned earlier, DSD’s Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, *People and Place*, represents an important framework for tackling the integrated needs of older people living in areas of urban disadvantage. The approach also offers an important opportunity to bring older people into decision-making processes and in the delivery of actions in places where they often feel marginalized and frightened. For example, the Neighbourhood Warden Scheme operated by the Housing Executive has had a significant impact on the reduction of anti-social behaviour, vandalism and the removal of sectarian graffiti. Here, many experienced and respected older people are making a profound contribution to their community.

**Proposal:**

- Interventions such as the involvement of older people in the Housing Executive’s Neighbourhood Warden Scheme to be further encouraged and developed in the delivery of both urban and rural regeneration programmes.

**Idea 4.9: Challenge stereotypes and develop positive images of older people as valued and valuable members of local society**

It is vital that the contribution that older people make to local life is presented in more positive and creative ways, including the role they play in local history research, volunteering and in community development.

The World Assembly on Ageing held in Madrid recently adopted an International Plan of Action that called on the international community to challenge society’s perception of ageing.

**Proposal:**

- OFMDFM in conjunction with leading agencies in the voluntary and community sector to commission a targeted publicity strategy that will:
  - challenge stereotypes of older people in the local media;
  - modify the language and images used to represent older people;
  - raise awareness of the contribution older people make in a range of spheres of civic life; and
  - highlight the benefits of ageing.

**We have set out a long list of ideas here and suggested some specific issues for development. Do you think that these are the correct actions and are there other issues that you would like to see included? Should any of the proposals be changed or even left out of the Strategy? In what way would you like to see the ideas prioritised? Are there specific examples of best practice or projects that could help us to develop meaningful programmes in these areas?**

**Objective 5: To ensure that Departments, Agencies and the Age and other voluntary sectors work in a coordinated way to improve services for older people**

It is important that raising the profile of issues for older people as a matter of priority results in the delivery of improved services and opportunity. The approach must be a co-ordinated one with Government working in partnership with interested bodies and service providers in the voluntary, community and private sectors.

**Idea 5.1: Identify a champion for older people placed in a senior position within Government**

It is considered that a high level committed figure within Government needs to be identified to provide prominence to issues for older people, and to ensure that priorities are to be given prominence and integrated effectively.



This consultation seeks views on how this can be taken forward in Northern Ireland.

**Proposal:**

- Identify a Champion, possibly at Ministerial level, to:
  - Advocate progressive joined-up policy across Government;
  - Lead the implementation of the PSI Strategy within Government;
  - Develop a wide ranging and high profile marketing and awareness campaign promoting older people's rights and opportunities;
  - Ensure that older people's affairs are addressed in key strategies such as the Programme for Government;
  - Help to articulate older people's priorities in setting out policy objectives including Public Service Agreements (PSAs) and Service Delivery Agreements (SDAs);
  - Help to facilitate integrated actions required to tackle the exclusion of older people;
  - Monitor progress and identify critical issues, obstacles and solutions relevant to the delivery of the Strategy.

**Idea 5.2: Ensure that this Strategy is implemented effectively and reviewed**

It has been stressed in this draft Strategy that the needs of older people are integrated and multi-layered. It is important that key Departments, business and the age sector work in mutually reinforcing ways, and that their policies and programmes are harmonised effectively.

**Proposals:**

- The PSI Working Group on Older People should redefine its role as an Implementation Group that would help to monitor the delivery of an Action Plan to take forward the PSI Strategy.
- The PSI Working Group on Older People would also monitor progress towards achieving its objectives and targets and report progress annually to relevant Ministers.



**Idea 5.3: Put in place a system for monitoring and evaluating the progress of the Strategy against the objectives**

It is important that progress in achieving the objectives set out for the Strategy is assessed. It is also important that these are consistent with other PSI policy priorities, especially where it can measure progress towards *financial, social and economic* inclusion.

There is now in place a range of data on the lives and experiences of older people, including the House Condition Survey, Northern Ireland Household Panel, Continuous Household Survey and the Life and Times Survey.

The recently developed Geographical Information Strategy for Northern Ireland (Mosaic), which aims to improve the delivery of effective services, management of resources and the development of informed, evidence-based policy through the exploitation of geographical information, could also be an important monitoring tool not only in the development of this older people's strategy but also in monitoring its impact.

**Proposals:**

- OFMDFM will identify monitoring indicators that are specifically linked to the Action Plan for older people, which in turn would establish targets for the actions to be taken forward from this Strategy, and underpinned by the work of the proposed PSI Older People Implementation Group (see idea 5.2).
- The proposed PSI Older People's Implementation Group will work closely with DCAL on the implementation of the Geographical Information Strategy for Northern Ireland (Mosaic) as an effective tool to assist in the development and monitoring of the Ageing in an Inclusive Society Strategy.
- Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) to take forward the monitoring exercise;
- A comprehensive mid-term evaluation (between 2 to 3 years) to be carried out, looking at inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes from the Strategy.



**Idea 5.4: Collate and disseminate best practice on policy, programme and projects to support older people in Northern Ireland**

It is important to recognise that whilst innovative programmes have been developed in the past it is vital that lessons continue to be learnt from the available evidence, and that practices are shared and enhanced as much as possible.

**Proposals:**

- Collate research and evidence of projects, policy interventions and programmes, some of which have already been identified in this report, designed to deal with older people's exclusion, which might relate to:
  - new governance arrangements involving older people;
  - volunteering schemes;
  - the experiences of the Neighbourhood Wardens, older people in the workplace;
  - joining up and integrating actions;
  - initiatives in the private sector; and
  - lessons from elsewhere, including outside the United Kingdom.
- Research and evidence material to be made available in accessible formats.
- Research and evidence material to be made available as a resource for development, training and education.
- OFMDFM to commission a consortium of interests to establish and service the programme of best practice projects and policies that support older people (possibly involving voluntary sector agencies and the Universities) and set out how it can be maintained and developed in the longer-term.

**Idea 5.5: Develop and implement a research strategy to help improve legislation, policies and programmes for older people**

Many of the proposals set out here have pointed to the need for further research to help understand the problems faced by older people, their priorities and how and where they use services.

**Proposals:**

- OFMDFM to develop a research programme on older people that will help to support the delivery of this strategy.
- This would begin with the publication of a draft strategy for consultation with the interested organisations and people.

**How do you feel about our proposed approach to Strategy implementation and how do you think we might integrate all the interests in the delivery of the proposed actions? Have you any specific views on how we should monitor and evaluate the Strategy over time?**



**5 Making a response to the consultation**

This document sets out a range of ideas designed to improve the lives of older people. Many relate to the humanity and basic decency accorded to older people, whilst others involve more specific actions or policy proposals. We want to develop through this Promoting Social Inclusion process an agenda that will address the inter-related needs of older people and identify their contribution to the civic, social and economic life of Northern Ireland.

Throughout this document we have posed a number of consultation questions and have summarised these below. We suggest that these might help to frame a consistent approach to the consultation exercise but you should not feel constrained by these particular issues. We welcome any relevant and informed discussion about how to promote the social inclusion of older people in Northern Ireland and all responses are valuable in this debate. The questions are:

- **Do you feel that we have analysed the needs and priorities of older people correctly?**
- **Are there issues that you think we should include in our assessment of need when establishing priorities?**
- **Are the principles, vision and strategic objectives appropriate and do they reflect your priorities for the development of a Strategy for older people;**
- **We have set out a long list of activities under Objectives 1 to Objective 4. Do you think that these are the correct actions and are there other issues that you would like to see included?**
- **In what way would you like to see the ideas prioritised?**
- **Are there specific examples of best practice or projects that could help us to develop meaningful programmes in these areas?**
- **Should any of the proposals be changed or even left out of the Strategy?**
- **How do you feel about our proposed approach to Strategy implementation and how do you think we might integrate all the interests in the delivery of the proposed actions?**
- **Have you any specific views on how we should monitor and evaluate the Strategy over time?**

Please also see Equality issues raised in Annex 1.

You should make your response in writing by the 19th of November 2004 to:

Andrew Adams  
Office of the First and Deputy First Minister  
Room E.3.21  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont  
Belfast  
BT4 3SR

Or e-mail to [info@ageinginni.gov.uk](mailto:info@ageinginni.gov.uk)

This consultation paper will be available from all post offices and public libraries in Northern Ireland. It is being sent to:

- Members of Parliament and MEPs;
- Members of the Legislative Assembly;
- District Councillors and community representatives within Northern Ireland;
- Voluntary and community sector organisations concerned with older people and Section 75 equality issues;
- Statutory bodies within both Northern Ireland and Great Britain;
- Irish Association of Older People;
- Age Action Ireland;
- National Council on Ageing and Older People (Ireland);
- A wide range of voluntary and community organisations.

If you require additional copies or alternative formats of the consultation paper, please contact the above address or telephone 028 9052 3437.

The paper is also available on our website at:

<http://www.ageinginni.gov.uk>

All comments will be treated as public unless you state that you wish your views to be treated in confidence. All comments will be considered when developing the Strategy and a summary of the responses will be placed on our website.

The consultation process will last until the 19th November 2004 and we propose to publish the report of the consultation by January 2005. We will take a further three months to finalise our report, which we will publish by April 2005. After that we will produce an *Action Plan*, which will set out how we will implement the overarching strategy including:

- The description of actions designed to achieve the objectives;
- The identification of bodies involved in programme delivery;
- The resource implications, if any, of the key actions;
- Targets for the objective areas that will be time bounded;
- Monitoring and evaluation methods linked to performance targets.

We also propose to launch a publicity drive to ensure that the Strategy is understood by older people, Government Departments, businesses and the Community and Voluntary sector. This will help to underpin our efforts to implement the Strategy and deliver change as effectively as possible.



## Annex 1 Equality issues

### Background

1. Section 75 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which came into force on 1st January 2000, "A public authority shall have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity –
  - (a) between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
  - (b) between men and women generally;
  - (c) between persons with a disability and persons without; and
  - (d) between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition Section 75 (2) states that; 'Without prejudice to its obligations above, a public authority shall, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.'

2. In line with its legal obligations and the specific commitments in its approved Equality Scheme, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister is fully committed to adhering to the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 when reviewing and developing policy.

### The Ageing in an Inclusive Society evaluation

3. The Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) group on Older People was set up in 2002 in response to a commitment given in the first Programme for Government. 'Ageing in an Inclusive Society' is a process set in place by Government to promote and support the inclusion of Older People in Northern Ireland.

**Assessment of impact**

4. Ageing is a multi-dimensional issue, which cuts across several Section 75 groups.
5. Research has shown that as the population gets older there are a higher proportion of:
  - a. Women;
  - b. Protestants;
  - c. Single persons;
  - d. Persons without dependants; and
  - e. Persons with disabilities.
6. The objective of this evaluation is to increase the positive impact on older people without adding any negative impacts for them or others.
7. Equality and New TSN analysis are closely linked, and wherever screening indicates that it is necessary, programmes and policies falling out of this strategy will be subject to full equality impact assessment. It will ensure that our current view of the likely equality impact of the strategy is correct. Only equality impact assessment of specific policy measures will accurately identify positive and negative impacts.

**Questions on equality issues**

8. We are seeking views on the way in which equality issues interface with issues discussed in this document and would be grateful for your comments on the following:

Is there any other data or information we should take into account when thinking about Section 75 (1) equality issues in relation to the strategy?

Could the proposals, in your view, impact on any groups within Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act in a way we have not identified? If so, how?



Taking account of existing legislation, are there any alternative approaches to 'Ageing in an Inclusive Society' in a more equality-friendly way? If so, what are they?

Do you have any other comments on the equality issues raised in this chapter?

**Decisions and publication**

9. Taking account of this public consultation, the consideration of these equality issues and any more raised in consultation will be taken into account prior to final decisions being made by Ministers. This will be fully reflected in the final strategy.

## Annex II Terms of Reference of the PSI Working Group on older people

### Scope and objectives

The Programme for Government commits us to opening new channels of communication with organisations that represent older people to identify the developing needs of older people, to consider how our services can best be provided in appropriate and accessible ways. This work will be taken forward in the context of the Promoting Social Inclusion element of New TSN.

The Working Group will consider factors, which cause older people to be at risk of social exclusion and develop a co-ordinated Strategy through which relevant agencies will work together to tackle them.

OFMDFM will present Ministers with a draft policy and Strategy document for public consultation, setting out clearly defined recommendations as to what preventative and other measures are required, by whom, and within what timescales, and other mechanisms to be put in place to evaluate effectiveness and ensure progress.

This policy and Strategy document will be subject to Equality Impact Assessment.

### Timescales

Work will begin during 2002. A draft Policy and Strategy document will be delivered within one year of the establishment of the Working Group. A final report will be provided to Ministers with 2 years of the initiation of the work.

### Membership of Working Group

The Working Group will be lead by a Senior Official in OFMDFM. The Working Group will comprise representatives from Departments, the wider Public Sector, Voluntary Sector and people directly concerned with the issues affecting older people, or their representatives.

### Methodology

The Working Group will:

- 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 issues affecting older people, and their causes.
- Consider Departments' roles and responsibilities in relation to older people, 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.
- Make 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.

### Monitoring and reporting

Detailed Terms of Reference, Action Plans and Performance Targets will be developed by the Working Group and agreed with the Equality and Social Need Steering Group. The Working Group will report to the ESNSG on progress against agreed targets on a regular basis and will be responsible for preparing a final report to Ministers. Specific targets will be included in our TSN Action Plans and progress will be reported on a regular basis.



### **Annex III Membership of the PSI Working Group on older people**

Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) – Chair;  
Anti-discrimination legislation Division; and Secretariat support  
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)  
Department for Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL)  
Department of Education (DE)  
Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)  
Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment (DETI)  
Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP)  
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS)  
Department for Regional Development (DRD)  
Department for Social Development (DSD)  
Northern Ireland Office (NIO)  
Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)  
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)  
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI)  
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC)  
Northern Ireland Congress/Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC/ICTU)  
Age Concern (NI)  
Age Sector Reference Group  
Confederation of British Industry (CBI)  
Law Centre (NI)  
Help the Aged  
Rural Community Network  
Northern Ireland Council on Voluntary Action (NICVA)







**Ageing in an Inclusive Society**

**Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister**

**Room E3.21**

**Castle Buildings**

**Stormont**

**Belfast**

**BT4 3SR**

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**Tel: (028) 9052 3437**