



# Figuring it Out:

Looking Behind the Social Statistics  
in Northern Ireland

Ann Marie Gray  
Goretti Horgan

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## ARK

ARK is a joint resource between the University of Ulster and Queen's University, Belfast. Its goal is to carry out high quality research and to make information on social issues available to the widest possible audience. Through this ARK seeks to inform and stimulate policy debate and increase capacity for knowledge based decision making in Northern Ireland. This publication, which brings together and discusses statistical information on a range of important social policy issues, is very much in keeping with these objectives and with the need to ensure that academic research has maximum impact.

About the authors:

Ann Marie Gray is Policy Director of ARK and is a Senior Lecturer in Social Policy at the University of Ulster.

Goretti Horgan is in the ARK Policy Unit and is a lecturer in Social Policy at the University of Ulster. She currently holds a Leverhulme Fellowship.

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### Foreword

I welcome this publication bringing together social statistics relating to a range of social policy issues in Northern Ireland and contextualising them within a lay friendly commentary. It shows that it is possible for this kind of work to be accessible without jeopardising academic quality. The presentation and dissemination of research knowledge in a way that engages a wide audience is an important part of the ESRC's mission across the UK. But it is even more crucial to encourage social policy debate in a region where devolution is still embedding. This book with its relevance for researchers, policy makers, users and providers of services and the public makes an important contribution to informing the future development of Social Policy in Northern Ireland and is very much in keeping with the current focus on maximising the impact of academic research in the wider world.

This project is the outcome of an effective working relationship between ARK and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. It shows the benefit to be gained from this kind of co-operation which is an important mechanism for the exchange of knowledge and effective collaboration necessary as we move towards more evidence based policy.

Professor Ian Diamond, Chief Executive Economic and Social Research Council.

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# DEMOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

In recent years Northern Ireland has had the fastest growing and youngest population of all UK countries. Population increase has been a general trend since the inception of the state, due primarily to natural change with births exceeding deaths. Historically, this increase has been tempered by significant population loss due to out-migration but more recently a different pattern has emerged with Northern Ireland experiencing significant in-migration which has resulted in a larger increase in population. Northern Ireland's population growth in recent decades has continued despite a fall in both the number of births and the birth rate. This fall in birth rate is tempered with a recent recovery in the number of births recorded. In 2008 the fertility rate in Northern Ireland rose above the replacement level of 2.1 births per woman. This recent fertility increase has in part been driven by in-migration.

Northern Ireland has the lowest crude death rate of all UK countries - related to having the youngest age structure. Since the mid-1970s, Northern Ireland has experienced a general decrease in the annual number of deaths recorded. This decrease has occurred despite the population increasing in size and the increasing proportion of the population who are elderly. As in other European countries, there has been a significant change in the age-structure of the population. This chapter summarises the trends in population, births and deaths from 1922 and offers some comparisons with the rest of the UK.

## Northern Ireland Population

The population has risen from around 1.28 million in 1922 to 1.75 million in 2007. There was an initial period of population loss from 1922 to the early 1930s due to significant out-migration from Northern Ireland. Following this, a rise occurred throughout the twentieth century, with the main exception to this period of growth being in the early 1970s when the size of the population again decreased. This decrease was at the start of the period of civil unrest in Northern Ireland known as 'the Troubles' and was due to particularly high levels of net out-migration. The 2006-based population projections indicate that the population in Northern Ireland is projected to continue to increase beyond 2030. Over the last five years population growth has been driven by both natural change and net migration. Net in-migration has been significant in Northern Ireland since the accession of the eight Central and Eastern European, or A8, countries to the European Union in May 2004. In 2007 population gain in Northern Ireland due to migration was half a per cent of the population or 10,000 people. The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) carried out research based on administrative data sources to estimate the stock of people of A8 origin living in Northern Ireland. In 2007 it estimated the size of this population at 30,000 people. This represents almost 2% of the Northern Ireland population of just over 1.75 million. While all parts of the UK have experienced recent increases in population, in 2007 Northern Ireland had the fastest growing population of all UK countries with a 2006/07 increase of

1.0% (17,500 people), compared to 0.6% in England, 0.5% in Scotland and 0.5% in Wales. In addition to having the fastest growing population, Northern Ireland also has the youngest population in the UK. In 2007, 22% of the Northern Ireland population were children and 16% were of pensionable age, while for England it was 19% and 19% respectively. In Scotland 18% were children and 19% were of pensionable age, and in Wales 19% and 21% respectively.

### Long-term Trends in Births

In Northern Ireland there was a significant growth in the number of births in the decades following the Second World War. A peak in 1964 at 34,300 births was followed by a marked fall in the number of births registered in the early 1970s. In the 1980s the number of births levelled off. The decline in the number of births in Northern Ireland resumed in the 1990s with the figure hitting an all-time low of 21,400 births in 2002. Since then there has been a marked recovery in numbers with 25,600 births registered in 2008. This increase restores birth numbers to the 1992 figure. Northern Ireland has consistently had higher overall birth rates than those seen in Great Britain. All countries of the UK have experienced a similar upturn of greater than 10 per cent in birth rates since the lows of 2001/02. However, Northern Ireland is the only country within the UK which has had fertility levels above replacement level since 1978. It was not until 1992 that Northern Ireland's fertility rate first fell below this level. This compares to 1973 in both England and Wales and 1974 in Scotland.

Across the UK an increasing number of women are waiting until later in life to have children. This has had an effect on the overall period fertility rate. In Northern Ireland over the past 30 years the most striking change has been the decline in the number of women in their twenties having children. In 2008, just under half (49%) of births were to mothers aged 30 and over compared to under a third (31%) in 1978. The average age of a mother at first birth in 1978 was 24.5 years which increased to 27.4 years in 2008. Whilst the overall fertility rate in Northern Ireland is higher than that of the rest of the UK, there is a variation in fertility rates with respect to age. Northern Ireland has lower fertility rates for teenage women but significantly higher rates for those aged over 25, with a peak at around 29 years.

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of births outside marriage. In 2008 in Northern Ireland, 39% of births were outside marriage, an increase from 6% in 1978. Similar trends are observed in the rest of the UK. In 2007, 38% of births occurred outside marriage in Northern Ireland, compared to 44% in England, 49% in Scotland and 54% in Wales.

Over the past thirty years there has been a significant change in family size. Prior to 1997 birth order statistics were not collected for unmarried mothers. Therefore this analysis relates to births within marriage only. In 1978, 18% of all births within marriage were to mothers who already had at least three other children. This percentage has steadily fallen to 10% of all births within marriage in 2008.

### Long-term Trends in Deaths

Over the last century the picture has been one of falling mortality albeit with an increase during the conflict of the 1970s. The figures also show that female deaths exceeded male deaths from the early 1920s until the mid-1940s. After this the number of male deaths were higher until the end of the 1980s. Female mortality improved at a faster rate from the 1930s to the 1970s. Since the 1980s, male mortality rates have improved, resulting in a narrowing of the 'gender gap'. Although female deaths have exceeded male deaths since 1989, male mortality rates still remain higher than those for females. Northern Ireland had higher crude death rates than Great Britain until the late 1930s when the rate began to fall more sharply. Since the early 1950s Northern Ireland has had consistently lower death rates than Great Britain, a consequence of it having a younger population than the other parts of the UK. As with births, there is a similar fluctuating pattern in death rates for each of the four UK countries. In recent years all UK countries have seen a general downward trend in death rates. Death rates for Scotland and Wales have become almost identical and have remained higher than England and Northern Ireland.

Although the number of deaths in Northern Ireland increased in 2008 to 14,900 from 14,600 in 2007, the long-term trend is one of falling death rates. The reduction in the number of deaths in recent years has occurred despite the population increasing in size and containing a greater proportion of elderly people. In 2008, 62% of deaths were to people aged 75 and over compared to 44% in 1978. Improvements in health care contributed to this reduction in the death rate.

Over the thirty year period from 1978 to 2008, mortality rates have improved across all age groups. Male mortality rates remained higher than female mortality rates throughout the period although there has been a gradual narrowing of the 'gender gap'. The largest declines in male age-specific death rates occurred in the 0–4 age group (down 68%) and for those aged 55–59 (down 62%). Female age-specific death rates declined most substantially for those aged 10–14 (down 75%) and for ages 0–4 (down 66%). If the age-specific death rates of thirty years ago years ago still applied today, the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland in 2008 would have been almost 11,000 higher (25,500) than the actual number registered. Thus, in overall terms, the weight of mortality has nearly halved in the last thirty years.

### Cause of Death

Over the last century there have been changes in the most common causes of death. In Northern Ireland at the beginning of the 20th Century a large number of deaths (on average 19% of all deaths registered) were due to infectious diseases such as diphtheria, influenza and tuberculosis. In more recent years infectious diseases have only accounted for, on average, 1% of all deaths registered. Conversely, deaths from diseases such as malignant neoplasms (cancer) have increased over the period. In 1922, 6% of all deaths registered were a result of



malignant neoplasms. In 2008 cancer accounted for 27% of all deaths registered. In 2007 the three most common causes of death in Northern Ireland were malignant neoplasms (26% of all deaths), ischaemic heart disease (17% of all deaths) and respiratory diseases (14% of all deaths). Similarly, in Scotland 27% of all deaths were due to malignant neoplasms, 17% due to ischaemic heart disease and 13% to respiratory diseases. Equivalent figures for England were 27% of all deaths due to malignant neoplasms, 16% due to ischaemic heart disease and 14% to respiratory diseases; for Wales these were 27%, 17% and 14% respectively.

### Conclusion

Changes in the demographic structure of the population, such as the recent increase in the number of migrants entering the UK, have public policy implications. Mortality trends have implications for health policies such as residential care planning and care for the elderly in hospitals, while a change in the birth trend will affect maternity services and school planning. The latest Northern Ireland trends show an increasing number of children born and more diversification in the family backgrounds of children. Data from the 2008/9 School Census in Northern Ireland show that around 3 per cent of the primary school population has English as an additional language. This figure has more than doubled over the last three years.

Northern Ireland has the lowest all age mortality rate within the UK. This is driven by the population in Northern Ireland having the youngest age structure of the UK countries. It is clear that over the last 30 years there has been a marked improvement in mortality, with the weight of mortality in the late 1970s being almost double that observed today.

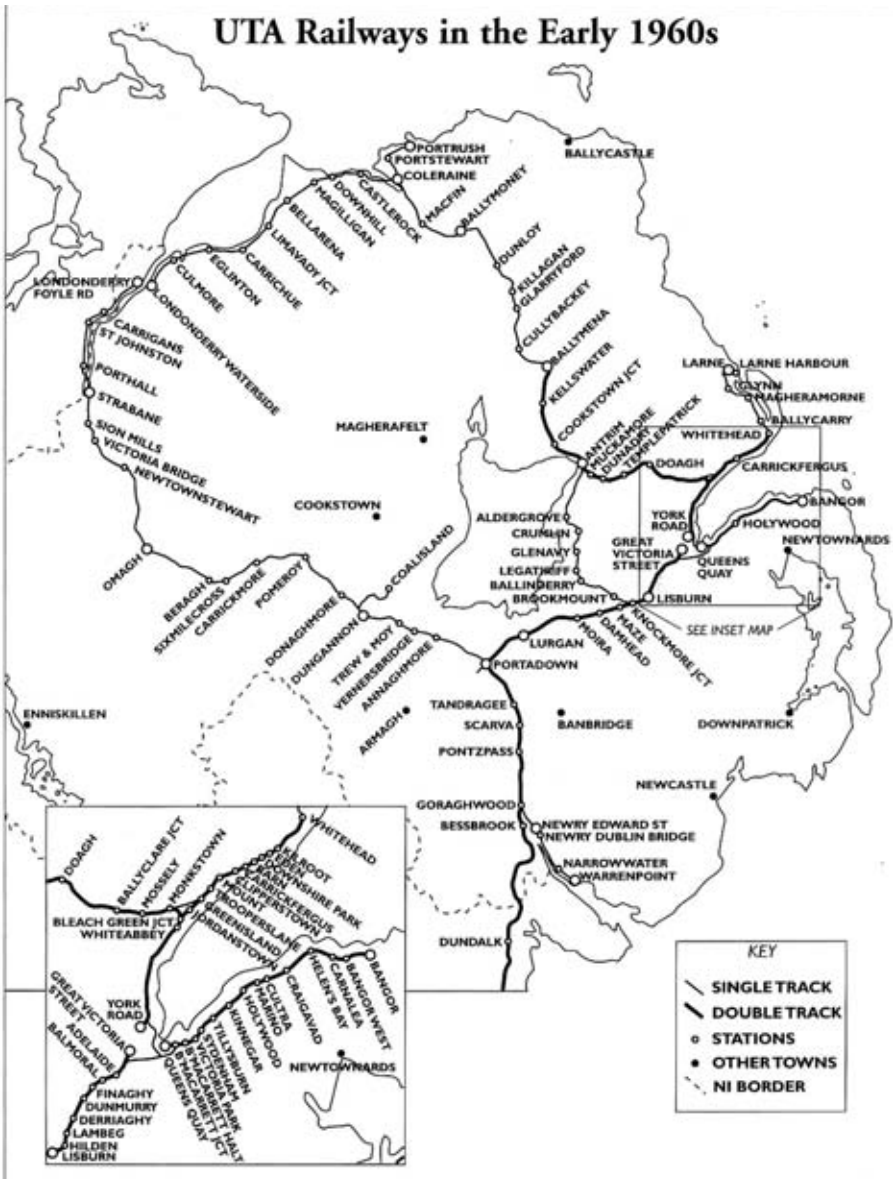
# ARE WE THERE YET? TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL

## Introduction

Transport is a crucial component of everyday life in Northern Ireland. It facilitates business, commerce, social and cultural activity and impacts on every aspect of society. On average each person in Northern Ireland now travels 6,100 miles per year. This equates to approximately 300 hours per year or 50 minutes per day. However, the way in which we travel has changed significantly. In the first half of the twentieth century, towns and rural areas across Northern Ireland were linked by a comprehensive rail network with major towns and other strategic areas additionally serviced by electrified trams. Prior to the 1950s the Northern Ireland rail network covered approximately 900 miles and extended north to south and east to west see figure 1 below. Much of the rail network closed during the 1950s and 60s, declining to around 200 miles today. Coinciding with this there has been a rapid increase in car ownership, growing by 400% since the 1960s. The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) Road Accident statistics show that in Northern Ireland in 2007/08 there were 6,321 injury road traffic collisions, an increase of 12.6% on the previous year and during 2008 there were 106 deaths, 4 less than the previous year.

# Are We There Yet? Transport and Travel

Figure 1: Showing UTA Lines Ulster Rail Network in the 1960's



Source: McLarnon Sinclair, I (2002) UTA Lines Ulster Rail Network in the 1960s, Colourpoints Books Map kindly provided by Mr Wallace McNaul.

## Policy and Investment

The Northern Ireland Assembly has responsibility for all aspects of transport with the exception of Air and Sea (ferry) which are reserved responsibilities. Although the UK White Paper on Transport<sup>1</sup> provides a broad vision, devolution allows for all the countries of the UK to develop local policies. Other UK and international policies also have a bearing. For example, under the Kyoto Protocol, the UK is committed to cutting six greenhouse gases by 2012 and it has a domestic goal of 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010.<sup>2</sup> EU transport policy up to 2010 focuses on sustainable developments and road safety<sup>3</sup> and a recent review of progress in relation to the 2010 goals calls for stronger action to tackle congestion, pollution and road accidents.<sup>4</sup>

The Northern Ireland Regional Transportation Strategy (2002-2012) forms the basis of government transport policy.<sup>5</sup> The vision as set out in the strategy is to:

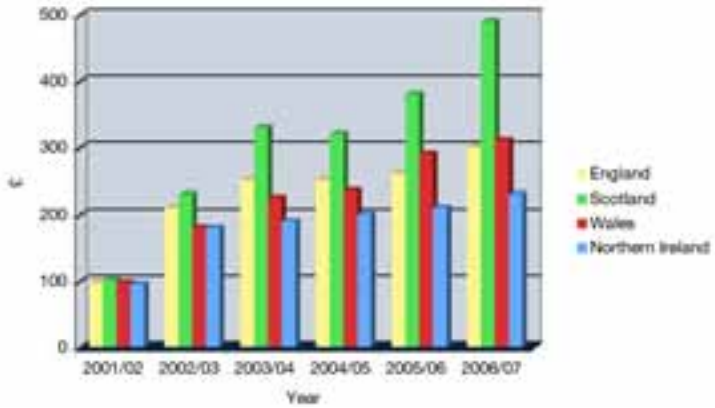
*“....have a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone’s quality of life.”*

There has been less investment in transport in Northern Ireland than in the rest of the UK and the legacy of such under-investment is acknowledged by government. The Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland notes that in terms of its rural nature, Northern Ireland is considered most comparable with Scotland. However, as the tables below show, in terms of both current and capital expenditure, and with regard to expenditure per head, spending in Northern Ireland lags quite significantly behind Scotland.

Treasury estimates show that the capital expenditure on transport in Northern Ireland increased by 63.2% between 2001/02 and 2006/07. In Scotland, the percentage increase was more than four times that at 261%. In terms of current expenditure between these years, Northern Ireland spending increased by 45.3%, while spending in Scotland increased by 86.59%.

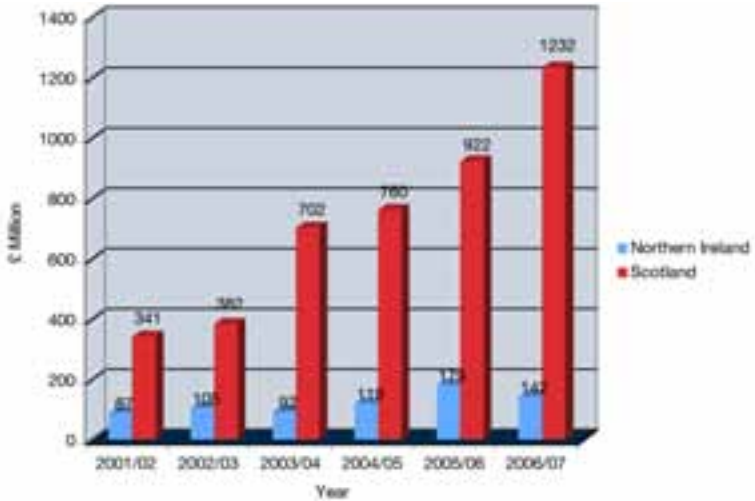
# Are We There Yet? Transport and Travel

**Figure 2: Expenditure per head on Transport (£ per head)**



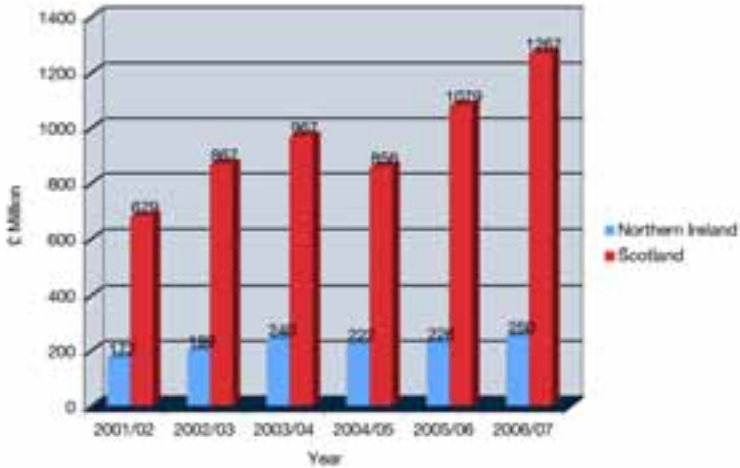
Source: Treasury Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis 2008

**Figure 3: Capital Expenditure on Transport (£ million)**



Source: Treasury Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis 2008

**Figure 4: Current Expenditure on Transport (£ million)**



Source: Treasury Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis 2008

In terms of transport expenditure per head of population, between 2001/02 and 2006/07 spending in Northern Ireland increased by 151.1%. In Scotland the increase was more than double this at 348.6%.

Investment in public transport in Northern Ireland is the lowest in the UK and is also considerably behind European levels. Spending has been, and continues to be, heavily weighted towards road services/improvements. In 2002 a consultation paper on public transport included discussion on increasing the private sector involvement in public transport.<sup>6</sup> However, there has been insufficient detail on how this would be achieved or discussion about the extent to which it is a viable option.

The Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland<sup>7</sup> has allocated £612 million for investment in the road network up to 2011 and £195 million for public transport. Over the ten years of the Investment strategy (up to 2018) the ratio is 81% of spending on roads against 19% on public transport.<sup>8</sup> This ratio of road to public transport spending differs from that which was put forward in the Regional Transportation Strategy (2002-2012), where 35% of spending was to be allocated to public transport.

## Trends in Transport Use

### Private Vehicle

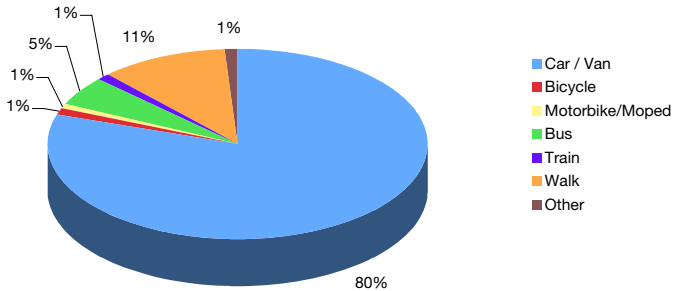
Northern Ireland is a strongly car dependent society and the number of licensed vehicles in Northern Ireland increased by 66% between 1992 and 2006. The car is the dominant mode of transport for all journeys over one mile. Children under 16 make 61% of their journeys as car passengers.<sup>9</sup>

While there has been a steady growth in car ownership rates since the mid 1990s, the high car ownership rate masks a significant minority of households which do not have access to a car. Slightly over a quarter (26%) of households in Northern Ireland do not have access to a car while 30% of households in Northern Ireland have access to two or more cars. However, only 14% of Belfast households have access to two or more cars, compared to 34% of households in the East and 31% in the West. In comparison to the whole of Northern Ireland, fewer households in Derry-Londonderry and Belfast have access to a car, 38% and 29% respectively.<sup>10</sup>

Access to a car is related to household income. Data from the Family Resource Survey 2003/04 shows that 70% of working age adults in the lowest income quintile live in a household where there is a car compared to 98% in the top income quintile. Over half of lone parent families and two-thirds of single pensioners do not have a car. Slightly over 20% of households in rural areas do not have a car. This is particularly noteworthy given the lack of easy access to public transport in many of these areas. Gender and age differences in terms of driving licence holders was also evident. Full car driving licences were held by 80% of men compared to 61% of women. Only 28% of women over 70 hold driving licences compared to 70% of men.<sup>11</sup>

Travel to work comparisons show that Northern Ireland has many more people travelling to work by car or van with 83.7% of people travelling this way compared to the UK average of 70.6%. Belfast has a lower proportion of working households with at least one person driving to work (59%). Figure 5 details the travel to work methods in Northern Ireland for 2005-2007. The figures show that few people in Northern Ireland travel to work by bus, rail or walking. The number of people travelling to work by car has increased by almost 4% since 2002.

**Figure 5: Method of Travel to Work (2005-2007)**



Source: Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (2005-2007) Dept Regional Development

As can be seen from Table 1 below, outside of Belfast over 80% of people travel to work by car or van. In all areas use of bus, train and bicycle is low.

**Table 1: Method of Travel to Work by Area (2005-2007)**

Method of Travel to Work	Proportion of People (%) Belfast	Proportion of People (%) East	Proportion of People (%) West
Car/van	59	82	82
Bicycle	3	1	0
Motorbike/moped	0	1	0
Bus	12	5	3
Train	0	1	0
Walk	21	8	11
Other	5	1	3
All	100	100	100

Source: Dept Regional Development Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (2005-2007)



### Rail Travel

For a number of years policy on the rail network was in a state of flux with criticism that non investment in parts of the railway network, particularly in the north west amounted to closure by stealth. Much of the stock was of a very poor standard and fare increases were high in relation to the cost of car travel. Between 1995/96 and 2000/01 rail usage fell by 9%.

The 2002 Regional Transportation Strategy set a target of 60% increase in rail passengers by 2012, although there was insufficient detail on how this was to be achieved. The 2001-2004 Task Force Report on the railway network resulted in the Assembly allocating £103 million for additional stock, which seems to have had an impact on increasing the passenger numbers. There has been a 34% increase in rail passenger numbers between 2001/02 and 2006/07. This includes a 16.7% increase in the passenger numbers on the Derry-Londonderry line between 2005/06 and 2006/07, possibly attributable to the introduction of new trains<sup>12</sup> (Department for Regional Development, 2007). However, as figure 5 and table 1 above show, the number of people using trains to travel to work is low in comparison to other methods of transport.

### Bus Travel

The bus service is more extensive than the rail network but several problems exist including limited availability of services, especially outside Belfast and in rural areas, poor evening provision outside of the greater Belfast area and lack of access for people with mobility problems (41% of buses are currently categorised as accessible). The Northern Ireland Executive Programme for Government (2008) includes the target that all Metro and Ulsterbus coaches will be 100% accessible by 2012.

Declining use between 1995/96 and 2000/01 led to a reduction in routes and fare increases. Travel Survey statistics for 2005-07 show that 5% of workers travel to work by bus (see table 1 above). Inevitably bus travel times have been affected by road congestion. At peak times journeys between Belfast and Derry-Londonderry take over two and a half hours by bus.

### Access to Public Transport

Consideration of accessibility issues includes geographical access and physical access. Few households in Northern Ireland live close to a train station. Sixty one per cent of people live forty four minutes or more walking distance to their nearest train station; 69% live within six minutes walk of a bus stop. Demographic changes means that older people will comprise a greater proportion of the population and many will be dependant on public transport, for example the relatively low number of women over 70 with driving licences as discussed above - though this may be a generation effect and the proportion of current 50 year olds with a driving licence will be higher. Northern Ireland has a higher number of people with a

disability than elsewhere in the UK, yet as outlined above currently less than half of the buses in Northern Ireland are accessible. While the new trains are accessible, the old trains are not. For those who are not able to own a car or who have mobility problems lack of access to decent and affordable public transport is a significant cause of disadvantage with a knock on effect in terms of access to employment, services and social activities.<sup>13</sup>

### Public Attitudes

The public's opinion clearly needs to be considered. Data from the 1999 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey<sup>14</sup> shows that when asked what would encourage people to reduce their own use of the car the two main factors were cutting public transport fares in half and a 'doubling of petrol prices in the next ten years.' Fifty eight percent of people felt that these factors would reduce their car use. Other highly rated causes included improving the reliability of public transport and charging for entry by car into towns/cities. There was strong support for the need to improve public transport with 32% of respondents stating that they would be prepared to pay a penny more in income tax to finance improvements in public transport.

### Key Policy Challenges

While the Programme for Government cites the objective of promoting an increase in the usage of public transport and identifies action to do this, including taking forward a feasibility study on a rapid transit system for Belfast and progressing work on the rail track by 2011, these measures are over a long term, and will be contingent on budgetary allocation and constraints. It is unlikely that any of the measures aimed at reducing car usage will be effective until alternatives are in place.

To date the main response within Northern Ireland to congestion problems has been to build new roads and improve existing ones. Critics argue that this is a very short term solution given the past and anticipated future increase in car ownership. The Sub-Regional Transport Plan (2015)<sup>15</sup> acknowledges the difficulties facing people living in rural areas who do not have access to a car. There has been limited policy support to date for more provision for cyclists and concerns about road safety and this has not been reflected in the financial allocation to road and public transport. Public/private transport ratios raise issues with regard to road safety targets, environmental targets and the health priorities.

Due to the lack of affordable public transport car ownership is essential for many families and the lack of access to a car can result in social and economic disadvantage in terms of accessing education, work and social activities. The inadequate provision of public transport also poses a challenge for other areas of social policy such as meeting the needs of people who are required to travel outside of their immediate locality for work, and financial implications including the costs associated with the high number of injury road traffic collisions.

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# FORTY SHADES OF GREEN? THE ENVIRONMENT

## Introduction

Northern Ireland has made significant steps over the past decade to improve our environmental record and to move towards more sustainable development. The region has seen the overall recycling rate for household waste rise in recent years from 4.9% in 1998/99 to 31.7% in 2007/08. There remain, however, a number of challenges to sustainable development in the region in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The environment in Northern Ireland has been greatly impacted by the growth in housing over the last quarter of a century. While this has been necessary to meet the needs of a growing population, the new infrastructure it demands has had a direct impact on every aspect of the environment. It has seen new roads built to service outlying estates; increased reliance on cars to access employment, with concomitant increases in emissions. The land taken for housing and roads affects the habitats of humans and animals to varying degrees.

All housing growth increases demand for water and produces more waste, both sewage and household waste. However, the landscape in Northern Ireland has been particularly and acutely affected by the growth in new housing built on greenfield sites on the outskirts of cities and larger towns and in 'dormitory' towns within commuting distance of Belfast and Derry-Londonderry. Development policy, as set out in *Shaping Our Future: the regional development strategy 2025* has an objective which promotes a more sustainable form of development by encouraging compact urban forms and promoting more housing within existing urban areas. It is too soon to have data about the success of this objective; however, the economic downturn may have an impact in terms of an overall decline in building.

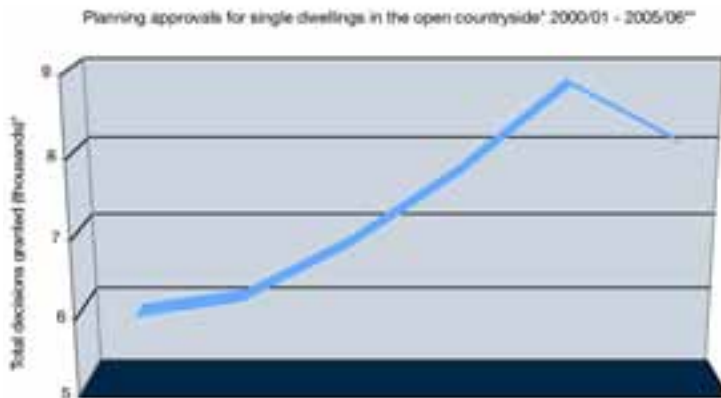
## Planning

Decisions on whether to allow proposals to build on land or change the use of buildings or land are made by the Planning Service. In determining whether or not to grant planning permission, the Planning Service will refer to a number of planning policy documents which include the Regional Development Strategy, Area Development Plans, the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland and Planning Policy Statements. Between April 2007 and March 2008, the Planning Service received almost 28,000 applications for planning permissions and consents. Of these, more than nine out of ten (91.6%) were approved.<sup>1</sup>

While there is a Public Service Agreement (PSA) target to decide 60% of major applications within twenty three weeks of their receipt, in 2007/08, 40% of major planning applications were decided within this period, compared with 38% in 2006/07. However, 60% of major planning applications were decided within thirty six weeks, compared to thirty eight weeks in 2006/07. This was in the context of a reduction of more than 1,300 in applications for full planning permission and some 500 in applications for outline planning permission in 2007/08 compared to 2006/07.

There was much controversy in Northern Ireland about the impact of the draft Planning Policy Statement 14 (PPS 14) which was introduced in 2006 under Direct Rule and which imposed a presumption against development outside settlements right across Northern Ireland. It may be the case, however, that the controversy served the environment well by encouraging much needed debate on planning policy. When a review of the draft Planning Policy was undertaken by the Assembly, led by then Minister for the Environment, Arlene Foster, there was a consensus that while draft PPS 14 was too restrictive, the previous unrestricted development was unsustainable. The extent to which the previous situation was untenable can be seen in Figure 1 which was produced as part of the monitoring of one of *Shaping Our Future's* objectives: "to create and sustain an attractive and unique rural environment in the interests of the rural community and the region as a whole". As is evident from the level of planning approvals for single dwellings in the open countryside, this was unsustainable if an "attractive and unique rural environment" was to be maintained.

**Figure 1: Planning Approval for Dwellings in the Countryside**



Source: DRD (2006) <sup>2</sup>*Shaping Our Future Monitoring Report 2005 - 2006*

Following the review of planning policy in rural areas, a revised proposal, draft PPS21, was published for consultation in November 2008. Aiming to balance the needs of rural communities with the need to protect the environment, it includes:

- The reinstatement of Dispersed Rural Communities (developments of small and appropriately sited groups of houses);
- Greater potential for planning permission to replace dwellings;
- New policy for the reuse or replacement of non-residential buildings as dwellings;
- More flexibility on social and affordable housing in rural areas;
- The reintroduction of a policy for a dwelling to meet compelling personal or domestic circumstances;
- Policy on farm dwellings and farm diversification brought into line with current agriculture and rural development policy.

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Draft PPS 21 applies outside settlements across Northern Ireland except in Special Countryside Areas. Countryside Policy Areas (CPAs) are exceptional landscapes, such as mountain ranges, stretches of the coast or lough shores, and certain views or vistas. In these areas, development is allowed only in exceptional circumstances.

Planning in Northern Ireland is governed by a range of legislation, regional strategies, plans, programmes and policy statements. Table 1 outlines a range of these.

**Table 1 Strategy, Policy and Legislation directing Landscape, Land Use and Management (PPS – Planning Policy Statements)**

<b>National Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991</li> <li>The Planning Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2006</li> <li>Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995</li> <li>Amenity Lands Act (Northern Ireland) 1965</li> <li>The Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985</li> <li>The Wildlife Order (Northern Ireland) 1985</li> <li>The Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands Amendment (Northern Ireland) 1995</li> <li>The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland "Shaping our Future" 2001</li> <li>Northern Ireland Rural Strategy 2007-2013</li> <li>Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy 2006</li> <li>Northern Ireland Forestry - A Strategy for Sustainability and Growth 2006</li> <li>Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy 2002</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Guidance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DOE Statement of Policy on Protected Landscapes 'Shared Horizons' 2003</li> <li>PPS 2 Planning and Nature Conservation (under review)</li> <li>PPS 6 Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage</li> <li>PPS 7 Quality Residential Environments</li> <li>PPS 12 Housing in Settlements</li> <li>For a full list of PPS see <a href="http://www.planningni.gov.uk">www.planningni.gov.uk</a></li> <li>Earth Science Conservation Review Geological Sites in Northern Ireland 2003</li> <li>DARD's Strategic Plan 2006-2011</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Plans &amp; Programmes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Ireland Rural Development Plan 2007-13</li> <li>Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007 - 13</li> <li>Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Implementation Plan 2006</li> <li>Area Development Plans</li> </ul>

Source: Environmental Heritage Service (2008), *State of the Environment Report*, p.92

## Preservation and Architectural Heritage in Northern Ireland

Concern about the number of vacant properties and the threat to buildings of historical or architectural value, from neglect and illegal demolition has led to planning policy favouring the retention and repair of buildings rather than demolition and replacement. The Northern Ireland Environment Agency has the aim of rescuing 200 buildings at risk over a 10 year period (as first established in the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy in 2006).

A University of Ulster research report (A Study into Vacant Domestic Property, 2007) noted 48,000 empty properties in Northern Ireland, including many buildings of interest, such as those on the BHARNI Register (*The Built Heritage at Risk Northern Ireland Register*). The fact that approximately 72% of entries are in private ownership (both commercial and individual), and the majority are sited in rural areas, reinforces the need for effective planning and targeted public policies that encourage re-use whilst discouraging vacancy. One policy development which aims to do this is the decision taken in October 2008 by the Minister for Finance and Personnel in the Northern Ireland Executive to impose a rating of 100% on empty homes.

### Northern Ireland and Climate Change

The issue of climate change has dominated discussion of the environment in recent years. Policy in Northern Ireland has responded to the challenge of climate change.

In 2006, *First Steps Towards Sustainability: A Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland* was published.<sup>3</sup> The Strategy pointed out that climate change is already affecting Northern Ireland. For example:

- 9 of the 15 warmest years recorded since 1841 have occurred since 1990;
- The average sea level is now about 10 cms higher than it was in 1900;
- Over 40,000 properties are currently at risk of river flooding.

Climate change is inextricably linked to our demand for energy which, as the main producer of CO<sub>2</sub>, contributes the vast bulk of our greenhouse gas emissions. Although there is no solid fuel, oil or gas processing carried out in Northern Ireland, the region is largely dependent on coal, oil and gas for power generating. Around 75% of greenhouse gas emissions are accounted for by the 16 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> produced annually through the burning of coal, oil and gas. Energy from renewable energy sources such as windfarms, hydropower schemes and wave turbines provided just 5.8% of electricity consumed in 2005/06.<sup>4</sup> Since 2002 the 'Renewable Obligation' has placed a commitment on electricity suppliers to source a rising proportion of their electricity from renewable sources. In 2006/07 the target was 6.7% rising to 15.4% in 2015/2016. Research by Diaz Rainey and Ashton (2008)<sup>5</sup>, using figures from OFGEM, shows that the present level of generation of renewable energy is far below the target. England and Wales produce 68% of the requirement, Scotland produces 85% with Northern Ireland producing only 9% of its electricity needs from renewable sources.

Emissions from fossil fuel sources impact on indicators of air quality and greenhouse gas emissions which, scientific evidence shows, affect climate change. As well as emissions caused by power generation, road transport, particularly private cars, contributes to high levels of carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide emissions. The demographics of the region, the configuration of its labour market, a limited public transport system outside the Greater Belfast area and a poorly developed rail system have led to considerable reliance on road transport. Over 84% of journeys to work in Northern Ireland are undertaken by private

## Forty Shades of Green? The Environment

transport, compared to just over 70% in the UK generally (SOE Report, 2007, p.23).

A study of greenhouse gas emissions for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland for the years 1990, 1995, 1998 to 2006 examined emissions of the basket of greenhouse gases being monitored under the Kyoto Protocol.<sup>6</sup> They are:

- Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)
- Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>)
- Nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O)
- Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)
- Perfluorocarbons (PFCs)
- Sulphur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>)

The resultant estimates are consistent with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) reporting guidelines; they showed that the UK distribution of regional net greenhouse gas emissions in 2006, expressed in terms of global warming potentials (GWP), is:

- England 77.1%
- Scotland 9.1%
- Wales 7.8%
- Northern Ireland 3.4%
- Unallocated 2.6%

Table 2 below is taken from that study and shows the changes in Northern Ireland's emissions of greenhouse gases between 1990 and 2006. The basket of greenhouse gases that are monitored are weighted by global warming potential (GWP). The GWP for each gas is defined as its warming influence relative to that of carbon dioxide. As the principal man-made greenhouse gas that affects the earth's temperature, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is the reference gas against which other greenhouse gases are indexed and therefore has a Global Warming Potential of 1. Therefore, all GHG emissions are presented as carbon dioxide equivalent, in line with international reporting and emissions trading protocols. For example, sulphur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>), largely used in heavy industry to insulate high-voltage equipment and to assist in the manufacturing of cable-cooling systems, is one of the six greenhouse gases monitored. It is to be curbed under the Kyoto Protocol. Its global warming potential is 23,900 times that of CO<sub>2</sub> when compared over a 100 year period.

Greenhouse gas emissions for Northern Ireland, measured as their million tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent have decreased overall by 6% since 1990. There has been a small (1.5%) decrease in CO<sub>2</sub>; methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) emissions have decreased by 20%, nitrous oxide by 17% and perfluorocarbons (PFCs) by 100%. By contrast, hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) have increased by over 500% and sulphur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>) by 352%. The bottom three rows of this table indicates the extent to which net emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O have been impacted by Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF).



**Table 2: GHG Emissions for Northern Ireland**

Northern Ireland	Mt CO <sub>2</sub> Equivalent											% Change BY to 2006
	1990	1995	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	
CO <sub>2</sub>	16.6	16.9	15.8	16.0	15.8	16.1	14.8	14.7	14.8	15.5	16.3	-1.5%
CH <sub>4</sub>	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.3	-20.6%
N <sub>2</sub> O	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.2	3.3	2.6	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.6	-17.0%
HFC5	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	505.0%
PFC5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-100%
SF <sub>6</sub>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	352.6%
Total (Net Emissions)	23.9	24.3	23.3	23.3	22.8	23.0	21.1	21.0	20.9	21.6	22.5	-6.0%
Net CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions from LULUCF	0.0	-0.1	-0.2	-0.2	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	

Source: AEA (2008) *Greenhouse Gas Inventons for England, Scotland & Northern Ireland: 1990 - 2006*

In 2007, the Department of the Environment and Environment and Heritage Service jointly published the Scottish and Northern Ireland Forum for Environmental Research (SNIFFER) report *Preparing for Climate Change in Northern Ireland*. The report looked at how Northern Ireland needs to prepare for the impact of climate change on the economy, the built environment and social well-being and included strategies for the public sector to deal with each impact. This included increasing public awareness, reviewing planning and design to reduce flood risk, improved management and maintenance of buildings and to enhance emergency planning.

## Waste Management in Northern Ireland

Waste management strategies in Northern Ireland are shaped by the EU Waste Framework Directive. This requires member states to produce waste management plans based on a hierarchy that promotes prevention, recovery and recycling of waste, with disposal, whether in landfill or by incineration, used only as a last resort (see Figure 2 below). The Landfill Directive includes targets for the reduction of biodegradable waste sent to landfill, as well as standards that aim to prevent pollution of the environment by harmful chemicals and gases that develop in landfill sites. The Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive includes targets for the recovering and recycling of packaging waste for the UK. Northern Ireland does not have its own packaging waste recovery targets.

**Figure 2: Waste Management Hierarchy in Northern Ireland**



Source: Environmental Heritage Service (2008) *State of the Environment Report* p.141)

Plans to implement Northern Ireland's contribution to meeting the UK's targets set by these EU directives are set out in the Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 2006-2020<sup>7</sup> and by three sub-regional Waste Management Plans. The three sub-regional plans were developed jointly by consortia of local councils. The consortia are:

Arc 21 which is made up of Antrim, Ards, Ballymena, Belfast, Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Down, Larne, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and North Down Councils;

The Southern Waste Management Group (SWaMP) which comprises Armagh, Banbridge, Cookstown, Dungannon, Fermanagh, Newry and Mourne and Omagh Councils

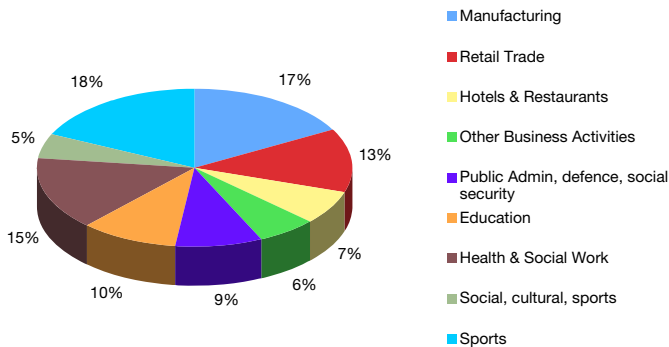
The North West Regional Waste Management Group (NWRWMG), which is made up of Ballymoney, Coleraine, Derry-Londonderry, Limavady, Magherafelt, Moyle and Strabane Councils. The sub-regional plans establish targets for waste prevention, recovering and recycling waste and the amount sent to land fills or incinerators, as well as the actions to achieve those targets. Most of these targets impact on household waste streams, rather than industrial and commercial waste.

The Packaging Waste Regulations do place obligations on companies with a turnover of more than £2 million and handling over 50 tonnes of packaging per year to register with the Environment and Heritage Service and recover and recycle a proportion of their packaging waste. Since smaller businesses are not covered by these regulations, only 390 businesses in Northern Ireland came under the regulations in 2005. Their combined packaging recovery obligation for that year was 127,987 tonnes.<sup>8</sup>

A large proportion of commercial and industrial waste could be recovered and recycled but

most tends to be sent to landfill. Commercial and industrial waste is not subject to the same level of audit as household waste, so there are not the same levels of data available for year on year reductions or increases in landfilled commercial and industrial waste. Figure 3 shows the areas that produce the most commercial and industrial waste. Some of these areas, like health and social care which produces 15% of such waste, education which produces 10%, and public administration which produces 9% are within the public sector and could be relatively easily audited and levels of waste reduced, recovered and recycled so helping to reduce Northern Ireland's landfill levels.

**Figure 3: Breakdown of Commercial and Industrial Waste (2002)**



Source: *Environmental Heritage (2008) State of the Environment Report, p.143*

As mentioned above, Municipal Waste which is overwhelmingly household waste, is subject to strict audit in preparation for meeting the targets set by the Landfill Directive. Since January 2005, district councils have to formally report municipal waste data on a quarterly basis. This allows close monitoring of the extent to which Northern Ireland is meeting the targets of our Landfill Allowance Scheme (NILAS). NILAS is designed to ensure that the amount of Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) sent to landfill is reduced through setting limits for each district council.

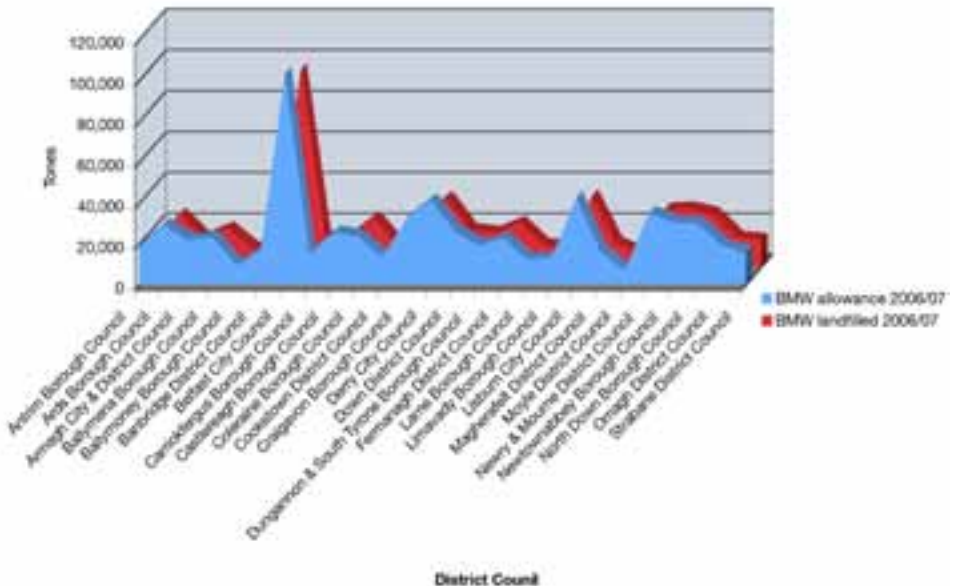
All twenty six district councils in Northern Ireland achieved their 2006/07 landfill allowance obligations by both diverting Biodegradable Municipal Waste from landfill and, where necessary, transferring allowances. One allowance represents one tonne of BMW that can be sent to landfill. In 2006/07, the total amount of BMW which was permitted to be sent to landfill was 655,545 tonnes. The total amount reported to have been sent to landfill was 535,716 tonnes. In 2006/07, 18.3% of landfill allowances were not utilised, an increase from the 16.3% not utilised in 2005/06. Over the last two years Northern Ireland has reduced the amount of BMW sent to landfill by 22,294 tonnes.

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The Southern Waste Management Group (SWaMP) sent 135,835 tonnes of BMW to landfill in 2006/07, 23.70% less than their allocated allowances. The amount of BMW sent to landfill by the ARC21 Waste Management Group (WVG) was 295,624 tonnes, 16.3 % less than their allocated amount. In the North West Regional Waste Management Group (NWRWVG), two district councils were involved in the transfer of landfill allowances: Coleraine Borough Council had a deficit of 1,830 allowances. Therefore, Ballymoney Borough Council transferred 1,830 allowances to Coleraine Borough Council, which allowed them to meet their obligations under the Regulations. Figure 4 below shows levels of landfill allowances across the region in 2006/07 and the actual landfill used by district councils, while Table 3 shows the huge progress which has been made by households between 2002 and 2008 in recycling their waste.

Over the next 13-14 years the allocations for each district council, and Northern Ireland as a whole, will progressively reduce making it vital for more BMW to be diverted from landfill. In 2007/08, 641,235 tonnes of BMW can be sent to landfill in Northern Ireland, reducing to 626,925 tonnes in 2008/09. This amount further reduces to 470,000 tonnes in 2009/10, the first Landfill Directive target year.

**Figure 4: Landfill Allowance Utilization 2006/2007**



Source: DOE/EHS (2007)<sup>29</sup> Landfill Allowance Scheme Regulations, Annual Report

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**Table 3: Percentage of Household Waste Recycled 2002 - 08**

District Council	Percentage of Household Waste Recycled					
	2002	2003	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Antrim BC	19.1	22.4	38.39	44.02	47.11	48.73%
Ards BC	9.6	9.0	20.40	24.02	25.45	27.61%
Ballymena BC	21.0	18.0	23.39	26.87	28.15	26.54%
Belfast CC	4.0	4.6	8.86	14.36	18.95	23.24%
Carrickfergus BC	8.2	10.5	17.20	17.41	21.89	33.16%
Castlereagh BC	5.0	12.1	22.24	32.53	34.91	37.69%
Down DC	13.5	13.3	19.17	33.69	32.16	31.56%
Larne BC	6.0	9.6	16.49	25.00	31.63	37.44%
Lisburn CC	9.0	9.2	12.25	19.83	25.08	31.95%
Newtownabbey BC	16.5	17.0	19.90	22.54	24.79	30.27%
North Down BC	11.1	12.6	17.21	24.63	32.97	38.05%
<b>ARC21 Total</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>16.70</b>	<b>22.90</b>	<b>26.80</b>	<b>30.88%</b>
Ballymoney BC	10.2	9.9	24.02	24.44	24.75	26.21%
Coleraine BC	6.8	11.6	18.60	24.26	25.67	29.86%
Derry CC	2.7	7.2	13.72	28.07	24.37	31.93%
Limavady BC	2.5	10.9	27.33	35.88	28.51	35.97%
Magherafelt DC	4.9	18.1	31.42	35.66	35.26	38.09%
Moyle DC	2.1	4.6	11.32	25.51	26.53	34.51%
Strabane D C	4.1	8.6	17.32	21.30	22.81	23.00%
<b>NWRWMG Total</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>19.30</b>	<b>27.60</b>	<b>26.30</b>	<b>31.31%</b>
Armagh City & DC	16.5	21.0	23.30	26.70	32.83	37.28%
Banbridge DC	29.5	33.3	39.21	40.99	45.13	45.70%
Cookstown DC	17.3	16.2	20.06	28.14	31.57	36.31%
Craigavon BC	16.1	19.3	23.35	29.29	29.96	34.67%
Dungannon & South Tyrone BC	10.9	13.4	20.13	19.54	24.93	30.22%
Fermanagh DC	10.6	17.5	21.04	20.77	27.83	28.84%
Newry & Mourne DC	9.3	13.4	20.03	24.86	27.83	30.09%
Omagh DC	9.1	12.2	19.62	17.77	27.95	38.09%
<b>SWAMP Total</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>23.00</b>	<b>25.90</b>	<b>30.50</b>	<b>34.4%</b>
<b>NI Total</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>18.9</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>31.90%</b>

Source: (Assembly Questions: Written Answer AQW 8411/08) and NIEA (2008) <sup>10</sup>

## Key Policy Challenges

Overall, then, there is clear evidence that the population of Northern Ireland has become more aware of the environmental issues facing the region. Through the coming years, perhaps the most pressing challenges will be the continued growth of waste produced and the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and take into account the impact that climate change has begun to have on the region. Additional challenges exist in relation to planning and architectural heritage, including the need to reconcile the demand for affordable housing with the need to protect the environment.

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# FIT AND WELL? HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

## Introduction

Health care has consistently been identified by the Northern Ireland public as one of the most important social policy areas and its top priority for spending. This chapter looks at the health of the population in Northern Ireland and at the main health challenges.

In general the health of the Northern Ireland population has been improving as evidenced by increasing life expectancy and, in recent years, some reduction in death rates from the major killers such as heart disease, cancers and respiratory conditions. However, preventable conditions continue to be a significant cause of death and many of these conditions impact disproportionately on lower socio-economic groups.

The majority of people assess their health as 'good'. Almost two out of three respondents (63%) in the 2005/06 Northern Ireland Health and Well-being Survey said that their health had been 'good' in the previous 12 months, 23% commented that it had been 'fairly good' and 15% said it was 'not good'. Overall 36% of men and 40% of women indicated that they have a long-standing illness. This proportion increased with age. In the 16-24 age group 12% of men and 14% of women had a long standing illness in comparison with 68% of men and 70% of women aged 75 and over. Ten per cent had been told by a doctor that they were suffering from asthma and 6% from angina.

Life expectancy has increased consistently and at 76.2 years for men and 81.2 years for women<sup>1</sup>, life expectancy in Northern Ireland is generally in line with the average for the UK and higher than in Scotland. However, when we look at disability-free life expectancy – in other words the proportion of your life you are expected to spend free from disability or chronic illness - Northern Ireland fares worst of all regions in the UK. So, while the average male in the UK can expect to have 62.3 years of disability free life, it is only 59.7 for a man in Northern Ireland. Wales (60.6 years) and Scotland (61.0) fare better. Women in Northern Ireland are also less likely to stay healthy as they get older, with only 60.3 years of disability free life expectancy compared to a UK average of 63.9. This is two years less than the next worst region, Wales, where a woman can expect 62.2 years of disability free life.

There is a considerable difference in life expectancy between those living in the most deprived parts of Northern Ireland and those living in the more affluent parts of the region. In the most deprived areas, life expectancy for men is 72.1 years, which is more than 4 years less than for men in non-deprived areas. Women in deprived areas have more than 2.5 years less life expectancy in comparison to women in non-deprived areas.<sup>2</sup>

Northern Ireland fares badly compared to other countries of the UK in relation to a number of diseases and illnesses. In comparison with England and Wales, Northern Ireland has higher

mortality rates for circulatory diseases (9% higher), respiratory diseases (28% higher), and injuries/poisonings (23% higher). The proportion of Northern Ireland's population that has diabetes is estimated at 5.4%, compared to 3% in Britain. These are all diseases that are closely related to deprivation.

Northern Ireland also has the highest female incidence rate for colorectal cancer (19% above the UK average) and the second highest male incidence rates for lung cancer (1% above UK average) and colorectal cancer (14% above the UK average)<sup>3</sup>.

There is much concern throughout the UK about the growing levels of obesity and the impact on the future health of the population. The 2005/06 Health and Well-being Survey estimated obesity levels using the Body Mass Index, which is calculated from a person's height and weight. Overall, three out of five adults measured were either overweight or obese. About one in three was overweight and one in four obese. Men were more likely (64%) than women (54%) to be either overweight or obese. Obesity was most common amongst the middle aged. However, 29% of young men aged 16-24 and 32% of young women were either overweight or obese. Data on childhood obesity in Primary 1 pupils (age 4-5 years) reports that 5.2 % of children were obese and 15.7% were overweight<sup>4</sup>.

### **Mental Health Issues**

Levels of mental ill-health in Northern Ireland are higher than elsewhere in the UK or Ireland. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) estimates that prevalence figures for mental health problems in Northern Ireland are 25% higher than in England. The number of people in Northern Ireland receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for mental health reasons in 2006 was 2.9% of the total adult population. This is three times the comparable figure for GB (0.9 per cent) and has more than doubled since 1998, when 1.2% of the total adult population received DLA for mental health reasons.<sup>5</sup> Other evidence, that suggests a growth in the extent of mental ill-health in Northern Ireland, is the 33% rise in the number of anti-depressant prescription items issued in the five years from 2000, to 1.4 million in 2005, equivalent to 0.75 prescription items per head.<sup>6</sup>

Findings from the 2005/06 Health and Well-being Survey show that 19% of all people aged 16 and over showed signs of a possible mental health problem such as depression, by scoring highly on a General Health Questionnaire (GHQ). Women were more likely to show signs of a possible mental health problem (21%) than men (16%). This is a better picture than that previously painted by the 2002 Health and Lifestyle Survey conducted by the Health Promotion Agency. It found that a quarter of respondents (23% of men and 26% of women) showed signs of a possible mental health problem by scoring highly on a GHQ. Those with no qualifications and those on a low weekly household income were more likely to show signs of mental health issues. Depression and anxiety were greatest in the 35-54 and 55-69 year age groups.



A Northern Ireland Audit Office Report<sup>7</sup> on absence because of sickness in the Civil Service found that stress-related illness accounts for almost one in three work days lost through illness. Stress is now known to impact on physical health, especially on heart disease and diabetes.

There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that high levels of mental ill-health are significantly related to the conflict, including the psychological distress suffered by those who appeared resilient during the conflict. Variation in intensity of political violence between different areas of Northern Ireland has been linked to area differences in the level of psychological disorder.<sup>8</sup> People in poorer households were found to be more likely to suffer significant health stresses and also more likely to have borne the brunt of “the Troubles.”

Another factor which should be taken into account in discussions of poorer mental health in Northern Ireland is that services have been significantly less developed. The Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability established in 2002 identified major deficits with regard to policy and provision and made over 700 recommendations. Lack of development in relation to community mental health services and poor services for children and adolescents were highlighted. The government’s planned response to the review is set out in a consultative document published in 2008.<sup>9</sup>

### **Structure of Health Care Services in Northern Ireland**

As in the rest of the UK, the National Health Service was established in Northern Ireland in 1948. There has always been some policy and structural divergence across the jurisdictions of the UK but the introduction of devolution in 1998 has resulted in governments in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland having more discretion over significant aspects of health policy. Historical differences with regard to the Northern Ireland system include the structural integration of health and social care in Northern Ireland in 1973. This resulted in the removal of social services from local government and health and social care being administered by four integrated health and social services boards.

The structure of health and social services in Northern Ireland has been under examination since 2000 when a fundamental review of the system of public administration was announced. However, decisions and the implementation of various proposals were delayed by the intermittent nature of devolution. Final decisions regarding the structure were published in 2008 and include:

- A Regional Health and Social Care Board
- A Regional Agency for Public Health and Social Well being
- 5 integrated Health and Social Care Trusts with 5 Local Commissioning Groups
- 1 Patient and Client Council

The new structure in Northern Ireland is more centralised than in Scotland or Wales where, post devolution, there was a strong emphasis on localism. The restructuring in Northern Ireland significantly reduces the number of health and social care delivery trusts. The five Trusts established under the restructuring serve large populations and are among the largest health related Trusts in the United Kingdom. Wales, with a population of 2.9 million compared to 1.7 million in Northern Ireland, has sixty bodies to carry out the same functions as seven bodies in Northern Ireland.

In addition to structural differences, there are a number of other areas where there is divergence across the UK. These include different entitlement to some NHS services. A number of examples are provided in the table below.

**Table 1: Examples of Differences in Entitlement to Health and Social Care Services across the UK**

	Prescriptions	Dental check	Eye tests	Personal Care
Northern Ireland	From 1 Jan 2009 reduced to £3 per prescription. Free from 1 April 2010	Means tested + free to under 18 and in Full time education women who are pregnant and had a child in the previous 12 months	Means Tested but free to people over 60 and those with certain medical conditions	Means tested
Scotland	To be abolished by 2011	Free	Free	Free in nursing and domiciliary settings
Wales	Free to all	Free to under 25s and over 60s	Means tested but free to people over 60 and those with certain medical conditions	Means tested
England	Means tested with exemptions	Means tested + free to under 18s, women who are pregnant and have a child under 18	Means tested but free to people over 60 and those with certain medical conditions	Means tested

### Expenditure on Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland

Expenditure on health and social services in Northern Ireland has almost doubled since the turn of the century, from approaching £2,000 million p.a. in 1999/2000 to almost £4,000 million in 2007/08. Since the 1990s per capita spending on health and social services in Northern Ireland has been higher per head of population than in England but has been lower than Scotland for some time. In recent years, however, the spend per head gap with England has narrowed and now has dropped below Wales, as well as Scotland.

In 2004, Professor John Appleby was asked to review the future resource requirements for health and social care in Northern Ireland and examine whether resources could be used more effectively.<sup>10</sup> Using Needs and Effectiveness Evaluation data he reported that in 2003/04:

- Hospital activity per member of staff was 19% **lower** than the UK average;
- Hospital activity per pound of health spend was 9% **lower** than the UK average;
- Hospital activity per available bed was 26% **lower** than in England;
- The unit cost of procedures was 9% **higher** in Northern Ireland than England with day case unit costs 9% **lower** and elective inpatient unit costs 12.6% **higher**;
- There were significant variations in unit costs between hospitals;
- Day case rates were **higher** than the UK average and had risen significantly since 1990/91;
- Average unit prescribing costs were nearly 30% higher in Northern Ireland than in England, though lower than Wales.

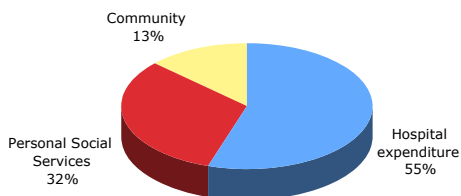
**Table 2: Expenditure on health and personal social services per head of population**

	£ per head
Northern Ireland	2,096
England	1,915
Wales	2,109
Scotland	2,313

*Source: HM Treasury, Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses Data (2008)*

NHS expenditure for the devolved jurisdictions is determined by a 'block grant' for each which incorporates funding for health services. The allocation of this is at the discretion of the Northern Ireland Executive. In 2006/07 spending on health and social care in Northern Ireland totalled £3.8 billion.

**Figure 1 Health and Social Care spending in Northern Ireland 2006/07**



Within programmes of care spending on hospital and residential services continues to be high relative to other provisions. Out of £629 million spent on elderly care in 2006/07, £171.2 million went on nursing homes (quarter of total spending on elderly care), £79.7 million on residential homes and £121.9 million on domiciliary care. In relation to mental health services, half of the £191 million total was spent on hospital setting care.

Analysis of Trust expenditure for 2006/07 shows that the amount allocated to health promotion and disease prevention, while increasing, is still relatively small compared to other Programmes of Care. In fact Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and Primary Health and Adult Community Programmes of Care combined account for only 4.4% of total expenditure of Trusts, despite the prevalence of CHD, mental illness, diabetes etc.

## Hospital Care

In 2007/08, over half a million (538,552) inpatients were treated in Northern Ireland hospitals. Of these 69% were inpatients and the remainder were treated as day cases. On a number of 'efficiency' measures Northern Ireland has improved. Since 2002/03, the number of patients treated in hospitals as day cases has increased by 21.6%.

There were 7,873 beds available across Northern Ireland in 2007/08; this is a 5.2% decrease in the average number of available beds in 2002/03. In the course of the latest year for which figures are available, 2006/07 to 2007/08, there was a decrease of 2.2%. The average length of time spent in hospital (excluding day cases) was 6.4 days compared to 7.8 days in 2002/03. Another measure of efficiency is throughput, that is the number of admissions treated in each available bed. This has increased by 19.4% between 2002/03 and 2007/08.<sup>11</sup>

The 2005 Appleby Report found that waiting times for in- and out-patient appointments in Northern Ireland were the worst in the UK, with considerable variation between trusts. These figures have since improved. Cutting NHS waiting lists has been a policy priority for the NHS in England since 1997 and strategies to reduce waiting times have included performance

targets and strong sanctions for failure to meet these. Historically Northern Ireland has had some of the longest waiting times in the UK for in-patient and out-patient care. In 2005, one in ten of the population was waiting to attend a first out-patient appointment but this figure has fallen steadily. Non-emergency admissions to hospitals had fallen steadily from mid 1990s and continued to fall between 2005 and 2008. In 2005, during a period of Direct Rule, the Minister of Health set out a package of reform to reduce waiting lists, including significantly more challenging targets. Hospital Statistics published by DHSSPS show reductions in hospital waiting lists for both in-patient and out-patient treatment.

**Table 3: In-patient Waiting Lists 2005-2008**

	Dec 05	Dec 06	Dec 07	Dec 08	% change Dec 05 and Dec 08
<b>Ordinary Admissions</b>	17,145	14,373	12,813	11,962	-30.2%
<b>Day Case Admissions</b>	27,595	25,879	24,950	24,938	-9.6%

In 2008 new targets were set for waiting times. From April 2008 no patient was to wait more than 21 weeks for in-patient or daycare treatment. From March 2009 the target is 13 weeks. In December 2008 4,370 people were waiting more than 13 weeks, with 161 waiting more than 21 weeks.

**Table 4: Number of People Waiting for First Out-Patient Appointment 2005-2008**

	Dec 05	Dec 06	Dec 07	Dec 08	% Change Dec 05-Dec 08
<b>First Out-Patient Appointment</b>	180,063	154,607	73,637	68,734	-61.8%

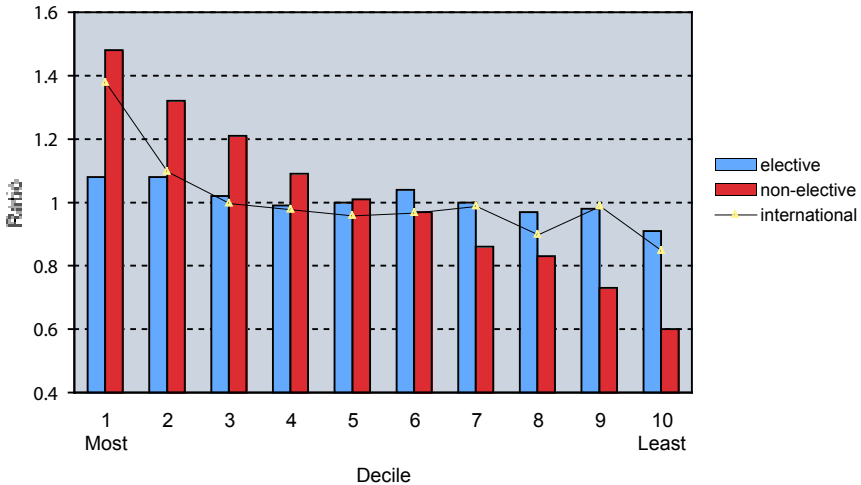
Outpatient waiting times have been similarly reduced. By April 2008 no patient was to wait more than 13 weeks for their first out-patient appointment, reducing to 8 weeks by March 2009. In December 2008 the number of patients waiting more than 9 weeks for their first out-patient appointment was 5,831, 8.5% of the total number of people waiting.

In order to effect this dramatic reduction in waiting times, there has been a significant investment surrounding buying-in capacity from the private sector. So, for example, in reply to a written question in June 2008 (AQW 8293/08), Minister McGimpsey revealed that the Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHST) had referred 2,884 patients to the North West Independent Hospital (NWIH) in 2007/08. Of these, 2,091 had had surgery and the total cost to the taxpayer amounted to £5.3 million. This was almost double the amount spent by the WHST in 2006/07 when it sent 2,130 patients to the NWIH, 1,389 of whom had surgery, at an overall cost to the taxpayer of £2.7 million.

## Access To and Use of Health Care Services

A report for the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust<sup>12</sup> looked at differences in the way that people in more deprived parts of Northern Ireland use hospital services, compared to those from better-off areas. It found that in the nine year period up to 2006/07, a person in the most deprived tenth of the region was almost two thirds more likely to have been treated as a patient than a person in the least deprived tenth. The figures also show that that while someone in the most deprived tenth is 17% more likely than a person in the most affluent tenth to be admitted to hospital on an elective basis, they are 132% more likely to be admitted on a non-elective basis. Figure 2 shows the actual number of elective and non-elective cardiology patients from each tenth of the population, from the most economically deprived to the least, divided by the number that would be expected to be admitted to hospital. A value greater than one indicates an above average use. As can be seen, people living in the most deprived tenth are more than twice as likely as those in the least deprived tenth to need non-elective admission to hospital for cardiology treatment.

**Figure 2: Standardised ratios for elective and non-elective cardiology patients, and patients receiving interventional cardiology, by economic deprivation decile for the period 1998/99 - 2006/07**



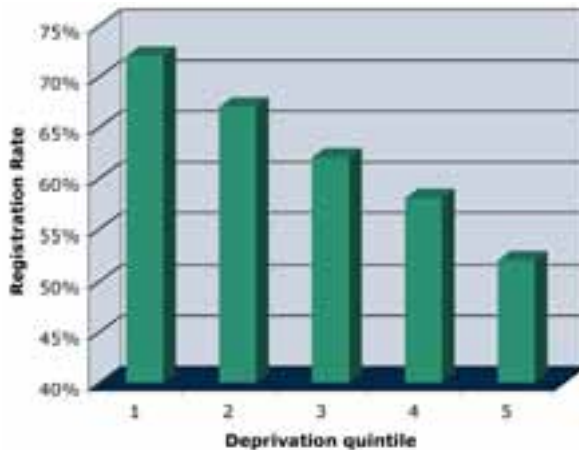
Source: Bates (2008), A report on patterns and trends in the use of hospital services in Northern Ireland.

There are also issues with regard to dental services. In June 2006, Central Services Agency figures show that there are 4.59 practising principal dentists<sup>1</sup> registered to provide Health Service dental treatment per 10,000 head of population<sup>2</sup> in Northern Ireland. This compares with 5.57 dentists per 10,000 people in Scotland. The problems in accessing NHS dentists

faced in some areas is reflected in the numbers of people registered with a dentist in Northern Ireland, which has dropped from 913,303 in 2006 to 862,864 at a time when the population was growing, although within the UK Northern Ireland has the second highest percentage of population registered with an NHS dentist. People living in poverty or in a deprived area are less likely to be registered with a dentist and more likely to have serious oral health problems because of a lack of preventative care.

In recent years there has been considerable focus on the growing number of people unable to get dental treatment on the NHS and the impact of this in terms of equity and oral health issues. The Oral Health Strategy for Northern Ireland published in 2007 provides information about the state of the region's oral health; it indicates that rates of registration with a dentist vary by age, social class and geographical area. There is a marked dip in registration at age 18 when free universal care ceases. While registration rates increase up to age 40, it then dips again – but without recovery after age 40. Figure 3 shows registration rates by deprivation quintile for 3-5 year-old children in Northern Ireland. Although dental care is free to children, just over half the children in the most deprived areas are registered with a dentist, compared to almost three quarters of children in the least deprived areas. Children living in the most deprived wards in Northern Ireland are twice as likely to have dental decay as children from the most affluent wards. Furthermore, in 2003, 8,000 Northern Ireland children attended hospital for dental treatment under general anaesthetic; this is the highest per capita rate of general anaesthetic for dental reasons in Europe.

**Figure 3: Registration rates by deprivation quintile for 3-5 year-old children in Northern Ireland**

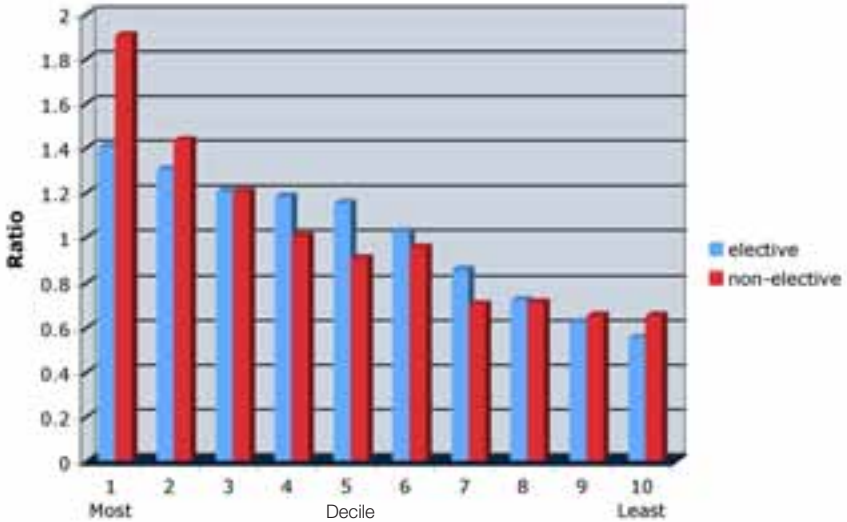


Source: DHSSPS, 2007, *Oral Health Strategy for Northern Ireland*.

A similar picture emerges in relation to adults. As figure 4 shows, people from the most deprived areas are two and a half times more likely to require hospital dental services than

those living in the more affluent areas, and almost three times more likely to need non-elective dental treatment in a hospital setting.

**Figure 4: Standardised ratios for elective and non-elective dentistry patients, by economic deprivation decile, for the period 1998/99 - 2006/07**



Source: Bates (2008), *A report on patterns and trends in the use of hospital services in Northern Ireland*

## Key Policy Challenges

This chapter has considered the state of the Northern Ireland population's health and explored trends in health care expenditure. On a number of measures Northern Ireland appears to be achieving greater cost efficiency and waiting times, in particular, have been significantly reduced. The recent restructuring of health and social care has reduced the number of health and social care bodies and resulted in a more centralised system.

Many of the challenges facing Northern Ireland relate to public health policy. This includes the need to increase healthy life expectancy, reduce obesity, achieve substantive improvements in mental health and reduce the incidence of a range preventable diseases and conditions. An overarching theme is the persistence of inequalities within the population in relation to health outcomes and access to health services.



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- <sup>3</sup> Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety (2004) Health and Social Care Comparative Data for Northern Ireland and Other Countries Information and Analysis Directorate. Belfast: DHSSPS
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- <sup>11</sup> Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety (2008) Northern Ireland Hospital Statistics 2002/03 to 2007/08. Belfast: DHSSPS
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# WHO CARES? SOCIAL CARE PROVISION

## Introduction

Social care refers to those services that supply the kind of care that often is provided by family members: care of older people, children and people with disabilities or limiting health conditions, including mental ill-health. Also known as personal social services, social care includes a broad range of activity, from residential and nursing home care, to domiciliary care and day care, meals on wheels and social work services. Social care also includes informal carers whose input, though essential, is often taken for granted.

Health and social care services in Northern Ireland have become increasingly integrated and, while this is generally hailed as a good thing, there is some evidence that social care services have suffered as budgets are skewed towards health, particularly acute services. Thus, while the Appleby Review of our health services found that, during the 1990s, per capita health and social care spending in Northern Ireland was consistently higher than in England (although lower than Scotland), it did not look at per capita expenditure on social care services. In 1997/98, per capita expenditure on adult services was £273.80 across the region, amounting to about 83% of all expenditure on social care services. The rest was spent on children's social care services. A total of approximately £747,341,027 was spent by the trusts on Personal Social Services in 2007/08. Using the mid year estimated population for 2007 of 1,759,148, this works out as spending on personal social services of approximately £424.83 per capita.

Social services' delivery is broken down into a number of Programmes of Care (POC). These are: Family and Childcare; Elderly; Mental Health; Physical Disability; and Learning Disability. While in theory it should be possible to receive services from more than one POC, in practice individuals generally must choose from which POC they will receive services.

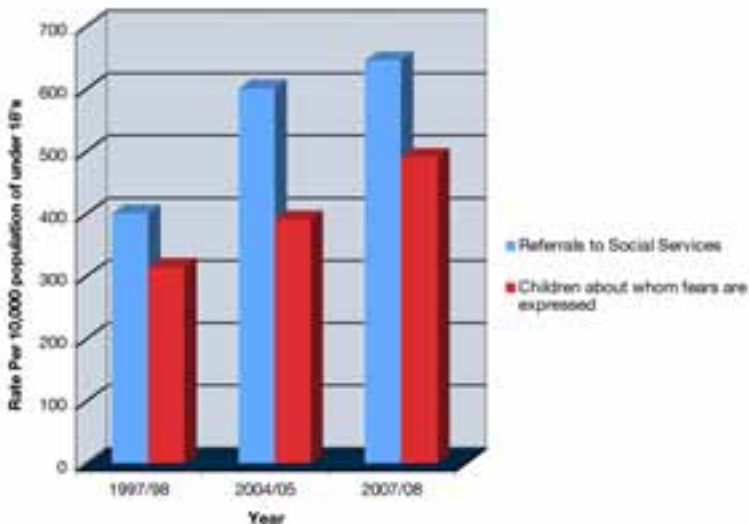
## Children's Services in Northern Ireland

While all families have problems in coping from time to time, those who can call on the support of extended families or who can buy in support through hiring a nanny, paying a babysitter or accessing private respite care rarely come to the attention of the state. However, for those families who through poverty or ill-health do not have the resources to help them cope when things go wrong, their children are often referred to Social Services. The rate of referrals of children to Social Services has been described as a reflection of levels of poverty and inequality in society. Over the last decade, referrals have grown by around 50% in Northern Ireland, from 401.9 per 10,000 children under 18 in 1997/98 to 598.6 in 2004/05. Using mid year estimated population figures for 2007 the number of referrals to social services per 10,000 population of under 18's for 2007/2008 is 650.4. The above figures refer to the actual number of referrals. As some children may be referred

more than once in the same year, figures are also provided for the number of actual children about whom fears are expressed to social services each year. So, in 1997/98, of every 10,000 children in Northern Ireland the figure is 313.7. This has risen to 388.6 children in 2004/05 and, using mid year estimated population figures for 2007, the number of children about whom fears are expressed per 10,000 population of under 18's for 2007/2008 is 488.8.

It is noteworthy that referrals have continued to rise year on year, even as the proportion of children under 18 in the population has dropped.

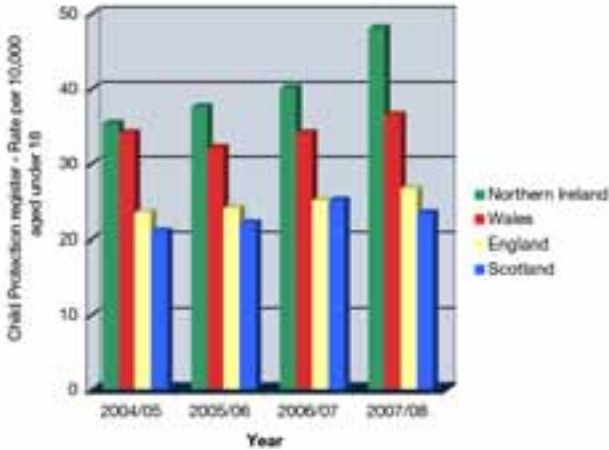
**Figure 1: Referrals to Social Services**



Source: *Childrens Order Statistical Bulletin*

The seriousness of the cause of many of these referrals is seen by the numbers of children who are placed on the child protection register. The proportion of children on the child protection register in Northern Ireland has been higher than in England, and the gap has grown steadily over the last decade. In 1997/98, for every 10,000 children under 18 in Northern Ireland, 30.1 were on the child protection register, compared to 28 in England. By 2005, the rate in Northern Ireland was 35.3 compared to 23.4 in England, and only 20.9 in Scotland. By 2008 the rate for Northern Ireland was 48 (an increase of 15% on 2007 figures) compared to 36.4 for Wales, 26.6 for England and 23.3 for Scotland.

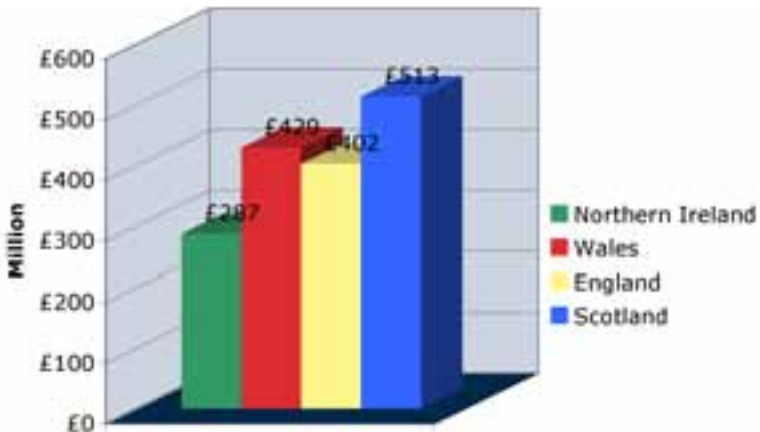
**Figure 2: Rate per 10,000 of children on child protection register, UK comparison**



Source: Childrens Order Statistical Bulletin

Whilst there are high levels of children on the child protection register and in the care system in Northern Ireland, expenditure devoted to such services is generally lower than in the rest of the UK. Research commissioned by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People and carried out by the Economic Research Institute for Northern Ireland and the Institute for Fiscal Studies<sup>2</sup> found that expenditure per child on personal social services in Northern Ireland in 2006/07 was £287. In Scotland it was £513; in Wales £429.10; and in England it was £402.

**Figure 3: Expenditure (£) per child on personal social services, UK comparison**



Source: Economic Research Institute for Northern Ireland and Institute for Fiscal Studies An analysis of Public Expenditure on Children in Northern Ireland. Belfast: NI Commissioner for Children & Young People.

### Day Care Provision for Children in Northern Ireland

Since 1997 in Britain the trend has been towards integration of formal education, early years and childcare provision. These objectives are linked to the government goals on reducing child poverty and are aimed at meeting the educational and developmental needs of children and enhancing childcare provision to help unemployed parents into work.

Although the *Sure Start* initiative was introduced to Northern Ireland in 2000/01, with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety having initial responsibility for the programme, funding for it has been significantly less than in other parts of the UK. In 2008 30,000 children aged under the age of 4 and their families had access to the services provided through the programme in Northern Ireland.

In 2006 the *Children and Young People Funding Package* announced by the Direct Rule Secretary of State provided £13.25 million for extended schools and £3.85 million for early years, supporting an expansion of *Sure Start*, a Planned Development Programme for two year olds, and investment of approximately £0.65 million to allow day care to be provided within *Sure Start* projects. From 2007 responsibility for *Sure Start* and other early years' activities has passed to the Department of Education (DE) as part of the drive to integrate early years support. In 2007/08 the DE made £12 million available to *Sure Start* pending the publication of a new *Early Years Strategy* 'to bring together early years care and education in a co-ordinated way'<sup>3</sup>. However, responsibility for childcare for working parents ranges across a number of Departments with the DE having responsibility for early years policy, DHSSPS having responsibility for inspection and a number of other departments funding provision.

The UK government actively began to support a policy of *Extended Schools* in 2002. The aim of the *Extended Schools programme* is to make schools act as 'hubs for community services' by providing access to a range of activities and services linked to the development of children and young people. In England this includes childcare provision aimed at supporting parents to enter and remain in the labour market. Services made available under the Programme can include study support, health services, support for parents, adult learning and community activities and high quality 'wraparound' childcare provided (primary schools) on the school site or through other local providers, available 8am-6pm all year round or to reflect community demand.

In England the government intends that by 2010 all schools will provide a core set of extended activities, some are free others such as childcare are charged for and £1.3 billion has been made available for the period 2008-2011. A number of extended school pilots were introduced in Northern Ireland as a result of the 2006 *Children and Young People's Package*. In 2008 the DE announced that the outworking of the Budget 2007 process would result in a considerable reduction in the resources available for the *Extended Schools programme*, from a 2007/08 allocation of £10 million to an allocation of £5.826 million in 2008/09. The Department also introduced new, more stringent eligibility criteria.<sup>4</sup>

Day care facilities in Northern Ireland include day nurseries, childminders, playgroups and some extended school provision including out of school clubs. The majority of day care services are provided by the independent sector. Table 1 shows trends between 2003 and 2007 in the number of places in day care provision for children under 5, including day nurseries, childminding places and registered playgroups. It should be noted that there is considerable variation in the availability of childcare places across and within the Health and Social Care Trust areas.

**Table 1: Childcare provision by sector**

	2003	2005	2007
<b>Day Nursery :</b>			
Private	6,633	7,642	8,508
Voluntary	587	803	1,018
Other	578	752	1,145
<b>Registered Childminder</b>	12,015	10,174	9,452
<b>Play group :</b>			
Trusts	130	94	106
Voluntary Orgs	363	421	276
Community	12,555	11,910	11,529
Private	1,600	1,345	1,104

Source: NI Children Order Statistical Bulletin 2007

## Care Packages

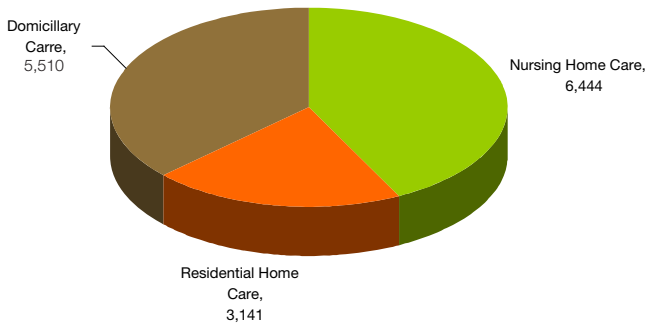
In recent years there have been substantial increases in the number of people receiving support from social services in the form of a care package. A care package is recommended for a client through the care management process. This process involves assessing the client's needs, planning for care, and coordinating and later reviewing the services recommended. Care packages are provided in the form of places in nursing and residential homes as well as domiciliary care in an individual's own home. A care package could also include provision of a home help and meals on wheels, or a place in a day care centre.

Between 1998 and 2005, the number of care packages in effect increased considerably from 13,942 to 20,204 – an increase of 45%. However, while the currently main emphasis is supposed to be on increasing the proportion of support delivered in people's own homes, the proportion of care packages in effect where the main form of care is in the person's own home (domiciliary care) has decreased, while care in residential and nursing homes has increased. In 1997/98, 43.2% of care packages provided domiciliary care; this dropped to 37.4% in 2003 but had climbed to 40.5% by 2005. Eighty percent of people in receipt of a home help service are in the elderly POC group. However, figures for the level of domiciliary care are not available and would be an important indication of the extent to which actual needs are being met in the community.

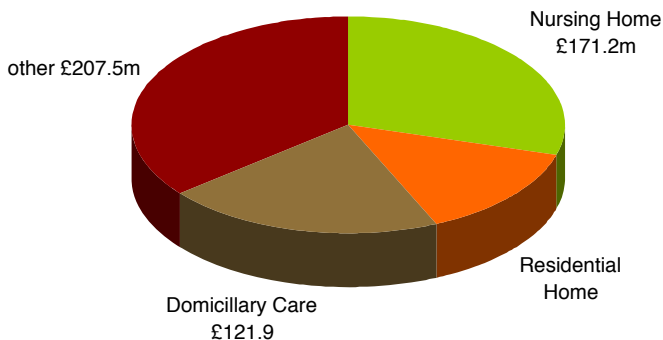
## Older People

Three out of four of all care packages (i.e. care packages provided in a person's home or in a residential or nursing home setting) are provided to older people via the Elderly Care programme. This proportion has remained fairly constant over the last decade but since 2002 the largest increase in care packages for the elderly has been in the nursing home sector.<sup>5</sup> Services have also been increasingly targeted towards those with higher level needs resulting in a reduction in the overall number of people receiving care packages. In March 2007, there were 15,194 older people in Northern Ireland benefiting from a care package: 6,444 of these were in nursing homes. Expenditure in Elderly Care totalled £629 million in 2006/07. Hospital services accounted for £124.4 million of this with £94.8 million spent on Geriatric Medicine and £29.6 million on Old Age Psychiatry. Nursing Homes (£171.2 million) accounted for nearly a quarter of the expenditure within this POC, residential homes for £79.7 million and spending on Domiciliary Care amounted to £121.9 million. In January 2008, there were 320 residential care homes in Northern Ireland providing 5,023 places. At the same time, there were 250 nursing homes providing 10,171 places. Although the number of residential care packages has risen over time, the number of places in residential homes has fallen as a result of a downward trend since 1990/91. By March 1997, the number of available places was 6,787, reducing to 6,164 in March 2005 and 5023 places in 2008. As noted in the chapter on health, a person's entitlement to free social care varies across the countries of the UK. In Northern Ireland older people in residential or nursing homes are charged for personal care, a service that is free in Scotland.

**Figure 4 Care packages for elderly POC by care type 2006/2007**



**Figure 5 Expenditure on elderly care in Northern Ireland (£ millions) 2006/2007**



Legislation to allow Direct Payments to be made to people wishing to purchase their own care was introduced in 1996. However, the take up of Direct Payments in Northern Ireland is low across all client groups with only a 3.3% take up among older people. Although the number of people in receipt of direct payments has increased, only 4,777 Direct Payments were made in Northern Ireland between June 2007 and June 2008.

## Mental Health

Using any of a number of measures, Northern Ireland has inordinately high rates of mental ill-health, attributed generally to a combination of high rates of poverty and the impact of the conflict. Using the General Health Questionnaire, the Northern Ireland Health and Social Well Being Survey (2001) had found a prevalence of mental health problems of 24% among women and 17% among men; this is over 20% higher than the rates in England or Scotland. In 2002, more than a third of Incapacity Benefit claimants had mental health problems and just under one in five people receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) gave mental health reasons as the main disabling condition.

Figures from the 2005-06 Northern Ireland Health and Social Well Being Survey suggest a slight reduction in the prevalence of mental health problems to 21% among women and 16% among men, however, other sources suggest that rates of mental ill-health in the region are increasing. For example, the rate of anti-depressant prescriptions per head of (total) population rose from 6.1 in 2000 to 7.8 in 2004<sup>6</sup>. By 2007, one in three people receiving DLA, a full 3% of the population, were doing so for reasons of mental ill-health, a rate three times that in Britain.

The reports produced by the Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability brought together the current state of knowledge on mental health care in Northern Ireland.



They can be accessed on [www.rmhdni.gov.uk](http://www.rmhdni.gov.uk). The Review found that Health and Personal Social Services expenditure on Adult Mental Health in the year 2002/03 was £110 million, 6.1% of the total expenditure on health and social care (PSS Key Indicators records 6.7%). This represented a reduction in the proportion of H&PSS expenditure on adult mental health, down from 7.5% in 1997/08. Expenditure on mental health in England in 2002/03 accounted for 11.8% of public spending on health and social services compared with 8.4% in Northern Ireland.

The Bamford Review found that, in 2002/03, over half (57%) of the mental health expenditure was on hospital services. This remained the case in 2006/07 when over half the £191million expenditure in Mental Health services was for hospital settings (£98.7million)<sup>7</sup>.

### Learning Disability

The Bamford Review also looked at learning disability in Northern Ireland. Table 2 is taken from the Bamford Review's Strategic Review of Learning Disability and Service Provision. Using data from various databases, it presents estimates of the numbers of people with a learning disability by age groupings and severity of disabilities and provides comparative data from the Republic of Ireland.

These data suggests that more children in Northern Ireland are recorded as having a learning disability than in the Republic of Ireland. However in the latter, the figures are based on children in receipt of, or requiring special services. In Northern Ireland some of the children classed as having a 'learning disability' in the Child Health System may not be making any demands on special services.

**Table 2 Learning disability by age and severity(1)**

Age Bands	Moderate	Severe/ Profound	Total	Overall Prevalence	ROI Prevalence*
0-19	6432	1718	8150	16.30	7.69
	39.3%	10.5%	49.8%		
20-34	2504	1047	3551	10.16	9.59
	15.3%	6.4%	21.7%		
35-49	1489	949	2438	7.04	7.81
	9.1%	5.8%	14.9%		(35-54 yrs)
50+	1473	753	2226	4.54	3.62
	9.0%	4.6%	13.6%		(55+ yrs)

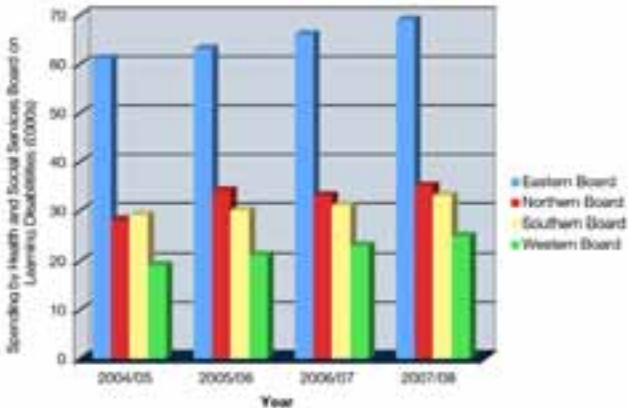
<sup>(1)</sup> Overall and ROI prevalence refers to the prevalence per 1000 population for each age band.

# Who Cares? Social Care Provision

The prevalence figures for people aged 20 years and over are broadly comparable. Similar data are not available for Great Britain although in Scotland an estimated 5.45 per 1,000 are in regular contact with services with others having occasional or short term contact. Some of this additional level of learning disability in Northern Ireland may be due to the fact that rates for congenital<sup>8</sup> malformation at birth are much higher than in Britain.

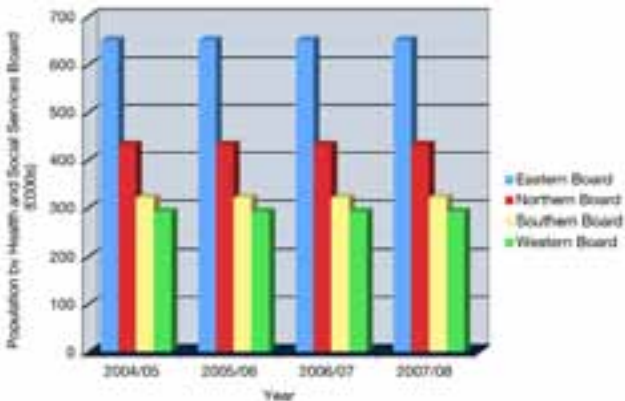
Spending by Health and Social Service Board on learning disabilities varies considerably, even when different population sizes are taken into account. These figures for spending in the last four available years were supplied by the Minister for Health in response to a question in the Assembly.

**Figure 6: Spending on learning disabilities by health board**



Source: Written answer to AQW8855/08

**Figure 7: Population by health board**



The Bamford review pointed out that Northern Ireland has the highest proportion of people resident in long-stay hospitals and also has the single largest hospital in these islands. In 2003, Northern Ireland had 264 long stay beds per 1 million population, compared to 15 beds per 1 million population in England and Wales and 163 beds per 1 million in Scotland. Further, there are many more beds provided in Northern Irish hospitals for assessment and treatment admissions (estimated 203 beds or 11.9 per 10,000 population) compared to Scotland (3.98 per 100,000 population). (Audit of Learning Disability Chapter 1, P. 36/37)

Bamford reports that in 2000, over one quarter of people with a learning disability in Northern Ireland lived in nursing homes while in England and Wales in 1997, just 7% of their places were in nursing homes. While the proportion of nursing home places varied within Northern Ireland, the NHSSB having the highest proportion (46%) and the WHSSB the lowest (21%), all relied heavily on nursing home placements. Perhaps inevitably then, the proportion of people in supported housing within Northern Ireland is lower than Great Britain although there is wide variation across the four Boards; with EHSSB having the highest proportion (31%) and WHSSB and SHSSB the lowest (4%)<sup>9</sup>. As with mental health, the Bamford Review website has a huge amount of information about learning disability in Northern Ireland. This can be accessed on [www.rmhdni.gov.uk](http://www.rmhdni.gov.uk).

In February 2009 the DHSSPS announced proposed additional resources for key areas of personal social services including:

- 17 % increase for mental health and 16% increase for learning disability to help drive the Bamford recommendations forward.
- 13% increase for elderly services;
- 16% increase for children services; and
- 14% increase for physical or sensory disability services. (DHSSPS, 2009)

However this spending has to come from efficiency savings achieved from within the general health and social care budget and does not reflect any additional resources to health and social care in Northern Ireland.

### Informal Care

Informal care refers to the care that is provided, in the main by other family members, on an unpaid basis to older persons and persons with a disability. Informal care underpins our health and social care services and is a vital contribution to maintaining the health and well being of a significant proportion of the population in Northern Ireland. It has been estimated that one in three people will become carers at some stage in their lives. Taking on a caring role can significantly change people's lives and have an impact on their financial circumstances as well as their health and well being. The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey asked people about caring responsibilities in 1994 and again in 2006. The 2006 Survey found, overall, that the proportion of people reporting that they have caring responsibilities in 2006 (23%) was marginally lower than the figure for 1994 (26%). While

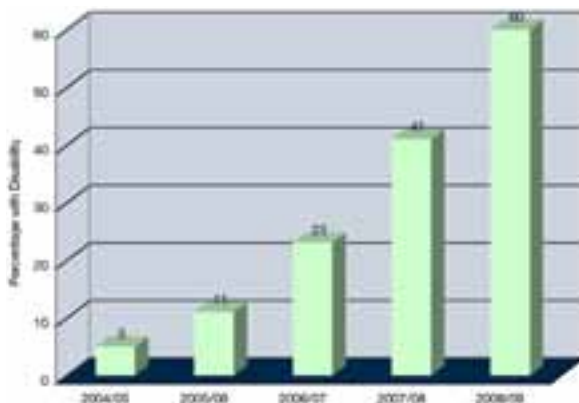
slightly fewer people are engaged in informal care, for those that are, informal care is more intensive and more demanding. While just 13% of carers in 1994 provided 30 hours or more of care per week, 31% of carers in 2006 provided 30 or more hours. At the same time, the proportion of people caring for friends or neighbours (outside the immediate family) declined sharply from 10% to just 3% and there are fewer informal carers assisting persons in another household. Overall, the findings suggest that informal care is increasingly being provided only within and to the immediate family<sup>10</sup>.

### Physical and Sensory Disability

The Northern Ireland Survey of Activity Limitation and Disability (NISALD) was carried out throughout 2006 and was completed in early 2007. It aimed to provide an up-to-date, accurate picture on the prevalence and circumstances of people in Northern Ireland with a disability. The definition of disability for the purposes of the NISALD was based on the concepts of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) which was developed and endorsed by the World Health Organisation.

NISALD found that 18% of the population in Northern Ireland are limited in their daily activities for reasons associated with a disability or long-term condition. Twenty one percent of adults and 6% of children have at least one disability. The difference between the groups is indicative of the fact that the overwhelming majority of disability is acquired. Figure 8 underlines the way in which the prevalence of disability increases with age.

**Figure 8: Prevalence rates by age group**



The majority of disability is due to a physical or sensory impairment. NISALD reports that the most common disability amongst adults is that associated with a chronic illness (14% of adults) followed by pain (12%) and mobility (also 12%). Some people have a number of

disabilities which are associated with each other. For example, a person may suffer from arthritis (a chronic illness) which causes pain and associated mobility difficulties.

While 18% of the population has a limiting disability, only a small proportion of these people receive social care services. Thus, while the Royal National Institute of the Blind estimate there are over 28,000 blind or partially sighted people in Northern Ireland, about 5,400 blind and partially sighted people had contact with a Health and Social Care Trust in 2006/07. Over 6,600 people who are deaf or hard of hearing had contact with a HSC Trust in that year. Just over 10,000 people with another form of physical impairment had contact with a HSC Trust in 2006/07.

During 2006/07, 11,706 people with a physical or sensory impairment had contact with community service providers. Comparing 2006/07 with 2002/03, the number of people with a physical or sensory impairment decreased by 465 (4%).

Of 1,543 care packages in effect for people with a physical or sensory impairment in 2006/07, the majority, 1,132 were packages of domiciliary care with slightly over one third, 411, residential care packages.

At 31 March 2007, there were 4 residential homes in Northern Ireland solely for people with a physical disability / sensory impairment, providing 64 places.

### Key Policy Challenges

This chapter has considered social care provision in Northern Ireland and looked at trends in social care policy and funding. The structural integration of health and social care services in Northern Ireland is generally viewed as positive but there is some evidence that social care services have suffered from greater emphasis on acute health care. Much social care provision in Northern Ireland is less developed than in other parts of the UK and has suffered from historical underfunding, despite high levels of need in areas including child protection and mental health. The low level of childcare provision for working parents remains a challenge for policy. Parents in Northern Ireland have not had access to some of the initiatives introduced elsewhere in the UK, including the availability of 'wrap around childcare'. The review of mental health and learning disability (the Bamford Review), has resulted in an increased focus and a commitment to more funding for these areas.

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- <sup>2</sup> Economic Research Institute for Northern Ireland and Institute for Fiscal Studies (2007) An Analysis of Public Expenditure on Children in Northern Ireland, Belfast: Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People
- <sup>3</sup> NI Assembly Debate on Pre-school Education 26 Feb 2008 (Statement by the Minister of Education)
- <sup>4</sup> Department of Education for Northern Ireland (2008) Extended Schools Programme, Criteria and Funding, 2008/09. Belfast: DENI
- <sup>5</sup> Northern Ireland Public Accounts Committee (2008) Report into Older People and Domiciliary Care, Report 24/07/08R Feb, 2008, NI Assembly Public Accounts Committee
- <sup>6</sup> Assembly answer to written question 65867, June 2008.
- <sup>7</sup> Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety (2008), Summary of HPSS expenditure in Northern Ireland 2006-07. Belfast: DHSSPS
- <sup>8</sup> Information and Analysis Unit, Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (2002) Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland: a Statistical Profile. Belfast: DHSSPS and NISRA
- <sup>9</sup> Figures taken from Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability [www.rmhdni.gov.uk](http://www.rmhdni.gov.uk)
- <sup>10</sup> Evason, E (2007) Who Cares Now? Changes in Informal Caring 1994 and 2006, ARK Research Update No 51 – [www.ark.ac.uk](http://www.ark.ac.uk)

# ARE WE WORKING? SHIFTING PATTERNS OF EMPLOYMENT

## Introduction

The number of people in a society that are employed is often used as a measure of the functioning of that society. During the years of the conflict, and particularly in the 1980s, unemployment was high in Northern Ireland and the number of jobs low compared to other regions of the UK. However, the rate of employment and unemployment, and the number of jobs, in the Northern Irish economy were at that time similar to the Republic of Ireland.

The number of actual jobs in Northern Ireland's economy increased from 720,000 in 1998 to 842,000 in 2007 an increase of 12%. This was a faster rate of growth in jobs than any other UK region. Compared to the Republic of Ireland, of course, the increase was not so significant. Total employment in the Republic's economy rose from 1,670,700 in 2000 to 2,095,000 in 2007, an increase of over 20 percent.

In the decade from 1998 to the end of 2007, the number of people aged 16 and over in employment in Northern Ireland rose from 687,000 to 778,000, an increase of over 13 percent. The employment rate, the proportion of people of working age who are employed, rose to around 70 percent. Over the same period the number of people who were unemployed almost halved – from 53,000 in 1998 to 29,000 in 2007.

Since the number in employment includes those who are self-employed, the difference between the numbers in employment and the number of jobs suggests that about 64,000 jobs in the region are held by people who have more than one job.

However since January 2008 there has been a significant downturn in employment with the number of people claiming unemployment benefit increasing by 23,100, (+92.8%) in the year to May 2009, a bigger rise than the UK average (+88.7%). During the year up to March 2009, the number of jobs in construction declined by 12.9% (5,800 jobs), in manufacturing the decline was 5.7% (4,749 jobs) and in the service sector 8,230 jobs were lost (1.4%)<sup>1</sup>.

## Where Are the Jobs?

While the number of manufacturing jobs in Northern Ireland fell by over 13,500 (13.7 %) in the pre-recession period between 2001 and 2006, the ten year period from 1996 saw a 30% increase in the number of jobs in the service sector. The result was that in 2007, four out of every five jobs (79%) in Northern Ireland were in the service sector. Just over one in ten jobs (12%) was in manufacturing and 6% in construction. The rise in service jobs was greater than the total rise in employee jobs during the period.<sup>2</sup> Within the service sector the biggest

growth areas have been wholesale and retail and health and social care. The growth in this area of employment has been in predominantly low value, low wage and often part-time jobs and this has had a disproportionate impact on women. Between one in four and one in five service sector jobs was in sales, either wholesale or retail, and one in five was in health and social work.

Between 2001 and 2006 jobs in the public sector rose by 9% compared to 6.6% in the private sector. Eighty eight per cent of the increase in public sector employment has been in female employment while the rise in male jobs in the same period was mostly in the private sector.

In terms of geography, jobs generally, and in particular well-paid jobs, tend to be concentrated in the eastern part of Northern Ireland, or "East of the Bann". See Table 1 for details.



## Are We Working? Shifting Patterns of Employment

**Table 1: Employment by District Council area 2007**

District Council	Job Density Indicator* (2006)	Proportion of NI's population	Proportion of NI's jobs	Working age employment rate (%)	Median gross weekly earnings
Antrim	0.98	2.8	3.5	81.7	£301.90
Ards	0.45			70.5	£323.20
Armagh	0.69			70.9	£315.60
Ballymena	1.01			74.3	£319.60
Ballymoney	0.53	1.6	1.0	77.9	£322.40
Banbridge	0.50			72.1	£353.70
Belfast	1.37			65.5	£326.80
Carrickfergus	0.39			78.8	£339.60
Castlereagh	0.76			82.1	£383.70
Coleraine	0.83			65.8	£299.70
Cookstown	0.63			61.9	£283.90
Craigavon	0.82			69.1	£298.10
Derry	0.72	6.2	5.9	60.5	£300.40
Down	0.55			68.0	£310.60
Dungannon	0.77			68.0	£332.10
Fermanagh	0.73			57.4	£260.90
Larne	0.53			77.3	£307.30
Limavady	0.58			56.4	£300.20
Lisburn	0.70			71.7	£332.70
Magherafelt	0.67			70.7	£346.20
Moyle	0.49			**	**
Newry & Mourne	0.69			66.3	£341.20
Newtownabbey	0.73	4.7	4.4	71.2	£366.70
North Down	0.56			72.1	£347.60
Omagh	0.75			69.1	£344.40
Strabane	0.49	2.2	1.3	60.1	£278.30

\* The Jobs Density Indicator is an indicator of demand for labour; it is defined as the total jobs in an area divided by the resident working age population.

\*\* sample size too small for reliable estimate

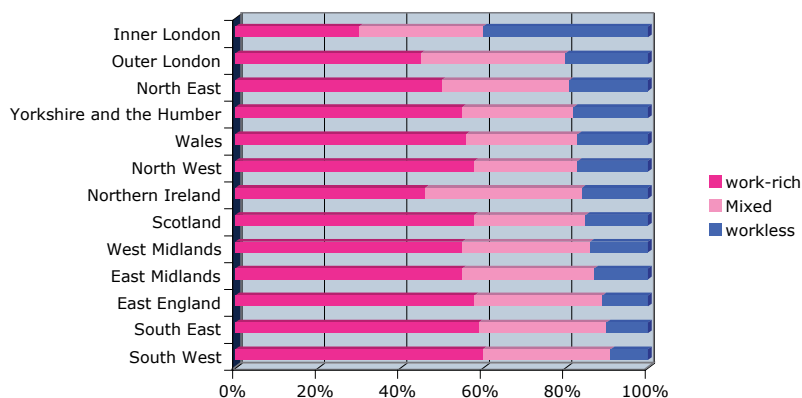
In the year to May 2009, the highest increases in unemployment within Northern Ireland were in Magherafelt (224.0%), Dungannon (204.2%) and Cookstown (190.9%) District Council areas. The highest rates of unemployment at January 2009 were in Derry (6.4%), Limavady (6.2%) and Strabane (6.2%).<sup>3</sup>

### Job-rich, Job-poor Households

Across Europe, the view has been accepted that employment is the best route out of poverty. However, there is a growing body of literature confirming that for a family to get out of, and stay out of, poverty more than one person in the household needs to be in full-time and sustained employment. At February 2009 over 50% of children living in poverty in the UK are living in a household where a parent is in employment.<sup>4</sup> Research in Britain also shows that poverty risks are less for individuals who maintain couple households and avoid separation, and who remain childless or do not increase their family size.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, in Northern Ireland, the proportion of children in work-rich households is less than in any other part of the UK, outside London (see Figure 1 below) and when not all the adults in the household are employed the chances of escaping poverty are reduced.

**Figure 1: Children in workless, mixed and work-rich households, by region**



Source: Bivand, P. (2005), "Rising workless households threaten child poverty aim", CESI Working Brief 167, London

### Gender and Employment

While the number of women in the Northern Ireland labour market has increased by 10 percentage points since 1984 there are significantly fewer women in paid work than men. The economic activity rate for women of working age is 67%, compared to 79% for men.

## Are We Working? Shifting Patterns of Employment

Female economic activity rates are also lower than in Britain where the figure is 74%.

Women's economic activity rates are influenced by the number of children that they have and the age of the children. Seventy three percent of women with no children are in paid work compared to 64% for women with two children. Women with children under 10 years old are less likely to be in paid work than those with children in the 11-15 age group.<sup>6</sup> Women who are lone parents are much less likely than women in two parent families to work outside the home. The UK government target is to get 70% of lone parents into employment by 2010, a significant increase on the 45% employed in 1997. In 2008 in Northern Ireland 56.9% of lone parents were employed, compared to 56.3% of lone parents in Britain. It is worth noting that the definition of employment used in these figures is the International Labour Organisation's definition which regards as employed anyone who has done one hour's paid work in the week prior to interview. As research shows that lone parents are most likely to take up 'mini-jobs' that do not impact on their benefit disregard, these figures for lone parents' employment may not impact on the numbers of lone parents claiming benefits. Lone parents are less likely than other groups to remain in employment. Up to 15% of lone parents move into work each year, a rate similar to that of other non-employed individuals, but they have more than double the exit rate of non-lone parents.<sup>7</sup>

Women are less likely than men to be self employed, making up only 8% of the total self employed. They are however, much more likely than men to work part-time with 39% of female employees working part-time compared to just 7% of male employees. In Northern Ireland 57% of part-time working women are employed in the three lowest paid occupations. The service sector is the largest employer of women in Northern Ireland with 93% (98% for part-time workers) of female employees working in that sector, compared to 63% of male employees. This sector has a high proportion of low paid workers. In the hotel and restaurant sectors, in wholesale and in retail the majority of workers earn less than £7 per hour. Seventy five percent of hotel and restaurant workers earn less than this and three quarters of these are women. In wholesale half of the 65% who earn less than this are women.

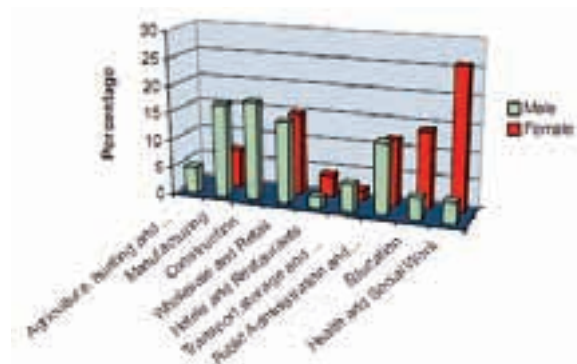
The labour market continues to be characterised by a high degree of occupational segregation. This segregation is both in relation to occupational areas and to the position of men and women within organizations. Table 2 and Figure 2 show the proportion of women and men employed by industry section.

**Table 2: Industry Employment by Gender**

Industry	Male	Female
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	5%	*
Manufacturing	17%	7%
Construction	18%	*
Wholesale and Retail	15%	15%
Hotels and Restaurants	2%	4%
Transport, storage and communication	5%	2%
Public Administration and defence	13%	12%
Education	4%	14%
Health and Social Work	4%	26%

\* indicates number are too small to be estimated

**Figure 2: Industry Employment by Gender**



Analysis of employment by occupation shows men and women are employed in gender traditional occupational areas. For example, 28% of employed males are in skilled trades while the number of women in this occupational group is 2%.<sup>8</sup> The percentage of women working in administration and secretarial occupations is 21% compared to 6% of males. In health and social work 79% of employees are women, in education the figure is 73%.

As demonstrated, women's employment is highly concentrated in certain occupations. Occupations which are female dominated are often the lowest paid. Part-time work is also associated with lower rates of pay. In 2007, the ratio between full time male and female median hourly earnings was 97.2% which is better than the UK figure of 87.4%. In terms of annual earnings, men working full time earned 12% more than women. Significant gender

pay gaps exist in particular occupational and industrial groupings and have been identified by research to be the result of a range of factors including occupational segregation, the higher proportion of women in part-time work and the under-representation of women in senior and managerial positions. In its 2007 report the Low Pay Commission reported that two thirds of minimum wage jobs in the UK were held by women. It identifies the two low paying sectors with the largest proportion of employees paid at or below minimum wage as hairdressing and cleaning.

### Self Employment in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland has the second highest self-employment rate amongst the UK regions. Self-employed numbers increased by 22,000 (22%) from 97,000 in 1998 to 119,000 in 2007. This compared to an 83,000 (15%) increase in employee numbers over the same period. While the growth in numbers of self-employed females was proportionately greater, increasing by 34% compared to a 20% increase in self-employed males, there are far more self-employed men (97,000) than women (22,000). While the overall numbers increased between 1998 and 2007, this increase has not been regular, with decreases in numbers being recorded for some yearly intervals. The number of self-employed persons has varied between 96,000 and a peak of 123,000 in April – June 2006. (see Table 3)

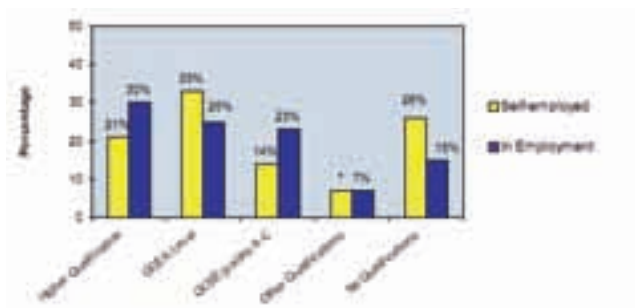
**Table 3: Self-employment 1998/2007**

	Numbers in Self-Employment		
	Males	Females	All
April - June 1998	81,000	16,000	97,000
April - June 2000	80,000	16,000	96,000
April - June 2002	83,000	18,000	101,000
April - June 2004	94,000	21,000	115,000
April - June 2005	98,000	18,000	116,000
April - June 2006	100,000	23,000	123,000
April - June 2007	97,000	22,000	119,000

Source: Labour Force Survey Quarterly Report August 2007

The stereotypical image of a self-employed person is someone running a small business and earning a good income. As is clear from Figure 3 and Table 4 the occupations and qualification levels of self-employed people in Northern Ireland indicate that most do not fit this stereotype. Over a quarter of self-employed people in Northern Ireland have no qualifications at all, with less than a quarter having a higher qualification. In 2007, a quarter of self-employed people were employed in the Construction industry, with Agriculture (20%), the Wholesale and Retail trade (14%) and Real estate/renting (13%), the other large areas for self-employment.

**Figure 3: Highest qualifications of self-employed and those in employment April – June 2007**



\*Cell size too small for a reliable estimate

Source: Labour Force Survey Quarterly Report August 2007

**Table 4: Occupations of self-employed people in Northern Ireland**

	% of Self-Employed
Managers and/or Senior Officials	21%
Professional Occupations	9%
Assoc. Professional and Technical	*
Administrative and Secretarial	*
Skilled Trade	43%
Personal Service	*
Sales and Customer Service	*
Process, Plant & Machine Operatives	7%
Elementary	*
All occupations <sup>1</sup> (100%)	119,000

\* Cell size too small for a reliable estimate

Percentages may not sum due to rounding

<sup>1</sup>Total excludes those on college based government training and employment programmes and those who did not state occupation

Source: Labour Force Survey Quarterly Report August 2007

Self-employed workers are more likely to work full-time than are employees. At April – June 2007 77% of employees were full-time and 23% part-time compared to 86% full-time and 14% part-time for the self-employed.

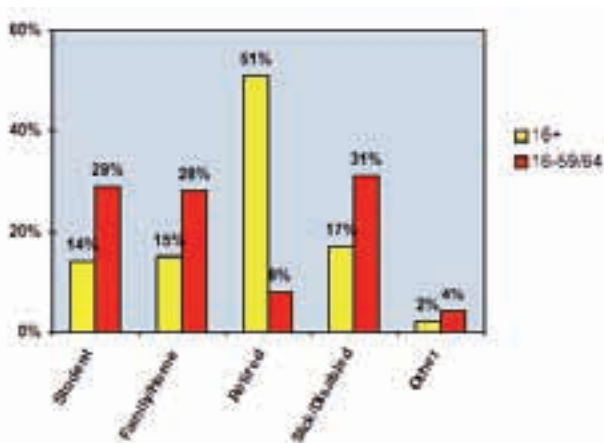
## Employment and Section 75 Groups

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public bodies to ‘ensure the equality’ of policies, publish an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) of all decisions and consult with those likely to be affected by these decisions. The categories covered are: gender, marital status, disability, race, religious belief, political opinion, age, sexual orientation and those with or without dependents.

As a result of Fair Employment legislation, we have excellent figures for the religious composition of the workforce. The latest figures available are for 2006 and they show that, overall, a higher proportion of Protestants (72%) than Roman Catholics (64%) of working age were in employment. This gives an employment gap of 8 percentage points. Figures for the employment gap faced by Black and Minority Ethnic groups in England and Scotland show that in England this gap has persisted for over 15 years at around 16 percentage points. In Scotland, the gap is 19 percentage points.<sup>9</sup>

Around half of people in Northern Ireland aged 25 to retirement who are not working, are disabled. Thirty percent of those with a work-limiting disability are working. A further 15% lack, but want, paid work. By way of contrast, over half (55%) say they do not want paid work. The proportion of people who are both work-limiting disabled and lack, but want, paid work is lower in Northern Ireland than in any other region of the UK. The 2006 Northern Ireland Survey of Activity Limitation and Disability found that 67% of people of working age with a disability are economically inactive. Of the 33% who are economically active, 26% are employees, 4% are self-employed and 2% are unemployed and looking for work.

**Figure 4 Reasons for Economic Inactivity**



Source: Labour Force Survey Quarterly Report April 2007

Within the UK, Northern Ireland has the lowest employment rate for the youngest age group (16-24).<sup>10</sup> In part this can be attributed to the higher numbers of young people staying on at school or college (see chapter on education), but Northern Ireland also has a significant number of young people not in education or training. In Northern Ireland it is estimated that 15% of all 16-24 year olds are not in education or training and 12% of 16-18 year olds are not (NI Assembly Debates, 18/11/2008). Overall, in 2008, the UK ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> out of 28 in the OECD's league table of young people not in education, employment or training.

In the two older employment age groups (45-64 years and 55-64 years) the Northern Ireland employment rate is significantly lower than in the rest of the UK. In the 45-54 age group it is below the UK average by 8% and by 9% in the 55-64 years group. Less than half of those aged 55-64 (49%) were in employment in 2007. Economic activity rate data for Northern Ireland shows an overall decline in the number of people working over 'standard' retirement age – 65 for men and 60 for women (the age at which women can draw their state pensions is to be raised from 60 to 65, to match the age for men, by 2020). In 2005 9.4% of people over retirement age were in employment; in 2008 the figure was 8.5% - a drop of 1.1%. The drop was more marked for men (from 11.3% in 2005 to 8.9% in 2008) than women (8.4% to 8.3%).

### Skills and Qualification

The number of graduates of working-age in Northern Ireland almost doubled in the decade from 1995 to 2005: from 83,000 in 1995 to 155,000 in 2005. In contrast, the total working-age population only increased by 8% over the decade. As a result, the proportion of the working-age population who are graduates increased from 9% in 1995 to 15% in 2005.

In Autumn 2007, 18% of the working-age population in Northern Ireland were graduates, compared to 19.9% in the UK. However, the proportion who are graduates is similar to other disadvantaged regions of the UK (those outside of London and the South/South East) and considerably higher than the North East. The working age employment rate for Northern Ireland graduates in 2007 was 89.1%, almost 25 percentage points higher than the rate for Northern Ireland non-graduates 65.2%.<sup>11</sup>

Female graduates are considerably more likely to work full-time than female non-graduates, with almost four-fifths of graduates working full-time compared to three-fifths of non-graduates.

Less than half of Northern Ireland graduates (47%) worked in the private sector, compared to three-quarters of non-graduates. Over 90% of graduates were employed in the top four occupational groups, compared to 37% of non-graduates. Average weekly earnings of graduates are approximately 70% more than that of non-graduates.



**Table 5 Qualifications by Economic Activity**

Qualifications by Economic Activity (Working-age), April - June 2007

	In employment	Unemployed	Econ. Active	Econ. Inactive
Degree or higher	22%	*	21%	7%
Other higher below degree	8%	*	8%	5%
A Level or equivalent	25%	*	25%	21%
GCSE A-C or equivalent	23%	*	23%	22%
Other qualifications	7%	*	7%	7%
No Qualifications	15%	34%	15%	39%
	100%	100%	100%	100%
All	(744,000)	(28,000)	(772,000)	(284,000)

\* Cell size too small for reliable estimate.

Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Total excludes those who did not state their highest level of qualification.

Please refer to Technical Notes for full definition of educational attainment categories.

Only men and women of working-age, and those of any age with a job were asked the question on qualifications

As is clear from Table 5, a very large proportion of people of working age who are economically inactive have no qualifications. Over 230,000 people of working age have no qualifications and almost half of them (110,760) are economically inactive, with a further 11,000 unemployed. Thus, well over half of those without qualifications are not in employment.

## Pay in Northern Ireland

Figures for 2007<sup>12</sup> show that full-time male earnings in Northern Ireland continued to be the lowest of any UK region. Half of all men working full-time earned less than £424.80 per week. This compares with the UK-wide figure of £498.30 and is more than £15 a week less than the next lowest paid region of the UK, the North East of England.

Women fare considerably better with a median weekly wage for women working full-time in Northern Ireland of £372.60 per week, which is higher than in most of the other

disadvantaged regions of the UK. In fact, only full-time working women in London, the South East, East and Scotland have a higher median weekly wage. This sum amounts to 88% of the Northern Ireland male median weekly wage, although since men work shorter hours (in the workplace), in hourly terms, the gender pay gap at the bottom virtually disappears. Median hourly earnings for full-time working men in 2007 were £9.93, for women £9.65 (97% of men's earnings).

In April 2007 median full-time gross weekly earnings in the private sector were £364 which is 83% of the UK figure. Median full-time gross weekly earnings in the public sector were £484. There is a higher differential between public and private sector wages in Northern Ireland than in the UK as a whole (32 percentage points, compared to 14 in UK). Indeed, the differential between public and private sector wages for women is 55 percentage points.<sup>13</sup>

### Key Policy Challenges

From 1998 until 2008 employment figures show a significant growth in the number of people employed in Northern Ireland. The biggest increase in jobs was in the service sector. However, many of these were low value, low wage and often part-time jobs, many taken by women. Significant challenges have persisted including the problem of low pay, occupational segregation and unequal pay between men and women, the low number of people with disabilities in employment and the significant number of young people not in education or training. The recent economic downturn has impacted particularly on the service sector and manufacturing and construction sectors.

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# WHAT DO WE KNOW? EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTCOMES

## Introduction

Education is as integral today as it always has been in relation to the future hopes and aspirations of Northern Ireland. It can be summarised as both the teaching and learning of knowledge and most would agree that it will have a profound effect on shaping future generations of Northern Ireland citizens and the economy. In this chapter we look specifically at education from the start of compulsory education at age 4 years to 18 years. There is therefore no discussion of pre school education, Further or Higher education or life long learning. The focus is on those areas identified as key issues by the Department of Education and the Northern Ireland Executive. These include structural reform, improving standards and performance and the link between education and disadvantage<sup>1</sup>.

## Types of School

The Northern Ireland education system is segregated along religious lines and by type of school. Schools fall under various management types.

Controlled schools (de facto Protestant) are under the management of the schools' Board of Governors while the employing authority is the relevant Education and Library Board. Buildings are owned and managed by the education authority which is also the employer of teaching and non-teaching staff. Recurrent costs are met from school budgets.

Voluntary schools are managed by Boards of Governors, who are also the employer of teaching and non-teaching staff. The school buildings are owned by the schools' trustees. Recurrent costs are funded by the Department of Education (DE). There are two types of voluntary schools – voluntary maintained (including primary and post primary schools which are mostly Catholic schools) and voluntary grammar schools. Most voluntary maintained schools are managed by the Catholic Church. Responsibility for Catholic maintained schools rests with a statutory body, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS).

Integrated Schools are schools which include pupils from both the Protestant and Catholic communities. The Department of Education accepts a balance of 70:30 (with 30% coming from whichever is the smaller religious group in the area) as the minimum required for a new school to be recognised as integrated. There are two types of integrated schools. Grant-maintained Integrated schools are owned and managed by Boards of Governors, supported by the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and funded directly by the Department of Education. Controlled integrated schools are managed by the regional education authority. There are at present 56 grant-aided integrated schools in Northern Ireland, with a total enrolment of over 17,000 pupils – over five per cent of total pupils.

There are also a number of Irish Medium schools (mostly in the primary sector), where children are taught through the medium of the Irish Language. These are owned and managed by Boards of Governors, supported by Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) and, generally, funded by the Department of Education.

## What do We Know? Educational Opportunities and Outcomes

Under the Review of Public Administration, from April 2010 the five education and library boards will be replaced by a single authority, the Education and Skills Authority. This will absorb all the functions of the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) including libraries, youth services and the operational functions of the Department of Education. The responsibilities of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) will also be transferred to the new authority as will youth and library services.

**Table 1: Numbers of schools in Northern Ireland by school type**

<b>Primary</b>	<b>2002/03</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2007/08</b>
Controlled	435	425	401
Catholic Maintained	417	413	404
Other Maintained (including Irish Medium)	16	20	24
Controlled integrated and Grant maintained integrated	29	34	39
Preparatory Depts:			
Controlled	5	4	3
Voluntary	15	14	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>917</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>885</b>
<b>Secondary (non grammar):</b>			
Controlled	69	66	63
Catholic Maintained	76	76	73
Other Maintained	1	1	1
Controlled Integrated and Grant Maintained Integrated	14	19	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>Grammar Schools:</b>			
Controlled	17	17	17
Voluntary (under Catholic Management)	32	30	30
Voluntary (under other Management)	22	22	22
<b>Independent Schools</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Special Schools</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>109</b>

Source: DE School Census Data

## Expenditure on Education and School Numbers

In 2006/07 the Northern Ireland education budget was £1,838 million. According to the report of the Independent Strategic Review of Education<sup>2</sup> the budget for current expenditure in education in Northern Ireland grew by 27.2 % between 2001/02 and 2005/06. Table 2 details spending per head of population on education across the countries of the UK.

**Table 2: Expenditure (£) per head of population**

	£ per head
England	98
Scotland	110
Wales	105
Northern Ireland	126

Source: HM Treasury Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2008

While public expenditure per head of population in Northern Ireland is higher than in any of the other UK countries, this reflects the high proportion of schools to the school age population.

As can be seen from Table 1 the most marked decline has been in the number of controlled and Catholic maintained primary schools. Sectors which have seen increases are Irish Medium primary schools which have increased from 11 in 2002/03 to 20 in 2007/08, and the number of integrated schools in the primary sectors which increased from 29 to 39 in the same time period. In 2006, the schools' estate had more than 50,000 surplus places and it was estimated that the figure is likely to rise to more than 80,000 (more than a quarter of the current school population). See Table 3 for numbers of children currently in education and projected figures for the future. Table 4 outlines the number of pupils, year by year, in each type of primary school between 2002/03 and 2007/08.

**Table 3: Number of children in primary and post primary schools in Northern Ireland and projected numbers**

	1991/92	2001/02	2007/08	Projected figures 2013/14
Primary Schools	189,481	179,039	166,639	158,286
Post primary Schools	143,295	155,503	147,942	136,804

Source: Department of Education School Census Data

**Table 4: Number of Primary school pupils by management type – 2002/03-2007/08**

Management type	No of Pupils 2002/03	No of Pupils 2004/05	No. of pupils 2007/08
Controlled	85,448	82,182	78,108
Catholic maintained	81,313	78,699	76,480
Other	2,732	2,664	2,529
Irish medium - Other maintained	1,374	1,655	1,902
Controlled integrated	1,502	1,996	2,259
Grant maintained integrated	4,433	4,802	5,361
<b>Total</b>	<b>176,802</b>	<b>171,998</b>	<b>166,639</b>

Source: School Census Data. The figures include nursery, reception and year 1-7 classes

Changing demographics in Northern Ireland have seen a resulting fall in the school population. The Report of the Independent Strategic Review of Education published in 2006 noted that more than one-third of primary schools have an enrolment of fewer than 90 pupils. Approximately one-sixth of post-primary schools have an enrolment of fewer than 300 pupils and nearly two-fifths have an enrolment of fewer than 500 pupils. The downward trend in terms of pupil numbers is expected to continue (see Table 3).

## The Integrated Sector

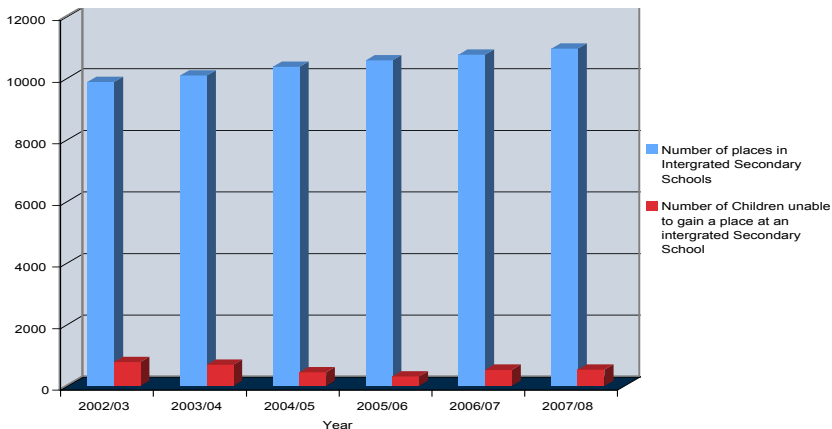
The Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 established a new management type of school in Northern Ireland, Grant-maintained Integrated (GMI) schools. This legislation gave the Department of Education powers to provide recurrent and capital funding for GMI schools, provided certain conditions were met. The 1989 Order also incorporated transformation legislation, transformation being defined as the acquisition of Grant-maintained Integrated status or controlled integrated status by an existing school. The motive for transformation should be the desire to provide an integrated school and schools have to demonstrate reasonable prospects of being able to recruit at least 30% of pupils from the minority tradition in the area.

In 2007/08 19,124 pupils (5% of children in Northern Ireland schools) attended integrated schools. There are 8,164 pupils in primary schools, and 10,960 in secondary schools.

Over the period from 2002/03 to 2007/08 the number of primary level integrated places in all board areas (apart from the Belfast Education and Library Board where the number remained

static) has increased, some substantially. Nonetheless, it is the only sector where there are an insufficient number of places at primary level. In relation to integrated post-primary schools the number of places has also increased in all Education and Library Board areas. At second-level also, demand for places at Integrated schools outstrips supply. Figure 1 details the trends in integrated school places from 2002/03 and 2007/08.

**Figure 1: Integrated post primary schools**



Source: AQW 8391/08 and AQW 7233/08

## Academic Selection

A distinctive feature of the education system in Northern Ireland has been the existence of the selective system of grammar and secondary schools at post primary level. Entrance to grammar schools has been determined by the results in two tests taken in the last year of primary school (the Transfer Test, or “Eleven Plus”). This has been, and continues to be, a controversial issue and one which has been debated over several years.

Unlike other parts of the UK there were no developments towards a comprehensive system of education in Northern Ireland in the 1960s and 1970s. However, the Labour government elected in 1997 made clear its intention to review the system. The Direct Rule Minister in Northern Ireland commissioned two major research projects on the effect of the selective system of education<sup>3</sup>. On the basis of the research findings, the then Minister of Education in the newly devolved administration set up an independent body to consult on the issue of selection and make recommendations. This review (the Burns Review) was published in 2001<sup>4</sup> and recommended the end of academic selection and the introduction of a system of collaborative collegiates of post primary schools. After the suspension of devolution in



2003, the Direct Rule Minister established a post primary review group to provide advice on future options. The report (the Costello Report)<sup>5</sup> published in 2004 recommended ending the transfer test in 2008, a recommendation accepted by the Minister. With the restoration of devolution in May 2007 the Minister of Education outlined proposals to end the system of academic selection. The last transfer test took place in 2008.

This section updates some of the statistical work of the research project, commissioned by the Direct Rule Minister in 1997, carried out by Tony Gallagher and Alan Smith for the Department of Education and published in 2000.

The updated figures indicate that the trends, which the research published in 2000 had revealed, have continued. Then, figures showed that a quarter of pupils in the final year of primary school tended to achieve a grade A in the Eleven Plus. They also showed that the proportion of pupils who achieved a grade A “varied by, and was correlated with, FSM band”, with schools that had fewer pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) having higher proportions of pupils who achieved a grade A in the Transfer Test. As can be seen from Table 5, that trend has continued. Indeed, in 2007/08, schools with more than 30% of pupils entitled to FSM were considerably less likely to have pupils receiving an A in the Test than was the case in 1997/98.

**Table 5: Percentage of pupils with Transfer Test Grade A by primary school FSM band 1997/98<sup>1</sup> and 2007/08<sup>2</sup>**

FSM Band	1997/98	FSM Band	2007/08
< 11%	41	>10%	36
11 – 20	28	10 – 19.99	24
20.1 - 30	25	20 – 29.99	21
30.1 – 40	21	30 – 39.99	14
40.1 – 50	20	40 – 49.99	10
> 50%	11	> 50%	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>

Table 6 shows the other side of the coin – the proportion of pupils who either achieved a grade D or who were not entered for the Transfer Test, by the level of FSM entitlement in their school. Just over half of all pupils in both 1997/98 and 2007/08 achieved a grade D or did not sit the Transfer Test. However, the proportion of such pupils in schools with the lowest levels of FSM was considerably lower than the norm while in schools with higher levels of FSMs, the proportion of pupils obtaining grade D or not sitting the Test was considerably higher than the norm.

**Table 6: Percentage of pupils with Transfer Test Grade D or Not Entered by primary school FSM band 1997/98 and 2007/08**

FSM Band	1997/98	FSM Band	2007/08
< 11%	34	>10%	38
11 – 20	51	10 – 19.99	54
20.1 - 30	52	20 – 29.99	58
30.1 – 40	59	30 – 39.99	68
40.1 – 50	60	40 – 49.99	71
> 50%	72	> 50%	78
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>

The 1989 Education Reform Order introduced open enrolment for all schools and removed the quotas on grammar school admissions that had operated until then. In 1991, some 33% of Year 8 students entered grammar school – an increase from the 28 – 29% which had been the norm when quotas were in place. As is clear from Table 7, the proportion of Year 8 pupils entering grammar schools has continued to grow. Until the middle of the 2000s, this did not impact on the actual numbers attending secondary schools as the size of the cohort was increasing. However, since 2004/05 when the size of the Year 8 cohort dropped below 25,000, there has been a marked increase in the proportion of pupils going to grammar schools.

**Table 7: Number and percentage of pupils entering secondary and grammar schools 1994 -2009**

Year	Number of Year 8s entering secondary school	Percentage of Year 8s entering secondary school	Number of Year 8s entering grammar school	Percentage of Year 8s entering secondary school	Total number of pupils in year 8
1994/95	16,863	65	8,920	35	25,783
1995/96	16,947	65	9,028	35	25,975
1996/97	17,479	66	9,005	34	26,484
1997/98	17,422	66	9,122	34	26,544
1998/99	17,564	66	9,160	34	26,724
1999/00	17,594	66	9,105	34	26,699
2000/01	16,915	65	9,023	35	25,938
2001/02	16,758	65	9,019	35	25,777
2002/03	16,653	65	9,069	35	25,722
2003/04	16,401	65	9,001	35	25,402
2004/05	15,180	62	9,131	38	24,311
2005/06	15,192	63	8,845	37	24,037
2006/07	14,739	62	8,913	38	23,652
2007/08	14,349	62	8,846	38	23,195
2008/09	15,394	63	8,880	37	24,274

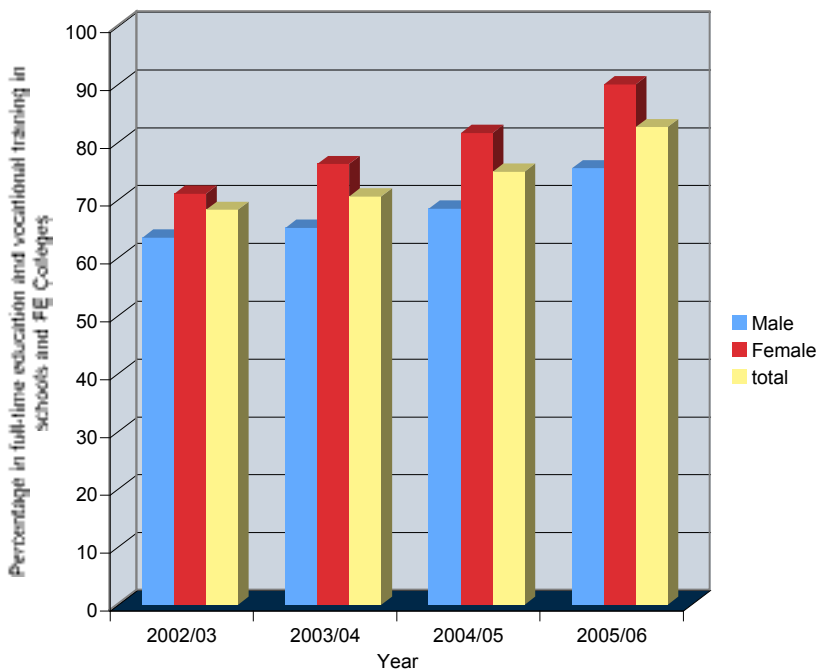
## Participation in post compulsory school age education

Full time participation rates for 16 and 17 year olds are higher in Northern Ireland than in England (Table 8). Within Northern Ireland there are distinct gender differences with significantly more females than males participating and with participation rates for females growing faster than for males.

**Table 8: Comparison of participation in full-time education and vocational training in FE Colleges between Northern Ireland and England (16 and 17 year olds) 2005/06**

	Northern Ireland	England
Males	80.4	73.9
Females	93.2	81.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>86.6</b>	<b>77.4</b>

**Figure 2: Participation in full-time education and vocational training in schools and FE colleges by 16 & 17 year olds, 2001/02 to 2005/06**



Source: Department of Education Participation Figures

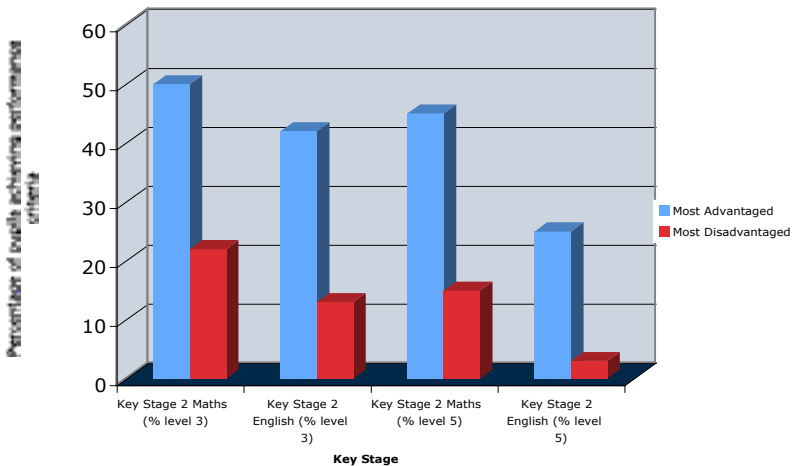
More recent participation data includes vocational training provided outside the School and FE sector – for example, JobSkills/Training for success programmes not delivered through FE colleges. This shows that for males there is a participation rate of 89% and for females it is 95.8%.

## Educational Outcomes

In terms of results of public examinations, schools in Northern Ireland do better than counterparts in England and Wales. Ninety eight per cent of Year 14 pupils achieved two or more A Levels at grades A-E while 52% of year 12 pupils achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C. However, Northern Ireland has a higher proportion of working age people with no qualifications. In 2006 the figure was 24 % of people with no qualifications, compared to 13.6% in England and 17% in Wales (DE, 2006). While data suggests that this picture is likely to improve, with 52% of young people now achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C, this still leaves 48% who do not. Moreover, 25% of 11 year olds are not meeting secondary school literacy and numeracy targets, 37% of pupils fail to achieve a grade A\*-C in GCSE English; 41% in Mathematics and 47% fail to achieve an A\*-C in both English and Mathematics.<sup>6</sup>

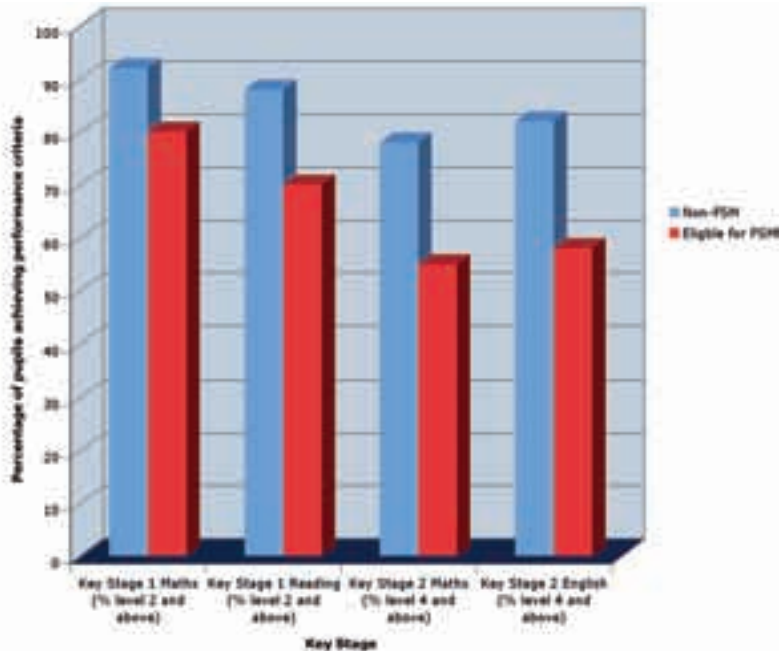
The impact of poverty on educational attainment is well documented.<sup>7</sup> Figures 3a and 3b below, using UK and Northern Ireland Key Stage 1 and 2 (primary school) assessment data for 2002/03, illustrate a link between social disadvantage and education performance across the UK. In every case there is a gap in the performance of pupils in the most advantaged schools as compared with the most disadvantaged schools and between pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSMs) and those not eligible for FSMs. International evidence demonstrates that these disparities are found across all developed countries<sup>8</sup>.

**Figure 3a: Percentage of pupils achieving performance criteria in the most advantaged schools and the most disadvantaged schools in Northern Ireland**



Source: Gallagher (2006)

**Figure 3b: Percentage of pupils achieving performance criteria by eligibility for Free School Meals in England**



Source: Department for Education and Schools (2005)

The 2006 Northern Ireland Audit Office report, *Improving Literacy and Numeracy in Schools*, concluded that “there has been only limited improvement among lower performing pupils in both primary and post-primary sectors.” The 2005 Literacy results for Key Stage 3 suggested that 6000 14 year-olds in Northern Ireland were at risk of leaving school unable to read at the expected standard (Level 5).

Children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, as indicated by Free School Meal (FSM) entitlement, were less likely to have positive educational outcomes. In 2007/08, over 18% of primary school children in Northern Ireland were entitled to free school meals as were 25% of pupils in secondary schools and 5.9% of pupils in grammar schools. For the same period, 18.6% of children in nursery provision had parents in receipt of Income Support or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance and so would have been eligible for FSM. The qualifications of school leavers data, as shown in Table 9 below, indicates the continuing educational disadvantage for pupils entitled to FSM. Such pupils are only half as likely to have at least 5+ GCSEs (A\*-C) and are four times more likely to have no qualifications.

**Table 9: Qualifications of school leavers by FSM entitlement**

Attainment	% entitled to Free School Meals	% not entitled to Free School Meals
5 A*-C GCSEs or higher (including A levels)	35.6	70.3
No formal Qualifications	8.4	2.1

Source: Northern Ireland Audit Office (2006)

In order not to identify individual schools, figures on how well children do in tests are produced by grouping together schools according to the proportion of pupils entitled to FSMs. Within each group, the school results have been ranked from the lowest performing school, in terms of test results, to the highest. The median figures quoted below are the actual results of the school in the middle of this scale i.e. 50% of the schools in this group failed to obtain this level and 50% achieved or exceeded the results.

In 2002/03, the median school with 40 – 49.99% of children entitled to FSMs had 29.0% of children achieving level 3 and above in English at Key Stage One and 31.8% of children achieving level 3 or above in Maths. By 2006/07, the median school with a similar level of FSM entitlement had decreased to 26% of children reaching level 3 or above in English and 30% achieving level 3 or above in Maths at Key Stage One. For children attending the small number of schools where 70% or more of children are entitled to FSMs, in 2002/03, the median school had 12% of children reaching level 3 or above in English and 21% reaching level 3 or above in Maths. In 2006/07, the median school with 70% or more children entitled to FSMs had decreased further to 5.5% of children achieving level 3 in English and 9.5% in Maths.

The situation in relation to educational outcomes at Key Stage Two is similar. As Table 10 shows, the proportion of children achieving level 4 and above in schools with high rates of FSM entitlement dropped sharply between 2002/03 and 2006/07. While Table 11 indicates an increase in attainment in English at level 5 for children at the median school, that improvement is not carried through to the schools with higher levels of FSM entitlement where outcomes have declined sharply.

**Table 10: Key Stage Two proportion of children achieving level 4 and above**

Year	Proportion of children entitled to FSM	% of children in median school achieving Level 4 or above in English	% of children in median school achieving Level 4 or above in Maths
2002/03	40 – 49.99	66.7	73.2
2006/07	40 – 49.99	60.6	66.7
2002/03	70% +	53.8	59.6
2006/07	70% +	37.5	41.7

Source: DE Benchmarking data 2002/03 and 2006/07

**Table 11: Key Stage Two proportion of children achieving level 5 and above**

Year	Proportion of children entitled to FSM	% of children in median school achieving Level 5 or above in English	% of children in median school achieving Level 5 or above in Maths
2002/03	40 – 49.99	3.2	25.0
2006/07	40 – 49.99	10.7	24.2
2002/03	70%+	2.3	14.8
2006/07	70%+	0.0	5.9

## Children In/Leaving Care and Educational Outcomes

Data provided by DHSSPS (2007)<sup>9</sup> shows that children and young people in the care system have significantly worse educational outcomes than other young people. Only 11% of care leavers achieve five or more GCSEs grades A\*-C and care leavers in Northern Ireland are ten times more likely than school leavers in general to leave without gaining any qualifications at all. They are also under-represented in post 16 education and training statistics with figures showing that only 57% of care leavers whose economic activity was known were in education, training or employment. Inevitably, this impacts on employment levels with the unemployment rate among care leavers six times the rate among all school leavers in Northern Ireland. Figures for 2002/03 show that 9% of 'looked after' children of school age were suspended from school, compared with 1.7% of the total school population in Northern Ireland.



### Educational Outcomes for Children from Irish Traveller and other Minority Ethnic Backgrounds

In 2006 the Northern Ireland Audit Office noted that 9 out of 10 Traveller children were not achieving the required literacy levels. The vast majority have no formal educational qualifications and 92% have no GCSEs or equivalent qualifications.<sup>10</sup> A working group on social inclusion of travellers in Northern Ireland<sup>11</sup> found that, while rates of attendance in primary school had improved, the majority of Traveller children do not continue to attend school regularly after primary education. Of those 41 Traveller children who did sit GCSE examinations in 2003/04 and 2004/05, 10 achieved 5+ GCSE grades A\*-G compared to 98% for the general population and the number of Traveller children achieving the accepted standard of good GCSEs (5+ grades A\*-C, including English and Mathematics) was too small to be included. The Department for Education in 2008 established a task force to review the educational needs of Traveller children and the current delivery of services. It is due to report on the findings before the end of 2009.

A more mixed picture emerges in relation to young people from ethnic minority backgrounds. A higher percentage of minority ethnic pupils (67%) leave school with 5+ GCSEs, A\*-C, compared to 64% of all pupils and the proportion of minority ethnic school leavers who go onto further and higher education is higher (76%) than the general population (66%). However, a higher percentage of minority ethnic pupils (8%) leave with **no** GCSE qualifications.

In recent years the migrant worker population in Northern Ireland has grown and there has been a substantial increase in the number of children whose first language is not English. The Equality Commission (2008)<sup>12</sup> points to concerns which have been raised about the difficulties faced in accessing grammar schools in Northern Ireland and suggests that there are access issues for this group of young people.

### Children with Special Educational Needs

Northern Ireland has higher levels of children with particular needs than is the case in the UK generally. Table 12 shows 4% of pupils in Northern Ireland in 2006/07 had a statement of Special Educational Need (SEN). This compares to 2.8% of pupils in England in the same year. The process by which a pupil comes to have a statement of SEN is not a simple one. Once a child is identified as having particular needs in relation to his or her education, those needs are placed on a register. The level of assessed needs range from Stage 1 to 5. For children at stages 1 to 2, Individual Education Plans are drawn up and the school tries to meet his/her needs within normal school resources. If the school concludes that the child's needs are so substantial that they cannot be met within the school's resources, then the Head Teacher will make a request for Statutory Assessment with a view to the child obtaining a Statement of Special Educational Need. Education authorities have a statutory duty to provide resources to meet the needs detailed on a Statement of SEN.

**Table 12: Percentage of children with Special Education Needs by school type 2006/07**

School type	Statemented children	SEN children (not statemented)	% SEN children Stages 1 – 5
Nursery	0.8	16.5	17.3
Primary	2.6	16.3	18.9
Secondary	4.0	15.9	19.9
Grammar	0.5	3.2	3.7
Special	91.2	8.8	100
All schools	3.8	13.6	17.4

Most, but not all, children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are on the SEN register. In a recent study of primary schools, Head Teachers reported that the Individual Education Plan, which is the minimum intervention for a child on the SEN register, takes up a lot of teachers' time. Therefore, a child is only put on the register if there is no doubt about their SEN status.<sup>13</sup>

## Views of Children and Young People

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provides for children's right to express their views on all matters concerning them; to have their views given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity; and to participate effectively in decision making processes concerning them. Since children are the main users of education services, they have a right to have their views heard in relation to improving educational experiences and outcomes. The government says it is committed to involving children and young people in decision making. For example, the Children and Young People's Unit at Westminster states that:

*"We want to hear the voices of young people, influencing and shaping local services... feeling heard, feeling valued; being treated as responsible citizens."<sup>14</sup>*

The Kids' Life and Times Survey ([www.ark.ac.uk/klts](http://www.ark.ac.uk/klts)), which began in 2008, is an attempt to ascertain children's views on a range of topics. In relation to education, children (11 year olds) were asked whether they were mostly 'happy' or mostly 'unhappy' in school, the majority said mostly happy.

**Table 15: ‘Happy or Unhappy in School’**

	%	
	Boy	Girl
Mostly happy	76	84
Mostly unhappy	6	3
Can't decide	18	13

Seventy seven per cent of children taking part in Kids' Life and Times had done the transfer test (the remainder had not – apart from 1% who did not know). Of these, 23% said they did not feel any pressure at all because of the test; almost one in five (19%) said they thought there was a lot of pressure on them; while over half (55%) felt ‘somewhere in between’ a lot and none at all.

The majority (43%) said the pressure was from themselves, 31% from parents or someone at home and 26% from teachers. Asked what they thought should happen to the transfer test, 44% wanted to keep the test, 35% of respondents to get rid of it; and 21% were not sure what they thought should happen.

Most young people in Northern Ireland appear to be happy at school. Findings from the Young Persons Behaviour and Attitudes Study (Central Survey Unit, 2008)<sup>15</sup>, a survey of over 6,000 11-16 year olds, show that 78% said they liked school. The vast majority (89%) feel the things they learn there are important and 90% feel what they learn in school will be important in their adult lives. Most attached a lot of value to education with over 80% saying they thought it was important to stay on at school or college after the official leaving age and 70% said they were planning to do A Levels. Data collected by the Young Life and Times Survey<sup>16</sup> which is an annual survey of 16 year olds ([www.ark.ac.uk/ylt](http://www.ark.ac.uk/ylt)) reinforce these generally positive findings with over two thirds of respondents reporting positive school experiences.

However, there are also indications that school can be stressful or difficult to cope with for some young people. Eighty four per cent of 11-16 year olds in the Young Person's Behaviour and Attitudes study reported feeling a certain amount of stress due to school work, 20% said they had skipped classes in the term in which they were surveyed. Department of Education school absence statistics show that the majority of all unauthorised absences from school are in the older year groups, growing significantly in the final three years of compulsory schooling. Twelve per cent of the 16 year olds did who took part in the Young Life and Times survey said they were not happy at school or felt that it had not met their skills and knowledge requirements in later life, while 16% felt that most teachers did not respect them as an individual and 17% felt they themselves had under-achieved. Young people from less well-off families reported significantly worse school experiences than those from well-off families. They were overall less happy at school, and were more likely to feel not respected as an individual by most teachers in their school.

### Key Policy Challenges

The results of public examinations and especially A Level results indicate that Northern Ireland compares well with England and Wales in terms of educational outcomes. It is also the case that most children and young people are happy at school and attach much value to education. Nonetheless, the Department of Education acknowledges that there remain significant challenges for education in Northern Ireland<sup>17</sup>. There are economic pressures including the fact that Northern Ireland has a higher number of schools for the school age population and the number of school age children continues to fall. Substantive challenges remain in relation to transfer to post primary schools, an issue which has dominated education debate for a number of years. Tackling inequality will be a major challenge for policy makers. The link between poverty and disadvantage in terms of educational opportunities and outcomes has been well established. Particular groups of children fare badly in the educational system including those in or leaving care, children with special educational needs and Traveller children.

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# WAY OF LIFE: ARTS AND SPORT

## Introduction

Arts, culture and sports in Northern Ireland have been increasingly linked to social and economic regeneration and well being, including contributing to a shared future.

The government department responsible for these areas is the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL). It oversees the work of a number of non-departmental public bodies and agencies, including the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, SportNI, the Northern Ireland Museums Council and the new body for library services set up in April 2009, Libraries Northern Ireland. Eighty five percent of the DCAL budget is allocated through non-departmental bodies and agencies.

## Sport and Physical Activity

Participation in sport has declined steadily in Northern Ireland over approximately the last 15 years. In 1990/91, if walking was included as participation in sport, 57% of persons aged 16+ had participated in the previous year. In 2003/04, this figure was 55%; in 2004/05, it was 54%, dropping to 51% in 2005/06; in 2006/07, 53% had participated in sport; in 2007/08, it was 49%.

In promoting sport and physical activity, the Government works through SportNI. SportNI is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. It was established on 31 December 1973 under the provisions of the Recreation and Youth Service (Northern Ireland) Order 1973. Its main objective was to further sport and physical recreation. SportNI's corporate vision is: "a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport which contributes to a peaceful, fair and prosperous society".

There are over 100 recognised sporting activities in Northern Ireland. SportNI recognizes 85 governing bodies and more than 5,000 clubs which provide opportunities for participation in sport and physical recreation at local and competitive levels. Most of these organisations depend on a pool of highly committed volunteers, although they can access support from a Northern Ireland wide network of Sports Development Officers employed by SportNI and local Councils.

The Strategy for the Development of Sport 1997-2005, was Northern Ireland's first sports strategy; it was developed under Direct Rule. It provided a basis for a number of initiatives including a Youth Sport programme; improved community sport infrastructure; the establishment of the Sports Institute for Northern Ireland and increased government investment in sport. The Northern Ireland Executive is developing a Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2007-2017. Drafts of the Strategy indicate that the Government aims to:

- promote the value, importance and priority of sport and physical recreation;
- secure the commitment of, and partnership working across, relevant Government Departments, particularly those responsible for health, education and regeneration, in realising the vision for sport and physical recreation in Northern Ireland;
- clarify the roles and secure a commitment to implementation from district councils and other public bodies with responsibility for sport and physical recreation;
- promote increased participation in sport and physical recreation among under-represented groups;
- support governing bodies of sport, sports clubs and local communities;
- promote community cohesion through sport and physical recreation in the context of 'A Shared Future';
- maximise the benefits for Northern Ireland from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in London;
- establish world class sports services that enable world class performances by Northern Ireland athletes;
- establish Northern Ireland as a world class venue for sporting events.

The Strategy is to be used as “a reference point for prioritising public funding interventions in sport and physical recreation” while the government seeks to pursue “increased, sustained and effective investment in sport and physical recreation by the public and private sectors”.

### **Funding for Sport and Physical Activity**

According to an analysis by the Northern Ireland Audit Office, about £450 million was allocated for sport and physical activity in Northern Ireland in 2003/04. The majority of that money, £169 million was ring-fenced capital expenditure, earmarked for a Multi Sports Stadium, the provision of training and/or competition facilities for Olympic and Paralympic sports, Safety at Sports Grounds, a High Performance Centre and the redevelopment of Tollymore Mountain Centre. District Councils invested £153 million in sports and physical activity; most of this investment was calculated pro rata in relation to leisure centres, water sports centres, country parks etc, with about £8.5 million devoted to developmental activity aimed at promoting Physical Literacy, Lifelong Activity and Performance (competitive) Sport.

Other government departments also contributed funding to promoting sport and physical activity. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) provided £5.5 million to promote the recommendation of the Chief Medical Officers in the UK that ‘all adults should take part in a minimum of 30 minutes moderate intensity physical activity at least five times per week in order to achieve health benefits’. The Department of Education, Department for Social Development, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Department for Employment and Learning and Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment provided, between them, some £2.5 million in 2003/04.

The National Lottery has also been an important investor in sport in the region over the last ten

years. However, the amount of money generated through the National Lottery has declined over the years. The Lottery income that SportNI receives has dropped from a peak of £10 million in 1997/98 to around £6 million in 2008/09.

In June 2008, the Westminster Department of Culture, Media and Sport announced that much of the Lottery income is to be reallocated to the cost of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This reallocation is to commence in 2008/09 and end in 2012/13 with a total loss to SportNI of £4.2 million.

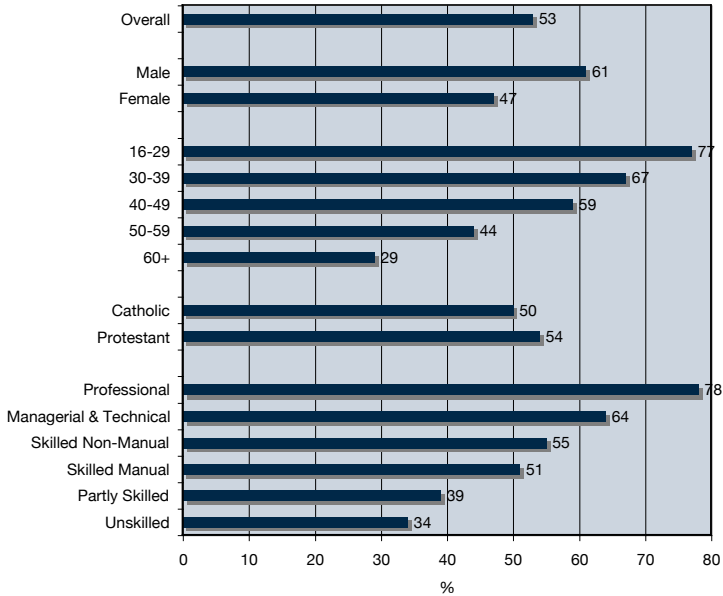
### **Participation in sport and Physical Activity in Northern Ireland**

Due to the wide range of sports played in Northern Ireland, for example hurling and Gaelic football which are peculiarly Irish, rugby and cricket which are organised on an all-island basis and soccer which is organised on a regional basis, sports organizations in Northern Ireland have to apply different administrative and competitive structures and requirements, on a North-South and East-West basis. The draft Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2007-17 recognises this but also expresses concern that, despite efforts by local and central government and governing bodies of sport to effect change, there continues to be little sharing of resources and a lack of effective co-ordination across the sporting disciplines.

Men are more likely than women to have taken part in some kind of sporting activity in the previous twelve months; 61% of men had participated, compared to just 47% of women. Unsurprisingly, those without a limiting long-term illness or disability were twice as likely to have participated in a sporting or physical activity in the previous twelve months. In 2006/07, sports participation, whether in the last 12 months or the last month, was highest amongst those in professional occupations and those aged 16-29 years old. For those in professional occupations 78% had participated in sport in the previous twelve months and 63% in the previous month. For those aged 16-29, 77% had participated in the previous twelve months and 64% in the last month. In 2006/07, almost half (49%) of all 16-29 year olds and a similar proportion of those in professional occupations had participated in sporting activity in the last week. See Figure 1 below for further details.



**Figure 1: Participated in Sporting Activity in the last 12 months to end March 2007**



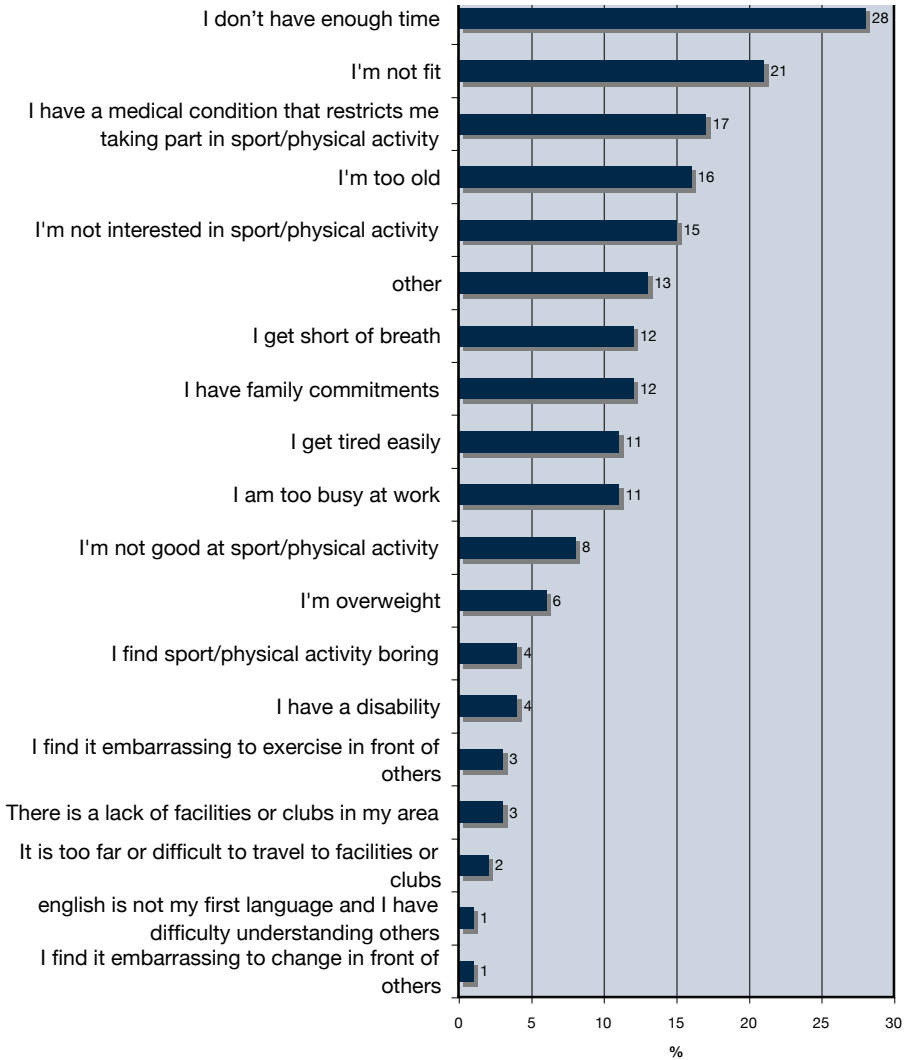
Source: DCAL (2008) <sup>1</sup> Sports Participated and Satisfaction with Sports Provision in Northern Ireland.

The socio-economic gradient in participation in sport is steep and must impact on levels of health inequalities. Of those in paid employment, only one third (35%) have not taken part in any kind of sporting activity (including walking, darts, snooker, pool and billiards) in the previous 12 months. Two thirds (66%) of those not in paid employment had not participated in any kind of sporting activity in the previous twelve months. The figure for non-participation by those who are economically inactive is even worse, at 68%.

The non-participation rates for those not in paid employment or economically inactive are mirrored by non-participation rates of those with differing levels of qualifications. So, people with a degree or higher qualification were most likely to participate in some kind of sporting activity, with only 26% not participating in any kind of sport or activity. By contrast, 71% of people with no qualifications did not participate in any kind of sporting activity (including walking, darts, snooker, pool and billiards).

When respondents who took part in the Continuous Household Survey were asked what it was that put them off taking part in sport or physical activity, the responses were as seen in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: – I do not take part in physical activity because**



## Arts and Culture

### Financing Culture and Arts

Funding for the arts in Northern Ireland comes primarily from Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and is allocated through the Arts Council for Northern Ireland. It is the regional agency responsible for the development of the arts in Northern Ireland. The Arts Council's stated vision is 'to place the arts at the heart of our social, economic and creative life'.<sup>2</sup> The arts sector is also supported by a number of other government departments – Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister, Department for Social Development, Department of Education, and through partnership funding from the 26 local authorities. In recent years there has been substantial investment in capital projects with Government allocating £18 million for arts infrastructure, primarily in Belfast. It is planned that for the period 2008-2011 a further £31.6 million will be allocated on arts capital projects across Northern Ireland. Investment from the local business community in arts and culture was £2.1 million in 2005/06. Data from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure indicates that 34,600 people were employed in creative industries or creative occupations in Northern Ireland in 2005.<sup>3</sup> This represents 4.7 per cent of the Northern Ireland workforce, compared to a UK average of 6.3 percent of the workforce (1.8 million employees).

Public attitudes as measured by questions in the 2007 Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey suggest strong support for the funding of arts related activity with 78% of respondents agreeing that there should be public funding of arts and cultural projects and 69% of respondents agreeing that their local authority should be spending money on arts and culture.

The details of the funding distributed to the Arts sector by DCAL are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Distribution of DCAL funding to the Arts sector (2005/06)**

Organization	Expenditure (£)
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	10,832,000
NI Film and Television Commission	647,000
Arts and Business	456,000
Culture NI Website	197,763
British Council	148,250
Craft NI	32,510
West Belfast Festival	20,000
Ardoyne Festival	7,500
New Lodge Festival	7,500
Cultural Affairs Office (based in Washington)	7,000
Grand Opera House (capital Funding)	1,484,630

Historically, the per capita spend on the arts in Northern Ireland has been the lowest in the UK and Ireland. Table 2 details spending in the countries of the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

**Table 2: Spending Per Capita on Arts**

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Northern Ireland	£6.09	£6.11	£7.58
Scotland	£12.01	£9.21	£14.04
England	£8.09	£8.14	£8.47
Wales	£8.81	£9.60	£10.10
Republic of Ireland (Euro)	12.46	18.87	17.92

Source: Arts Council for Northern Ireland (2009)<sup>4</sup> *Inquiry into the funding of the Arts in Northern Ireland*.

There has been debate and controversy surrounding the priorities for, and allocation of, Arts Council funding with criticisms of bias towards middle class users and interests and a focus on Belfast. The Arts Council argues that Grant Distribution Analysis produced in 2008<sup>5</sup> records that 56% (£31.5 million) of the funding awarded by the Arts Council through its main funding programmes in the last five years has gone to the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland and to a wide range of community projects thus challenging prevailing myths about bias in allocation. It argues that the level of revenue funding allocated within Belfast reflects the concentration of organisations with a national remit which are based in the city.

In July 2006 the Arts Council launched a Northern Ireland wide project, *The Re-imagining Communities Programme*. It was a pilot programme with the objective of contributing to the building of a shared future for Northern Ireland. The project has been rolled out in partnership with other government departments - Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, Department for Social Development, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the Community Relations Council and the International Fund for Ireland. The project places artists in communities to work with local people to tackle visible signs of sectarianism and racism creating a more welcoming environment. It aimed to deliver 60 to 80 community-based projects within three years, with a spend of £3 million. This number of projects has been surpassed by 25% with and a total of 109 projects receiving funding.

Local Authorities in Northern Ireland have a statutory duty to provide 'cultural activities' and it is anticipated that under the Review of Public Administration some element of current regional funding for the arts will be transferred from the Arts Council to local areas. In 2004/05 total local authority expenditure on culture was £19.8 million. This represents an overall increase of 1.6 percent in spend on the arts compared to 2003/04. Total expenditure by each individual council ranged from just over £3,000 to £9.2 million. The mean expenditure by Local Authorities was £763,000. The per capita spend on culture by Local Authorities varied from £0.11 in the case of Larne to £33.27 in the case of Belfast City Council, with the mean per capita spend being £8.10 and the median being £5.11.

### Participation at Arts and Cultural Events

Attendance and participation at Arts events has been measured by a general population survey of participation.<sup>6</sup> People were much more likely to go to see a film than to attend any other cultural event. More than double the number of people attended a film (55%) than the next most popular event – a play or drama (26%). While attendance is reasonably high with 76% of individuals interviewed attending at least one event within the previous 12 months (3% increase on 2004 figures) the survey data show that attendance at cultural and arts events varies considerably by age and occupational group. Those categorised as ‘professional’ attended most often, with 98% having attended an arts or cultural event within the last 12 months, an increase of 15% on the 2004 figure. People in the ‘unskilled manual’ category attended least frequently, with 49% having attended an event in the previous 12 months, a 6% decrease on 2004.

Of all age groups fewer people over 65 had attended events in the last 12 months than in any other age group (43%) compared to more than double this number in the 16-24 age group (93%) and 74% in the 50-64 age group. Participation rates for people with disability were also low. One in 5 adults interviewed for the survey reported having a disability and only 54% of this sample had attended an arts or cultural event within the last 12 months.

The main barriers to people attending or taking part in an event were time (30%), not interested (22%) and the cost (17%). These reasons tended to apply across the age groups apart from a significantly higher proportion of those in the 24-34 age group (43%) citing time as a problem.

This survey supported previous findings showing that people with disabilities were much less likely to attend and participate in arts and cultural events. Research by the Arts Council on the barriers to disabled people’s participation in arts events<sup>7</sup> identified a range of barriers including inadequate physical access and ease of getting to venues (including lack of access to public transport), the cost of an event and awareness of what is available. There were also economic barriers which is not surprising given that a high proportion of people with a disability have to rely on income from social security benefits.

### Libraries

Public Libraries are perceived by government as an important community learning resource. In addition to access to books and borrowing facilities, libraries have expanded their range of services to include multi-media material and free access to Internet Services. However, figures from 2003-2004 show that Northern Ireland libraries had the lowest number of visits per thousand population in the UK (Northern Ireland 4112, England 5724, Scotland 5920, Wales 4938). It also has the lowest number of book issues per head (Northern Ireland 3.83, England 5.80, Scotland 5.79, Wales 5.37). In Northern Ireland 18.5% of the population are active borrowers (borrowed at least one item last year) compared with 24.8% in England, 24.5% in Scotland, 29.5% in Wales (all figures from CIPFA 2003-04).<sup>8</sup> A survey in 2009 found that only

five percent of respondents go to a public library at least once a week. Seventeen percent go to a public library at least monthly and twenty-seven percent go at least once every 12 months. While the vast majority of those who used library services were satisfied, the results show a downwards trend, with the latest figure being the lowest in the last 5 years. Reasons for not using library services included lack of interest or that people would buy or get bought all the books they needed.

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure policy is that libraries should work to target the following groups:

- o Young adults
- o Children who need school or homework support
- o Literacy support for those lacking basic skills
- o Non-English speakers, those for whom English is a second language, and other support for ethnic minorities.

Attempts being made by government to reinvigorate the public library service are outlined in the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008-2018<sup>9</sup> and include financial investment of £138 million between 2008 and 2018, a significant proportion of which is for capital expenditure. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure has introduced a Public Library Standard (PLS 2) that aims to ensure that a local library service is available within 2 miles of 85% of the population of Northern Ireland.

### Key Policy Challenges

Strategies for Arts and sport in Northern Ireland envisage these areas as making a fundamental contribution to the development of a healthier and more cohesive society in Northern Ireland. There are, however, key challenges including declining levels and varying rates of participation across groups in society. Participation in sport has declined steadily over the past 15 years. In relation to the Arts, attendance has gone up for 'professional' groups but declined for those in the 'unskilled manual' category. Factors linked to participation include age (with older people being less likely to participate or attend arts events), socio-economic group, gender and whether or not a person has a disability, with research showing that people with disabilities are much less likely to attend arts and culture events.

Capital investment in the Arts has increased quite significantly but per capita spend for Northern Ireland is the lowest in the UK. Challenges are also evident in relation to funding for sports where the funding available from the National Lottery has declined.

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**ARK**

Magee campus  
University of Ulster  
Northland Road  
Derry/Londonderry  
BT48 7JL

Tel: 028 7137 5513  
Fax: 028 7137 5510  
E-mail: [info@ark.ac.uk](mailto:info@ark.ac.uk)



**ARK**

School of Sociology,  
Social Policy and Social Work  
Queen's University Belfast  
Belfast  
BT7 1NN

Tel: 028 9097 3034  
Fax: 028 9097 3943  
E-mail: [info@ark.ac.uk](mailto:info@ark.ac.uk)



Queen's University  
Belfast