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## **Ministerial Foreword**

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Increasingly we are becoming an older population. The statistics show that the issues affecting today's older generation will affect many more of us in the not to distant future. There is great diversity within our older population and there are people at risk of facing more than one type of social exclusion.

This strategy sets out the approach to be taken by Government to promote and support the inclusion of older people in Northern Ireland. This Strategy is the product of extensive consultation, research and expert views about the lives of older people.

The strategy is accompanied by an action plan which sets out, in real terms, the actions government departments will take to promote the inclusion of older people. Each action has been assigned a timescale and this will assist government in monitoring the plan and in developing future actions.

I commend this strategy as a positive step in promoting the social inclusion of older people in Northern Ireland.

Rt. Hon John Spellar MP

Equality Minister

March 2005



## 1. Introduction

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### Background

- 1.1 In June 2004 OFMDFM published the consultation document, *Ageing in an Inclusive Society*, aimed at promoting the social inclusion of older people. This is part of the Government's overall anti-poverty strategy to develop an integrated approach for tackling financial, economic and social exclusion in Northern Ireland as a whole. This document sets out our strategic vision and objectives and the key recommendations to improve the lives of older people in Northern Ireland. There is an accompanying Implementation Plan, which sets out how these recommendations will be taken forward in the future. *Promoting Social Inclusion* is about identifying and working with groups who are especially excluded and our work with older people is connected to initiatives with homeless people, people with disabilities and carers.
- 1.2 We aim, in this strategy, to reflect the diverse needs of older people as well as the need to develop positive attitudes to ageing within the wider community. Between 2001 and 2041 the number of people in Northern Ireland will increase from 1,689,000 to 1,723,000 people. Moreover the total number of people aged 70 and over may increase from 158,000 to 327,000 over the same period, which means that the number of people in this group will more than double over the next 40 years. This Plan also describes the need for integrated programmes on health and nutrition, consumer protection, housing, family support, social security income, employment and education.

## How the strategy was prepared

- 1.3 OFMDFM acknowledges the role of the PSI Working Group on Older People, which drew together a range of experts to inform the development of the strategy by identifying and working through the priorities for further analysis, supplying best practice and research and by providing advice on specific proposals and recommendations.
- 1.4 This strategy is also the product of the involvement of a large number of people, consultation processes and research on the nature of ageing and social exclusion in Northern Ireland. A major conference was held in March 2003 involving Northern Ireland Departments and other public bodies, the Equality Commission, organisations representing the interests of older people along with academics, trades unions and employer representations. Delegates discussed and debated the extent and nature of poverty and exclusion among older people and the Department were able to draw on an extensive bank of statistical data on demographic restructuring, the qualitative experiences of older people in Northern Ireland and the way in which the economy will increasingly be affected by an ageing population.
- 1.5 These documents were summarised in our consultation document and can be accessed on our website; [www.ageinginni.gov.uk](http://www.ageinginni.gov.uk). In particular, they helped us to build up a comprehensive picture of the various dimension to older peoples exclusion, which were well summarised by Professor Alan Walker<sup>1</sup>:
- First, there is simply not having sufficient income to be able to participate in society especially for the very elderly;
  - Research shows that where a person lives has a bearing on exclusion as, for example, older women living in remoter rural areas experience some of the highest rates of exclusion as do older people living in disadvantaged urban housing estates;
  - Discrimination affects people's access to services and their ability to earn income independently over a longer period of their life. The European Union Equal Treatment Directive will

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<sup>1</sup> Walker, A. (2003) *Social Exclusion and Growing Older*, Ageing in an Inclusive Society Conference, Europa Hotel, 28th March 2003.

help to protect older people in the workplace and enhance the income and satisfaction that employment can often bring;

- The fourth dimension he identified is ill-health, which together with disability, is progressive with age and curtail the independence that can be crucial to feeling a valued and valuable member of a family, community or society more generally;
- Finally, there is transport exclusion, as accessibility is vital to get to and from the services and facilities that we all need to have a decent standard of life.

## **The consultation process**

- 1.6 A key part in the preparation of the strategy was a wide ranging consultation exercise based on the document, *Ageing in an Inclusive Society*, that was published in 2004. The consultation involved an independent listening exercise conducted jointly by Age Concern Northern Ireland and Help the Aged Northern Ireland as well as a series of written responses to the consultation document. A summary of the consultation exercise conducted by the two age organisation is available on our older peoples' website. In general, the consultation endorsed the overall approach including the analysis of older peoples' problems, the vision statement, underpinning principles and objectives. It produced a wealth of important and innovative ideas about how to tackle the exclusion of older people and a desire to contribute, in a partnership approach, to the improvement of their quality of life.
- 1.7 We do not attempt to summarise the consultation here but there were a number of strategic issues highlighted in the exercise that have an influence on the development of the strategy:
- There was some concern that the age of 50 was too low for determining an *older person* although we feel that this helps us to highlight the importance of preparing for older age and the diversity of needs as society itself ages;
  - The financial resources of older age was a primary concern for respondents. Here, consultees felt that improving state pension entitlements was essential although it was generally appreciated that this is a reserved matter that is not within the scope of the PSI process to change. There was also a concern about the shortfall in occupational pensions, making sure that older people get the benefits and entitlements they deserve, about being 'forced' to work longer and the potential impact of reform of domestic rates and water charges on older people in Northern Ireland;
  - Linked to this, a number of respondents highlighted the importance of ageing rather than old age *per se* in the development of preparatory and preventative programmes for society and government as a whole;

- Many felt that a priority should be placed on ensuring that older people should have a stronger role in decision making, and that their diverse needs and priorities should be respected in developing and delivering services;
- Respondents in the age sector felt that the experiences of older people living at home should be prioritised in the objects of the strategy and in the way in which services are developed for older people;
- Implementation and ensuring that older people really feel the benefit from the strategy was a key concern among respondents. In particular, it was felt that there needs to be strong commitment at a senior level within Government to the delivery of the strategy and the commitments made in the implementation plan.
- It was therefore suggested that there needed to be a clearer connection between older people's priorities and delivery programmes in a range of policy areas such as health, housing and transport.

## **A summary of the strategy**

1.8 This section describes the background to the strategy and in particular, the role played by the consultation process and the PSI Working Group in formulating our objectives and proposals.

**Section 2** sets out the vision and strategic aims as well as the principles underpinning the strategy. These express the need to create an enabling environment, which gives older people choice and control over the services that influence their lives. The objectives highlight the need for integrated action to provide more effective economic, health and housing support to the older community. Moreover, they reflect the need for older people to have access to services, equal and fair treatment and a real say in decision making and policies that affect their lives.

**Section 3** describes the need to target older people who are economically vulnerable by strengthening the network of

support offered by Pensions Credit, employment opportunities, entrepreneurship, training and education.

**Section 4** highlights the importance of healthy ageing. In particular, it emphasises the way in which the Government's strategy on a Healthier Future prioritises older people in the design and delivery of health and social services in primary, acute and community care. It also highlights the importance of ageing on the type of services that will be required for the future, the need for integrated packages of delivery and the importance of quality standards.

**Section 5** highlights the importance of improving older people's lives at home. This includes the way in which services are delivered, the quality of accommodation that older people live in and the safety that they feel in their areas. It also emphasises the importance of community based approaches to tackling crime and the fear of violence as well as bringing the talents of older people to the fore in local development.

**Section 6** describes the obstacles that older people experience accessing services and facilities. The Department for Regional Development's draft Accessible Transport Strategy provides a comprehensive framework for addressing these obstacles in transport and mobility. The draft strategy identifies the need to deal with the physical, attitudinal, information and affordability barriers that prevent older people using services that many in society take for granted.

**Section 7** identifies the progress that has been made in tackling ageism and the existing and proposed legislative protection for older people in Northern Ireland. However, it also acknowledges that equality legislation needs to work more effectively to prevent discrimination against the older community, especially those facing multiple disadvantages. It also highlights the need to challenge stereotypes in the media and society.

**Section 8** mentions the structures that will be required to deliver the approach effectively and to give older people a meaningful say in decisions that affect their future. This includes establishing a Champion for Older People at Senior Civil Service level who will monitor the delivery of the strategy.



## 2. Principles, vision and strategic objectives

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- 2.1 The consultation exercise verified the vision statement, strategic objectives and the principles underpinning our work to deliver better services for older people. However, respondents also felt that the objectives needed to better reflect the way in which older people experience exclusion in their home, their community and when accessing some services.

### Vision

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

### Strategic objectives

To turn this Vision into reality we have proposed six strategic objectives:

1. To ensure that older people have access to financial and economic resources to lift them out of exclusion and isolation;
2. To deliver integrated services that improve the health and quality of life of older people;
3. To ensure that older people have a decent and secure life in their home and community;
4. To ensure that older people have access to services and facilities that meet their needs and priorities;

5. To promote equality of opportunity for older people and their full participation in civic life, and challenge ageism wherever it is found;
6. To ensure that Government works in a coordinated way interdepartmentally and with social partners to deliver effective services for older people.

## **Underpinning principles**

The principles that underpin our approach are:

- We will prioritise social need taking account of the way in which older people face more than one form of exclusion;
- We will promote the esteem and dignity of older people;
- We will work to ensure that there is equality of treatment for older people;
- We will respect the desire of older people to live independent and self-fulfilling lives;
- We will ensure that we continually listen to older people in the design and delivery of services;
- We will encourage a partnership approach involving all the stakeholders in the design and delivery of the Strategy.

### **3. The economics of ageing**

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- 3.1 One of the main issues raised in the consultation process was the need for older people to have a decent and affordable quality of later life. There was a concern expressed by consultees about shortfalls, water charges and domestic rates and that the use of savings for health and care would put unbearable pressure on older people and push some deeper into poverty. There was also a perception that the Pension Credit system could work more effectively, that older people were vital to the development of the economy and their identity as valued members of local society should be promoted.
- 3.2 Our priority, however, will be to ensure that the benefits system will continue to work as effectively as possible by maximising uptake among older people across Northern Ireland. This will include moving towards benefits awards which are as automatic as possible. Much has been done to target the benefit at those most in need by Government and the community and voluntary sector.
- 3.3 As in the rest of the UK, there have been significant improvements in the pensions system; particularly with the introduction of Pension Credit in 2003. This resulted in:
- pensioners have a dedicated service which accepts benefit claims over the telephone;
  - a local service which is focussed on visiting older people who need it;
  - claims to Pension Credit can be taken over the telephone; and
  - the claim form has been reduced in size.
- 3.4 The consultation highlighted the concerns of unemployed people over 50 who see age as a barrier to employment. Helping unemployed and inactive people over 50 into jobs is a key priority for Government investment. Employers need to

invest in the skills of older workers to remain competitive. Additionally, the age provisions of the EU Employment Framework will make it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of age in employment and training. Furthermore the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's Age Positive Campaign complements this work by promoting the business benefits of an age diverse workforce. New Deal 50+ has been operational for almost 5 years and the Department for Employment and Learning has developed the eligibility for other New Deals to ensure that people aged 50 and over and who want to work have the same opportunity and support as others to get into the labour market.

- 3.5 The development of entrepreneurship among older people was well supported in the consultation, especially given the skills, experience and knowledge that older workers have accumulated. Invest Northern Ireland continue to target older people in their Accelerating Entrepreneurship.
  
- 3.6 It is also clear that planning for an ageing workforce should not just be a matter for employers or older people. The Department for Education will be introducing a revised School Curriculum from September 2006. There will be a new area of Learning for Life and Work, which will include Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship education, which should make children aware of the issues affecting the older members of society and encourage them to value ageing and older people, intergenerational contact and understanding and challenging stereotypes among younger people.
  
- 3.7 Research showed that older people are less likely to own a computer or access the Internet than the rest of the population. Yet, ICT and indeed the Internet open up a range of communicative opportunities for people who are often physically isolated or immobile. They also bring skills that can be used to access services, training and jobs or simply new opportunities for self-expression and learning.

## **4. Healthy ageing**

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4.1 The health and social services demands of an ageing population were highlighted repeatedly in the consultation as was a recognition of the financial pressures on government, given competing spending priorities. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) recently published a twenty year vision for health and well being in Northern Ireland called A Healthier Future. It has identified the need for responsive integrated services for older people and committed the Department to support the overarching vision and specific aims of the PSI Strategy set out here. Key objectives for the Department will be:

- the promotion of active ageing;
- the protection of vulnerable people;
- a prompt response to acute crises when they arise;
- the opportunity for rehabilitation; and
- support for carers.

4.2 The Department will also support the community development approach advocated under other objectives in this strategy by building on the Ageing Well Network and the range of area based initiatives, which also target older people including Investing for Health Networks, Health Action Zones and Healthy Cities projects. Beyond that, the Health and Personal Social Services (HPSS) will continue to develop its range of services designed to meet the changing needs of older people. Maintaining independent living is a priority for many older people and the HPSS will be working to increase the percentage of older people who receive the care they need in a domiciliary setting. In tandem, there will be a greater focus on the role of intermediate care services, which are designed to reduce unnecessary admissions to hospital, promote faster recovery from illness, support timely discharge and maximise independent living. The HPSS will also be working in partnership with other statutory and non-statutory agencies in

the continued development of supported living as an alternative to long-term institutional care. Four in five people over 75 take at least one prescribed medicine and 36% take four or more medicines. With ageing, the susceptibility to the adverse effects of medicines increases and the international epidemiological evidence suggests that, on average, 12% of admissions to hospital of elderly people are medication related. Through its medicines management programmes, the HPSS is seeking to ensure that older people gain the maximum benefit from their medication to maintain or increase their quality and duration of life and do not suffer unnecessarily from illness caused by excessive, inappropriate or inadequate consumption of medicines.

- 4.3 A number of respondents to the consultation felt that discrimination in the health service is a key problem for older people. Through the development of minimum standards for care, the expansion of regulation and the creation of an independent Regulation and Improvement Authority, the Department will be working to ensure that equity in dignity, respect and quality of care is maintained, regardless of age. The Department is also taking further legislative steps to strengthen the protective measures for vulnerable people. A regional multi-agency representative group, which has already developed a joint protocol for the investigation of incidents of abuse, has now started work on the development of an updated comprehensive set of operational guidelines for the protection of vulnerable adults, which will be applied equitably across Northern Ireland.
- 4.4 Also central to the aim of promoting independent living is the role of informal carers and the contribution they make to our health and social services. The Department wants to recognise, value and support that contribution in ways that will make practical improvements to carers' lives. Carers have also been identified as at risk of social exclusion and the Department will publish a strategy, building on the Valuing Carers Report, issued by the Executive in 2002. The objective will be further growth in the delivery of flexible and responsive services,

including respite care, which will ease the burden on carers and support them in their vital work.

- 4.5 Older people are not a homogenous group with similar needs. The identification of people at risk and the development of person-centred assessment processes must be at the heart of our decision-making about service provision. The direct involvement of older people and their families in planning, delivery and evaluation is also crucial to the development of services that will actually make a difference.
- 4.6 The Sports Council for Northern Ireland has recently announced funding for Age Concern to employ a Community Sports Officer and part time Co-ordinator with a remit to increase the uptake of under represented older people in sport and physical activity in NI. The project is based on a partnership approach involving a range of key stakeholders including district councils, health organisations, community and voluntary groups and older people's organisations. Priorities of the project will be older people living in disadvantaged rural and urban areas across seven District Councils. It is estimated that 2,500 members of the older population within each Council will directly benefit from the proposed project and a further 30% indirectly, through improved general access to leisure provision within the community. The project aims to provide opportunities for older people to participate in sport and physical activity through building on leadership models, peer monitoring, capacity building and community empowerment. Training and development are an inherent part of the project.
- 4.7 Craigavon Borough Council have also been awarded funding to appoint a Community Sport Development Officer to develop the physical, social and emotional well being of specific populations within Craigavon. The project aims to target those individuals who are frail and dependant, either through age or disability, giving them more opportunities to become physically active. The Sports Council currently funds, through Investing in Sport, a Sports Development Officer in Craigavon who focuses on

developing opportunities and engaging older people in physical activity.

- 4.8 Age Concern also manage the Ageing Well programme, a 50+ health promotion initiative, which includes physical activity - 2005 being designated by Age Concern as the year of Dance.

## 5. Life at home

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- 5.1 The consultation highlighted the fundamental need for the strategy to make a difference to older people in the homes and communities in which they live. This objective reflects the way in which the design, type and condition of housing will need to match the requirements of an ageing population, the desire of many older people to live independently and to tackle crime and fear that often blights the quality of later life at home.
- 5.2 Housing is a policy field where we have seen the development of services for and by older people which include bringing Supporting People assistance to nearly 9,000 older residents, the development of assistive technologies in Supported Housing for people with Dementia, specific assistance to remote rural dwellers under the Housing Executive's Rural Housing Strategy *Places for People* and the development of integrated approaches to community safety on housing estates. Strategies to support independent living will also extend to actions outside care provision. The Housing Executive's Private Sector Grant Regime and assistive technologies will help householders stay in their own homes by addressing unfitness, disrepair, disabled facility adaptations, enhancing energy efficiency through the provision of insulation and non-manual central heating systems.
- 5.3 Area based strategies in both urban and rural settings need to involve older people in the development of plans and in the delivery of projects. *People and Place* is the Department for Social Development's Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal designed to tackle the most disadvantaged areas of our towns and cities. It provides a framework for articulating older peoples needs and bringing them into mainstream development programmes for their areas. Neighbourhood Renewal is being

implemented through separate strategies for Belfast, the North West and Regional Towns.

- 5.4 DSD, the Housing Executive and Housing Associations have promoted safe areas by designing housing estates and new building schemes in ways that reduce the chances of crime and anti-social behaviour. In some areas, initiatives such as closing off communal alleys have had a significant impact on reducing crime and vandalism.
  
- 5.5 A Community Safety Strategy for Older People is being prepared by the Northern Ireland Office for public consultation. The concerns and fears of older people will be prioritised in the strategy and there is an opportunity for the department to capture the real fear that many older people experience in their home and community.
  
- 5.6 The Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy also represents an opportunity to bring older people into the decision-making processes and to the delivery of actions in places where they often feel marginalised and frightened. For example, the Neighbourhood Warden Scheme operated by the Housing Executive has had a significant impact on the reduction of anti-social behaviour, vandalism and the removal of sectarian graffiti. Here, many experienced and respected older people are making a profound contribution to their community and this type of intervention needs to be further encouraged and developed in both urban and rural areas.
  
- 5.7 The Housing Executive has done much to improve housing conditions in Northern Ireland although stubborn problems remain, especially with the high number of older people living in unfit accommodation. The organisation has developed a number of initiatives aimed at reducing the levels of unfitness in this sector, which is often hard to target, especially in remoter rural areas.

- 5.8 The Department for Social Development provides 100% funding to Housing Associations to carry out adaptations to properties for people with disabilities, including elderly tenants whose health had deteriorated, to enable them to maintain independent living.
- 5.9 There has been progress on issues such as fuel poverty and the Department for Social Development launched "Ending Fuel Poverty: A Strategy for Northern Ireland" in November 2004. This strategy recognises that a partnership approach on the part of all the relevant organisations in Government and elsewhere is necessary to eradicate fuel poverty and subject to the availability of necessary resources, DSD and its partners aim to eliminate fuel poverty in vulnerable households by 2010, and in non-vulnerable households by 2016. An Inter-Departmental Group and a Fuel Poverty Advisory Group is being set up to monitor and advise on the progress of the Strategy and the Department for Social Development's Warm Homes Scheme will continue to receive funding. This scheme together with the work being done by the Housing Executive is improving energy-efficiency across all tenures. The Housing Executive will continue its work with housing associations and the private house building industry to improve the supply of lifetime homes especially where they address the distinctive energy priorities of older people. This is vital work that needs to ensure that housing design, resources and information improves the quality of life of older people in their homes. There is an opportunity here to link campaigns to address fuel poverty and activities that improve the take-up of the Pensions Credit. Here, the Senior Network and organisations in the age sector have a role to play in helping to target programmes at those most in need.



## 6. Access to services

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- 6.1 One of the main ways in which older people could access a better range and quality of services is by effective and tailored transportation. This emerged as a key issue in the consultation, especially in rural areas and housing estates where car ownership and public transport provision was low. In October 2004 the Department for Regional Development published a draft Accessible Transport Strategy, which identified older people and people with disabilities as a priority for the range of initiatives they suggest for different transport modes. It makes the point that not only is the number of older people growing but that they face physical, attitudinal, information and cost barriers to using public transport in particular. The draft Strategy has the overall vision *“to have an accessible transport system that enables older people and people with disabilities to participate more fully in society, enjoy greater independence and experience a better quality of life”*. The draft Accessible Transport Strategy includes 7 Strategic Objectives and a range of supporting policies that will be followed to assist in achieving that vision.
- 6.2 The consultation on older people highlighted the potential of alternative transport models including door-to-door, demand responsive, community based and social car schemes that meet the specific mobility needs of older people. Some respondents described successful community transport schemes in rural areas and the DRD draft strategy recognises the value of these initiatives in supporting older people and people with disabilities. A key action point that responds to particular concerns raised in the consultation is the need to coordinate health, education, social services that older people often use on a frequent basis with the public transport network.
- 6.3 Participation in culture, arts and leisure activities can enhance the quality of older persons’ lives. The Corporate Strategy of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure sets out government’s goals in this area, including enabling as many

people as possible to experience and appreciate the excellence of our cultural assets and promoting creativity, innovation and lifelong learning. While many of the actions and targets adopted in pursuit of these goals embrace the population of Northern Ireland as a whole, there are several activities aimed specifically at enabling older people to engage in and enjoy culture, arts and leisure opportunities. For example, older people constitute a large proportion of the audience for arts events and the Arts Council for Northern Ireland will be addressing the inclusion of older people in its next strategic plan. Concessionary permits are available to people aged 60 and over who wish to fish the public angling estate and the installation of appropriate resting/seating facilities at water recreation amenities for older and less able-bodied people continues. The Public Record Office has provided a series of talks about family history for older people's groups over the last two years, reaching out in particular to the retired community who are most likely to have the time and interest to pursue the subject. The Northern Ireland Film and Television Commission has an outreach programme in partnership with other organisations which delivers, amongst other things, themed workshops using moving images from its Digital Film Archive. Since the programme began, over 60% of the workshops have been delivered to people in the 60 and over age group.

- 6.4 It is also important that older people are encouraged back into learning and the consultation highlighted the employment as well as personal value provided by learning, libraries and further and higher education institutes. Courses in the use of computers are provided for older people by the Public Library Service on an individual and small class basis. These appeal to older people because they feel safe in a local environment, and there is very positive feedback from users. Some of the obstacles to the development of education related services include lack of access to affordable and flexible transport.

## 7. Fighting ageism

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- 7.1 The legislative protection for older people will be strengthened by the regulations that implement the European Equal Treatment Directive as well as the Single Equality Bill. The Single Equality Bill provides an opportunity to consider the extent and nature of protection against discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services and a recent consultation in 2004 on options for the Bill addressed the age GFS (Goods, Facilities and Services) issue. The consultation sought views on whether or not such protection should be provided and if so how and when this could be achieved.
- 7.2 Section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in Northern Ireland to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons in different categories . The categories specified include people of different age . In order to comply with this statutory obligation each public authority will have an Equality Scheme which will set out the authority's arrangements for assessing and consulting on the impact of their proposed policies for the promotion of equality of opportunity . Where a policy is likely to have an adverse impact on any of the categories of persons identified then the authority must consider if there are any alternative approaches or what mitigating steps might be taken to minimise the adverse impact .
- 7.3 Intergenerational Programmes are gaining increasing recognition for the contribution they can make to building vibrant, inclusive and safer communities. They fit with many of the proposals set out in this strategy including education, community safety, reminiscence programmes in museums and health and social services. A Northern Ireland Intergenerational Steering Group has been established with Age Concern Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Youth Council at the lead partners. This has evolved out of the projects and good practice developed over a number of years and has gained

recognition in Britain, Ireland and the International Consortium for the quality and pioneering nature of the work undertaken. The Steering Group's aims include: encouraging the development of Intergenerational Programmes in Northern Ireland; spreading good practice; develop reminiscence programmes, especially in museums and maintaining standards of excellence. This work will be carried forward through the new curricular area of Learning for Life and Work through which young people would be encouraged to understand the personal, social and economic aspects of ageing.

## 8. Working in partnership to deliver change

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- 8.1 A key issue to arise from the consultation is the need to ensure that older people have real influence over the policies that affect their lives. Moreover, it is important that the strategic objectives set out here as well as the proposals in the Action Plan are implemented and have an impact.
- 8.2 We will establish a Champion for Older People, a senior Civil Servant to have a strategic responsibility for co-ordinating actions to improve the lives of older people in Northern Ireland. Specifically, the Champion will: advocate and promote integrated planning and improved service delivery for older people; ensure that older peoples affairs are addressed in key strategies such as the Programme for Government; help to articulate older peoples priorities in setting out policy objectives including Public Service Agreements (PSAs) and Service Delivery Agreements (SDAs); facilitate integrated actions required to tackle the exclusion of older people; and monitor progress and identify critical issues, obstacles and solutions relevant to the delivery of the Strategy.
- 8.3 It is important that we can assess progress in achieving the objectives set out for the Strategy. It is also important that these are consistent with other PSI policy priorities, especially where they can measure progress towards *financial, social and economic* inclusion. There is now in place a range of data capturing systems on the lives and experiences of older people including the House Condition Survey, Northern Ireland Household Panel, Continuous Household Survey and the Life and Times Survey.
- 8.4 Older people already benefit from a professional and diverse work of the various age sector organisations and it is important that this is maintained and developed in the future. The Promotion Social Inclusion Group and other fora, offer important

opportunities for the sector to articulate the issues of concern to older people, and thereby to contribute to the development of policy. We propose to consider and recommend structures which, taking account of existing arrangements, would ensure a continued opportunity for older people and their representative organisations to continue to engage with each other and with officials and thereby help monitor and ensure progress towards achieving the objectives and targets set out in this document.

- 8.5 These structures will enable us to seek the views of older people and their representative agencies on issues such as research needs, and age legislation. It will also assist us in the ongoing review and refinement of indicators and targets and thereby help monitor and ensure progress towards achieving the objectives set out in the document.

## **9. Next steps**

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- 9.1 The Action Plan translates the key recommendations in this strategy into a programme of work with lead agencies, timescales and programme details attached to each one. It will be important to establish the structures set out in the previous section to ensure that older people and representative organisations have a key role in the delivery of the strategy. We commend this strategy to all those with an interest in the quality of older peoples lives and highlight the need for a genuine partnership to put older people and ageing at the heart of government decision making and the work of the voluntary, community and private sectors.



## **Annex 1 Equality Issues**

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### **Background**

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

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

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

### **The Ageing in an Inclusive Society evaluation**

3. The Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) group on Older People was set up in 2002 in response given in the first Programme for Government. ‘Ageing in an Inclusive Society’ is a process set in

place by Government to promote and support the inclusion of Older People in Northern Ireland.

## **Assessment of Impact**

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

## **Questions on equality issues during consultation**

8. Various questions were set out under the heading 'Equality Issues' in the consultation document 'Ageing in an Inclusive Society'. Those respondees who referenced the equality issues section felt that the proposals would not adversely impact on any groups within Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act.



## Annex 2 Rural Proofing

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### Background

1. Rural Proofing is a process to ensure that Government policies are examined carefully and objectively to ensure that they treat rural dwellers fairly and in particular to make public services accessible on a fair basis to people wherever they live in Northern Ireland.
2. The ethos of Rural Proofing is to ensure that the needs and special considerations of rural communities and areas are routinely and objectively considered as part of the policy development process. The first Programme for Government outlined government's commitment to Rural Proofing to '*ensure that the rural dimension is routinely considered as part of the making and implementation of policy*'.
3. The aim of effective rural proofing is that all significant policy proposals, consultative papers and proposals for new legislation which are submitted to Departmental Ministers for endorsement, specifically identify any likely impact which that policy might have on rural areas or communities, and offer an assessment of how any differential impact can be addressed.
4. Prior to the 'ageing in an Inclusive Society' consultation, the PSI group for older people included a representative from the Rural Community Network. OFMDFM also funded the rural Community Network to produce a report titled 'Ageing and Rural Poverty' which was published in October 2004. The report is available at: <http://www.research.ofmdfni.gov.uk/ageing.pdf>.

5. During the consultation OFMDFM consulted with groups working with older people in both urban and rural areas and with older people from both urban and rural areas.
  
6. Many comments were received which raised issues specific to the rural community; access to services, unfit housing and transport. Each of these areas is being looked at by individual departments and this can be seen from the accompanying action plans.
  
7. OFMDFM is committed to implementing the rural proofing initiative in areas where it is specifically responsible for the development and delivery of policy. The PSI, however, is more than an individual departmental policy. It impacts on a range of policies and strategies across government, as reflected in the Action Plan. As such individual departments will factor in rural proofing in their consideration and delivery of those specific policies. The rural proofing work then taken forward by departments is included in the Rural Proofing Annual Report, collated by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

## AGEING IN AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY – ACTION PLAN 2005 - 2006

Priority	'Idea' Published in Strategy	Areas of Action	Timescale	Relevant/Lead Departments
<b>Economic And Financial Inclusion</b>	Ensure the pension system works effectively	<p>The SSA has a number of initiatives to improve benefit take-up rates. The Agency actively promotes the use of its Tele-Claims service for both Retirement Pension and Pension Credit. Calls are free, and are a quick and easy way for new pensioner customers to claim as the claim forms are completed by Agency staff. In addition our network of local Pension Advisers visit people in their homes and local communities to provide help and advice on completion of forms.</p> <p>Where customers do not avail of the Tele-Claims or Pensions Advisers services the Pensions Credit application form is designed for easy use.</p> <p>The Agency, in consultation with counterparts in GB and the voluntary sector is reviewing the Pension credit application form to ensure that it continues to meet customer requirements whilst capturing the key information to determine benefit entitlement.</p> <p>We are working to expand the functions of Pensions advisers and formalise a programme of work to meet the wider needs of pensioners.</p>	On-going	DSD/SSA
			A revised form will be introduced from April 2005.	DSD/SSA
			To be completed by March 2006.	DSD/SSA

	Promote employment opportunities and entrepreneurship	<p>Extend the Age Positive Campaign as appropriate in the period up to the introduction of new Age Legislation</p> <p>Continue to target older people under the Accelerating Entrepreneurship programme.</p> <p>To extend the development of training opportunities in sport and physical activity for older people.</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>DETI</p> <p>InvestNI</p> <p>DCAL/SCNI</p>
	Develop opportunities for life long learning and skills in ICT	<p>Develop a customer strategy and charter through consultation with customers and stakeholders.</p> <p>Introduce a process to monitor the age categories of clients using the learning advice services of the National Learning Advice line and the Educational Guidance Service for Adults</p> <p>Encourage the Educational Guidance Service for Adults and the National Learning Advice Line to market their services specifically to older potential learners</p> <p>Increase uptake of IT by older people for leisure and lifelong learning, including courses in the use of computers on an individual and small class basis.</p> <p>Regular visits to and book exchanges in residential and nursing homes, hospitals and the mobile library service.</p>	<p>By March 2006</p> <p>2005/06</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p>	<p>DEL</p> <p>DEL</p> <p>DEL</p> <p>DCAL/Public Library Service</p> <p>DCAL/Public Library Service</p>

	<p>Co-ordinate the work of government to improve services.</p>	<p>We propose to consider and recommend structures which, taking account of existing arrangements, would ensure a continued opportunity for older people and their representative organisations to continue to engage with each other and with officials and thereby helping to monitor and ensure progress towards achieving the objectives and targets set out in this document.</p>	2005	OFMDFM
	<p>Encourage targeting of rural development programmes</p>	<p>Through its rural policy the Housing Executive targets rural areas and with specific reference to unfit housing has developed ‘Rural Priority Areas’ based on criteria such as age, house condition and income.</p> <p>To continue to fund Translink and Rural Community Transport Partnerships through the Rural Transport Fund to provide socially necessary transport services for those who live in deep rural areas.</p> <p>To continue to support and develop programmes and initiatives which provide opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity in rural areas</p> <p>In consultation with the Rural Stakeholder Forum, DARD is carrying out a major review of rural policy, which should be completed by Summer 2005. The review will be informed by an in-depth consultant’s report covering the economic, environmental and social needs of rural communities, and how these have changed since the policy was first introduced, the rationale</p>	<p>These will be rolled out in 2005/06.</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p>	<p>DSD / NIHE</p> <p>DRD</p> <p>DCAL/SCNI</p> <p>DARD</p>

		<p>for Government intervention and the effectiveness of current DARD policy and delivery mechanisms, taking account of a changed economic and funding context. Over coming months, the Department will undertake full consultation, including with organisations representing the interests of older people, both on the consultant's report and also on the subsequent draft rural development policy.</p>		
	<p>Build on progress made in tackling fuel poverty Improve accessibility to housing.</p>	<p>Lifetime Homes standards have been developed in the social housing sector for new build housing in NI since 1998 which is now undertaken by Housing Associations and funded by DSD. Social housing new build accounts for approximately one in ten of new dwellings built in NI each year. New property construction represents 1.5% of total Housing stock. Lifetime Homes are suitable for family housing and both young and old value many of the core features.</p> <p>Since 2000 the aim of the NIHE is to include the concept of Lifetime Homes as part of its improvement programme. The introduction of flexible design and improvement in the physical access to the dwelling stock should help secure the benefits of reduced major adaptation costs and provide a more flexible and quality housing stock capable of meeting the needs of families as they progress through their life cycle. The next stage is to encourage the private housing sector to embrace the Lifetime Home concept as it is currently a higher standard than that of Part R of the Building Regulations. Progress has</p>	<p>2005/2006</p>	<p>DSD / NIHE</p>

		<p>commenced on this already and there is an imminent meeting arranged with OFMDFM to discuss this further to see if Part R can be amended to incorporate these principles. This was a recommendation of the Northern Ireland Select Affairs Committee.</p>		
<b>Healthy Ageing</b>	Integrated health and social services programmes	<p>To put in place robust organisational structures designed to commission and deliver high quality health care needed by people.</p> <p>To provide people with modernised acute hospital services to deliver high quality treatment and care, substantially reduce waiting times, and meet peak demands without postponing normal activity.</p> <p>The development of integrated primary and community care services that prevent unnecessary hospital admission, promote faster recovery from illness, support timely discharge and maximise independent living, in accordance with the principles of 'People First'</p> <p>Ensure that medicines management programmes provide opportunity for older people to gain the maximum benefit from their medication</p>	<p>March 2010</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	DHSSPS
	Recognise the concerns of older people in the HPSS	Engage with older people, their carers and families in the development of the new 20-year Regional Strategy for the Health and Personal Social Services.	<p>Consultation on the <b>draft</b> Strategy due to end on 27 March 2005.</p>	DHSSPS

		The introduction of personalised care plans for people at risk.	March 2007	DHSSPS
	Listen to older people in the development of HPSS planning	<p>Person-centred assessment of need and development of services.</p> <p>Improvement in general health and wellbeing and reductions in health inequalities amongst older people.</p> <p>Build upon existing local partnerships and include older people in the development of an overall strategy for involving people and building caring communities.</p>	Ongoing	DHSSPS
	Promote the dignity of older people in hospital care.	<p>Extend regulation of services</p> <p>Introduce minimum standards for care</p> <p>Enhance inspection regime through establishment of independent HPSS Regulation and Improvement Authority</p> <p>Further legislative steps to strengthen the protection of vulnerable older people.</p>	March 2007	DHSSPS

		Build upon the joint protocol for the investigation of incidents of abuse by developing an updated comprehensive set of operational guidelines for the protection of vulnerable adults, which will be applied equitably across Northern Ireland.		
	Support and develop strategies for independent living.	<p>Increase the percentage of people who have their care needs met in their own homes.</p> <p>Contribute to the further development of Supporting People.</p> <p>A strategy to recognise, value and support the contribution made by informal carers.</p> <p>To support the development of programmes and initiatives, which link health to physical activity.</p>	March 2007	DHSSPS
			On-Going	DCAL/SCNI
<b>Safety and Access to Facilities and Services</b>	Identify the needs of older people in Transportation Strategies.	<p>To continue to fund the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme, which provides free travel on public transport to NI residents aged 65+.</p> <p>To expand the Transport Programme for People with Disabilities by introducing Door-to-Door transport services for people with disabilities and those who find it difficult or impossible to use public transport in all of Northern Ireland's urban areas with populations in excess of 10,000.</p>	On-going. Begin implementation in 2005/06.	DRD  DRD

	<p>The preparation of an Accessible Transport Strategy for NI.</p>	<p>To develop an integrated, fully accessible public transport network which will enable older people and people with disabilities to travel by public, private and community transport services in safety and in comfort and move easily between these modes.</p> <p>To enable older people and people with disabilities to travel safely using cars and other means of private transport.</p> <p>To enable older people and people with disabilities to travel safely using cars and other means of private transport.</p> <p>To address attitudinal and psychological barriers that discourage older people and people with disabilities from using transport services that are available to them.</p> <p>To ensure that information in a range of formats is available for all public transport services, including the full range of accessible services supported by the Department, to enable people to plan and make journeys easily.</p> <p>To provide help with travel costs and provide other support services to enable older people and people with disabilities to use the transport services available to them.</p>	<p>2005-2015</p> <p>2005-2015</p> <p>2005-2015</p> <p>2005-2015</p> <p>2005-2015</p>	<p>DRD</p> <p>DRD</p> <p>DRD</p> <p>DRD</p> <p>DRD</p>
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		To manage effectively the transition to a fully accessible transport system by targeting the resources available at initiatives that maximise the benefits for older people and people with disabilities and offer best value for money.	2005-2015	DRD
	Maximise the potential of community, flexible and Demand Responsive Transport options.	To trial DRT services in rural areas and evaluate their impact.	To commence in 2005/06.	DRD
	More access to education, cultural and leisure facilities.	Develop and implement a Northern Ireland regional strategy on widening access, extending the remit beyond higher and further education. Complete 2 community based projects involving groups of older people. Create at least 5km of new or improved access at water recreation amenities. To ensure that training opportunities on issues relevant to older people are available. To support the development of programmes and initiatives which support intergenerational work through sport and physical activity. The Arts Council will include older people as a focus in its next five year plan. Arts Council engaging with Clannmil Housing to help them promote artistic activity for older people in their residential accommodation.	2005-2008 2005 2005/06 Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing To commence 2006	DEL DCAL/PRONI DCAL DCAL/SCNI DCAL/SCNI DCAL/ACNI DCAL/ACNI

			<p>NIIFTC are engaging in the expansion of Reminiscence Workshops to sheltered elderly dwellings, elderly community groups and nursing homes.</p> <p>Enhancement of inter-generational workshops this year by incorporating an IT/moving image project</p> <p>Expansion of the Digital Film Archive and improvement of Local History Presentations to incorporate new material.</p>	<p>2005</p> <p>2005</p> <p>2005</p>	<p>DCAL/NIIFTC</p> <p>DCAL/NIIFTC</p> <p>DCAL/NIIFTC</p>
	<p>Improve safety and help reduce fear.</p>		<p>A Community Safety Strategy for Older People is being prepared by the Northern Ireland Office for public consultation. The concerns and fears of older people will be prioritised in the strategy.</p>	<p>2005</p>	<p>NIO</p>
	<p>Safer Environments</p>				
	<p>Develop positive links between schools and older people.</p>	<p>Citizenship will become a compulsory element of the revised NI curriculum from 2006. The key concepts are diversity and inclusion, equality and social justice, human rights and social responsibility and democracy and active participation.</p> <p>Citizenship will provide opportunities for young people to consider issues such as identity, difference, inequality - how it arises (eg age, disability), its results (eg poverty,</p>	<p>The legislation will be in place by September 2006 and the revised curriculum will be introduced on a phased basis.</p> <p>CCEA are currently working on guidance and Citizenship is</p>		<p>DE</p>

		exclusion, homelessness) and how to address it - promoting inclusion and encouraging participation and involvement in the local community.	being piloted in a number of post-primary schools.	
<b>Equality of Opportunity</b>	Protection from discrimination	Implement the age strand of the Employment Framework Directive by regulations.  Publish a report on the findings of a recent consultation on the Single Equality Bill.	By December 2006  By June 2005	OFMDFM  OFMDFM
<b>Co-ordinated Service Provision</b>	Identify a champion for older people within Government	Establish a Champion at Senior Civil Service level.	Establish by March 2006	OFMDFM
	Ensure that Strategy is implemented effectively and reviewed.	Champion to oversee review of progress on an annual basis.	First review begins in March 2006	OFMDFM
	Put in place a system for monitoring and evaluating	Use new indicators being developed under NewTSN to establish baseline figures from which we can set targets and monitor progress.	Have in place prior to first review in March 2006	OFMDFM