



Office of the
**First Minister and
Deputy First Minister**
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OLDER PEOPLES STRATEGY

Ageing **in an inclusive Society**



2005/06 Annual Report *at March 2006*

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Minister's Foreword

I am pleased to present today the first annual report of Government's Older People's Strategy.

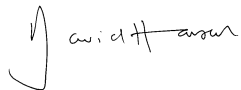
In March 2005 Government launched "Ageing in an Inclusive Society": A Strategy for promoting the social inclusion of older people". This document set out six strategic objectives of Government to promote the social inclusion of older people, with an associated action plan to achieve the challenging objectives. It aims to tackle issues of financial and social exclusion, to deliver services which will improve the health and quality of life for older people, and ensure that they live safe and secure in their own homes and communities.

The strategy also recognises that to tackle the issues facing older people an emphasis needs to be made on a partnership approach with older people and organisations in the voluntary and community sector representing their needs, such as Age Concern and Help the Aged, who bring a wealth of expertise and insight to the decision making process within departments.

This Report highlights Government's actions since the launch of the strategy in March 2005 and the progress that has been made on the implementation of the strategy, which aims "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".

I pay tribute in my new role of Champion for older people to the contribution the voluntary and community sector organisations and individuals have made to progress departments have made so far.

As Champion for Older People, I look forward to continuing to work with departments in partnership with key older people's organisations to address the needs of older people in Northern Ireland. I will continue to monitor progress on the implementation of the older people's strategy, and assess impact of its action plans to develop the vision of the strategy's vision.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Hanson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

David Hanson MP
Minister of State for Northern Ireland

Minister with responsibility for Equality

CHAPTER 1 – BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Programme for Government of the former Northern Ireland Executive gave a commitment;-
- to open new channels of communication with organisations which represent older people to identify the issues and requirements of older people in Northern Ireland, and
 - those public services should be provided in the most appropriate and accessible way to meet those requirements.
- 1.2 It also stated that this should be taken forward within the context of the Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) element of the new Targeting Social Need policy as older people had been identified as one of several groups who are most vulnerable to social exclusion.

PSI Working Group on Older People

- 1.3 The PSI Working Group on Older People was established in 2002 and was made up of representatives from Northern Ireland Departments, the wider public sector, the voluntary sector and organisations representing older people. The Group developed the consultation document “Ageing in an Inclusive Society” which was launched in June 2004 by the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Consultation Document – Ageing in an Inclusive Society

1.4 In developing the consultation document the Group and OFMDFM were informed by wide ranging consultation, research, existing strategies and working papers prepared by Government and the age sector. This included:-

- A major conference held in Belfast in 2003 which identified issues of concern to older people;
- Public consultation including a number of public seminars across Northern Ireland;
- Help the Aged research in 2003 into the lives of older people in Northern Ireland;
- A statistical report published in 2003 describing the socio-economic and demographic conditions of older people;
- A report published by Queens University in 2003 on Poverty in Northern Ireland, which looked, in particular, at the issues confronting older person households;
- The Northern Ireland Ageing Population Panel Report 2001, which was produced following a temporarily established Panel on which DETI and Age Concern were key members as one of the strands of the NI Foresight Programme aimed to address action needed to deal with issues which will arise as a result of NI's ageing population; and
- Age Concern's report "Agenda for the Age" in 2000 which highlighted the economic, health and environmental challenges of an ageing society;

1.5 The consultation produced a wealth of important and innovative ideas about how to tackle the exclusion of older people and highlighted their desire to contribute, in a partnership approach, to the improvement of their quality of life. These responses were taken into account in the final older people's strategy document "Ageing in an Inclusive Society" launched by OFMDFM in March 2005.

Older People's Strategy – Ageing in an Inclusive Society

1.6 The Vision of the Strategy is;-

'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.'

1.7 Six strategic objectives were identified to provide the policy framework within which departments will work to achieve this vision:

- To ensure that older people have access to financial and economic resources to lift them out of exclusion and isolation;
- To deliver integrated services that improve the health and quality of life of older people;

- To ensure that older people have a decent and secure life in their home and community;
- To ensure that older people have access to services and facilities that meet their needs and priorities;
- To promote equality of opportunity for older people and their full participation in civic life, and challenge ageism wherever it is found; and
- To ensure that Government works in a co-ordinated way inter-departmentally and with social partners to deliver effective services for older people.

1.8 The Strategy was accompanied by an action plan which translated the key recommendations in the Strategy into a programme of work for 2005/06 NI government departments.

Priorities in 2005/06

1.9 OFMDFM has been working with departments on taking forward these obligations, and a series of meetings with Departments to discuss actions, monitoring, and reporting structures took place throughout the year. As a result of these meetings, and in consultation with the age sector, some actions contained in the Action Plan were developed further to take account of policy developments since the original Plan was drafted. The updated Action Plan is attached at Annex A.

1.10 A mid-year review was carried out and departments presented their progress reports to representatives of the older people's sector at a meeting held in November 2005. The mid-year progress reports have been placed in the Libraries of the House of Commons.

CHAPTER 2 – PROGRESS ON ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

2.1 Progress under each of the strategic objectives identified in the Strategy is set out below.

Strategic Objective 1: To ensure that older people have access to financial and economic resources to lift them out of exclusion and isolation

2.2 One of the issues raised in the consultation process was the need for older people to have a decent and affordable quality of later life. During the year older people's issues were a particular focus for the Social Security Agency, for example recognising the need to ensure that the benefits system continues to work as effectively as possible by maximising uptake among older people across Northern Ireland. By August 2005, approximately 95,580 customers were receiving Pension Credit, and the Social Security Agency was on track to meet its target of 98,500 by March 2006. Confirmation of this target will be available in 2006 and will be reported on in the next Annual Report.

2.3 The Social Security Agency Management Board also approved a Benefit Uptake Strategy, which instigated a time-bound pilot programme (June – October 2005) to trial some exercises aimed at older people. Three exercises went forward, with a total of 3,750 pensioners participating. Overall there was a 35% contact/response rate. 10% of the

targeted 3,750 were successful in making a claim. A total of £401,718.62 has been paid out in arrears. These customers were also awarded an average weekly entitlement of £28.76, equating to a yearly benefit expenditure of £575,775.20. All of this information has been fed into the Agency's benefit uptake activities for 2006-07.

- 2.4 During 2005/06, the Pension Centre completed a special exercise targeting 23,765 Pension Credit customers to maximise the take up of Housing Benefit. This work finished on 31 March 2006 and the results are being analysed.
- 2.5 The Agency also administers the yearly Winter Fuel Payment Scheme, which provides help to older people with their heating bills. Customers aged 60 years or over during the period 19-25 September 2005 were eligible to make a claim for a Winter Fuel Payment. Some customers are automatically entitled. Each year a supplementary Winter Fuel Payment awareness campaign takes place in the regional and local press to ensure that customers not in receipt of benefit but eligible for the payment apply. The payments range from £100 to £300 depending on circumstances. For 2005/06, a total of 81,999 Pension Credit customers received a Winter Fuel Payment. Figures are not yet available for the total amount paid out in 2005-06 but in the previous financial year just over £51 million was paid out to eligible customers across Northern Ireland.

- 2.6 The Winter Fuel Payment Scheme was supplemented during 2005/06 by a one off Age Related Payment. This was to help people deal with either their rates bill or to help with meeting with additional living expenses. Payments were valued at £50 or £200 depending on circumstances. It is not possible yet to provide a breakdown of actual numbers/amounts paid this reporting period.
- 2.7 The Northern Ireland Fuel Poverty Strategy, launched in 2004, commits Government to meet challenging targets of eradicating fuel poverty in vulnerable and social households by 2010 and in non vulnerable households by 2016, and sets out the measures and direction through which this will be achieved. Vulnerable households include one that contains an older person. The Fuel Poverty Strategy emphasises the requirement of a partnership approach if the challenging targets are to be met. Building on progress made in tackling fuel poverty both an Inter-Departmental Group on Fuel Poverty, chaired by the Minister, David Hanson MP, and a Northern Ireland Fuel Poverty Advisory Group have been established and annual reports will be published in July 2006.
- 2.8 The eligibility criteria for the Warm Homes Scheme will be extended to people over the age of 60 years in receipt of disability related benefits, and funding has increased from £14.75 million in 2005/06 to £20.3 million in 2006/07 and 2007/08.

- 2.9 A Fuel Poverty Partnership Fund has been created to fund locally focused schemes to address fuel poverty among households that either do not qualify or apply for help through the more mainstream programmes such as the Warm Homes Scheme.
- 2.10 During the year to March 2006, OFMDFM met with officials from the Department of Finance and Personnel to discuss the Domestic Rating Reform and possible relief for pensioners. A meeting was also held with officials from the Department for Regional Development to discuss consideration of a relief package for pensioners as part of the Water Reform. Actions relating to these matters will appear in the Action Plan for 2006/07.
- 2.11 The consultation also highlighted the needs of unemployed people over the age of 50 who are concerned that their age is a real barrier to accessing employment. Work is ongoing in the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) and the Department of Education (DE) to develop an all age Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy. Consultation on the proposed Strategy is scheduled to commence in autumn 2006. The strategy will include proposals to address the needs of those who are in the third age and these will be included in the older people's action plan for 2006/08.
- 2.12 Management information systems 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 are now in place.

2.13 The Sports Council for Northern Ireland (SCNI) supported the development of sport for “All Older People” module in conjunction with Coaching Northern Ireland, in order to extend the development of training opportunities in sport and physical activity for older people. The module was piloted in April 2005. The module has been delivered 6 times over the last year, exclusively to groups put forward by Age Concern. The course, delivered over 5 hours, has the following outcomes:

- Awareness of the ageing process and benefits of physical activity for older people;
- Experience a range of physical activities suitable for older people;
- Explore the barriers to participating in physical activity and to develop solutions;
- Examine a range of physical activities suitable for older people;
- Plan and develop physical activity programmes for specific target groups.

2.14 During 2005/06 the Education and Library Boards have captured data on computer usage by the over 60s age group which will inform future actions to 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.

- 2.15 DCAL has collated statistics based on data provided by the Education and Library Boards on visits and book exchanges in residential and nursing homes, and hospitals and the mobile library service, which will inform future service provision by the Education and Library Boards.

Strategic objective 2: To deliver integrated services that improves the health and quality of life of older people

- 2.16 As part of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety's (DHSSPS) commitment to provide people with modernised acute hospital services, work commenced on a new hospital at Downpatrick, procurement of a new acute hospital for the South West has just commenced and design work has been completed on a new local hospital in Omagh. Both hospitals in the South West are to be completed by 2010. A new renal unit opened in December 2005 at Altnagelvin as part of the Renal Strategy to reduce travelling time for dialysis.
- 2.17 At the end of March 2006, no patient was waiting more than 12 months for inpatient or daycase treatment, 9 months for hip or knee surgery and 6 months for cardiac surgery or cataract surgery.

- 2.18 To further reduce waiting times for inpatient or daycase treatment, a target has been set to ensure, by March 2007, no patient is waiting more than 6 months for any procedure. Excellent progress has been made towards this target. The number of patients waiting more than six months has reduced by more than 50% since the beginning of April 2006.
- 2.19 In relation to outpatients, a target has been set to ensure, by March 2007, no patient is waiting more than six months for a first outpatient appointment, reducing to 13 weeks by March 2008. The number of patients waiting more than six months has reduced by over 30% since April 2006.
- 2.20 In January 2006, a total redesign of the way outpatient services are delivered was announced to achieve the target of ensuring by March 2008, that no patient will be waiting more than 13 weeks for their outpatient appointment, following referral by their GP. An interim outpatient target of a maximum waiting time of 6 months by March 2007 was introduced to ensure sufficient progress is made. Reforms include the development of Integrated Clinical Assessment and Treatment Services (ICATS); a range of services provided by integrated multi-disciplinary teams of health service professionals in a variety of primary and secondary care settings; an Electronic Referrals Management System (ERMS) to ensure that patients are advised of the next step in their treatment within five days of referral by a GP; and improved management of outpatient services.

2.21 There were significant developments during 2005/06 in modernising the Primary and Community Care Structure, which will also significantly improve access for older people with more services provided in local communities. The first phase of the primary and community care infrastructure programme is expected to be procured from June 2007 onwards. Design work has now begun on a number of these phase one projects. The programme envisages the building of over 40 Health and Care Centres and a range of other facilities to care for older people and people with mental ill health or learning disabilities. The aim is to provide a single point of contact in the community for a wide range of services that are currently either spread over many locations or only available at hospitals. There are already working examples of the first of these Health and Care Centres – The Arches Centre and Bradbury Centre in Belfast, and the Kilkeel Health and Care Centre.

2.22 The standard of care for nursing homes and residential care homes is a significant issue for older people and new standards are being developed with the intention of publication in early 2007. The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, which was established on 1 April 2005, has registered all nursing homes and residential care homes and will use the new standards in its inspections of these services.

2.23 The protection of vulnerable older people was further strengthened with the introduction of Protection of Children

and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 (POCVA) legislation, which came into effect from 1 April 2005, with one Article still to be commenced. Work is ongoing 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. This will build upon the joint protocol for the investigation of incidents of abuse. It is anticipated that these guidelines will be published in autumn 2006.

2.24 The Older People's Strategy document highlighted the need to recognise value and support the contribution made by carers, in ways that would make practical improvements to carers' lives. The Carers' Strategy was published by DHSSPS in January 2006. During 2005/06, the Department has continued to work with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive on the further expansion of care settings. Many of the recommendations listed in the Carers' Strategy can be taken forward by re-prioritising within existing resources or by making one-off investments beyond normal administration costs. There are, however, a number of key components, specifically falling under the theme of Support Services for Carers, which require additional recurrent resources. Action has already been taken on many of the recommendations. These include the production and distribution of 30,000 copies of an "A-Z Guide for carers; the extension of the Carers Information Network outside Belfast; the production of a DVD highlighting issues for young carers; and the investment of an additional £400,000 recurrently for the

expansion of flexible and responsive support services for carers.

2.25 The Strategy document also identified the importance of developing initiatives which link health to physical activity. During 2005/06, the Sports Council for Northern Ireland (SCNI) funded Development Officers in Castlereagh, Larne, Craigavon and Belfast to take forward projects focussed on older people, such as:

- Developing and delivering a varied programme of sport, physical activity and training at a community level with the ability to target those areas of greatest deprivation and social need. The Community Sport Development Officer has been working closely with Engage with Age to organise the senior sport festival and additional chair based exercise sessions.
- An extensive integrated programme of opportunities to motivate the lives of residents of 5 disadvantaged areas in the Larne area, especially those specific target groups known not to partake in regular physical activity in large numbers, particularly older people. 35 women attended the Fit for Life Club targeting all 5 Larne Borough Council Wards involved in the Community Sport Programme.
- Projects focusing on teenage girls, young people at risk, people with a disability and those aged over 50. Two programmes have taken place in the Craigavon area:

- ◀ Senior Sportsfest – this is an annual Celebration Day of competitive activities for all 50+ clubs in Craigavon and Banbridge area. Over 120 competitors took part in activities such as swimming, walking and indoor games. An extra 20 non-competing 50+ volunteers took part. The day was followed by a celebration dinner dance and awards ceremony.

- ◀ Playground Games – delivered in partnership with Craigavon Borough Council Health & Social Services Trust and Southern Education & Library Board, 16 older women from 4 local primary schools took part in this programme to develop physical activity during break times. The playground supervisors and classroom assistants were put through TOPS Play & Sport Training, and then additional training around traditional playground games.

- Developing opportunities for older people. Over 50 older women took part in the Women taking the Plunge programme in Belfast. This series of water based activities included Learn to Swim and Water Polo.

2.26 The Sports Council (SCNI) also supported 'Engage with Age' in the development of participation opportunities through the Senior Games and the Age Concern Actively Ageing Well Officer. The Senior Games will be held in October supported by Castlereagh Borough Council.

2.27 The Council also funded a number of programmes/initiatives which provide opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity in rural areas, for example:

- Age Concern Community Sport Development Officer and a part-time co-ordinator with a remit to increase the uptake of marginalised older people in sport and physical activity throughout Northern Ireland. The project is based on a partnership approach involving a range of key stakeholders including 7 district councils, health organisations, community and voluntary groups and older people's organisations. Training and development are an inherent part of the project. At the end of the first year investment the following has been achieved:
 - ◀ Needs analysis and key priorities plan completed for each council area supporting the programme;
 - ◀ 6 steering groups have been established to design, deliver, monitor, and evaluate the work;
 - ◀ Information and good practice on the development of safe, sustainable physical activity programmes disseminated, including a photo exhibition;
 - ◀ Support resources produced for Sports Development Teams – “Promoting Physical Activity with Older People”;

- ◀ A new training course – “Empowering and Supporting Older People into Physical Activity and Sport” has been piloted and will be rolled out from September 2006;
- ◀ 16 Taster events have been delivered in 6 council areas. Follow-up activities and programmes are being developed.

SCNI are currently supporting Age Concern through the recruitment process for a new Community Sport Development Officer, following the departure of the previous post holder. This will be advertised mid August 2006 with a view to the successful candidate being in post by the beginning of November. 2006.

- Craigavon Borough Council Community Sport Development Officer whose remit is to develop physical, social and emotional well being of specific populations within Craigavon. The project aims to target those who are recovering from mental ill health giving them more opportunities to become physically active. 70 older people attended the taster event which targets people over the age of 50 years who do not access services because of issues of transport or waiting lists. Activities included Boccia, New Age Kurling, Parachute games, chair based exercise, Tai Chi and Line Dancing. SCNI are currently

working to establish activities within the local communities for less mobile people.

The Care Home Exercise Pilot Programme was delivered over a six week period with limited mobility residents.

The Over 50s Convention was attended by 80 older people and delivered in conjunction with the Southern Area Health Promotion Department. Topics for discussion included funding activities, health condition, access to sport specific training, and club development.

Volunteer Walk Leader Training for mental health groups was attended by 10 people, 2 further courses are planned.

- Youth Sport Omagh has two part-time co-ordinators to develop participation and training programmes for older people as one of their target groups. Youth Sport Omagh is a member of the Senior Citizens Consortium Sperrin Lakeland, and has supported the Consortium with the development of swimming and walking programmes in Omagh. This has included Walk Leader Training.
- Strabane District Council has a Community Sport Development Co-ordinator and 3 part-time co-ordinators to develop sport and physical activity programmes, developing pathways to participation. A range of community based sport programmes will be delivered in

2006, including healthy living education programme and introductory activities aimed at young people, women and older people;. Older people will be targeted during 2006-07.

2.28 Funding for these programmes is to continue until 2007/08. Extension of investment has been awarded to March 2010 through the Sport in our Community Fund to Castlereagh Borough Council, Larne Borough Council, Craigavon Borough Council and Youth Sport Omagh.

Strategic Objective 3: To ensure that older people have a decent and secure life in their home and community

2.29 Consultation highlighted the fundamental need for the Strategy to make a difference to older people in the homes and communities in which they live. Responses reflected views that the design, type and condition of housing will need to match the requirements of an ageing population, including the desire of many older people to live independently, and the necessity to tackle crime and fear that often blights the quality of later life at home.

2.30 Through its rural policy, the Northern Ireland 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. During 2005/06 the first five rural priority areas have been declared – Newtownbutler, Roslea, Pomeroy, Newtownstewart, and

Bonamargy/Rathlin. Targeting of enhanced grants to tackle house conditions in these areas will take place. Discussions have also commenced with Western Health Action Zone concerning a joint exercise in Newtown Stewart Ward.

2.31 Work is ongoing within the NIO to draft a community safety strategy for older persons and an Advisory Group consisting of key stakeholders was established to inform development of the strategy. Although publication of the strategy for the safety of older persons has been delayed the NIO has demonstrated its commitment to tackling crime and fear of crime against older people in a number of ways.

2.32 During 2005/06, the Community Safety Unit commissioned an evaluation of Good Morning Projects. These projects addressed some of the issues faced by older people ranging from low-level anti-social behaviour and crime, to feelings of fear, vulnerability and isolation primarily by means of regular friendly telephone conversations. The purpose of the research was to identify systems, structures and procedures that would enhance the future viability and long-term sustainability of Good Morning Projects. A draft report was completed in March 2006.

2.33 The Stay Safe Stay Secure Campaign, launched in October 2003, has continued. This campaign was aimed at dealing with both providing and promoting security among older people. It has two key initiatives:

- the NIO Lock Out Crime (LOC) scheme, carried out in partnership with the NIHE makes provision of security devices to those aged 75 and over in receipt of housing benefit or rate rebate (extended to all those aged 65 and over in May 2005). To date the scheme has issued over 54,000 offer letters, 14,803 positive replies have been received, over 6,600 jobs have been completed, and a further 1,587 are on site (as at early March 2006). The scheme is aimed to be completed by September 2006. Early evaluation shows that the overwhelming majority of those who have received assistance now feel “safer” or “much safer” as a result.
- Bogus caller TV ads – during 2005 the advertisements were screened on two occasions, June and October, for a total of just over 5 weeks at a cost of £112,000.

2.34 The Community Safety Unit, NIO, in partnership with Age Concern and Help the Aged, launched in late March 2006 the first Handyvan scheme in Northern Ireland. This is a mobile unit that will fit security devices free of charge to the homes of vulnerable older people. The target is for 600 homes to be completed each year.

Strategic Objective 4: To ensure that older people have access to services and facilities that meet their needs and priorities

2.35 Access to effective and tailored transportation emerged as a key issue in the consultation, especially in rural areas and housing estates where car ownership and public transport provision was low.

2.36 The Rural Transport Fund's budget was significantly increased in 2005/06 to £3.75m which has allowed the Department for Regional Development (DRD) to support 19 Rural Community Transport Partnerships providing travel opportunities in 95% of Northern Ireland's rural area. Translink is also piloting two demand responsive services branded as 'Rural Rover'. These services operate in the Newcastle and South West Fermanagh areas.

2.37 The Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS) 2015 was published in April 2005 and presents a 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". DRD has established a Mobility and Inclusion Unit to "champion" the ATS and is continuing to support the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) to enable it to be a main source of independent advice to service providers and departments on all transport matters that affect the mobility of older people and people

with disabilities. DRD and IMTAC are also seeking to involve older people on the Committee's 2 working groups.

2.38 The Older People's Strategy emphasised that participation in culture, arts and leisure can enhance the quality of older people's lives and the 2005/06 Action Plan contained several actions aimed at enabling older people to engage in cultural and leisure activities and lifelong learning. PRONI, in partnership with the Belfast Education & Library Board, held a series of presentations on World War II to older people in a number of Belfast Libraries.

2.39 Work continued on creating new or improved access for older and less able-bodied people at the Department's water recreation sites, for example ongoing provision of resting/seating facilities at regular intervals on the Lagan Towpath.

2.40 Angling is a popular and accessible sporting activity for older people and the provision of concessionary priced rod licences and DCAL permits for people over the age of 60 years ensures it is a widely affordable activity. Both the permit pricing incentive and a programme of infrastructure provision to facilitate access encourages the use of public angling waters by older persons. The number of age 60+ DCAL permits sold between 2003 and 2004 increased by 17% from 1,331 to 1,563, and between 2004 and 2005 by a further 16% to 1,861, reflecting the increasing participation in angling by older people. However this figure still

underestimates the true level of participation in angling by older people as some will hold disabled concessionary permits or may prefer sea fishing or choose to fish on private fisheries for which no DCAL permit is required. For many older participants angling additionally promotes both social inclusion by getting them out to meet others and healthy living through exposure to fresh air and moderate exercise.

2.41 The Arts Council of Northern Ireland are in the process of drafting their strategy for 2006-2011, taking account of government policy expectations such as Ageing in an Inclusive Society. Views from the general public and key stakeholders will be taken on board during public consultation.

2.42 The Arts Council is the main funder for the Arts for Older People Network, which has been working to orchestrate the voice of older people and carry out research into good practice. This research will inform future developments.

2.43 Many arts projects funded by the Arts Council deliver against the Older People's Strategy. For example Share Arts in Lisnaskea and the Crescent Arts Centre in Belfast have both carried out participative dance sessions for older people. Several projects with Older People have been funded directly under Lottery Arts Projects and Awards for All small grant schemes.

- 2.44 Other programmes, for example those targeted at disabled people have a positive impact in enhancing the quality of access for older people who do not necessarily regard themselves as disabled. Some Arts and Disability projects have had a focus on older people because the group has been impairment-specific and the impairment is one that is associated with age. For example Open Arts has a visual impairment group that includes older people with age-related sight loss.
- 2.45 Additional premium payments have been a way of including older people in arts activity, for example covering the cost of accessible transport. This fund will be reviewed this year.
- 2.46 Data collection instruments such as the disability baseline, the Regularly Funded Organisation Survey and the General Population Survey have provided information enabling the Arts Council to encourage clients to cater more for older people. Information and data on older people given by these instruments will also provide the evidence base for policy decisions in this area.
- 2.47 The Northern Ireland Film and Television Commission (NIFTC) continue to support outreach activities in partnership with other organisations which deliver, amongst other things, themed workshops using moving images from its Digital Film Archive. From April – March 2006, 58% of the Outreach Workshops were delivered to the 50+ age group and 33% have been delivered for reminiscence purposes. From

September 2006 NITFC will be co-ordinating an Intergenerational Film Project in the Shankill and North Belfast, actively engaging older people within the community. NITFC is committed to expanding access to film heritage by older people and currently works with 21 different organisations to facilitate this access.

Strategic Objective 5: To promote equality of opportunity for older people and their full participation in civic life, and challenge ageism wherever it is found

2.48 The Department of Education has continued to develop positive links between schools and older people through the introduction of 'Citizenship' as a compulsory element of the school curriculum. 'Citizenship' will provide opportunities for young people to consider issues such as identity and inequality, poverty and exclusion, and how to address such issues through promoting social inclusion and encouraging participation and involvement in the local community. During 2005/06, guidance and support materials were completed by the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and 'Citizenship' was piloted in over two-thirds of all post-primary schools.

2.49 OFMDFM has implemented the age strand of the Employment Framework Directive. The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 will come into operation on 1 October 2006, and will make it unlawful to discriminate against workers, employees, job-seekers and

trainees because of their age, prohibiting age discrimination in terms of recruitment, promotion and training.

2.50 Work is continuing on a single Equality Bill for Northern Ireland. A summary of the responses to the second consultation was published in March 2005. Meetings were held with political parties over the summer and autumn, and during the reporting period officials were analysing responses and possible policy options in conjunction with a panel of experts.

Strategic Objective 6: To ensure that Government works in a co-ordinated way inter-departmentally and with social partners to deliver effective services for older people

2.51 Since the launch of the Strategy, OFMDFM has held meetings with officials from each department to discuss the targets set in the Action Plan and to monitor progress towards achieving these.

2.52 OFMDFM also has responsibility for brokering discussions between the older people's representatives and individual departments. For example, OFMDFM has facilitated a meeting between representatives from the Age Sector and officials from the Department for Regional Development to discuss the Accessible Transport Strategy and age representation on the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee.

2.53 Officials from Departments and members of the former PSI Working Group on Older People met on 10 November 2005 and reviewed progress in implementing the 05/06 Action Plan. It was agreed to establish a group made up of representatives of the age sector and voluntary and community organisations to continue to monitor future progress. It is intended that the group will meet on a regular basis. The organisations to be represented on the group are listed at Annex B.

CHAPTER 3 – THE WAY FORWARD

Action Plan 2006/08

- 3.1 A second Action Plan for 2006/8 is being developed. Actions contained in the 2005/06 Action Plan which were not completed by 31 March 2006 have been carried forward to the 2006/08 Plan. Departments are being asked to consider what new actions and targets should be included. Representatives of older people will be consulted and the 2006/08 Action Plan will be published.

Older Advisory People's Panel

- 3.2 To ensure ongoing engagement with older people OFMDFM will seek ministerial approval to set up an older people's panel which will include representatives of older people, key voluntary and community organisations, and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. The panel will advise and assist in the development of future action plans and monitor future progress.

Champion for Older People

- 3.3 During 2006 a Champion for Older People will be appointed and will have a strategic responsibility for co-ordinating actions to improve the lives of older people in Northern Ireland. The Champion's role will be to:

- help to raise the profile of older people and increase awareness about their needs;
- encourage good practice across the public and private sector in the treatment of older people;
- promote the provision of opportunities for older people and the elimination of discrimination against them;
- Monitor progress and identify critical issues, obstacles and solutions relevant to the delivery of the Strategy.

OLDER PEOPLE'S ACTION PLAN 2005-2006

Priority	Strategy Idea	Area of Action	Timescale	Relevant/Lead Department
To ensure that older people have access to financial and economic resources to lift them out of exclusion and isolation.	Ensure the pension system works effectively	Pensions	March 2006	DSD/SSA
		Benefit Uptake Strategy	2005/06	DSD/SSA
		The Winter Fuel Payment Scheme is being supplemented this year with a one off Age Related Payment.	2005/06	DSD/SSA
		Pensions Service has also additionally taken forward a specific exercise to further enhance its role in reducing Pensioner poverty through maximising the take-up of Housing Benefit by pensioner customers.	March 2006	DSD/SSA
		Promote employment opportunities and	Maintain the Age Positive Campaign as appropriate in the period up to the introduction of new Age Legislation.	Ongoing

OLDER PEOPLE'S ACTION PLAN 2005-2006

Priority	Strategy Idea	Area of Action	Timescale	Relevant/Lead Department
	entrepreneurship			
		Continue to target older people under the accelerating entrepreneurship programme.	Ongoing	Invest NI
		Extend the development of training opportunities in sport and physical activity for older people	Ongoing	DCAL/SCNI
	Develop opportunities for lifelong learning and skills in ICT	Develop a customer strategy and charter through consultation with customers and stakeholders.	By March 2006	DEL
		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.	2005/06	DEL
		Encourage the Educational Guidance Service for adults and the National Learning Advice Line to market their services specifically to older potential learners.	Ongoing	DEL
		Increase uptake of IT by older people for leisure and lifelong learning, including courses in the use of	Ongoing	DCAL/Public Library Service

OLDER PEOPLE'S ACTION PLAN 2005-2006

Priority	Strategy Idea	Area of Action	Timescale	Relevant/Lead Department
		computers on an individual and small class basis		
	Encourage targeting of rural development programmes	Through its rural policy the NIHE 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.	To be rolled out in 2005/06	DSD/NIHE
		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.	Ongoing	DRD
		To continue to support and develop programmes and initiatives which provide opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity in rural areas	Ongoing	DCAL/SCNI
		In consultation with the Rural Stakeholder Forum, DARD is carrying out a major review of rural policy.	2005/06	DARD
	Build on progress made in tackling fuel poverty.	Fuel Poverty	Ongoing	DSD/NIHE

OLDER PEOPLE'S ACTION PLAN 2005-2006

Priority	Strategy Idea	Area of Action	Timescale	Relevant/Lead Department
	Improve accessibility to housing	Lifetime homes	Ongoing	DSD/NIHE
To deliver integrated services improve the health and quality of life of older people.	Integrated health and social services programmes.	To put in place robust organisational structures designed to commission and deliver high quality health care needed by people.		
		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	March 2010 DHSSPS	DHSSPS
		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'.	Ongoing	DHSSPS
		Ensure that medicines management programmes provide opportunity for older people to gain the maximum benefit from their medication.	Ongoing	DHSSPS

OLDER PEOPLE'S ACTION PLAN 2005-2006

Priority	Strategy Idea	Area of Action	Timescale	Relevant/Lead Department
	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.	2005/06	DHSSPS
		The introduction of personalised care plans for people at risk.	March 2010	DHSSPS
	Listen to older people in the development of HPSS planning.	Improvement in general health and wellbeing and reductions in health inequalities amongst older people.	Ongoing	DHSSPS
		Build upon existing local partnerships and include older people in the development of an overall strategy for involving people and building caring communities.	Ongoing	DHSSPS
	Promote the dignity of older people in hospital care.	Extend regulation of services.	March 2007	DHSSPS
		Introduce minimum standards for care.	2005	DHSSPS
		Enhance inspection regime through establishment of independent HPSS regulation and improvement	2005	DHSSPS

OLDER PEOPLE'S ACTION PLAN 2005-2006

Priority	Strategy Idea	Area of Action	Timescale	Relevant/Lead Department
		authority.		
		Further legislative steps to strengthen the protection of vulnerable older people.		
		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 NI.	Ongoing DHSSPS	DHSSPS
	Support and develop strategies for independent living.	Increase the percentage of people who have their care met in their own homes. Contribute to the further development of supporting people.	March 2007	DHSSPS
		A strategy to recognise, value and support the contribution made by informal carers.		
		To support the development of initiatives which link health to physical activity.	Ongoing	DCAL/SCNI

OLDER PEOPLE'S ACTION PLAN 2005-2006

Priority	Strategy Idea	Area of Action	Timescale	Relevant/Lead Department
To ensure that older people have access to services and facilities that meet their needs and priorities.	Identify the needs of older people in transportation strategies.	To continue to fund the NI Concessionary Fares Scheme, which provides free travel on public transport to NI residents aged 65 plus.	Ongoing	DRD
		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 NI urban areas with population in excess of 10,000.	Begin in 2005/06	DRD
To ensure that older people have access to services and facilities that meet their needs and priorities.	The preparation of an accessible transport strategy for N I.	<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 more 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>	2005-2015	DRD

OLDER PEOPLE'S ACTION PLAN 2005-2006

Priority	Strategy Idea	Area of Action	Timescale	Relevant/Lead Department
		<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>To manage effectively the transition to a fully accessible transport system by targeting the resources available at initiatives that maximize the benefits for older people and people with disabilities and offer best value for money.</p>		
	<p>Maximise the potential of community, flexible</p>	<p>To trial DRT services in rural areas and evaluate their impact.</p>	<p>To commence in 2005/06</p>	<p>DRD</p>

OLDER PEOPLE'S ACTION PLAN 2005-2006

Priority	Strategy Idea	Area of Action	Timescale	Relevant/Lead Department
	and Demand Responsive Transport options.			
	More access to education, cultural and leisure facilities	Develop and implement a NI regional strategy on widening access, extending the remit beyond higher and further education.	2005-2008	DEL
		Regular visits and book exchanges in residential and nursing homes, hospitals and the mobile library service	Ongoing	DCAL/Public Library Service
		Complete 2 community based projects involving groups of older people	2005	DCAL/PRONI
		Create at least 5 km of new or improved access at water recreation amenities	2005/06	DCAL
		To ensure that training opportunities on issues relevant to older people are available.	Ongoing	DCAL/SCNI
		To support the development of programmes and initiatives which support intergenerational work through sport and physical activity.	Ongoing	DCAL/SCNI

OLDER PEOPLE'S ACTION PLAN 2005-2006

Priority	Strategy Idea	Area of Action	Timescale	Relevant/Lead Department
		The Arts Council will include older people as a focus in its next 5 year plan.	To commence 2006	DCAL/ACNI
		NIFTC through the Digital Film Archive Outreach Programme envisage that at least 25% of outreach workshops are delivered to the 50+ age group.	2005	DCAL/NIFTC
		NIFTC, through the Digital Archive Outreach Programme have a target of 20% of outreach workshops to be delivered for Reminiscence purposes	2005	DCAL/NIFTC
		NIFTC will develop partnerships with relevant organisations to extend the delivery of workshops in the community sector, paying particular attention to organisations engaging with older people.	2005	DCAL/NIFTC
To ensure that older people have a decent and secure life in their home and community.	<p>Improve safety and help reduce fear.</p> <p>Safer Environments.</p>	A Community Safety Strategy for older people is being prepared by the NIO for public consultation. The concerns and fears of older people will be prioritised in the strategy.	Ongoing	NIO

OLDER PEOPLE'S ACTION PLAN 2005-2006

Priority	Strategy Idea	Area of Action	Timescale	Relevant/Lead Department
To promote equality of opportunity for older people and their full participation in civic life, and challenge ageism wherever it is found.	Develop positive links between schools and older people.	Citizenship will become a compulsory element of the revised NI curriculum from 2007. The key concepts are diversity and inclusion, equality and social justice, human rights and social responsibility and democracy and active participation.	2007	DE
		Citizenship will provide opportunities for young people to consider issues such as identity, difference, inequality – how it arises (e.g. age, disability), its results (e.g. poverty, exclusion, homelessness) and how to address it – promoting inclusion and encouraging participation and involvement in the local community.	Ongoing	DE
	Protection from discrimination.	Implement the age strand of the Employment Framework Directive by regulations.	By December 2006	OFMDFM
		Publish a report on the findings of a recent consultation on the SEB.	By June 2005	OFMDFM
To ensure that Government works in	Co-ordinate the work of	We propose to consider and recommend structures which, taking account of existing arrangements, will		OFMDFM

2005

OLDER PEOPLE'S ACTION PLAN 2005-2006

Priority	Strategy Idea	Area of Action	Timescale	Relevant/Lead Department
a coordinated way inter-departmentally and with social partners to deliver effective services for older people.	Government to improve services.	ensure a continued opportunity for older people and their representative organisations to continue to engage with each other and with officials and thereby help to monitor and ensure progress towards achieving the targets set out in this document.		
	Identify a champion for older people within Government. Ensure that strategy is implemented effectively and reviewed.	Establish a champion at Senior Civil Service level. Champion to oversee review of progress on an annual basis.	Established by September 2005. First review begins in March 2006.	OFMDFM
	Put in place a system for monitoring and evaluating.	Use new indicators being developed under the proposed Anti-Poverty Strategy to establish baseline figures from which we can set targets and monitor progress.	Have in place prior to first review in March 2006.	OFMDFM

**OLDER PEOPLE'S ADVISORY PANEL
ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTED**

Age Concern Northern Ireland

Age Sector Reference Group

Law Centre (NI)

Confederation of British Industry

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Federation of Small Businesses

Help the Aged Northern Ireland

North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum

Northern Ireland Council/Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

Older Women's Network

Rural Community Network

Voluntary Services Bureau

Departmental representatives will attend meetings when required to provide reports on progress and provide advice on issues tabled for discussion.

Ageing in an Inclusive Society
2005/06 Annual Report at March 2006

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This document is available on our website www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/age-ageing-in-an-inclusive-society

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