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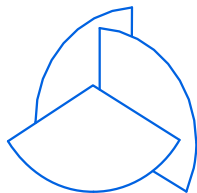
**First Minister and
Deputy First Minister**

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Poverty and Social Exclusion Project

**Carers in Northern Ireland
Fiona Scullion and Paddy Hillyard**

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Northern Ireland
**Statistics &
Research**
Agency

Introduction

This bulletin describes the demographic and social characteristics of carers in Northern Ireland. Persons who provide care represent 15 per cent (N=453) of the all persons in the survey of Poverty and Social Exclusion (PSENI) carried out in 2002/2003.¹ The majority of those who provide care (92%, N=415) do not get any financial recognition and the remaining 8 per cent (N=38) do.

Paid Carers

Paid carers represent 2 per cent of the whole sample (N=38). The figures for paid careers must therefore be treated with caution. Of paid carers these, 58 per cent provide care to another person in the household and 42 per cent provide care to another individual outside the household.

Age and Gender

Females represent 82 per cent of paid carers with males denoting the remaining 18 percent. The age of paid carers ranges from 16 to 73 with the average age (using the median) being 48.

Marital Status

Some 63 per cent of paid carers are married and living with their husband or wife, 19 per cent are single, 8 per cent are married and separated from their husband or wife, 5 per cent are divorced and 5 per cent are widowed.

Economic Activity

Thirty-four per cent of paid carers are economically active, of these 29 per cent are in employment and the remaining 3 per cent are looking for work. Some 66 per cent of carers are economically inactive. The main reason for their economic inactivity is looking after the home/family (62%). Some

¹ The PSENI was designed and directed by Professor P Hillyard, Professor E. McLaughlin and Mr M. Tomlinson, Queen's University Belfast. The project originated and was funded by OFMDFM and HM Treasury.

7 per cent suffer from an illness, 8 per cent are retired, 8 per cent are students and 15 per cent are so for other reasons.

For the remainder of the bulletin paid carers will be excluded from the analysis to coincide with the definition used in the Census of Population 2001 on provision of unpaid care².

Demographics

Those individuals who provide unpaid care represent 13 per cent of the sample, this is very similar to the finding of the Census of Population 2001 at 11 per cent. The number of hours spent providing care a week ranges from 1 to 168 with the average time (using the median) being 9 hours. On a weekly basis some 68 per cent provide care for 0-19 hours per week, 18 per cent 20-49 hours and 14 per cent 50 or more hours.

Age

The age of carers ranges from 16 to 73 with the average age (using the median) being 47. Approximately half of the individuals (52%) who provide unpaid care are aged between 35-54, 18 per cent are 16-34, 26 per cent are aged 55-74 and the remaining 4 per cent are 75 or over.

Gender

Some 65 per cent of carers are female and the remaining 35 per cent are male.

Marital Status

Twenty-two per cent of carers are single, that is never married, 64 per cent are married and living with their husband/wife and 4 per cent are married and separated from their husband or wife. Five per cent of

² A person is a provider of unpaid care if they give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long-term physical or mental health or disability, or problems related to old age. Note that there is no specific reference to whether this care is provided within the household or outside the household.

