

Guidance for Community Safety section of Integrated Impact Assessment in Northern Ireland.

In considering whether any policy or project will have an impact in improving community safety in Northern Ireland, a wide number of factors need to be taken into account. It is likely that a substantial number of policies and projects will have an impact on community safety, though some more directly so than others. In the paragraphs below, we have provided information that might help you to answer the specific questions around community safety in the integrated impact assessment tool. However this information is for broad guidance only. Staff in the Community Safety Unit, NIO and the Youth Justice Agency would be happy to offer you further guidance or clarification as required and contact details are set out below.

Will the policy or project contribute to community safety?

The simplest way to determine whether your policy or project may have an impact on contributing to community safety is to consider how it might contribute to objectives across nine key areas set out in the Northern Ireland community safety strategy document entitled “***Creating a safer Northern Ireland through partnership***”. (Copies can be obtained at 90-527371 or it can be accessed through the web-site www.communitysafetyni.gov.uk).

The strategy covers the period April 2002-March 2007. Drawing on recorded crime data, research findings on victimisation and fear of crime, consultation with key personnel working in community safety and the responses to the consultative paper issued in April 2002, nine key areas for work have been identified and targets for improvement in each of these areas established.

The nine key areas are:

- Car crime;
- Domestic burglary;
- Business and retail crime;
- Offences against individuals, especially domestic violence and sexual assault;
- Youth Offending and reducing criminality;
- Offences motivated by prejudice and hatred;
- Drug, substance and alcohol abuse;
- Anti-social behaviour and low level neighbourhood disorder; and
- Fear of crime among older people, vulnerable adults, victims and children.

You should therefore consider how your policy or project might contribute in one or more of these areas and the extent to which it might do so.



Is it likely to have an impact on any specific type of crime, especially vehicle crime or domestic burglary?

Northern Ireland is one of the most crime-free areas in the United Kingdom. Our rates of many types of crime measured per head of population is considerably lower than many other places. But in recent years levels of recorded crime, unlike England, Scotland and Wales, have been rising. Crime is now a major social problem and there is much concern in the wider community about its impact.

There are a wide range of crimes (annexes to the Chief Constable's report identify these in detail), with the main broad categories being;

- Offences against the person;
- Sexual offences;
- Burglary (domestic and non-domestic)
- Robbery
- Theft (including shoplifting and vehicle crime)
- Fraud and Forgery;
- Criminal Damage;
- Offences Against the State; and
- Other notifiable offences (including drug offences).

It is therefore important to consider whether any aspect of your policy could help to reduce the incidence of these types of crime.

In particular, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announced in March 2001 that he had set targets for reducing the incidence of vehicle crime and domestic burglary. The targets are;

- A 15% reduction in the rate of domestic burglary;
- A 10% reduction in theft of vehicles; and
- A 10% reduction in theft from vehicles;

By March 2007, using the police recorded crime figures for 2001/02 as a baseline.

The targets apply to all Departments, agencies and bodies and therefore it would be especially important to consider whether your policy or project might have a positive impact in this area.

Will it help victims of crime or reduce public fear about being a victim of crime?

The Review of the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland concluded that more could be done to help the victims of crime and made a number of specific recommendations. In addition, there is considerable fear of crime in the wider community that does not always match the actual level of crime. This is especially true of the more vulnerable members of society especially older people and children. Yet it is the younger members of society who are the most likely to be the victim of a crime especially of a violent crime.

While it is likely that most projects or policies will not directly help victims of crime, a significant number of policies and projects can influence the fear of crime. For example, the paying of grants into a bank account or directly to a beneficiaries agent reduces the levels of cash available in the wider



community. Again, environmental projects can easily be adapted to ensure they do not create focal points for young people to congregate, or where this might be the case that these young people can be separately provided for.

Indicators for measuring success in tackling community safety issues

There are a range of qualitative and quantitative measures and specific performance indicators that can be used to assess the impact of a project or policy on community safety. These include;

Qualitative

- Contribution to regional strategies dealing with community safety issues;
 - Creating a safer Northern Ireland through partnership (NIO);
 - Northern Ireland Drug and Alcohol strategies; (DHSSPS);
 - A policy statement on Domestic Violence (DHSSPS/NIO).
- Contribution to local plans dealing with community safety issues, such as community safety partnership action plans.

Quantitative

- Recorded crime figures – available from PSNI on overall basis or can be broken down into sub-areas.
- Statistics held at local level – e.g, NIHE/District Council figures on vandalism costs/complaints in housing estates or at local amenities; Fire Brigade figures on arsons; Translink attacks on buses/trains and damage to shelters, stations etc.
- Road traffic accident figures;
- Statistics from Victim Support Northern Ireland both across Northern Ireland and broken down into sub-areas.

Performance indicators

- No of homes with improved security measures;
- No of homes affected by upgrading of public service improvements (e.g., street lighting)
- No of door entry schemes installed;
- No of alleyways gated;
- No of individual areas of defensible space created;
- No of residents briefed on local community safety issues;
- No of safer routes created/improved re pedestrians traffic, cyclists etc.;
- No of safe public amenities created;
- No of volunteers involved in community safety schemes/projects (adults and young people);

- %decrease of people surveyed who have been victims of crime, vandalism or anti-social behaviour;
- % of people surveyed whose fear of crime has reduced;
- % reduction in reported crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour



- % reduction in cost of repairs to homes/public amenities arising from crime, vandalism or anti-social behaviour.



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