

**INDICATORS OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN
NORTHERN IRELAND**

**GENERAL LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE
DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF INDICATORS OF
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

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Foreword

This is the first in a series of reports from a research project commissioned by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister to study the development of indicators of diversity and equality in Northern Ireland. The aims of the project were:

- To conduct a general literature review on indicators of equality and diversity with a particular focus on their relevance and applicability in Northern Ireland. This included considering the relevant legislative context and identifying best practice nationally and internationally on equality and diversity monitoring.
- To consult and reflect the opinions of key “stakeholders” representative of groups within the nine categories identified under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998).
- Through reviewing and extensively analysing existing NI statistics and research, to develop an “equality and diversity picture” of the region; to identify key indicators of change over time; and to consider the potential of existing data to provide useful indicators of equality and diversity
- To consider the relative strengths and weaknesses of approaches that use univariate and multivariate methods to develop measures of equality and diversity; to comment on the technical and socio-economic interpretations of the indicators suggested in the consultation; to identify gaps; and to make recommendations about the way forward in terms of indicator development and future monitoring.

The project reports are as follows:

1. General Literature Review
2. Consultation Exercise
3. Patterns of Social Difference
4. Measuring Change
5. Executive Summary.

This research project lies within the context of the Northern Ireland Government Departments’ Equality and Social Need Research and Information Strategy¹. The strategy committed, amongst other things, to assist the understanding of the extent, nature and causes of inequality and social exclusion in Northern Ireland. The current project whilst reflecting this commitment also reflects the continuous developments in relation to statutory responsibilities placed on public authorities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998).

The report reflects the views of the authors and not necessarily those of Departments.

¹ See: www.research.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/crossdept.pdf

CONTENTS

	Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	4
LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT	5
- Northern Ireland	
- EU	
- UN	
EQUALITY MAINSTREAMING IN NORTHERN IRELAND	10
MONITORING COMPLIANCE – THE NEED FOR EQUALITY INDICATORS	12
BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDICATORS OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY INCLUDING SOCIAL INDICATORS	19
DEFINING AND DEVELOPING INDICATORS – GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	21
- Equality and Diversity in What?	
- Equality of Opportunity or Outcome?	
- Measurement Issues	
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AND THE USE OF INDICATORS	27
- General	
- Religion	
- Political Opinion	
- Age	
- Race	
- Marital Status	
- Sexual Orientation	
- Men and Women	
- Disability	
- Dependents	
REFERENCES	59
APPENDICES	63

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Conclusions

It is virtually axiomatic that differences are to be found between individuals and groups in respect of almost any aspect of welfare or well-being that is capable of measurement. Such inequalities are characteristic of every known society, whether based on an individual or collective ethos, and can be assumed to be inescapable. Economic orthodoxy holds that a degree of inequality is indispensable to material progress. The important question therefore is what types of inequality should attract remedial attention.

Given the persistence, ubiquity and complexity of individual and group differences decisions are required about which the state should concern itself with ameliorating. In most advanced liberal societies 'equality legislation' has concentrated on a small number of categories of people such as sex and age and a very small subset of 'welfare measures' such as success in gaining employment² or access to services. The legislation is also invariably framed in terms of equality of opportunity rather than of process or outcome. This can be seen as a recognition of the manifold causes of inequality and an attempt to concentrate attention, resources, and attempts at remedial action on aspects of inequality that constitute unfairness or inequity.

1. Any history of equality and diversity indicators should start with the development of Social Indicators, not least because these can often be expressed or interpreted as indicators of equality or diversity.
2. The literature on social indicators tells us that, in principle, the measurement of human welfare or well-being needs to take account of the full range of "domains" of well-being (health, adequate material wealth, security etc). Any set of indicators that fails to reflect the variety of components of well-being will be in danger of presenting an incomplete and misleading picture. Conversely, there is a danger in focusing too much on any one inequality dimension as this will imply causality where none is involved.
3. Individuals' quality of life should be assessed not in terms of an overarching theoretical design, but in terms which are accessible and which reflect the variety of ways in which people order their lives. Measures of diversity should reflect this variety.

² Although as we point out in our literature review, this is far from being an unambiguous benefit

4. Although equality of *opportunity*, rather than *outcome*, is the avowed aim of most Western societies, the latter is often much easier to measure. At the same time, inequalities in outcomes are often – although importantly not always - pointers to inequalities in opportunities and/or inequalities in process.
5. Where inequality in outcome has been established it is difficult to determine how much of that inequality is attributable to differences in opportunity or process rather than individual choice. Very often the assumption is made that the influence of the latter is negligible. This assumption is likely to be closer to the truth in some equality categories rather than others.
6. Equality of opportunity and process is likely, although not certain, to lead to diversity in those reaching the desired outcome (e.g. employment at a certain level). This means that, more often than not, indicators of value in monitoring equality can also be used or interpreted as indicators of diversity.
7. Work on population inequalities needs to take account of the fact that individuals often occupy a position on several dimensions simultaneously. This means that univariate approaches to monitoring equality may well give misleading results.
8. The variations observed across an inequality dimension are often not a consequence of being at different points along that inequality dimension. For example, variations in employment rates between different ethnic groups may arise because one ethnic group may include more young people than another or because their prior economic status as migrants makes it more difficult for them to find work. Whether or not variations should be treated as inequalities about which there should be public policy intervention requires careful interpretation of the data.
9. Clearly the notion of a set of indicators suggests a relatively small number of measures, as simple and easily understood as possible, and readily comparable across settings and over time. While this is an understandable and creditable objective, it is important to bear in mind that there are potential dangers in over-simplification.
10. Indicators used to monitor equality of outcome are usually based on “stock” statistics. To monitor properly equality of process or opportunity, on the other hand, often involves an examination of “flows”, or the numbers of people passing from one state to another (eg from unemployment to employment) over a period of time. Statistical methods such as log-linear modelling may be required to unravel the complex relationships involved.

11. There are major difficulties inherent in objectively monitoring equality and diversity in certain equality categories, particularly political opinion and sexual orientation, on account of the difficulty of obtaining accurate data.
12. It may be feasible to use household surveys to collect data on political opinion and sexual orientation, but other problems arise because of the difficulty of substantiating self-report data, particularly on perceived discrimination.
13. Monitoring utilization of health and other public services across equality groups has to take account of service need (and possibly supply) as well as uptake and will very often call for the use of reasonably complex statistical methods.
14. A number of authors have pointed to the complexity inherent in monitoring equality and diversity and have effectively suggested a multi-faceted approach to the derivation of indicators. One example is the Home Office which has proposed a 'basket of indicators' on racial equality including:
 - High level attitudinal data illustrating comparative perceptions of public services between the white majority and ethnic minority communities;
 - Harder and more specific data on a range of key policy areas across Government which directly impact and/or are of particular interest to ethnic minority communities (for example, health, housing etc.); and
 - Data about what the Government itself is doing to improve race equality within the Civil Service.
15. Most sets of indicators proposed in the literature are at a very high level. Although there would be value in compiling many of these routinely, not least to enable trends over time to be observed, they are virtually all outcome based and do not speak directly about equality of opportunity or process.

INTRODUCTION

This section of the report reviews and summarises a range of literature on monitoring equality and diversity, the rationale for developing equality and diversity indicators, and the methods and tools employed in the derivation and use of such indicators. The review draws on a variety of sources including academic literature, position papers and the direct experience of organisations that have developed and applied indicators to measure equality of opportunity, process and outcome. It also draws upon local, national and international examples of equality mainstreaming and the development and application of equality indicators as part of this process. It is anticipated that this literature review will provide a background to the use and misuse of indicators in this context along with some understanding of the process of mainstreaming equality, and will directly inform the development of equality indicators for Northern Ireland.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Northern Ireland

The legislative framework within which Equality and Diversity monitoring in Northern Ireland operates comprises a range of measures enacted at local, national, EU and UN levels. At the local level the key pieces of equality legislation³ can be summarised as:

- Equal Pay Act (Northern Ireland) 1970 (amended 1984)
- Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 (amended 1988)
- Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997
- Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Equality (Disability, etc.) (Northern Ireland) Order 2000
- Northern Ireland Act 1998
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003⁴

The 1998 Act arose from the Good Friday Agreement which affirmed:

- The right to equal opportunity in all social and economic activity, regardless of class, creed, disability, gender or ethnicity;
- The right to freedom from sectarian harassment; and
- The right of women to full and equal political participation.

Section 75 of the 1998 Act (commonly referred to as Section 75) states that a public authority shall, in carrying out its functions in Northern Ireland, have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- persons of different religious belief;
- persons of different political opinion;
- persons of different age;
- persons of different racial groups;

³ Note that the Civil Partnership Act (2004) subsequently came into operation in Northern Ireland on 19th December 2005 affording same-sex civil partnerships equal treatment on a wide range of legal matters with married couples (see: www.direct.gov.uk).

⁴ Secondary legislation

- persons of different marital status;
- persons of different sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability⁵ and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

Section 75 also imposes an obligation on public authorities to undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) for all existing and proposed policies identified by initial screening exercises as those which are likely to have a significant impact on equality of opportunity. An EQIA is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, the purpose of which is to identify whether there is a differential impact in respect of the nine equality categories and whether any such differential impact is adverse. If there are adverse impacts then the public body must consider how these should be addressed, except in cases where the policy is intended specifically to address the needs of a particular group. This may involve developing new measures to reduce the negative impact or developing new measures that more effectively promote equality of opportunity. The Equality Commission has published (2002b) a set of example **groups** contained within the nine equality **categories** (for example the religious belief category contains the following groups: Protestant; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Islam / Muslim; Sikh; Buddhist; other religion; people of no religious belief).

The Equality Commission's guidance (2002a) on conducting an EQIA stresses the need to 'consider available data and research'. Such consideration usually involves an assessment of the extent to which the various s75 groups can be separately identified and analysed using administrative and research data sets. In 2002, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), recognising the need for data in the successful completion of EQIAs and the likelihood of variability in the extent of coverage of s75 groups, carried out an 'audit' of key sources of data within Northern Ireland Departments. This culminated in the production of a comprehensive inventory of information sources of potential value in s75 and other equality work. Sources were classified by the Equality Categories on which data was held.

The 1998 Act also provided for the establishment of an Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. The Equality Commission is responsible for implementing legislation in a range of areas including disability, fair employment and treatment, sex discrimination and equal pay and race relations. It is an independent public body and its general duties include:

⁵ Disability has the same meaning as in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (See below).

- working towards the elimination of discrimination
- promoting equality of opportunity and encouraging good practice
- promoting affirmative / positive action
- promoting good relations between people of different racial groups
- overseeing the implementation and effectiveness of the statutory duty on public authorities.
- keeping the relevant legislation under review.

A useful review of developments in relation to the “equality agenda” in Northern Ireland since the 1998 Agreement can be found in Osborne (2003).

The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 made it unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds of religious belief or political opinion⁶. Uniquely in the field of UK anti-discrimination legislation, the Order requires all private sector employers with more than 10 full-time employees to submit an annual return to the Equality Commission giving details of the “community background”⁷ of their employees, applicants and appointees.

Discrimination and harassment in employment on the grounds of sexual orientation was made unlawful through the Employment (NI) Order 2002. Transsexuals are protected under the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999⁸.

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) aims to ensure that disabled people are not discriminated against in terms of employment, and access to goods, facilities and services.

The Act is expected to be extended to cover education and transport services in 2005. This Act defines disability as follows:

“...a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.

European Union

A statement of principles underpinning the European Union in Article F of the Amsterdam Treaty includes:

⁶ including a person's supposed religious belief or political opinion and the absence of any, or any particular, religious belief or political opinion

⁷ Community background means those who are treated as belonging to either the Protestant or the Roman Catholic community

⁸ Transsexuals are only protected in the areas of employment and vocational training, and in cases of direct discrimination rather than indirect discrimination

'The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights, and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the member states'.

As Galligan (2000) notes, within the Amsterdam Treaty equality between men and women is recognised as:

'a basic principle and all policies of Member States are obliged to incorporate an equal opportunities dimension'.

Article 2 of the same Treaty states:

'... a high level of employment and social protection, equality between men and women, the raising of the standard of living and quality of life, and economic and social cohesion and solidarity among member states'.

Article 3 sets as a goal for the members of the EU

'to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women',

while Article 13 includes a more general anti-discrimination provision:

'The Council, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament, may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation'.

In addition to the above, Articles 137 and 141 restate the EU commitment to equality between men and women at work, with the integration of a gender perspective into all EU policies and programmes with specific actions in favour of women.

In June 2000⁹ the European Parliament and the Council adopted a Directive forbidding discrimination on grounds of racial and ethnic origin in the areas of employment, social protection, education, goods and services, and housing.

United Nations

Equality between men and women is made explicit in the Charter of the United Nations, and other international human rights instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Although this has no statutory force, the United Kingdom Government has adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) in the field of sex equality which identifies 'critical areas for concern' as:

⁹ From Bell (2002)

- women and poverty;
- education and training of women;
- women and health;
- violence against women;
- women and armed conflict;
- women and the economy;
- women in power and decision making;
- institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women;
- human rights of women;
- women and the media;
- women and the environment;
- the girl child.

Article 3 of the 1975 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons states:

“Disabled persons whatever the origin, nature or seriousness of their handicaps and disabilities, have the same fundamental rights as their fellow-citizens of the same age, which implies first and foremost the right to enjoy a decent life, as normal and as full as possible”.

Later the UN Standards Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1994) spelt out in detail the actions member states needed to take to make this a reality. In particular, it was noted that:

“Persons with disabilities are members of society and have the right to remain within their local communities. They should receive the support they need within the ordinary structures of education, health, employment and social services” (Para 26).

EQUALITY MAINSTREAMING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The 'Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity' section of the Agreement reached in the 1998 multi-party talks on Northern Ireland included a commitment to introducing a new statutory obligation on public authorities to carry out all their functions with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in relation to: religion and political opinion; gender; race; disability; age; marital status; dependants; and sexual orientation. In effect, this amounted to a requirement to "mainstream" equality. This statutory duty, enacted in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, therefore makes equality central to every aspect of public policy decision-making.

The Equality Commission Guide to Implementation of the Statutory Duties (2002a) indicates that mainstreaming should:

- Contribute to better decisions being made because it requires that these decisions be better informed by techniques of systematic policy appraisal and impact assessment;
- Encourage greater openness in government, and greater transparency in decision-making since it requires consultation among affected interests at an early stage of policy-making, and to a greater extent than is usually carried out;
- Assist public authorities to effectively address issues of equality, targeting disadvantage and social need and promoting social inclusion in policy development and implementation; and
- Assist public authorities in complying with the law.

Mackay and Bilton (2003) note that the strategy of equality mainstreaming should not be confused with mainstreaming as a tool. This point is also highlighted by Rees (1998) who makes a distinction between mainstreaming **principles** such as integrating equality, building ownership and 'visioning' equality, and mainstreaming **tools** such as gender monitoring, impact assessment and awareness raising. Rees states: *'the tools are needed to put the principles into practice, but the existence of tools alone does not necessarily imply that mainstreaming is under way'*.

Quite a number of equality mainstreaming systems have been developed internationally. One example, drawn from the literature on gender equality indicators, is the Gender Management System (GMS) which was developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat. This provides a model for the integration and implementation of an equalities perspective at national government level. The GMS uses a "stakeholder approach" and is based on three broad principles: *empowerment* (representation on decision making bodies and control over

resources); *integration* (transformation of existing structures); and, *accountability*. The model comprises three components: *structures*, *mechanisms* and *processes*, which need to be developed within, what they term, an ‘enabling environment’.

By way of a further example of approaching equality mainstreaming, the Council of Europe classifies tools into three broad categories: *analytical* (tools are designed to expose the problem); *educational* (tools are designed to raise awareness, to transfer knowledge and support training); and, *consultative and participatory* (tools are designed to improve the quality of policy-making and deepen democracy). It should be noted that many tools can apply to all three categories. For example, equality statistics could be used as educational tools or in forming the basis of a consultation, as well as for their analytical value.

MONITORING COMPLIANCE – THE NEED FOR EQUALITY INDICATORS

A key function of equality and diversity indicators in Northern Ireland is to provide criteria by which the effects of policies of public bodies can be judged. Barry (2000) argues that a comprehensive system for equality monitoring requires *the ‘establishment of indicators for monitoring the implementation of policy, assessing objectives and reviewing programmes of action’*. According to Barry such data are essential to the analysis and monitoring of progress and an *‘equality-sensitive data system’* can itself contribute to underscoring the diversity in society as well as highlighting variations in the roles and situations of different groups. Within an Irish context Barry notes that equality statistics are essential to the formulation of policy and the effective monitoring of progress towards greater equality. Significantly, for the purposes of this study, Barry posits that the production of equality indicators is dependent on a cross sector and interagency approach involving government departments and agencies, and the voluntary and community sector. Barry also argues that equality statistics can provide an insight into the ways that inequality is reproduced in society, and that policies and programmes of action need to be based on a clear recognition that differences do exist between different population sub-groups.

Although Barry highlights the importance of equality statistics to inform equality mainstreaming, she does raise concerns about what she terms as ‘various limitations’ with using data to monitor equality, including:

- the development of data that is both comprehensive and appropriate can be costly and time-consuming;
- no data system can accurately reflect the basis of social reality, rather it is a snapshot in time;
- equality data needs to be continually reviewed, refined and updated; and
- the analysis of data needs to be subject to continual critical examination and assessment.

Mackay and Bilton point to the examples of the Nordic countries and Canada who produce comprehensive official statistics, broken down by sex, as a matter of course, and in the case of Sweden, gender-related statistics are published annually to allow for the monitoring of progress across all government policy areas. Mackay and Bilton also note that in some other countries the task of producing equality indicators has been conducted by either non-government or statutory based organisations such as women’s or other interest groups.

What is an indicator?

According to Beck¹⁰ an indicator “*summarises a large amount of information in a single figure, in such a way as to give an indication of change over time, and in comparison to a norm*”. Bilton argues that successful equality mainstreaming is dependent on the development and use of equality indicators. Following the outcome of a symposium on gender equality in Canada, three primary potential applications of indicators within mainstreaming work were suggested:

- **as an input:** using the indicators to inform analysis -
comparing the situation of men and women in a policy area e.g. analysis of transport policy in Sweden revealed that while women were the main users of public transport, provision followed male patterns of travel, therefore, ‘public transport answered to the needs of those who do not use it’ (Lundkvist 1988).
- **as a results measure:** to measure the success of analysis -
e.g. an indicator measuring the ratio of women to men in all levels of an organisation can be used to measure the success of a policy designed to overcome segregation in the workplace. For example, the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) can be used to measure the success of a range of policies aimed at improving women’s participation.
- **to raise awareness:** as a tool to sensitise policy-makers and the public to problems and the need for specific gender / equal opportunities analysis. Thus providing and publicising disaggregated data can turn a private issue into a public issue or social issue e.g. the dissemination of statistics on domestic violence or the gender pay gap.

Mackay and Bilton, although embracing the use of indicators generally, raise a number of concerns relating to their use as a means of monitoring equality of opportunity and outcome between the sexes. Their key concern is that the majority of sex equality indicators have been designed around what they term ‘*gendered assumptions*’ which they argue tend to lead to the ‘*invisibility*’ of women. These assumptions are summarised as follows:

- many traditional indicators assume that women and men experience the world in the same way;

¹⁰ Beck, T. Using Gender Sensitive Indicators, Office of Commonwealth Secretariat, 1999.

- women figure in traditional indicators primarily as mothers or care givers, and further relations within the family are often obscured by a focus on the head of household, often defined as the male breadwinner;
- the main indicators used at an international and national level are GDP (Gross Domestic Product), IDS (Index of Social Health), and the HDI (Human Development Index), which Bilton contends, are ‘sex invisible’.

In response to this, Bilton points to the United Nations which has developed a set of alternative indicators such as the Gender Related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). The GDI gives gender disaggregated data and adjustments for the Human Development Index for women and men. The HDI compares 175 countries on three basic measures: longevity; educational attainment; and life expectancy. This measure however does not take account of gender differences in achievement. The GEM measures women’s participation in the economic, political and professional fields, and aims to examine whether women’s and men’s active participation in economic and political life is equal.

The point that equality indicators are not value free has also been highlighted by Bilton, and this, she argues, is something which needs to be addressed, particularly in the context of gender. She points to three main ways that gender equality indicators have been constructed:

- by measuring the individual attainment of women;
- by disaggregating data by sex and other categories (age, ethnicity, etc); and,
- by comparing the status of women relative to men.

The chief criticism of this approach, according to Bilton, is that these indicators take men as the standard against which women are measured. In response, Bilton argues that the development of equality indicators should be subject to a number of key considerations including:

- **Equality indicators cannot be used as stand alone tools.** They need to be interpreted within an explicit framework and used in conjunction with other tools and resources and will not constitute policy analysis on their own.
- **Is it possible, or indeed desirable, to attempt to reduce complex social and economic phenomena to a single meaningful statement or stylised fact?**
- **To what degree is there is a ‘fit’ between indicators and social reality?** Whose reality do they correspond to?
- **Is it feasible to develop indicators which meaningfully measure qualitative variables and experiences?**
- **The need to develop expertise in using and interpreting indicators;**

- **The need for indicators to be supplemented by additional information from other sources;**
- **The need for indicators to be combined with clear targets and plans in order to achieve results.**

The literature highlights a number of different definitions of an indicator, some of which are of a purely quantitative nature, and others which are both quantitative and qualitative. For example, Statistics Sweden defines indicators as:

‘...statistical information chosen specifically to shed light on a particular economic, demographic or social problem or question. Indicators can be a single figure or a distribution. Figures can be expressed as numbers, percentages, rates or ratios’¹¹.

Galligan contends that *‘an indicator does not offer the solution to the problem it uncovers. Rather it is the first stage in identifying trends and patterns in society that combine to produce a social problem. It is a tool that allows one to show that a problem exists. It does not guarantee the eradication of that problem’*.

In the context of policy development, Galligan argues that indicators provide a framework for action, monitoring and accountability and are required in order to find out:

- which policies are working;
- whether existing policies are producing the desired effect; and
- whether current policies are neglecting sectors of the population.

In terms of gender equality, the Canadian publication *Economic Gender and Equality Indicators* (1997) identifies the different uses of indicators as:

- to inform gender based analysis;
- provide information on women’s and men’s social and economic status and activities;
- to establish goals and priorities;
- to identify problems;
- to anticipate the effects of equality policy; and
- to help shape solutions to equality problems.

Breitenbach and Galligan’s research also calls for the need to improve the quality of gender related statistics and the need for *‘mainstreaming’* to be integrated into the national statistical system. They point to the need for the producers / providers of statistics and users to work together.

¹¹ Statistics Sweden, *Engendering Statistics*.

‘Producers need to improve their understanding of gender issues. Users need to express their demand to statisticians and learn how best to use statistics in their work. This involves examining gender concerns and goals in society and identifying the necessary goals in society and identifying the necessary statistics and indicators to address them’¹²

Galligan identifies three types of indicator:

- **gender disaggregated statistics** across a range of policy areas, which may be compiled for separate policy areas, as in the New South Wales scorecard example;
- **performance indicators** which measure success in achieving specific goals and targets, and which are the responsibility of policy makers, and should form an integral part of policy development;
- **high level composite indicators** as exemplified by UN indices, and as recommended by Galligan on the gender equality report for Ireland.

However, the process of developing indicators, according to Breitenbach and Galligan, needs to address and consider the following:

- the **criteria** that should be used in their selection, e.g. clarity, frequency of data availability, data for trends over time, comparability with other countries, how they complement other indicators;
- addressing the **inter-relationship** of gender with race, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation etc;
- addressing data **gaps**;
- the capacity of indicators to **adequately reflect** the factors that contribute to gender inequalities;
- the role of **qualitative research** in providing explanations of factors underlying statistical trends; and,
- **accessibility** to users.

In response to these issues, Breitenbach and Galligan conclude by making a series of inter-related recommendations relating to the development of gender-related equality indicators:

- develop a set of **gender equality indicators** which will require improvements in the collection and dissemination of gender disaggregated statistics, considered in the context of relevant quantitative and qualitative research;

¹² Hedman, Birgitta, ‘New challenges in the improvement of gender statistics’, paper presented at symposium Gender Equality Indicators: Public Concerns, Public Policies, held at Statistics Canada, March 26 and 27, 1998.

- develop **performance indicators** for specific policy areas promoting gender equality. Gender statistics and research are likely to be integral to these, and where data do not exist, or are of poor quality, steps should be taken to remedy this.
- consideration should be given to high level **composite indicators** as a longer-term aim. This option should be draw on the experience of Canada and other countries, and in consultation with the providers of government statistics in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.
- policy making should include the development of **gender performance indicators** and methods of evaluation relevant to specific policy objectives;
- a **compendium** of statistics could be published on a periodic basis;
- a regular publication summarising selected **key indicators** should be produced;
- **occasional publications** on gender inequalities, based on more in-depth studies should be published;
- the publication of **materials which promote and educate** the public about existing gender inequalities and gender equality goals should be published;
- action should be taken to address any **data gaps**;
- the feasibility of developing a set of composite indicators as a longer-term aim should be considered;
- **consultation** with the user community of statistics and **networking** with researchers working in this area should be ongoing to inform the overall process.

In using statistics to monitor and evaluate gender equality a number of principles applying to official statistical agencies have been devised by the United Nations (see Appendices). One set of quality criteria was articulated by EUROSTAT (1998) as follows: good statistics should be: relevant; accessible and clearly presented; comparable and coherent; timely and punctual; comprehensive and complete; and accurate.

Morris (1997) suggests that there are a number of baseline criteria necessary to develop useful social indicators, but that the construction of coherent qualitative indicators is dependent on the successful development of the quantitative dimension in the first instance. Indeed McCracken (1997) identifies a set of key criteria for the construction of performance indicators generally. He argues that such indicators should:

- be a quantitative measurement that is clear, consistent and sensitive;
- have a specific focus allowing accurate measurement of the problem;
- use data that are reliable, timely and well-documented;
- be reflective of something that is relevant to the user;

- be transferable across geographical areas and societal groups;
- be developed in a participatory fashion, with inputs from all stakeholders;
- be constructed with foresight and be sensitive to past trends;
- be sensitive to uncovering concerns that may not be immediately apparent or relevant.

The Canadian International Development Agency 'Guide to Gender Sensitive Indicators' describes an indicator as a pointer, which can be a measurement, a number, a fact, an opinion or a perception that points at a specific condition or situation and measures changes in that condition or situation over time. The Guide explains the need to use both quantitative and qualitative indicators. It defines the former as measures of quantity, based on information gleaned from censuses, surveys, enumerations and administrative records; and the latter as people's judgements and perceptions about a subject such as living standards or quality of life. The Guide also notes, however, that these definitions hide some of the more complex ways in which these two types of indicators are used. For example, "quality of life" indicators, such as those that measure changes in a population's health, education or employment are often confused with qualitative indicators because both appear to refer to "quality".

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDICATORS OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY INCLUDING SOCIAL INDICATORS

Any history of equality and diversity indicators should start with the development of Social Indicators, not least because these can often be expressed or interpreted as indicators of equality or diversity. Although there have been forms of economic measurement since Sir William Petty (the Astronomer Royal) was asked to gauge the relative power and wealth of England and France in the 17th century, social indicators are of relatively recent origin. There were proposals for systems of social indicators in parallel with the development of national accounts around the middle of the 20th century (e.g. the UN's System of Social and Demographic Indicators proposed by Richard Stone), but the social indicators 'movement' (Gross and Straussman, 1974) only took off when Bauer attempted to assess the impact of the NASA Space programme on the population of Nevada in the early 1960s.

Subsequently, there were many proposals for systems to measure social progress (e.g. Bauer himself, Gross, UNRISD), whether theoretically based (e.g. on Maslow's hierarchy of needs from survival needs to self-actualisation needs), or on social surveys of quality of life domains (e.g. Andrews and Withey, 1976) or more 'eclectic' approaches based on a list of concerns (UNRISD, 1953; McGranahan, Pizarro and Richard, 1985). The most influential was a consequence of the OECD Economic Ministers agreeing that 'economic growth was not an end in itself but only a means to improving the quality of life'. This led to a concerted effort, coordinated by the OECD, to develop a system of social indicators that would cover all the main social concerns of Member States and encouraged the development of social reporting to measure progress in improving the quality of life by member states. For example, the United States began to produce a Social Indicators volume, the UK a Social Trends volume and the French a *Données Sociales* volume.

Several important lessons were learnt from these early attempts that have now become institutionalised in the more recent versions of Social Reports (e.g. *Living in Britain*). A number are important here:

1. Individuals' quality of life should be assessed not in terms of an overarching theoretical design, but in terms which are accessible and which reflect the variety of ways in which people order their lives. Measures of diversity should reflect this variety.
2. Nevertheless, there is a considerable degree of consensus in the literature about what the major areas of social concern are, although any number of different views

exist about what exactly to include in each, and about their relative importance¹³. Equally, government social reports tend to be very similar to each other in including data on employment, education and health, the environment, and other sectors (see Carr-Hill et al, 1995). This is not surprising as the areas broadly follow the administrative division of governments, and thus the way that government statistical systems are organised.

3. While it is relatively easy to agree - at least in any one society at any one time - on what constitutes minima, it is difficult to agree on whether more means better. This is partly because there is a perceived limit – one can have too much of a good thing - and the obvious example these days is food and obesity; it is also partly because having more of one desired attribute almost certainly means having less of another. But, whatever the reason, the focus of measurement has nearly always been on the bottom end of the scale (e.g. Breadline Britain)
4. The original Social Indicators volumes from the United States were presented in a very stylised format with breakdowns of every indicator by age, sex and race. This gave the misleading impression that variations in everything of value could be *explained* by age, sex and race.

In conclusion, the literature on social indicators tells us that, in principle, the measurement of human welfare or well-being needs to take account of the full range of “domains” of well-being (health, adequate material wealth, security etc). It follows that any set of indicators that fails to reflect the variety of components of well-being will be in danger of presenting an incomplete and misleading picture. Conversely, there is a danger in focusing too much on any one inequality dimension as this will imply causality where none is involved.

¹³ See for example, the arguments over the WHO’s Index of Health System Performance

DEFINING AND DEVELOPING INDICATORS – GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Equality and diversity in what?

In monitoring discrimination, disadvantage, or inequality of opportunity or outcome it is necessary to embrace two key components: the groups, dimensions or categories within or among which equality and diversity are to be assessed; and the measures or attributes in respect of which advantage or disadvantage may be found¹⁴. The equality categories of particular interest in Northern Ireland are specified in the 1998 Act. In general however, the “measures of advantage” will be a range of factors or characteristics that reflect, or impact upon, individual human welfare. These will reflect positive or desirable states such as health, wealth and employment¹⁵; or negative/undesirable ones such as ill-health and poverty. This raises the question of which of these attributes should be included, and then of how to measure them.

For the purpose of monitoring equality and diversity according to the current requirements in Northern Ireland, the range of measures of advantage is potentially very wide, representing the objectives of policy across all elements of the public sector¹⁶. In principle, a credible framework should be as comprehensive as possible including most aspects of welfare as judged by different interest groups. Although in practice it will almost certainly not be possible to take account of all of people’s preferred “outcomes” it needs to be borne in mind that the more incomplete the picture is, the more misleading any concentration on a small number of outcomes has the potential to be¹⁷.

There is an important cautionary note to the interpretation of any breakdowns of desired attributes by the equality dimensions. The variations observed across an inequality dimension are often not a consequence of being at different points along that inequality dimension. For example, variations in employment rates between different ethnic groups may arise because one ethnic group may include more young people than the national population (another inequality dimension) or because their prior economic status as migrants makes it more difficult for them to find work. It is appropriate to monitor the variations: whether or not

¹⁴ There is a third set of factors to be considered: potential confounding variables (some of which may also be in the list of equality categories).

¹⁵ It should however be noted that, as Carr-Hill and Lintott (2002) argue, much of current employment has little measurable impact on welfare other than on the person’s income; indeed, why pay people, if work is so delightful?

¹⁶ Examples include: cleanliness of housing estates and the proportions of people in employment and with good dental health.

¹⁷ This is because different equality groups (e.g. women and men) may differ in their valuations of certain outcomes.

those variations should be treated as inequalities about which there should be public policy intervention requires careful interpretation of the data.

Equality of opportunity or outcome?

A report from Canada (Morris, 1997) about gender equality recognizes that among the possible types of equality are equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes or results. There is a third aspect: equality of process¹⁸. Much has been written about the distinction between equality of opportunity and equality of outcome. As Roemer (1995) notes, equality of opportunity is the prevailing conception of social justice in western liberal democracies. Equality legislation in most jurisdictions, including Northern Ireland, embraces equality of opportunity as its ideal. Society's role is to "level the playing field," with individuals free to make choices and by and large obliged to face the consequences of their own choices¹⁹. The questions then arise: what constitutes a level playing field, and how much effort of what type should the state make to provide one? Roemer recognises that actions, and the consequences of those actions, are determined by a combination of circumstances beyond the person's control and autonomous choices within their control. He suggests that an equal-opportunities policy must equalise outcomes in so far as they are the consequences of causes beyond a person's control, but allow differential outcomes in so far as they result from individual ability²⁰ and choice. When there is equality of opportunity, no one will be worse off than others as a result of factors beyond their control. On the other hand an equal-outcomes policy would seek to eliminate inequality of outcomes regardless of the extent to which they were the consequence of individuals' own choices and actions.

Roemer points out that if equality of opportunity forms part of society's theory of justice, then social policy should aim to distribute resources so as to equalise the opportunities people have for making their lives successful, by their own measures of success. On the other hand, if equality of outcome were the objective, society should endeavour to distribute resources so as to equalize, as far as possible, the degrees of success that people rate their lives as having. In general, as noted above in the review of work on social indicators, people differ greatly in their conceptions of what constitutes worthwhile achievement in life: some value material wealth, others status in a profession or social circle, others 'softer' virtues such as family relationships or successful child-rearing. This means that one immediate problem with either

¹⁸ In the public services such as education, health, housing the way in which the service is provided can contribute to disadvantage.

¹⁹ With the exception of a "safety net" at some level.

of the above approaches to assessing equality is how to represent, value and weight such disparate concepts of success or well-being.

Although equality of opportunity rather than equality of outcome is the avowed aim of most Western societies, the latter is often much easier to measure. At the same time, inequalities in outcomes are often – although importantly not always – pointers to inequalities in opportunities and/or inequalities in process. Where inequality in outcome has been established it is difficult to determine how much of that inequality is attributable to differences in opportunity or process rather than individual choice. Very often the assumption is made that the influence of the latter is negligible. For example Galligan refers to the results of a survey in the Republic of Ireland which suggested that 26 per cent of girls aged between 15 and 17 years participate in sport, compared to 55 per cent of boys in the same age group. The Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women in the Republic said: “*It is likely that the type of sports women play and the proportionately lower number of women who participate does not so much reflect real choice as lack of opportunities to participate*”. There is no apparent acknowledgement that women may simply be less interested than men in participating in sport²¹.

Further argument in favour of the notion that social injustice or inequity is best interpreted in terms of inequality of opportunity can be found in Le Grand (1984, 1991), Arneson (1989) and Cohen (1989).

Differentiating Between Equality and Diversity

It is important to emphasise the conceptual and practical distinctions between the terms ‘equality’ and ‘diversity’. Equality refers to the distribution of an attribute among people.

There have been long debates over whether the concept includes variations between individuals (e.g. Le Grand, N Ireland Human Rights Commission), but the usual focus is on differences between people belonging to different social groups specified in terms of particular characteristics.

Diversity can be described simply as “the right to be different”. It *can* therefore be limited to the celebration of differences among people in their possession of different attributes – so long as, presumably, they do not fall below the minima; however, it can equally refer to the celebration of differences among people in what attributes they value. In this latter meaning,

²⁰ Clearly exceptions are appropriate in cases of disability.

²¹ Of course it can be argued that much of the difference between the sexes in this preference, as in others, is socially rather than biologically determined. We do not dispute this but rather suggest that some element of the difference will almost certainly be the product of individuals’ free choice which should be respected.

measurement should focus on the treatment of different groups which is why we should include in the list of collective or social attributes such as equality before the law. In the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland we suggest that diversity should be construed as referring to the makeup of those with a particular outcome or measure of advantage. Thus, equality of opportunity and process is likely, although not certain²², to lead to diversity in those reaching the desired outcome (eg employment at a certain level). This means that, more often than not, indicators of value in monitoring equality can also be used or interpreted as indicators of diversity.

Further complexities arise when one begins to consider equality issues in a particular field of the public services such as health and social care. In a wide-ranging set of discussion papers on health inequalities Ilesley (2003) contrasts the political and educational concern for equality of opportunity with the health professional concern with equality of outcome: ‘When health and social position are so closely linked you cannot have equality of health outcomes in a meritocracy’. Gillon (2003) responds by suggesting that what may be just, within a liberal democracy, is that health interventions should aim at producing equal health benefits proportional to people’s equal meetable health needs. Achieving this may well require differential resources (for example, in favour of those who for one reason or another, including social deprivation, have difficulty in making use of health services) – but it does not require a general concern with equality of health, nor a general concern with equalising health between different social classes. The concept of fairness or “equity” is often invoked in the context of access to and use of health and other public services. In health and other public services, equity can be defined as equality of use of services for people with equal need (Krasnik, 1996). In the next section we will touch on some of the methodological problems that arise in monitoring equality of opportunity, or equity.

Measurement Issues

Having covered some of the conceptual issues that arise in monitoring equality and diversity we now turn our attention to the difficulties that may arise in clarifying the concepts arrived at (in particular equality of opportunity). Clearly the notion of a set of indicators suggests a relatively small number of measures, as simple and easily understood as possible, and readily comparable across settings and over time. While this is an understandable and creditable

²² Because of the influence of other factors discussed above such as inclination

objective (and one which in the remainder of this study we shall be trying to fulfill), it is important to bear in mind that there are potential dangers in over-simplification.

The report of a conference for users of equality statistics in Scotland (Scottish Executive Central Research Unit, 2001) observed that not all barriers to equal opportunity can be monitored with statistical data, and not all information gaps can be filled with better and more accessible statistics. Some equality statistics are easier to collect than others, and survey data are often limited in what they can measure. While statistics can be valuable for documenting inequalities over many areas of social and economic life, they are far less useful in tracing those social processes that impede equal opportunity and produce unequal outcomes. It is important that as we try to improve equality statistics, we also keep a commitment to monitoring equality using other types of research and data.

Univariate or multivariate?

Work on population inequalities needs to take account of the fact (Carr-Hill and Chalmers-Dixon, 2002) that individuals often occupy a position on several dimensions simultaneously. Taking health inequalities as an example, many forms of disadvantage related to ill-health are themselves inter-correlated (for example, being non-white, working in an unskilled occupation or being unemployed, living in the inner city, being the female head of a single parent family) and disaggregating these components without taking account of the interactions between them may be misleading. This means that univariate approaches to monitoring equality (whether of opportunity, process, or outcome) may well give misleading results. (In the discussion above on what kinds of diversity and equality should be measured, we noted the need to take account of potential confounding variables, some of which might also be in the list of equality categories).

Research on equity in the use of health services (see for example Carr-Hill et al, 1994) often involves the use of moderately complex statistical methods²³ to adjust utilization rates to correct for differential levels of need for such services. A recently published investigation (Jamison et al, 2004) into the equitable use of hospital services in N Ireland using such methods found that once differences in age structure had been accounted for, Catholics tended to have very significantly higher utilization rates than Protestants. However these differences were reduced when differences in needs between the two parts of the community were taken

²³ Among these are spatial interactive modelling, multiple two-stage least squares regression and multi-level modelling

into account, and disappeared entirely when statistical adjustment was made for the fact that those living closer to hospitals and other health services tended to make greater use of them²⁴.

Stocks and Flows

Indicators used to monitor equality of outcome are usually based on “stock” statistics, i.e. the numbers of people in a certain condition (eg in employment) at particular points in time (see for example Equality Commission, 2004). Although such relatively straightforward analyses are clearly valuable, particularly if undertaken over a period of time, the accuracy of the inferences that are drawn from them is almost always unknowable; and certainly depends to a considerable extent on the presence or absence of confounding factors²⁵.

To monitor properly equality of process or opportunity often involves an examination of “flows”, or the numbers of people passing from one state to another (eg from unemployment to employment) over a period of time. Rather than simply “counting heads” in the actual workforce, research undertaken in the fair employment field in the NICS in the 1980s (Stevenson et al, 1988) measured the numbers of candidates passing through the recruitment and promotion processes and modelled these flows using log-linear methods. This multivariate research enabled robust statistical estimates to be made of the influence at each stage of the main factors of interest (eg religion) and also of potential confounding factors (eg age, qualifications).

²⁴ This does however raise the question of whether such ‘supply’ differences should be factored out when assessing equity of service utilisation.

²⁵ And on changes over time in the influence of those confounders.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AND THE USE OF INDICATORS

General

Local Government in Great Britain

Compared with other sectors of public administration in the UK, local government prides itself as having been at the forefront of introducing the concept of equality mainstreaming, and in particular devising and implementing a series of equality indicators in an attempt to ensure that services are meeting the needs of diverse populations and are equally accessible to all groups. According to Dialog (2001) *'equality indicators can provide a framework for ensuring that local authorities acknowledge the importance of equality as a criterion for performance measurement'*. The purpose of targets, in their view, is to *'represent an expected level of achievement against which the findings of monitoring systems can be compared'*. In relation to the local government sector, the benefits highlighted by Dialog include:

- to measure service use by different sectors of the population, allowing authorities to gauge under-use;
- to meet legal requirements (e.g. Race Relations Act 1976, Equal Pay Act etc.); and business requirements;
- to inform the targeting of financial constraints on local government spending.

In response to the introduction of Best Value within the local government sector, and the publication of the Government's 2001 White Paper (Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services'), the Audit Commission and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) sought to support local authorities by developing a library of performance indicators to inform the Best Value initiative (BVPIs).

In underscoring the need for equality and diversity indicators to be reflective of a wide-range of stakeholder organisations, the group that was established to advance the initiative within local government was made up of the Audit Commission; the IDeA, Commission for Racial Equality, Equal Opportunities Commission, Disability Rights Commission and the employers' organisations. In addition, a number of other organisations contributed to the process: Local Government Association; Welsh Local Government Association; Association of London Government; DIALOG, and officers from local authorities. The proposed indicators were categorised under four main headings in relation to which authorities might require measures to support their activities:

- community well-being;

- service delivery;
- employment; and
- providing a multi-lingual service.

Under each heading activities were further classified. As an example, under the heading ‘community well-being’, the aim is to ensure that initiatives by the various partners involved in Community Planning and local Strategic Partnerships reflect the diversity of the local community. As such the selection of indicators is intended to cover the main areas covered by the duty of authorities to promote community well-being – social, economic and environmental. The indicators suggested are:

- living in the community harmoniously (data generated via a survey);
- incidence of homophobic attacks and of sexual harassment (data supplied by police and local authority).

For most of the indicators it is suggested that data be collected by race, gender and disability²⁶. The indicators are not intended as an end in themselves, but rather to raise questions and point to possible problems.

Local Government In Scotland – Mainstreaming Equality

In a report to the Equal Opportunities Committee of the Scottish Parliament in June 2002, The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) outlined (2002) an approach for mainstreaming equalities within local government. The report acknowledges the difficulties in trying to measure outcomes, and suggests that good performance indicators need to:

- get to the heart of what the service is about particularly reflecting its desired outcomes;
- be meaningful to the public; and,
- be based on sound data.

Specifically in relation to equality indicators the report underscores the need for: consultation with “equality groups”; and for definitions of equality to take account of ‘fair access’ to services. According to COSLA the approach in Scotland has emphasised the development of service and employment indicators disaggregated by key equality groups to provide baseline data. This approach is very much dependent on high quality data on different sections of the population, and acknowledges that there are resource implications. In response COSLA

²⁶ In most cases sexuality is not asked for as confidentiality could not be guaranteed.

recommended the need to set priorities with the initial focus on gender, race/ethnicity, and disability given the existence of legislation covering these groups.

- The COSLA report also alludes to the need for consistent definitions of the main equality groups to be used across councils.

Local Government In Scotland - Service Reviews

COSLA (ibid.) also highlight service reviews as being the most important driver for continuous improvement, and that equality considerations be built into their design and conduct. The DETR have stated (1999):

'Reviews should address equity considerations by considering the way in which services impact on all sections of the community, and set targets to redress disparities in the provision of services to those to that are socially, economically or geographically disadvantaged'.

According to COSLA, service reviews need to be sufficiently flexible to be able to respond to changing priorities, including the changing of programmes where disparities in equality have been identified.

The conduct of service reviews need also to consider what are termed the 'four Cs':

- **Challenge** – does the service contribute to achieving council's equality objectives? Is it appropriate and accessible to equality groups? Do policies have a differential impact on equality groups? Are certain groups over or under represented? What steps are taken to ensure that service is accessible to all potential users? Do service charges impact on equalities groups?
- **Compare** – How does council performance compared with other councils and other public, private sector and voluntary organisations in terms of its contribution to equality objectives?
- **Consult** – How is user involvement / consultation carried out? What about non-users? Are equalities groups consulted etc?
- **Compete** – What is the equalities impact of alternative forms of service delivery? Is there likely to be a differential impact? Will equalities objectives / targets continue to be delivered?

Each service review must result in an improvement plan for action, and should identify areas of improved performance against equality objectives and set targets for improvement over an agreed timescale.

Local Government In Scotland – Public Performance Reporting

Councils in Scotland are also required to have in place a public performance reporting framework. The aim is to increase local accountability so that local people can make informed and meaningful judgements about the services being provided. To be able to do this, COSLA argue that local people need to be given regular and reliable information on council performance and achievements. Thus, according to COSLA, the process of public performance reporting must reflect equalities issues such as:

- **Right information** – Will there be reporting of equality targets as well as progress in the achievement of these targets? Will the outcomes of consultations with equalities groups be reported, and how will these results be used?
- **Right people** – Are equalities groups being considered as stakeholders? Will the reporting of performance re: equality be presented in thematic reports?
- **Right time** – Will councils consult with equalities groups to find out when they want the information?
- **Right medium** – Will councils ensure that information is provided in a range of languages and formats to suit the needs of equality groups?

COSLA recommends a series of actions for councils to meet their commitments regarding public performance reporting. These include the need to:

- undertake a review of what information is currently reported on equalities issues, the existing mechanisms used and in what format;
- ensure that the development of the Council’s public performance reporting takes account of the equalities issues;
- consider reporting on performance in delivering equal opportunities in a thematic report.

Local Government In Scotland - Effective Scrutiny Of Performance

COSLA recommend that councils’ performance should be subject to both internal and external scrutiny, and through external audit and inspection. In addition, they recommend that councils consider the role of specialist equal opportunities officers in facilitating internal scrutiny by elected members, and consider how best to involve equalities groups in the scrutiny process.

Local Government In Scotland - Contract Compliance

Section 17 of the Local Government Act 1988 makes it unlawful for councils to refer to non-commercial matters in any contractual process. With the exception of race relations, councils are not allowed to take account of any terms and conditions of employment and equalities (i.e.

gender, disability, sexual orientation etc.). However, according to COSLA, notwithstanding the need for legislative change, councils can still ensure that equalities issues are considered in the procurement process, but states that this approach is only sustainable where the council itself is a model of best practice in this regard. Nevertheless, COSLA have made a series of recommendations:

- ensure that equality requirements are taken into account in the council's procurement strategy;
- consider how the council can give assistance to contractors in complying with equality legislation;
- ensure that the councils voluntary sector and volunteering policy statements are in line with their equalities objectives;

ensure that criteria for funding voluntary and community organisations include standards which require arrangements to be in place to deliver equality of opportunities in terms of employment, membership and service delivery.

Republic of Ireland

Based on the literature, the evidence suggests that while much of the focus on developing equality indicators is centred on gender, the general principles and tools for equality mainstreaming are applicable to the other equality categories. Barry (ibid.), in an overview of current activity in the Republic of Ireland, underscores the need for:

- baseline social and economic data on the situation of those sectors of the population vulnerable to inequality and discrimination;
- data on systems, organisations and structures, which have an impact on progress towards greater equality in Irish society;
- data on changing social attitudes, particularly in relation to discrimination, prejudice and intolerance; and
- data on the development of resources and services within communities and sectors experiencing inequality and discrimination.

Barry acknowledges the overlapping nature of discrimination and inequality, for example, women may be discriminated against on grounds such as sexual orientation and disability. He also observes that the wider cultural environment is determined as much by social attitudes as other factors. As such it is important to monitor the nature of attitudes as well as how they change over time. Barry notes that attitudinal data in Ireland is highly variable, and that the collection of such data is sensitive to language, as well as definitions and concepts that are

applied within the data collection process. For comparative purposes, the EUROBAROMETER is cited as a valuable source for EU comparisons, and the European Social Survey is also recognised as a useful data source in this regard.

Barry also identifies a number of issues that need to be addressed if an effective equality-sensitive data collection system is to be achieved:

- **Disclosure Issues:** groups and individuals may be reluctant to disclose information on their situations or circumstances e.g. membership of specific social groups. Lesbians and gay men may not disclose information on their sexual orientation in certain contexts, but will do so in others.
- **Definitions:** Problems of definitions frequently arise in data collection systems. Definitions of disability, economic status etc can all give rise to difficulties in definition.
- **Access:** Some groups and individuals are not linked to fixed locations (e.g. Travellers) and may require the application of more qualitative-based approaches.
- **Measurement Difficulties:** Many aspect of social and economic life do not lend themselves easily to quantitative measurement. For example, the measurement of poverty is based on relative income measures or based on a composite of variables. Another example is the measurement of direct and indirect discrimination.
- **Fragmentation:** One of the criticisms of data collection in Ireland is that is highly fragmented and dispersed. For example, data on violence against women is collected by a variety of different agencies and organisations such as Hospitals, National Crime Council, Garda etc.
- **Individuals and Households:** Much of the routine data collected in Ireland is based on household units, rather than individuals.
- **Invisibility:** Key aspects of households' and individual experience have in many instances been hidden from view, partially due to underlying assumptions which have informed the collection and dissemination of data. For example, unpaid work in the home, in the community etc, can remain unrecorded.
- **Abuse:** There is a need to protect against data abuse. This requires data systems to be secure, transparent, independently monitored and subject to independent verification and scrutiny. It is essential that the integrity of data systems be protected against their use for purposes for which they were not collected.

- **Security and Confidentiality:** Census of Population forms in Ireland record name and address details. Although this information is for administrative purposes only, it is frequently not evident that this information will not be linked to the data.

In the remainder of this report we examine the literature on monitoring equality and diversity for each equality category in turn.

RELIGION

Religion and political opinion have clearly been the most contentious of the Section 75 categories in N Ireland (Osborne, 2003). As noted above, it is unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds of religious belief or political opinion (including a person's supposed religious belief or political opinion and the absence of any, or any particular, religious belief or political opinion).

Data Sources

Given the level of interest in fair employment issues in Northern Ireland, and particularly the focus on community background, it is no surprise to find that of all of the Section 75 categories, data on religion is relatively more available. The NISRA website (www.nisra.gov.uk) contains detailed quantitative information on religion in the following categories: population; labour market; education; crime and justice; health and care; social and welfare; transport; housing; and other.

Labour Market

Listed below are some examples of data relating to the Northern Ireland labour market:

- Economic activity in last seven days;
- Have you been refused a job because of your religion in the last ten years?
- Have you been treated unfairly by your colleagues because of your religion in the last ten years?
- Have you been treated unfairly in promotion because of your religion in the last ten years?
- Have you ever had a job?
- How many hours a week do you normally work in your job?
- If you ever had a job, are/were you an employee or self employed ?
- In which of these ways do you think Catholics are treated better?
- In which of these ways do you think Protestants are treated better?
- Work Related Life Events by Religion
- Would most people mind if a suitably qualified person of a different religion were appointed as their boss?
- Would you mind if a suitably qualified person of a different religion were appointed as your boss?

There are clear dangers in relying on self-report attitudinal-like data such as these, particularly on perceived discrimination, because of the difficulty of substantiating them.

Health and Social Care

The DHSSPS has published a report (2002) documenting data sources for the conduct of EQIAs in relation to religion. A number of administrative data sources are covered including, principally, the Patient Administration System (PAS) which is the operational system in acute hospitals. The report notes that consideration is being given (if resources are available) to ensure that religion data are downloaded onto PAS and linked systems.

Other sources of data on religion and health include population surveys such as the Continuous Household Survey (CHS) and the Northern Ireland Health and Social Well-being Survey (NIHSWS). The Department has also recently published (2004) a valuable compendium of statistics and research findings bearing on health and social care equality and inequalities.

Although these are potentially useful sources of data on health service utilisation, their value in monitoring equality and diversity depends crucially on the availability of data on need for, and supply of, services, and also on the use of appropriate multivariate methods. This applies also in other areas of the public services.

Education

Obviously some religions (e.g. Islam) will impose a particular ideological view on what should and should not be learned but within the liberal Northern European context of this study this issue has less salience.

POLITICAL OPINION

Although there are clearly close relationships between religious persuasion and political opinion in Northern Ireland, data on political opinion *per se* are not routinely collected by either government or statutory organisations. However, attempts have been made to link survey data on political opinion to opinions and experiences of public services, with the most notable recent example being the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey which is conducted annually by Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster. The survey was launched in October 1998²⁷, and records attitudes, values and beliefs in relation to a wide range of social policy issues including:

- Community Relations
- Crime and Fear of Crime
- Culture, Arts and Leisure
- Education
- Europe
- Environment
- Gender and Family Roles
- Genetics Research
- Health Issues
- Housing
- Men's Life and Times
- Pensions and Pensioners
- Political Attitudes
- Public Understanding of Science
- Religious Observance
- Rights of the Child
- Social Inequality
- Social Networks
- Transport
- Women in Politics
- Welfare Reform
- Work Orientations

²⁷ NILT is the successor to the Northern Ireland Social Attitudes Survey so some of the time trends can be placed pre-1998

Since 1998 the survey has included a module on political attitudes and examples some of the data available are given in Appendix D. Although the data collected are clearly self-report and suffer from the drawbacks referred to above, it is anticipated that the NILT may well provide a useful source of data to inform subsequent phases of this research project, particularly in defining equality and diversity indicators in the area of political opinion. Also worth noting is that some Government Departments in Northern Ireland have used first preference voting as a proxy for political opinion.

RACE/ETHNICITY

Ethnic Identity

".... ethnic identity is formed in relation to a number of dimensions: self description, being traditional, participation in the ethnic community, and racialisation. So, rather than being something based solely on country of origin, as would be suggested by definitions of ethnicity used in earlier studies, ethnic identity can be seen to be influenced by the wider social structure. Any measure of ethnicity needs to allow for this. These analyses suggest that the relationship between ethnicity and health is also mediated by structural factors, explored here in terms of socio-economic position, and racial harassment and discrimination." (Nazroo and Karlsen, 2001)

Whilst traditional measures of ethnic group allow us to recognise the existence of ethnic inequalities, in order to investigate fully the relationships between ethnicity and various measures of opportunity or of outcome, a more sophisticated assessment of ethnicity is required, which can both adequately account for the different forms of social disadvantage experienced by ethnic minority groups and the various ways in which racism itself can impact on the opportunities or outcomes considered. Racism and its accompanying social disadvantage are important aspects of the lives of people from ethnic minority groups, and this must be incorporated into strategies to address ethnic inequalities.

A more helpful approach may be to include any minority group within a nation state defined by language, nationality or origin. In any particular situation it should be possible to reach a much more precise definition agreed between all parties to the study. For example, in a study of the levels of drinking amongst the Irish in England and Wales, Harrison et al (1998) found it was crucial to distinguish between groups defined not only on their place of birth but also on where they were currently living, and on their parents' place of birth.

Ethnic group membership is also often closely associated with poverty and with several of the other nine inequality dimensions. One classic example was the use of an ethnic group breakdown by McClintock in the presentation of offender statistics on violent crime in England in the middle 1960s just before the passage of the Race Relations Act. This showed considerably higher rates of offending amongst black populations; later analysis showed that the black population at the time was much younger than the white population and that, adjusted for age (one of the nine equality dimensions), there was very little difference between the two groups.

Race

A Home Office document, 'Race Equality in Public Services' (2000) posits that race equality is difficult to measure in a quantifiable way, suggesting that it is in part about people's perceptions of whether they are treated equally but that it is also about hard facts: How do ethnic minorities compare with the majority in terms of, for example, their health, housing, employment prospects and other key aspects of life? It goes on to state that a 'basket of indicators' approach is well suited as the Government's key overall measure on race equality. Such a 'basket of indicators' on racial equality should include:

- High level attitudinal data illustrating comparative perceptions of public services between the white majority and ethnic minority communities;
- Harder and more specific data on a range of key policy areas across Government which directly impact and/or are of particular interest to ethnic minority communities (for example, health, housing etc.); and
- Data about what the Government itself is doing to improve race equality within the Civil Service, its own service delivery arm.

Subsequent Home Office documents on 'Race Equality in Public Services' dated November 2001 and November 2002 report on progress against the 'basket of indicators'.

Other considerations include the following:

- Although there are some striking health and mortality associations with ethnic group, the interpretation of these is difficult and may be partially owing to the influence of other factors;
- The recording of ethnicity has always been problematic in routine data collection, with different definitions of ethnicity being given in each of the 1981, 1991 and 2001 Censuses;
- Some groups prone to various social problems may not be recorded as an ethnic minority at all, and hence be impossible to target that way (e.g. the Irish in Britain).

Although in some cases ethnic association may be a useful indicator for measuring potential inequalities, the use of this measure should be carefully applied to specific situations where it is relevant and where possible combined with other socio-economic and demographic measures.

Bowes, quoted in a Scottish Executive report (2001), contends that in relation to minority ethnic issues 'mainstreaming equality' as a principle needs good supporting data and should: inform policy and practice at all levels; be accessible; reliable; and, be clear for a range of

users (researchers, officials and community groups). Bowes also argues that such data need to ‘interrogated’ i.e. available for people who need to ask further questions. The following points are made by Bowes in her submission to the Scottish Executive report:

- more routine, standardised collection of data on ethnic minorities as part of existing data sets;
- boosted samples of ethnic minorities where this is relevant and feasible;
- specialist survey work on ethnic minorities in Scotland;
- data analysis which learns from the wider research record; and
- investment in research and research tools.

The report to the Scottish Executive also summarised the outcomes from Conference workshops, the key theme of which related to how equality, and progress towards equality, should be measured. The key outcomes from the two workshops focused on minority ethnic issues are summarised in Appendix B.

AGE

It is likely that in Northern Ireland all data collection systems, at the individual or household level, will routinely collect information on age. From the perspective of developing equality and diversity indicators it is anticipated that age-related data, in comparison with the other equality categories, will be most freely available. Nevertheless, the literature has highlighted some concerns around the use of age-related statistics to inform the debate on equality and diversity.

Data Sources

Examples of age-related data in the education sector on the NISRA equality website include:

- Attendances at an integrated school
- Children in funded pre-school education by centre type and management type
- Children in funded pre-school education by centre type and sex
- Children in funded pre-school education whose parents were in receipt of Income Support or Income based Jobseekers Allowance
- Enrolment on Higher Education Courses by Level, Mode of Attendance, Age and Gender
- Enrolments by Age Group, Mode of Attendance and Gender
- Highest educational qualification
- Highest Educational Qualification by Age
- Highest educational qualification of Life and Times Survey respondent
- Highest qualification of School Leavers by sex
- Highest qualification of School Leavers by sex and school type
- How old were you when you completed your continuous full-time education?
- In which of these ways do you think Protestants are treated better?
- Mainstream school enrolments by Age

Problems with Analysis

Particular problems arise in interpreting age gradients because some apparent associations may be due to either:

- period effects (what happened during a particular year or decade);
- cohort effects (the experience of that group born during a particular year or group of years); or
- the process of ageing itself.

Even if the association with ageing is clear, the effects may be attributable to social as well as physiological aspects of growing older.

Examination of data in respect of victimisation raises another problem about the use of self-report data.

On the one hand, younger people are more likely to report being victimised than older: in England and Wales, 6.9% of young women and 15.1% of young men reported being victims of violence in the 2002/03 British Crime Survey (Simmons and , 2004) compared to 4.1% of all adults. In contrast, for women and men aged 45-64 the risks were only 2.7% and 2.0% respectively and were further reduced for those aged 75 and over to 0.4% and 0.6% respectively. But worry about personal safety is the other way around: 10% of men and 33% of women 60 and above report feeling very unsafe walking alone in area after dark compared to 5% and 21% of 16-29 year olds (Simmons and, 2004).

Also the long term effects of previous experiences are not being monitored. For example, a special analysis of 2,000 personal robbery cases from nine police Basic Command Units in England and Wales (Smith 2003) showed that one in five (22%) of personal robberies involved victims aged between 11 and 15 years with a similar proportion (23%) aged 16-20 years. Victims over the age of 60 accounted for just over 5% of all victims. It is possible that the current generation of youth will have more carry over into adulthood because of a much higher risk of being victimised.

MARITAL STATUS

Single people tend to have shorter lives²⁸ (Lillard & Waite, 1995); although it is also worth mentioning that widowed spouses also tend to die soon after the first. Single people are also much more likely than married ones to suffer from mental illness.

In relation to marital status the UK-based organisation Gingerbread has been at the forefront of campaigning on issues associated with lone parents. In a response to the government initiative 'Supporting Families', Gingerbread responded by stating that they welcomed the opportunity for consultation and that in recent years lone parent families have often been the target of

'ill informed, prejudiced comments. The impact of these 'moral panics' on the self confidence of both lone parents and their children cannot be overestimated. The perception that prejudice exists against you, even though your circumstances are frequently not of your own choice, that your efforts in bringing up your children under difficult circumstances and your contribution to society, as a parent as well as through paid and voluntary work is not appreciated, are important elements in social exclusion. This leads to great resentment and a strong sense of injustice'.

In relation to housing, Ian Roberts of the Child Health Institute has stated that *"Lone parents are also particularly disadvantaged in their housing situation. Low incomes and a tendency to view lone parents as less deserving tenants has resulted in their concentration into the most dilapidated housing on the most undesirable urban housing estates. The housing situation of never married lone mothers is particularly precarious: many share accommodation with friends or relatives with frequent moves. Again this is bad news for child health - because the type and quality of housing are important determinants of child health and is strongly linked to the risk of childhood injury."*

The literature on equality and marital status in Northern Ireland appears to be scant. Nonetheless some of the government departments, most notably the DHSSPS, has attempted to draw together some data on the issue of marital status. A review by Bunting (2002) on behalf of the DHSSPS identified a number of issues/data sources (Appendix C).

The DHSSPS have also published an information guide for equality impact assessments with data sources on marital status published in a separated report. As with religion, the data sources which record marital status include the Population Census, the Patient Administration System, and surveys such as the Continuous Household Survey and the periodic Health and

²⁸ Clearly some doubt here about cause and effect.

Social Wellbeing Survey. NISRA have also published a range of tabular data on marital status and equality, and some examples are presented below:

- Unemployed Job Seekers Allowance claimants by gender, marital status and benefit entitlement
- Economic Activity of Working Age Couples, NI and UK
- Economically Active by Gender and Marital Status
- Marital Status of Self-Employed and Employees
- Work Related Life Events by Marital Status.

This is an equality category where there are particular difficulties in interpreting any differences as evidence of unfairness.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Examples of disadvantage experienced by non-heterosexuals include:

Equality before the Law

Where their orientation is known (or suspected), homosexuals (especially male) tend to be discriminated against. (Saunders et al., 2001). There are clear examples of literature on this in institutional settings (army, prisons). Within those settings such instances of discrimination could be monitored

Other Quality of Life Issues

The obvious dimensions along which individuals are disadvantaged are in relation to marriage and children. This could be monitored quite easily in terms of requests and refusals for adoption. Other quality of life issues include pensions, financial issues, medical consent etc.

The literature on monitoring inequality by sexual orientation is quite limited, both in Northern Ireland and beyond. A review, again by Breitenbach (2004), commissioned by OFMDFM notes that there are difficulties in using a single definition to describe those with sexual orientations or proclivities other than heterosexual. She uses the term 'LGBT' (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) to describe the range of such diverse groups. A number of explanations are offered by Breitenbach as to why information on sexual orientation is limited in Northern Ireland: a lack of political commitment to tackling discrimination; a politically hostile climate to LGBT groups; limited resourcing of research; and insensitive research methodologies.

In seeking to develop equality and diversity indicators in this area, a key requirement will be some form of evidence base, either quantitative or qualitative. However, as with the experience in Great Britain, within Northern Ireland there is a lack of reliable quantitative data. Breitenbach cites the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILTS, 1999), which estimates that 1% of the Northern Ireland adult population define themselves as either gay or lesbian. This figure of 1% is significantly at odds with the Kinsey figure of 10% (itself disputed) quoted by 'Diversity Matters'²⁹.

While there exists some limited information on attitudes to sexual orientation issues, the early indications from various government departments would suggest that generally there is limited information available on sexual orientation. Indeed the DHSSPS have concluded (200?) that information on a number of equality categories, including sexual orientation, 'tended not to feature, and left extensive gaps across the vast majority of systems that we

²⁹ Quoted in 'Who Lives In A Place Like This?' Diversity Matters, Disability Action, Belfast. April 2003.

examined'. Indeed, DHSSPS concluded that age and sex were the only two categories where good quality information existed across their systems. A lack of data on sexual orientation is also highlighted in another DHSSPS publication³⁰, which concludes that sexual orientation is the only category 'where no denominator data are available'.

Breitenbach highlights the difficulties in collecting personal information in this field. Indeed OFMDFM have advised 'that public authorities must not disclose or pry into matters which are confidential to an individual'. However, the Department of Employment and Learning found in a commissioned survey that 60% of the adult population in N Ireland would provide information on sexual orientation, if asked.

Research on Sexual Orientation in Great Britain

McManus (2003), in a report commissioned by the Scottish Executive, addresses a number of definitional and methodological concerns with respect to research on sexual orientation.

Definitions

According to McManus the term 'sexual orientation' is deterministic and does not allow for change over time, whereas terms such as 'sexual preference' have been criticised on the basis that they 'imply conscious or deliberate choice, which is often not consistent with how people experience their sexuality'. The key issue, according to McManus, is that depending on definitions used, individual and groups may be excluded from the research.

Breitenbach makes the point that in conventional research the coding of sex is categorised as either 'male' or 'female', and that this may exclude people who are 'intersex' (born with elements of both female and male sexual organs and biology), transgendered (people engaged in gender reassignment), or transsexuals (people who have undergone sex change surgery or other forms of treatment). However, according to Breitenbach, the purpose and rationale for the research will partly determine the definitions and categories used.

There are also a range of other 'terms' used in relation to sexual orientation which Breitenbach argues are ambiguous, such as the notion of a 'gay community' which imply homogeneity rather than heterogeneity and diversity. Similarly, the terms 'family' and 'couple', according to Breitenbach, imply heterosexual nuclear family formations, with the implication of sameness in attributes and characteristics. The point being that any focus on sexual orientation needs to be cognisant of issues around definition, particularly in the context of developing equality and diversity indicators which seek to measure a change over time.

³⁰ Paper on data needs relating to inequalities and to Targeting Social Needs, DHSSPS.

Methodology

McManus contends that much of the research to date on the LGBT population does not include any comparisons with the overall population or with a heterosexual or control group. This, according to McManus, is vitally important in respect of identifying and explaining differences, in particular where the aim of the research is to analyse and document disadvantage and discrimination.

Issues associated with the large-scale collection of data by government departments are also highlighted by Breitenbach, particularly where such information is used to inform policy development or resource allocations. For example, the under representation of the LGBT populations may under estimate the need of these groups, and questions in such surveys can be seen as being intrusive.

Consulting With Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual Groups

As noted early in this review, consultation with key stakeholders is seen as a key element of any process to develop equality and diversity indicators, regardless of the subject area. McManus offers some insights into the process of consulting with LGBT groups in Scotland and concludes that although there is a greater recognition of the importance of such consultation, there are significant problems with research fatigue, or of bias associated with people, or groups, who are easier to access or more motivated to participate. According to McManus, a lack of feedback and action following the research is actively discouraging the participation of many LGBT groups in research. This point has also been raised by CoSo in Northern Ireland, who see little in point in participating because they do not see any results emerging from the research or consultation process.

MEN AND WOMEN

International Examples

Republic of Ireland

In a report entitled 'The Development of Mechanisms to Monitor Progress in Achieving Gender Equality in Ireland', commissioned by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Galligan (2000) charts the position in relation to gender equality and gender mainstreaming in Ireland and examines the statistical pre-requisites for effective gender mainstreaming. In presenting a range of gender equality indicators to monitor progress in implementing the Platform for Action, it suggests a revised constitutional framework to accommodate ongoing progress in the advancement of women's human rights.

Galligan contends that there are a number of gaps in data which are required to give a more accurate overview of the situation of men and women in Irish society. These are summarised below:

- measurement of women's and men's work in the informal and unpaid sectors of the economy;
- measurement of women's and men's participation in the informal sector
- the compilation of 'satellite' national accounts to quantify the unremunerated work of women and men in the home, informal and voluntary sectors;
- improving measurements of women's unemployment;
- financial outcomes for women and men (e.g. earnings, pensions etc);
- percentage of women and men harmonising work and care responsibilities;
- more detailed analysis of those involved in 'home duties';
- accurate data on rural women;
- comprehensive information on poverty among men and women;
- information on the distribution of assets and income within the family;
- improving data on household characteristics and gender roles in the household;
- information about women's and men's access to credit facilities;
- the percentage of wealth owned and controlled by women and men;
- improved statistics on the incidence of violence against women;
- specific statistics on sub-groupings of women e.g. disabled, Traveller etc.
- comprehensive data on women's access to healthcare;
- data on women's presence in situation of power and influence in social and economic life;
- data on women and men in the media;

- data on women's and men's participation in cultural and recreational activities; and,
- data on girls and boys across all areas of the Platform for Action.

Australia - New South Wales Scorecard

The Department of Women in New South Wales has attempted to develop a gender equity scorecard to raise awareness of gender equality and monitor progress. The scorecard consists of basic measures across areas such as: income; gender; violence; work; health; decision-making; education and training; and housing. The intention was to develop a range of indicators appropriate to each of these areas, with the potential to compare these data with Australian and international data.

Canadian Economic Gender Equality Indicators

In Canada the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women (1997) produced a set of Economic Gender Equality Indicators, providing a set of benchmarks to measure the relative status of women and men, and to monitor change over time. As reported in Breitenbach and Galligan, the framework for the development of the indicators was designed to reflect the following and conduct analyses:

- in key areas that affect women's economic autonomy including income and earnings, paid and unpaid work and education and training;
- in time series to show trends;
- from existing data;
- for Canada and the provinces and territories;
- to reflect the situation of women with different age, education, occupation and employment characteristics.

The outcome of this process was to produce a series of composite social indicators, based on many different variables, which could be used and understood in the same way as, for example, GDP. These social indicators were intended to provide an overview at the aggregate level rather than to reflect the diversity experienced between different subgroups of women. The indices produced are: total income index; after-tax income index; total workload index; paid work index; unpaid work index; University degrees granted; job-related training index; and, occupational returns on education.

These indices then use ratios of women to men, which provides a measurement of the position of women relative to men. According to Breitenbach and Galligan, these indicators are more gender sensitive, in that they successfully integrate a series of interrelated factors affecting the

economic position of men and women, for example, by acknowledging women's actual workloads by recognising both paid and unpaid work. Some of the indicators also factor in the presence of children, with the result that differences among women with children, compared with those without, can be greater than differences between men and women. The Canadian report acknowledges that the task of devising these indices was technically challenging, and notes that it was not always possible to produce measures for areas they wished to include. For example, an attempt was made to construct an index of economic decision-making which did not succeed due to lack of adequate and appropriate data to provide a good measure.

Institute of Women's Policy Research, USA

Since 2000, The Institute of Women's Policy Research³¹ has produced trend data on the status of women in the US, and presents this data in terms of 'best' and 'worst' States for women to live in. The research has involved producing 30 component indicators, as well as five composite indices that rank states in the following domains:

Political Participation

- voter registration;
- voter turnout;
- representation in elected office
- women's institutional resources – includes several types of state organisations that serve women e.g. women's state agenda projects, caucuses formed by female members of the state legislature

Employment and Earnings

- women's earnings;
- the wage gap;
- women's representation in managerial and professional jobs;
- women's participation in the labour force

Economic Autonomy

- health assurance;
- college education;
- business ownership;
- poverty rates

³¹ Information about composition of the indicators is contained in Appendix II, on Methodology, Terms and Sources for the Composite Indices and Grades, of the Report on Best and Worst States. Institute for Women's Policy Research. www.iwpr.org

Reproductive Rights

- access to abortion services;
- whether governor or state legislature is pro-choice;
- whether state laws requires health insurers to cover contraceptive services and fertility treatment;
- whether second parent adoption is legal for gay / lesbian couples;
- whether there is mandatory sex education for children in public schools.

Health And Well-Being Index

- mortality from heart disease;
- mortality from lung cancer;
- mortality from breast cancer;
- percentage of women ever told they had diabetes;
- incidence of chlamydia;
- incidence of AIDS;
- poor mental health;
- mortality from suicide;
- mean days of activity limitations.

Sweden

Since 1992 there has been an annual publication: Men and Women in Sweden, which summarises information by sex in areas such as: health, crime, work, income, pay, power, education, smoking etc, together with international comparisons.

Other Examples

There are major differences between the sexes in respect of a vast range of social indicators.

A few examples are:

Males are killed off more *in utero* and have higher infant, child and adolescent mortality (at least in 'developed' countries), partly due to a higher incidence of genetic conditions among males (Fujita et al, 1994). On the other hand girls are more likely than boys to be victims of infanticide, and most recently foeticide, in some societies (Bhattacharya 2006).

Although they usually report poorer health, women's life expectancy is considerably greater than that of men.

Of all violent incidents reported to the British Crime Survey 2003/03, 62% were against men and 32% against women; it is only for domestic violence where the percentages are reversed with 27% against men and 73% against women³². (see also Chivite-Matthews and Maggs, 2002).

Despite these relative risks, women are more than twice as likely to report feeling worried about violent victimisation (19% vs 9% for mugging, 22% vs 7% for physical attack and 23% vs 5% for rape). Even for property victimisation, women are more likely to report feeling worried (17% vs 12% for robbery, 17% vs 15% for theft from a car). There are also smaller differences in the perceptions of the risk of being a victim next year.

Both locally and internationally, more work has been undertaken to document and monitor inequalities between men and women than for any other equality category. One instance is from Great Britain where Stark (1996) disaggregated labour market statistics by gender. For example, unemployment statistics had been presented by the following categories: *Total; of which women; of which younger people; of which older people; of which handicapped; of which immigrants*. According to Bilton, this presented all but middle-aged, non-handicapped, non-immigrant men as 'special' or 'problem groups'. The statistics have since been rearranged into three columns: *total, men, and women*. These data are then disaggregated by other equality dimensions such as race/ethnicity, age and disability.

In 2002, the Women and Equality Unit (WEU) in the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) published a report on 'Key Indicators of Women's Position in Britain'. The report presents tabulated data across a range of policy areas, rather than focusing on 'key' indicators. Breitenbach and Galligan are critical of some aspects of the WEU approach: *'While the authors link various sets of indicators to key government objectives and WEU priorities, on the whole there is not a close tie in with these, and the indicators do not serve in any sense as a measure of the effectiveness of policies (nor were they intended to do)'*.

The same authors acknowledge that the report does highlight gaps in data and problems with disaggregation of data into further sub-sets, especially in relation to ethnicity. An additional concern of the authors is that these data are more of a compendium of statistics used to profile women's position, rather than a comment on gender inequalities. Indeed they argue that these data *'do not lend themselves easily to a clear presentation of key differences between men and women that may be regarded as being the most significant areas in which gender inequalities need to be addressed'*. Breitenbach and Galligan have also produced a discussion document (2004) on developing a series of gender equality indicators for Northern Ireland. The authors note that *'the availability of data relevant to the creation of gender equality indicators covering the groups identified in the Northern*

³² It is of course likely that men are also over-represented among the perpetrators of violence

Ireland Act 1988 is variable', although they acknowledge that data are available in the following sectors:

- Employment
- Earnings and income
- Health
- Crime and criminal justice
- Incidents of domestic violence
- Political representation and public appointments
- Community attitudes and other attitudinal data.

In addition there are some data available on childcare, work-life balance issues and childcare, but according to the authors, these are areas that need further development. Regarding marital status and people with and without dependants, they conclude that this information is not typically analysed with the purpose of examining differences between these groups overall or gender differences specifically.

In seeking to describe the situation and experience of women, Breitenbach and Galligan present data on the following: attitudes; education and training; employment; earnings; income; childcare; other forms of caring; health; transport; violence and crime; and decision making.

Breitenbach and Galligan (2004) make a series of recommendations regarding key equality indicators in specific areas. These are summarised in Appendix A. The authors contend that the real test of such indicators' utility and comprehensiveness will be whether they "provide signals for policy that move institutions and people to behave in ways that help to resolve some of the problems".

However the proposed indicators are at a very high level (eg in health they consist of life expectancy, mortality, morbidity, mental health, and suicide, limiting long term illness, smoking, drinking, physical activity, usage of services, and the makeup of the health workforce). Although there would be value in compiling these routinely, not least to enable trends over time to be observed, like sets of indicators proposed by other authors they are virtually all outcome based and do not go directly to equality of opportunity or process.

DISABILITY³³

With regard to disability issues, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland undertakes the same functions as the Disability Rights Commission in Great Britain which was established in 1999. Those are:

- (a) To work towards the elimination of discrimination against disabled persons;
- (b) To promote the equalisation of opportunities for disabled persons;
- (c) To take such steps as it considers appropriate with a view to encouraging good practice in the treatment of disabled persons; and
- (d) To keep under review the working of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Disability is a deceptively difficult concept to define. In recent years understanding has increased greatly about the usefulness or otherwise of categorising people as ‘disabled’ and of the implications that flow from this. A common conclusion is that there is no one, comprehensive and right definition. Rather, different definitions are needed for different purposes. Or put another way, certain individuals may count as being disabled in one context but not in another. People with disabilities are a significant minority within society but there is ample evidence of their marginalisation within society. Moreover the numbers of people with disabilities is likely to increase in future years, primarily because of longer life expectancy and also as a result of medical advances.

Modern policy-making with respect to people with disabilities has two main aims. First, to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the same range of opportunities as their age peers and that they are not discriminated against. Second, to provide people with disabilities the additional services and supports they require to assist them to achieve a better quality of life and social inclusion.

However, these outcomes are not easy to achieve largely because of the technical issues surrounding the definition of disability and methods of gathering information. Existing information sources have not developed sufficiently to provide adequate data that identifies the needs of people with disabilities, with respect to an ordinary lifestyle and access to the same opportunities as their age peers.

The Secta MSA Ferndale report (Spollen et al, 2004) has therefore recommended that proposals should be developed for a disability-specific survey in Northern Ireland to be

³³ Most of the material in this section has been taken from the report of a recent NISRA-commissioned Review of Disability Information by Secta MSA Ferndale.

conducted within the next two years and to undertake an option appraisal of alternative approaches.

United Nations

The UN Statistics Division maintains a database on prevalence of disability in a large number of countries:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/disability/alldata.htm>

United States

The US Census Bureau Data on Disability - data on characteristics of people with disabilities by state, metropolitan area, and county and on employment and disability. Data is collected from the 1990 Census, the Survey of Income and Program Participation, and the March Current Population Survey. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disability.html>

NCHS Statistics - statistics about the prevalence of various disabilities.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/disable.htm>

National Health Interview Survey on Disability - a series of questionnaires designed to provide a useful set of measures while maintaining a balance between the social, administrative, and medical considerations involved in disability measurement.

http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/nhis_dis/nhis_dis.htm

Sociometrics Data Archive on Disability in the U.S. - data sets on the prevalence, incidence, correlates, and consequences of disability in the United States.

http://www.socio.com/data_arc/radius_0.htm

National Study on Women with Physical Disabilities - the study examined a broad range of issues facing women with physical disabilities.

http://www.bcm.tmc.edu/crowd/national_study/national_study.htm

Australia

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) carries out a survey of disability every 5 years. Prior to each disability survey the ABS conducts widespread consultation with its users of statistics. With information needing to be altered over time, in line with government policy

and changed social attitudes, new questions were introduced in later surveys to better identify disability.

DEPENDANTS

In relation to equality and diversity data on dependants, the NISRA equality website again has published some information, with examples drawn from sources such as the Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey (2001). Examples of population data on dependants are presented below:

- Average Number of Children in Families with Dependent Children
- Can one parent bring up a child as well as two parents together?
- Carers by Dependent Children
- Carers by Marital Status
- Carers by Marital Status
- Carers by Religion
- Carers by Religion
- Carers by Sex and Age
- Dependant Children by Religion
- Do you have any children aged 16 or under (either living or not living with you)?
- Do you have children 16 or under (living or not living with you)
- Do you provide regular service or help for someone not living with you
- Do you provide regular service or help for someone not living with you?
- Families with Dependant Children by Marital Status
- Family Farms, Dependent Households and Household Members
- Farmers by Dependants Hours Spent Caring by Age
- Hours Spent Caring by Dependent Children
- Hours Spent Caring by Marital Status
- Hours Spent Caring by Religion
- Number of Households by Type, in NI and UK
- Percentage of Households by Type
- Type of Household and Family.

In a more detailed analysis of the Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey, Evason (2004) estimates that 16% of the Northern Ireland adult population are informal carers, and that the vast majority of informal carers (91%) are caring for a family member. Evason also reports that the majority (61%) of informal carers have health problems and that the majority of informal carers are women (64%).

This equality category is similar to most of the others in that it would be relatively straightforward to compile a set of data which would demonstrate marked and persistent

differences in the circumstances of those with and without dependants. However it would be very difficult to use such data to make reliable inferences about the existence or extent of inequality of opportunity or process without access to more sophisticated data and/or the use of statistical modelling techniques.

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APPENDIX A

GENDER INDICATORS SUGGESTED BY BREITENBACH AND GALLIGAN

Attitudes

- working mothers;
- breadwinner / gender roles at work / within household;
- sharing childcare;
- sharing domestic labour;
- marriage / cohabitation.

Education and Training

- qualifications obtained at secondary school;
- degrees and class of degree;
- subject choice at secondary school;
- subject choice in further and higher education;
- composition of educational workforce at all levels.

Employment

- economic activity rates;
- distribution of working hours (full-time/part-time);
- average working hours, overtime etc;
- unemployment rates (ILO);
- industrial distribution of employees by gender;
- occupational distribution of employees by gender;
- relationship of economic activity to age of dependent children;
- relationship of working hours to age of dependent children.

Earnings

- pay gap – full-time hourly;
- full-time weekly;
- full-time and part-time hourly;
- graduate pay gap;
- low pay;
- gender differences in pay rates across major sectors.

Income

- Individual incomes with breakdowns of different sources of income;

Childcare

- childcare places and different types of provision;
- patterns of demand for and usage of childcare;
- time spent on childcare by men and women;
- estimated economic value of unpaid childcare.

Other Forms of Caring

- patterns of informal caring;
- time spent in informal caring by men and women;
- estimated economic value of these forms of unpaid caring.

Health

- life expectancy;
- mortality;
- morbidity;
- mental health and suicide;
- limiting long term illness;
- smoking;
- drinking;
- physical activity;
- usage of services.

Transport

- licence holders;
- mode of transport used;
- numbers of journeys;
- distances travelled;
- purpose of journey.

Violence and Crime

- incidence of domestic violence;
- incidence of rape, and other sexual offences, and conviction rates;
- fear of crime

Decision Making

- MPS by male / female;
- MEPs by male / female;
- MLAs by male / female;
- Councillors by male / female;
- Public appointments by male / female;
- Senior positions in public sector by male / female.

APPENDIX B

FINDINGS FROM SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS ON MINORITY ETHNIC ISSUES

WORKSHOP 1

Identifying Gaps

- data at a neighbourhood level need to be developed;
- minority groups are underrepresented in sample sizes;
- areas where discrepancies in equality statistics include: social care; housing; employment; education; crime and justice; court proceedings; domestic abuse; transport; carers of older people; provision of services to young people and lifestyles. there is a need for disaggregated data for ethnic minorities in all these areas;
- difficulties in accessing the data that are often required to make a strong case for a particular project (raised by workshop participants from voluntary organisations). Client based data maintained by DSS, education authorities, health authorities and employment agencies were not readily accessible;
- health statistics should include information on ethnicity as well as the socio-economic class of clients. A number of health issues might correlate better with poverty rather than ethnicity, and it was important that statistics be disaggregated by ethnicity and socio-economic status.

Issues relating to the Census

- Categories should allow for self-identification;
- Traveller's category has been omitted;
- There was a concern that African-Caribbean minorities were primarily identified by colour and not by geographical area of origin. Use of White and Non-white categories would be useful in identifying cases related to racism. A two-tier classification – colour followed by ethnic origin for both White and Non-white categories would provide greater flexibility and detail.

Explaining the Gaps

- Difficulties in engaging ethnic minorities in providing information;
- Issues of confidentiality was cited as one of the main reasons for these difficulties;
- Fear that detailed personal information might lead to possible misuse;
- Language is frequently a barrier. Some may need personal help in filling forms;
- Forms translated in different languages could be a possible solution, though translated material often had limited utility;
- Data collection by different bodies inconsistent due to resource restrictions and emphasis on other priorities;
- Great variation between local authorities as to methodologies employed and approaches to data collection. This results in inconsistencies and lack of information on minority ethnic households.

Addressing the Gaps

- Equality data collection is not seen as a necessary requirement by many organisations. A change in data collection practices can only be brought about by making it mandatory to collect minority ethnic data;
- There is a need to bring about a change in attitudes and culture of organisations reinforced by appropriate policies;

- Benefits of data collection, such as for long term planning, should be clearly spelt out. This will ensure that the data collected is meaningful;
- 1991 Census data now out of date and always had its limitations. Scottish Executive is now building its information about ethnic minorities through discussions and scoping work in order to improve information ;
- Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics is being taken forward by The Scottish Executive in order to produce and disseminate data at local level with an emphasis on social justice;
- Local authorities could help in promoting accessibility by developing a mechanism where they can make data available through administrative records while maintaining confidentiality;
- Lessons could be learnt from surveys using harmonised questions to facilitate comparability of results;
- Data collection should demonstrate its usefulness, should be policy led and cater to minority ethnic needs.

Equality Indicators

- Relative value of process and outcome indicators is open to discussion;
- Equality indicators require constant assessment, monitoring and adjustments with changing needs of society.

WORKSHOP 2

Standardisation

- Data quality and generalisability would be improved by a more systematic standardisation of terminology, questions and categories. It was suggested that the Census 2001 could provide a blueprint for the crucial categories of ethnicity and religion, although it was noted that even these were not without dispute.
- A strong argument was made for taking a step back and agreeing a conceptual framework for notions of "race" and "ethnicity" prior to establishing acceptable research tools. Once agreement on the meaning of these concepts is reached, definitions and specific research questions will be easier to frame. For example, differentiating between the notions of quality and "equity" is helpful in emphasising the need to be **fair** rather than the need to be **equal**. The piecemeal approach to defining categories was a product of non-theorised concepts, exacerbated by growing categorisation problems such as mixed race households.
- The identified gap was broadened to include the lack of standardisation of data collection **protocol**. If this is not addressed, data collection attempts could be jeopardised (as happened with school data);
- The difficulties of achieving acceptable categories and definitions when starting from a racist standpoint were expressed.

Bridging the gaps

- MECs should be involved early on in the planning process for research, including any questionnaire design. A culture whereby the involvement of MECs in the planning and collecting of data on ethnicity is routine must be encouraged;
- MECs need to be able to categorise themselves, although the trade-off could be a lack of comparability with earlier data if categories changed;
- Definitional problems could be reduced by achieving greater clarity in reasons given for the data collection and its proposed use;

- More thought to wider issues of standardisation of data collection protocol was suggested. This may require greater resourcing of training of data collectors as well as identification of core support;
- Central roles in promoting standardisation should be played by the Scottish Executive and COSLA.

Holistic Approach

- The current narrow focus on race issues should be broadened to encompass wider life experiences which may be shared with majority ethnic populations;
- Focusing on hard, quantitative data around race curtailed a more balanced investigation of MEC life circumstances and experiences.

Bridging the gaps

- It was seen as important not to view quantitative and qualitative data as "either/or" but to deploy both approaches in conjunction as a way of looking at issues from different angles and in totality.

Quantitative information

- Although the group placed an emphasis on qualitative approaches, a clear need did exist for quantitative material. For example, hard data was needed to challenge existing assumptions, to assist in target setting and benchmarking and for providing a rationale for decisions on targeting resources and services.

Bridging the gaps

- The new survey planned by the Scottish Executive was an attempt to fill the gap for current robust, hard data;
- The group debated the merits and drawback of mainstreaming ethnicity disaggregation into surveys or commissioning special Minority Ethnic boosts of existing surveys such as the Health Survey. The problem of over-researching small communities arising from repeated boosted samples was raised and the advantages of inter-sectoral analysis provided by general purpose surveys discussed;
- The tagging on of a Minority Ethnic dimension to existing dedicated surveys also raised the problem of interpretation of findings. Outcomes quantified by such surveys may mask cultural differences in process. Different contexts for interpretation could produce different results;
- It was agreed that the approach taken by the Gender Audit had produced useful generalisable lessons on the interpretation and extraction of meaning of quality data.

Information strategy

- It was agreed that the current approach in Scotland to establishing data on ethnicity was not systematic, resulting in discussions such as whether to boost surveys or not.

Bridging the gaps

- A strategic approach was required to set out a framework for establishing new ethnicity data.

Maximising under-used data

- A gap was identified in the use of existing data, such as those now collected in Social Inclusion Partnerships.

Bridging the gaps

- The identification and exploration of underused data was recommended.

Exploring the data needs of Minority Ethnic Communities

- The need to look beyond the traditional data needs of representative organisations was highlighted. Those designing research need to explore the data needs of Minority Ethnic communities.

Bridging the gaps

- MECs need to be made more aware of funding issues. Further work on the development of MECs was required. The data requirements of social auditing were identified as important.

Policy Evaluation Data

- Robust data, required for the evaluation of specific policies, were lacking. New policies, such as contained in the Race Relations Act amendments, would require evaluation.

Bridging the gaps

- Greater attention and priority should be given to focused benchmarking, process, output and outcome data around specific policies.

Gaps between Data and Policy Making

- More thought was required around using data to inform policy and action.

Bridging the gaps

- A better tie-in of qualitative data with quantitative material would provide a greater understanding of issues and a more informed steer to policy makers.

Specific Data Gaps

- Specific gaps in data were prioritised for bridging. These included labour market/employment information, MEC businesses and economies (parallel economies?) and post-school/mid-life destinations.

Bridging the gaps

- The importance of longitudinal data for exploring transitional data was emphasised.

APPENDIX C

ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY BUNTING (2001) IN LITERATURE REVIEW FOR DHSSPS

Key Issues	References
Research indicates that lone fathers may not know how to contact social services.	Spence, 1995
Lone fathers were found to have little contact with one-parent family organisations.	Spence, 1995
There was a reported lack of involvement between lone fathers and health visitors.	Spence, 1995
Young single fathers face barriers to participating in their children's upbringing.	JRF Findings: Social Policy Research, 137, Dec. 1997
Young single fathers felt that they were made to feel unimportant both during the pregnancy and after the birth.	JRF Findings: Social Policy Research, 137, Dec. 1997
Young single fathers felt that little effort was being made to encourage them to develop and maintain involvement with their child	JRF Findings: Social Policy Research, 137, Dec. 1997
Due to the way in which birth data are collected, young single fathers are an invisible group. Because of this, their needs cannot be incorporated into policy.	JRF Findings: Social Policy Research, 137, Dec. 1997
Many young single fathers felt unable to access support from the few fathers groups which existed. They reported feeling unwelcome at general family support groups and at groups established for young mothers.	JRF Findings: Social Policy Research, 137, Dec. 1997

Gingerbread note that day care is needed for the children of parents who are not working, as well as those who are. Day care provides important benefits for the child and for the mother's psychological well being.	"Supporting Families": A Response from Gingerbread, (not dated) http://www.gingerbread.org.uk/respsf.html
A 'break from parenting' might avert a family crisis according to research carried out by Gingerbread in Northern Ireland.	"Supporting Families"(see above)
Whilst there is a lot of support given to lone parents when their child is a baby, Gingerbread report that there appeared to be a shortage of information when children reached "the terrible two" stage.	"Supporting Families" (see above)
Delegates of lone parents at a Gingerbread Conference stated that there is a need for improved availability and accessibility of welfare services for lone parents, as well as anti-discriminatory services and practice.	"The future of lone parent families": Report of Gingerbread's Conference, March, 2000
According to Gingerbread, there is a lack of local and national data on the needs of black lone parents.	"Lone parent families: routes to social inclusion": Gingerbread, (not dated) http://www.gingerbread.org.uk/lprtsi.html
Gingerbread state that there is insufficient knowledge relating to organisations working with black lone parents and also about the types of services they provide	"Lone parent families: routes to social inclusion": see above)

Rural lone parents face particular difficulties, according to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. These include social isolation and hostile social attitudes. There is also a difficulty due to lack of access to transport.	JRF Social Policy Research, No. 108, December, 1996
In research carried out with lone parents in the Upper Shankill in the early 1990s, it was found that lone parents felt ignorant about issues affecting their health and that information was frequently passed by word of mouth.	Spence, 1995
Lone Parents in Upper Shankill asked for more information about contraception and abortion.	Spence, 1995
Lone Parents in Upper Shankill indicated their need for more health outreach work, as people needed to know about local health resources.	Spence, 1995
Lone parents in Ardoyne and in Glencairn expressed similar concerns to those expressed by lone parents in Upper Shankill. They also expressed difficulties in accessing health services due to lack of transport.	Spence, 1995
Children of divorced couples are not seen as a vulnerable group. The services to these children are limited, fragmented and may vary from area to area.	Spence, 1995
The relationship between the social worker and the client is a key element in determining the level of support required and help gained. Research highlights the need for social workers not to be judgmental about this form of parenting.	Spence, 1995
Research commissioned by the Western HSS Board in 1992, focusing upon pregnant teenagers, found that two thirds of respondents had not used contraceptive services, and one in three stated that they were unaware of the existence of Family Planning Clinics	Spence, 1995
Feelings engendered by stigma can have an adverse effect on help seeking behaviour and in relation to service providers.	Spence, 1995
Gingerbread expressed concern that young lone mothers might be stigmatised if they are targeted in relation to having their child adopted.	"Lone parent families: routes to social inclusion" Gingerbread, date
Research commissioned by the Health Education Authority found that teenagers in the UK often find GPs to be distant and unapproachable. They reported difficulties in obtaining appointments and expressed concern about confidentiality	Kane & Wellings, 1999

APPENDIX D EXAMPLES OF NILTS POLITICAL ATTITUDES QUESTIONS

How much interest do you generally have in what is going on in politics? [1998](#)

Which Northern Ireland political party do you support? [1998](#) [1999](#) [2000](#) [2001](#) [2002](#)

Do you think of yourself as a unionist, a nationalist or neither? [1998](#) [1999](#) [2000](#) [2001](#) [2002](#)

Are you a very strong (unionist/nationalist)? [1998](#)

Which Northern Ireland politicians would you generally trust to act in the best interests of all the people in Northern Ireland? [1998](#)

What is the most important thing for the assembly to bring about? [1998](#)

What is the second most important thing for the assembly to bring about? [1998](#)

What do you think the long-term policy for Northern Ireland should be? [1998](#) [1999](#) [2000](#)
[2001](#) [2002](#)

How would you feel if the majority of people in Northern Ireland ever voted to become part of a united Ireland? [1998](#) [1999](#) [2000](#) [2001](#) [2002](#)

How would you feel if the majority of people in Northern Ireland never voted to become part of a united Ireland? [1998](#) [1999](#) [2000](#) [2001](#) [2002](#)

Do you think it likely that there will be a united Ireland in the next 20 years? [1998](#) [1999](#) [2000](#)
[2001](#) [2002](#)

Does the NHS in Northern Ireland treat Catholic and Protestant patients equally? [1998](#)

Does the NIHE treat Catholics and Protestants equally? [1998](#)

Do the police treat Catholics and Protestants equally? [1998](#)

Do the courts treat Catholics and Protestants accused of non-terrorist offences equally? [1998](#)

Do the courts treat Catholics and Protestants accused of terrorist offences equally? [1998](#)

Do you think the chances of peace in Northern Ireland are better now than five years ago?
[1998](#) [1999](#)

Is it easier now to go into different areas? [1998](#)

Has the Irish government been helpful in the search for peace? [1998](#)

Has the British government been helpful in the search for peace? [1998](#)