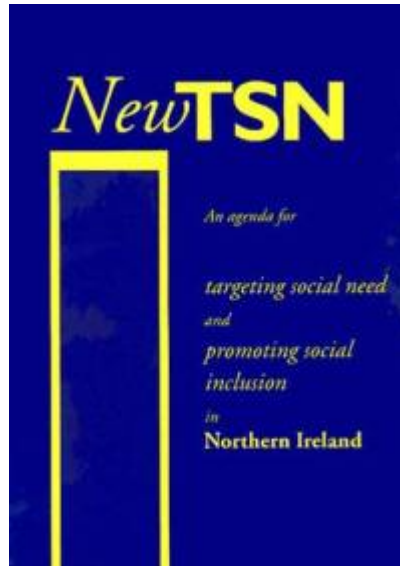


# *New*TSN

**An agenda for targeting social need  
and promoting social inclusion  
in Northern Ireland**



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# New TSN

## Introduction

In March the Government announced a New Targeting Social Need initiative.

**NewTSN is about the way the Government, its Departments and public bodies approach some of the most important problems in society, including some which are special to Northern Ireland.**

The lives of everyone in Northern Ireland are effected by public programmes, such as:

- schools for the children who will be the citizens of tomorrow;
- health care for everyone, particularly those who are ill or have disabilities;
- public housing for those who cannot afford to buy their own homes;
- public transport by bus and train;
- benefits for those in need;
- training to help people find work suited to their abilities;
- encouraging the creation of new jobs, both in companies which already provide employment and in firms which decide to invest in Northern Ireland;
- improving areas and communities, both in cities and in the countryside, where employment is scarce and people are in need.

A great deal is already being done but NewTSN will try to do it more effectively, so that those most in need really benefit. These include:

- individuals, who are unemployed or disadvantaged or who find it difficult to play a full role in society;
- groups, which may suffer particular types of disadvantage, such as Travellers or people with disabilities;
- disadvantaged areas with high levels of unemployment, poverty and poor environmental conditions.

New TSN can make a real difference to these individuals, groups and areas. Many voluntary organisations have tried, over the years, to help them and to represent their interests to the Government. This document is aimed especially at these organisations. Closer liaison between them and the Government will be an important feature of New TSN.

One part of New TSN is Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI). This is about helping people who cannot enjoy the full range of opportunities in life which most people take for granted. This document seeks views from outside Government on how it can best achieve this. It asks a number of detailed questions, and it hopes to receive answers from voluntary organisations and individuals with a particular interest in social inclusion. PSI will be taken forward as a partnership between the Government, other public agencies, the private and voluntary sectors.

All responses to the questions asked in this document will help PSI to work more effectively. This is a completely new way of approaching the most difficult social problems. The Government needs to learn the experiences and views of people and organisations most closely interested if the initiative is to achieve real success.

## **An agenda for targeting social need and promoting social inclusion in Northern Ireland**

The Government is relaunching the Targeting Social Need initiative under the banner of New TSN. New TSN is about identifying people and areas in greatest need in our society and trying to ensure that Government programmes are more effective in helping them.

Social need exists in many parts of the community, and this needs to be tackled. Both Protestants and Catholics are affected. New TSN will play a role in this, but it will not discriminate in favour of one community and against the other. New TSN is designed to help many people in both communities who are disadvantaged. To show that it is fair and that it is benefiting the most deprived people and areas, it will rely heavily on research and the collection of statistics. This will ensure that help will go where it is really needed.

New TSN will therefore seek to tackle disadvantage by directing efforts and resources towards individuals, groups and areas objectively defined as being in greatest need, irrespective of community background. However evidence collected over many years has shown that the Catholic community, on the whole, is more disadvantaged than the Protestant community. This is seen, for example, in the statistics for unemployment, housing conditions, and other important aspects of life. The Government believes that these differences in the life experiences of Catholics and Protestants should be reduced. While not discriminating in favour of one community and against the other, therefore, New TSN should contribute, over time, to the erosion of differentials between the communities.

In March 1998 the Government published a White Paper, "Partnership for Equality". This considered Northern Ireland's fair employment laws and what could be done to reduce unemployment. It also considered what the Government could do, through the broad range of its programmes, to make Northern Ireland a fairer and more equal society. New TSN was one of the approaches set out in the White Paper.

### **It said that New TSN would operate in three linked ways:**

- a special focus on the problems of unemployed people and on increasing their chances of finding a job. This might also involve helping local community efforts to create employment. It will mean working within the educational system to help those at risk of becoming the next generation of unemployed.
- targeting other sorts of social need, which may not be directly related to unemployment. There is inequality in health, housing and education. There are areas, both in cities and in the country, which are clearly disadvantaged and need special help.

- a special initiative called Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) which will seek new and creative ways of helping people who are disadvantaged in several ways, to such an extent that they cannot enjoy the full range of life opportunities which most people take for granted.

The Good Friday Agreement committed the Government and the other participants in the Talks to partnership, equality and mutual respect as the basis of future relationships. New TSN was mentioned in the Agreement as one of a range of measures to achieve equality of opportunity.

As new institutions for governing Northern Ireland are established, New TSN will play an important role in the creation of a fairer, just and prosperous society, in which everyone will have a stake and can make his or her own contribution.

All of the Northern Ireland Departments and many agencies will have a role to play in NewTSN. A steering group of senior civil servants from all parts of the administration, as members of the Social Steering Group chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services, will give oversight and direction to it. A New TSN Unit in Central Secretariat will advise Departments and agencies on how best to implement NewTSN and will set overall objectives. On the devolution of power, of course, Ministers in the Executive Committee may wish to change these arrangements to reflect the departmental structure they adopt; the arrangements described here should not prejudice new structures in any way.

An annual report will be published on the progress of New TSN.

Official guidelines have been issued to Northern Ireland Departments and the Northern Ireland Office (including Next Step Agencies) on New TSN. These will normally also apply to NDPBs and other agencies. Copies are available, on request, from Central Secretariat.

**Contact point:** New TSN Unit, 20/24 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2GP  
Telephone 01232 544520  
Fax 01232 544500

## **Reviews and action plans**

In planning for their implementation of New TSN, Departments will examine closely how they identify need across the range of their activities (including NDPBs and agencies) and how they measure the impact of their activities in terms of NewTSN. Some Departments have carried out similar exercises in recent years. All Departments will now need to look afresh at these issues, possibly using the expertise of independent consultants.

The next step will be for Departments to draw up their Action Plans for New TSN, covering their own work and that of NDPBs and agencies. These Action Plans should be set against clear timescales with objectives and, where possible, targets to be achieved.

Action Plans may include steps to identify practices, policies and legislation which hinder the achievement of New TSN objectives.

In drawing up their Action Plans, each Department will consult with organisations representing interests affected by its work. They will have an opportunity to influence the Action Plans before they are adopted.

The published annual report on New TSN will consider the performance of Departments against what they set out to achieve in their Action Plans. These will be important documents for management throughout the administration and for wider public assessment of how New TSN is being progressed.

## **Information on deprivation**

Often social need is best identified in terms of areas, rather than individuals or groups. It is important to have information on an objective basis which shows how an area is disadvantaged and which enables it to be measured against other places. Since 1994 the Government has used extensive data on deprivation, developed by Professor Robson of Manchester University, using results from the 1991 Census and other official sources of information. Professor Robson's research will continue to be an essential tool in New TSN, but the information it used will be overtaken by the 2001 Census. In the meantime, consideration will be given to how the mapping of disadvantage can be improved in future. This will involve consultation, both with experts in the subject and with organisations in Northern Ireland which have a particular interest in New TSN. Departments will decide, for each of their programmes which tackle need across geographic areas, how it will define the places which should see the greatest impact.

In some cases it may be disadvantaged individuals and groups which are targeted rather than discreet geographic areas. Decisions will depend on the nature of the programme, the resources available and objective measures of need, notably Professor Robson's research. What is important is that such decisions are transparent and can be justified publicly. NewTSN must be seen to be fair at all times.

## **Monitoring**

To manage New TSN effectively, Departments and agencies will continuously collect information to monitor what their programmes are achieving, the people and areas which benefit from them, and whether they are really reducing inequalities. Monitoring information is essential to confirm that programmes are achieving their New TSN objectives and to show when programmes need to be changed.

Sometimes people who benefit from programmes or services may need to be asked questions about themselves to assist monitoring. These questions are usually voluntary, but the assistance of the public will greatly help the effective implementation of New TSN. One of the questions which may need to be asked is whether a person comes from the Protestant or Catholic community. Information on this can help to find out whether all sections of society are able to make use of services. It can also help to show whether New TSN programmes are reducing inequalities between Catholics and Protestants. Though it will never be compulsory to answer this question, the Government would encourage an honest and positive response, wherever possible. The information will be kept in the strictest confidence and used only for purposes of statistical analysis.

## **Focus on unemployment**

Tackling unemployment was central to the White Paper, "Partnership for Equality", which set out the aims of New TSN. There are many Government programmes which address unemployment and promote employability. Job creation is the most effective way to tackle unemployment and for several years the Industrial Development Board has provided special incentives for inward investment in parts of Northern Ireland which are particularly disadvantaged. The Training and Employment Agency also contributes directly through job placement and through the New Deal for the long term unemployed. The New Deal is backed by £140m of additional finance over 5 years, which has now been supplemented by a further £65m announced in May.

Within the education system, greater emphasis is being put on equipping children with life skills for employment. The School Improvement Programme will put particular emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Pre-school provision is being targeted on children in greatest social need, as there is much evidence that such provision helps children to make the best use of subsequent educational opportunities.

Further education and adult education will play a role in improving the skills of those about to enter, or already in, the workforce. The recent innovative Lifelong Learning and University for Industry initiatives will enable people of all ages to enhance their employability. The broadening of the skills base not only helps individuals to compete better in the job market, but also contributes to making Northern Ireland a more attractive prospect for quality job creation.

It is hoped that New TSN programmes on unemployment and employability will contribute, over time, to redressing the unequal distribution of unemployment between the Catholic and Protestant communities. At present the unemployment rate

for Catholic men is twice that for Protestant men. The Government regards this as unacceptable and is committed to reducing this inequality.

## **Social need and inequality**

Though obtaining a job is often the most effective way of improving life for disadvantaged people and their families, not all forms of social need and inequality are linked to unemployment. There are inequalities in aspects of life such as health, education and housing. Usually these inequalities are closely related to broader social disadvantage. These comprise significant areas of Government expenditure, including some where there is universal entitlement, as of right.

Departments will make greater efforts to target assistance on clearly identified need. Again, objective measurement and monitoring will be essential. Tackling these inequalities should have the effect of materially benefiting the most deprived sections of the community, and this should be demonstrated through monitoring; another consequence should be the erosion of differentials between the two main communities.

Even in the most disadvantaged areas, there is scope for effective community development and local regeneration. This can create employment in the "social economy". Furthermore, it can raise the morale of disadvantaged people, encouraging them to seek employment and making their areas more attractive for investment.

The Government has sought to support and encourage local community regeneration in disadvantaged areas. This too will be part of New TSN. Current initiatives which illustrate this approach are:

- Making Belfast Work, which targets the most disadvantaged wards in the city.
- The Londonderry Initiative, which has been a major contributor to the regeneration of the second city.
- The Rural Development Programme, funded by European Union Structural Funds, which encourages indigenous economic activity in some of the most disadvantaged parts of the countryside.

In targeting social need and inequality, Departments and agencies will be able to apply lessons from the review of their current activities and the preparation of Action Plans (page 9). These plans should identify how targeting, whether of people or of areas in need, can be more precise and its impact more effective. Example of good practice should be shared between different parts of the public sector. For instance, the inclusion of New TSN objectives as explicit programme priorities may, in itself, be advantageous. Some programmes which distribute resources across geographic areas may include weightings for social disadvantage. This practice could be extended to other programmes.

Departments and agencies will also continuously review their expenditure to identify any possibilities for reallocating resources towards people and areas in greatest need. Often this may be difficult. Programmes are already tightly constrained. Some make universal provision and it would be difficult to make radical reallocations without

infringing that principle. However, the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review has required that Departments make fundamental reassessments of their expenditure patterns. As part of this, the scope for reallocations to re-enforce New TSN will be closely scrutinised.

## **Social exclusion**

Some individuals and families suffer from multiple social problems. They may for example be poorly skilled, unemployed, living on a low income and coping with difficult home circumstances. They might live in poor housing and in areas blighted by crime. Those living in rural areas may have difficulties in accessing the types of services that other people take for granted.

Sometimes people's problems are so numerous and the effects are so severe that it is impossible for them to lead what most people in Northern Ireland would consider to be normal every-day lives.

The Government is using the term "social exclusion" to describe what can happen to people who are subject to the most severe problems. Social exclusion has to do with poverty and joblessness - but it is more than that. It is about being cut off from the social and economic life of our community.

Government has identified social exclusion as one of the most serious social issues of our time. It believes that for too long interventions have sought only to repair the damage caused by social exclusion. For many people the help comes too late to be effective in addressing the problem.

Government is committed to cutting away the very roots of social exclusion and to preventing the damage happening in the first place.

## **Tackling Social Exclusion in England, Wales and Scotland**

The Prime Minister has established a Social Exclusion Unit in the Cabinet Office to identify and tackle the causes of social exclusion. It will work towards new and more co-ordinated ways of attacking the worst problems.

The Unit works co-operatively with Government Departments. It focuses on problems or issues which cut across administrative boundaries and can best be dealt with through joint action.

### **During its first six months the Social Exclusion Unit examined:**

- the circumstances which lead to people living on the streets and sleep rough.
- the situation of children and young people who truant or who are excluded from school.
- the multiple problems faced by the residents of the I 300 estates defined as being the worst in England.

The Prime Minister launched, in May 1998, the Social Exclusion Unit's first report, *Truancy and Social Exclusion*, which set out new measures for dealing with school exclusion.

The Social Exclusion Unit focuses primarily on problems in England. Separate initiatives are being set up to tackle social exclusion in Scotland and Wales.

## **Social exclusion in Northern Ireland**

Social exclusion occurs in Northern Ireland too, but its causes and the groups of people most likely to be at risk here may differ from those in England.

In Northern Ireland some factors which may contribute to social exclusion and which can be particularly prevalent are: long-term unemployment, disability, literacy problems or living in an isolated or deprived area.

Some groups have additional needs, which, if not catered for, could place their most vulnerable members at risk of social exclusion. Examples of such groups might include those most affected by the Troubles, Travellers and members of other ethnic minorities, older people on low incomes, and young people with limited skills.

In addition to mainstream policies and programmes and the work on New TSN mentioned elsewhere in this document, there are cross-departmental initiatives aimed at tackling particular problems which may contribute to social exclusion. Such problems include illicit drug misuse, domestic violence and the needs of the most vulnerable children and young people.

The White Paper, "Partnership for Equality", considered the need for additional work to focus specially on social exclusion here.

## **Promoting social inclusion**

New TSN includes Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI), a new agenda of action to identify and tackle the factors which contribute to social exclusion in Northern Ireland.

The actions needed to respond to problems of social exclusion do not always fit comfortably within administrative boundaries. This can lead to duplication in some areas and gaps in others. PSI will therefore promote joint working. A key element will be relevant Departments, agencies and public bodies working together and, where appropriate, with partners in the voluntary and other sectors.

PSI will have a rolling agenda. The issues to be addressed will be identified following consultation with organisations and individuals outside Government. Details of the consultation are provided on page 21.

PSI will be led by a senior official accountable directly to Ministers and supported by a PSI Team.

The New TSN Steering Group will advise Ministers on the overall direction of the PSI strategy and what its priorities might be. In doing so it will take account of the views of social partners and non-governmental organisations, including representatives of groups particularly at risk of social exclusion.

PSI will be flexible. The way in which priorities are approached will depend on the issues involved and on any existing analyses. In general each priority will be tackled by a specially constituted Working Group with members drawn from Departments and other relevant organisations.

The terms of reference for each exercise will be time bounded and founded on clear aims and objectives. They will emphasise PSI's commitment to the principals of coordination, prevention and evidence-based decision making. Although they will be specifically tailored to the issues to be tackled, it is envisaged that each working group will usually:

- use existing research and other evidence and the advice of experts (including representatives of those most directly affected by the problem) to analyse the issues and develop an understanding of the problem and its causes;
- consider Departments' roles and responsibilities in relation to the issue, including the effectiveness of any existing policies, programmes and structures with a view to identifying elements which work well and should be developed and areas where things could be done differently;
- identify and examine options for the way forward (this may include examining models of good practice which exist elsewhere), including preventative measures;
- make recommendations as to what requires to be done, by whom, and within what timescales, and the measures to be put in place to ensure progress.

From time to time these groups may identify research needs and in some cases it may be appropriate to draw up indicators or baselines against which progress can be measured.

## **Involving partners**

The Government is acutely aware of the wealth of knowledge and expertise on matters relating to social exclusion which exists in the non-governmental sector. It acknowledges the significant contribution which voluntary bodies, in particular, make to tackling social need in all its forms.

The Government is keen to encourage the involvement in PSI of partners from these sectors and to maximise opportunities for working together which may arise. It may for example be appropriate for PSI working groups to invite or commission contributions from experts or to co-opt the services of key agencies or individuals. However they will seek means of doing so which avoid placing undue burdens on the individuals or organisations concerned.

As with all aspects of New TSN, PSI will be open and transparent. Its priorities will be announced by the end of I 998. Reports on the outcomes of its work will be published, and progress summarised in the NewTSN annual reports.

The PSI Team will maintain co-operative relationships with the Social Exclusion Unit in England and with those responsible for tackling social exclusion in Scotland, Wales and elsewhere.

In developing and implementing the initiative the PSI Team will take account of lessons from previous cross-departmental and inter-agency work and from the experience of others involved in this important field.

## **The PSI consultation exercise**

The purpose of this exercise is to establish a consensus on an approach to social exclusion in Northern Ireland, to identify key problems of social exclusion and to develop an agenda of issues to be tackled through the Promoting Social Inclusion initiative.

**The Government is seeking reactions to any of the issues discussed on pages 15-20 of this document. It is particularly interested on views on:**

### **the PSI model**

- how to maximise the impact of PSI as an initiative within NewTSN?
- how many priority projects should be addressed at any one time?
- how far ahead should the rolling agenda look?
- are the structural arrangements right, particularly the involvement of non-governmental partners?

### **groups at risk of social exclusion**

- what groups are particularly at risk?

### **causes of social exclusion**

- other than unemployment what are the factors which cause social exclusion?
- what types of approach are required to tackle these factors?
- to what extent are these factors unique to Northern Ireland?

### **experience of joint working**

**If you or your organisation has participated in inter-agency co-ordinating bodies or networks, we would be interested in hearing about your experiences. In particular:**

- what did your organisation gain from the experience?
- what were the costs, problems or drawbacks you or your organisation experienced?
- what factors helped your joint venture to succeed? what factors had to be overcome in order to progress?
- was there anything which would have helped to make your joint working more successful?

### **Who should contribute?**

**The Government is interested in everyone's views - but would particularly welcome submissions from the groups listed below:**

- people affected by social exclusion or who have been affected by it in the past.
- voluntary organisations working with or representing people experiencing poverty, disadvantage or social exclusion.
- academics, researchers and social commentators.
- trades unions, employers' bodies and other economic organisations.
- political parties, District Councils and District Partnerships

all of the views and information we receive will be carefully considered.

### **Contributing views**

**Submissions should be sent by 31 October 1998 to:**

Promoting Social Inclusion Team, 20-24 Donegall Street,  
Belfast BT1 2GP

Fax 01232 544500

Internet [www.dfpni.gov.uk/CCRU/](http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/CCRU/)

E-mail [ccru@dfpni.gov.uk](mailto:ccru@dfpni.gov.uk)

### **Confidentiality**

Should you wish any part (or all) of your comments to be maintained in confidence you should make this clear on any material you send.

Contributions which are not marked as confidential, will be assumed to be open, and

may be quoted in reports or other documents or made available to members of PSI Working Groups.

All of the views and information we receive will be carefully considered.

### **Further information**

**If you would like further information please contact:**

Maggie Smith, Telephone (01232) 252510