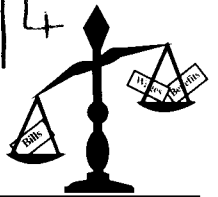


GJM | 30 AUG 2005 | 4



Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network

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Dr. Gerry Mulligan
Anti-Poverty Unit
Room E3
19 Castle Buildings
Stormont
BT4 3SR

ANTI-POVERTY

30 AUG 2005

RECEIVED

26.08.05

Dear Mr. Mulligan

Please find enclosed NIAPN's report detailing findings from a series of consultative events focused on the Phase II document outlining an Anti-Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland. The findings have produced a series of major concerns and recommendations supported by the vast majority of participants. We have sought to draw these out via the key priorities summarized at the end of each workshop.

In essence the general opinion is:

- The proposed strategy as it stands is unacceptable and must be withdrawn and rewritten.
- It is totally unsatisfactory that there is no specific budget for anti-poverty work.
- The voices of people and children experiencing poverty must be supported to actively engage at all levels within the process and mechanisms of an Anti-Poverty Strategy.
- The setting of departmental targets must be informed and monitored by people experiencing poverty and their representative organizations.
- The failure to carry out an EQIA is a breach of Section 75 under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the guidance from the Equality Commission, which states at para. 1.7: 'The statutory duties in Northern

~ Working together to tackle poverty ~

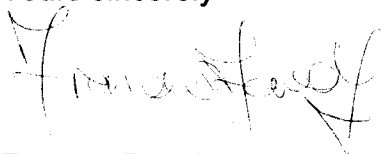
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Ireland underpin and influence policy-making in all spheres and at all levels of Government activity and public policy decision making'

NIAPN would welcome some feedback on this submission and, when a decision is made, we would like the reasons for such a decision to be made public. In addition we would like to know how responses will be collated and how the Department/Agency will weight submissions? We seek assurance that the method of analysis adopted in the last phase of this process will not be repeated as we feel that merely counting the number of responses 'for' or 'against' any proposal was not appropriate given the detailed responses received.

We also seek confirmation that, where a response is endorsed by a number of groups, this will be reflected in the analysis and not counted as one response to be given equal weighting to a response from a single individual. Please send us a copy of the analysis of the submissions when it is completed. We hope this submission will help in the work ahead on developing an effective, and resourced Anti-Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland. Ps The NIAPN board will be making a separate detailed submission to the current consultation in September.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frances Dowds', written in a cursive style.

Frances Dowds
Development Co-ordinator
NIAPN

NI Anti-Poverty Network



Consultation report on Phase II an Anti-Poverty Strategy for NI

Question and Answers

Clanmil Housing, Belfast 11th August 2005

Joy Poots Sure Start:

Comments were made of the amazement felt by workers within Sure Start that this programme was identified within the Phase II document as delivering on almost all of the objectives outlined within the Anti-Poverty Strategy. It was stated that this was not realistic particularly with regard to the employability objective as childcare places could not even be provided to women wanting to do training to return to employment. Sure start only deals with children aged 0-4 and it is implemented differently in Northern Ireland than it is in England and Wales e.g. smaller budgets, different criteria as to who can access child care places and shorter time frame for the actual programme.

It was stated that this needs to be thoroughly checked out by OFMDFM.

This commentator also stated that the Anti-Poverty Strategy should contain a strong commitment to eradicating child poverty in NI and should further develop its own set of indicators for measuring poverty in NI.

Theresa Geraghty Save the Children:

Attention was drawn by a member of the audience to a change* within the current presentation visual and the original produced in the Phase II document. The visual maps Departmental Programmes and Initiatives onto the NI Anti-Poverty Strategy. Does the difference in this chart and the one shown in the presentation indicate that the poverty unit knows something about the sure start project we don't?

Will Child Poverty be addressed within the proposed NI Anti-Poverty Strategy?

(*In the consultation document on p61 the visual reads North Belfast Community Action Unit, but in today's presentation it read the Children's and Young Persons Strategy)

Liam Stone Upper Springfield Development Trust:

From the presentation today it would appear that there is a tolerance level towards poverty that we cannot accept and the goal of an Anti-Poverty Strategy must be to eradicate poverty. There is no such thing as an acceptable level of poverty. Is it realistic to say that we can eradicate poverty? Yes! There are areas within the document in which targets have been set but haven't yet been quantified. What are those areas?

Gerry Mulligan OFMDFM Replies:

To Joy Poots:

Sure Start is there as an illustration, as an emphasis of the importance of a good start in early life. This programme is the responsibility of DH&SSPS and so it is really their responsibility to comment on it. However, this is not the time to have the discussion around what sure start should or shouldn't fund. It is not part of the remit of the New TSN. The question should be what are the key contributors to the key objectives discussed in the context of the ministerial forum. There will be an opportunity to pick up on this issue in the context of this forum.

To Theresa

This is an illustrative diagram only. We have included the children's strategy to show Alex that the Children and Young Person's strategy is central. I take on board the point of child poverty. This means that Northern Ireland by 2010 will also have to incorporate this into the document. There is a commitment to eradicate child poverty in the UK National Action Plan and it is also within the NI Programme for Government priorities. There is the intention to aim for the same goal of halving child poverty by 2010.

To Liam

I never at any stage said there is an acceptable level of poverty. There are targets in the document. Chapter 9 is all about areas in which targets will be set. P. 34 refers to the overall level of households. We have not quantified the target but we have set the base line. Targets are not yet set and this needs to be done at government department level.

Frances McCandless NICVA:

Comment was made that within the NICVA submission over 160 signatures had been included from other organisations yet this was not acknowledged by OFMDFM when they analysed the numbers of submission they received under the Phase 1 consultation.

Comment was made that the rushed timeframe did not make sense as with no targets in the current document there was no way the priorities of the up and coming budget could effectively be influenced. It was suggested that the process for developing targets should actually be the other way round, that 'we' should be telling government departments what they need to do not vice versa. It was also stated that if TSN had really been as successful as the Phase II document suggests then NI would not have 32 thousand children living in poverty. The final comment was that the targets within the document are not targets.

Cathy Stanton Sinn Fein:

The proposals within this strategy to side step an Equality Impact Assessment are a breach of Section 75. The strategy needs to contain concrete evidential information. The strategy does not address the conflict nor its impact on disadvantaged communities. This person commented that they were not surprised that statistics on poverty in NI were so dire, for those groups and organisations working at a local level dealing with anti-poverty work were continually chasing funding to enable them to continue to do their work. This is having a dire impact on the work they aim to do in disadvantaged communities. This participant also called for an equal emphasis on social protection not just on economic development and employment as the main route out of poverty.

Elaine Campbell Youthnet:

It is stated within the document that TSN was successfully mainstreamed but the evaluative report produced by Deloitte and Touche highlighted that although there was evidence of successful mainstreaming in some Govt Depts there was little if no evidence to show an impact on poverty. Can you tell me how the current proposals plan to avoid the same weaknesses that existed previously?

Gerry Mulligan OFMDFM Replies:

To Elaine

We don't accept that mainstreaming has not impacted. Within government we know what difference mainstreaming has made, one example of a successfully mainstreamed programme is Neighbourhood Renewal. However poverty proofing could be enhanced and we will be working on this.

To Cathy

Because the document is a high level framework it is our view that only when it is translated into actions would an EQIA be appropriate. The 'policy owners' of the EQIA would then need to do an EQIA. The conflict and its impact has been

recognised that's why the Victims Unit was established. It is necessary to have an economic focus within the strategy to ensure we are able to impact on poverty.

To Frances

In relation to the timescale for consultation it is important that we prepare for September to ensure we are able to impact on the new Budget Priorities to inform public expenditure. Impacting on the budget priorities is important especially if we set aspirational and achievable objectives such as increasing benefit uptake. If we can get objectives like financial hardship within the priorities it moves them to Ministerial level and this means we can talk to departments about things like relief's for people in relation to policies such as the proposed Water Charges.

Mimi McAlinden Investing for Health Team Eastern Area Partnership:

What's missing from the document is how the Anti-Poverty Strategy can impact at a regional and local level through the voluntary and community sectors and other partners. For example Investing for Health's key objective is to address poverty. The work of this strategy needs connected into the Anti-Poverty Strategy to demonstrate impact and outcomes, recurrent, ongoing and future work.

Lisa King Equality Commission

The OFMDM have an obligation to adhere to Section 75 and we look forward to a format that will include this. We would advise that you talk with the Department for Finance and Personnel on how to carry out an EQIA on a high level strategy. We would encourage you to show leadership on this important responsibility. The APS presents a significant opportunity to effectively tackle child poverty and to make a difference to the lives of other Section 75 groups. Rushing to meet targets at the end of a timescale is not good practice.

Halving child poverty in NI by 2010 as part of the UK NAPsincl is too easy a target for our Anti-Poverty Strategy. What does it mean to us to halve child poverty by 2010, does it mean focusing on addressing poverty for the 'easier to reach' groups i.e. those groups in poverty but not experiencing severe poverty?

Gerry Mc Loughlainn Mind the Gap

Can you tell us when the Regional Action Plan will be produced and whether be in line with the next NAPs due for 2006?

Gordon Hewitt NIAPN:

Can you tell us more about the role of the APS in relation to the proposed water charges?

Gerry Mulligan OFMDFM Replies:

To Lisa

Because the document is a high level framework it is our view that only when it is translated into actions would an EQIA be appropriate. The 'policy owners' of the EQIA would then need to do an EQIA.

To Gerry

The Ministerial Forum will deal with the National Action Plans for Social Inclusion through Open Method of Co-ordination process. Our Regional Action Plan will be produced for the end of this financial year, ideally early spring.

To Gordon

We have been in discussions with DRD and will be continuing to talk to them over relief's for a range of groups including those living on low incomes.

CLANMIL HOUSING, BELFAST- 11TH AUGUST 2005

WORKSHOP 1 – BLUE COMMUNITIES

FACILITATOR: FRANCES DOWDS – NIAPN

1 Brainstorm - What are your initial reactions/comments/questions to what has been presented today?

It's ironic that as we are developing an Anti-Poverty Strategy for NI that there is a crisis in the children's sector over childcare and early year's provision. The loss of the Children's Fund has had a disastrous impact on children and families right across NI. Child poverty is on the increase while the Anti-Poverty Strategy is being developed. The situation for children in our communities is continuing to worsen and yet the current Phase II document is still continuing to 'skew' resources.

It would appear that within Government it is 'lip service' only to working across sectors. There is no evidence of consideration within the strategy of the tangible impact work in other sectors has had on general anti-poverty work.

It is also very evident, once again that there has been no prioritization on vulnerable groups. No focus on key areas.

The situation with regards to the EQIA is unacceptable, 'high level' documents are not exempt from Statutory Duty. Due to the lack of a specific budget with identifiable targets many groups and communities will once again fall between two stools. Anti-Poverty work and the resources needed for it have not been prioritized in the document.

Participants recommended that 'dormant accounts' (Pathways for Change) with additional support from Government depts should be made available to fund anti-poverty work within the C&V sector. The document over emphasises the importance of economics and employability as a route out of poverty. There needs to be an equal emphasis on social provision.

It was observed that even though NI is in receipt of Peace monies according to the statistics poverty is still on the increase. This raises great concerns for what will happen when Peace monies come to an end. There is an obvious need for groups working with those on the margins of society to be mainstreamed under the anti-poverty strategy.

It was recommended that the Carers Strategy should be worked along with the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

2 What are the gaps/weaknesses within the current Phase II document?

All workshop participants expressed dismay that there was still no budget and it was felt that until one was established the sectors would keep calling for it. It was also stated by participants that the submission made by their organizations for Phase 1 could be submitted for Phase II. It was felt recommendations and comments made for Phase 1 had not been addressed in Phase II.

Participants clearly stated that if Anti-Poverty Work was not provided with a substantial budget and prioritized within Government that there would be no change on anything.

It was felt that there was no demonstrable link made in the document between the Anti-Poverty Strategy and Section 75 or of how they could be brought together. It was clearly felt a legislative basis was essential to hold Government to account on the APS.

A new Section 75 category was called for to address poverty and social exclusion.

It was felt that it was crucial that tangible links are made to existing strategies delivering on Anti-Poverty Work. Possibly this could lie within the forthcoming proposed Regional Action Plan.

Pathways and processes to identify existing anti-poverty work were called for e.g. Investing for Health, V&C anti-poverty work, Fuel Poverty projects/organizations, Children's Services etc.

This should then impact on the allocation of resources through the proper pathways for delivery.

It was felt that the development of an Anti-Poverty Strategy did not have enough status and that it should impact on all other strategies. All others should work to this central and important strategy. Govt Depts should be demonstrating their anti-poverty work in the document.

It was stated that more information was needed on process within the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

There is a big information gap within Phase II. Statements are made with no evidence provided, e.g. Sure Start tackling child poverty.

Questions were asked about where the idea that a high level strategy did not have to carry out an EQIA came from. More information is needed on this and the current situation with regard to the Equality Commission and their recommendations to the DFP.

Within the document there is no reference to the North South Ministerial Council or to proposals for encouraging such structures to prioritise anti-poverty work.

It was stated that we need devolved Government back in NI to drive this strategy forward. It was observed that it is too far away from devolved Ministers, who do not know what is happening on the ground in NI.

The document needs to address the debate on budget allocation on the basis of need versus population size.

There is more transparency needed on the process of 'mainstreaming' budgets. The consultation timescale (July-August) is not very feasible or practical. It is very disappointing as the timing won't allow the voices you need to hear to be heard.

Participants called for the consultation timeframe to be extended to the end of September.

It was stated that the targets are the real meat of the strategy but that they are not in this document and so there is no possibility to influence them.

It was recommended that the Regional Action Plan which will include Government Department action plans including their proposed targets should be consulted on as outlined under Objective 4 of the National Action Plans. This would allow for real influence on the strategic targets from the sector.

Ministerial Forum – It must have key players, government department decision makers and provide an opportunity for People Experiencing Poverty to really impact on the strategy and its processes.

It was asked how the Ministerial Forum would link with other department/groups working on other strategies. Such as:

- Neighbourhood Renewal
- Fuel Poverty Strategy
- Investment for Health
- Carers Strategy
- Children and Young People Strategy
- Review of Public Administration

A serious concern was raised over the Community Planning proposals within the Review of Public Admin and its relationship to NEW TSN.

Participants asked if all the current groups within government need to be kept in place or if they could be collapsed within the Ministerial Forum to work together more efficiently.

It was suggested that we look at what is happening in other countries in relation to successful anti-poverty initiatives, so they could be replicated within our Anti-Poverty Strategy, Income Tax, Pensions, and Benefit levels.

3 What are the strengths within the current Phase II document?

The strategic aim within the document is an improvement. The fact that we have a consultation and will eventually have an Anti-Poverty Strategy is good.

4 What should a strong Anti-Poverty Strategy aim to do and how?

It should aim to eradicate poverty.

Participation is essential for an Anti-Poverty Strategy to be strong.

It needs to create a level playing field for all people.

It should protect the most vulnerable in society.

It should ensure all Government Departments work toward the aim.

Welfare levels should not be 'basic' they should be 'decent'.

The system must be accountable and transparent, especially around budget settings and their priorities. People need to know how and why financial decisions are made.

We need an anti-poverty strategy that works.

5 Are there any comments you would like to make in general or on the proposed measurements to be used within the Strategy?

It was observed that this is an old chestnut. Participants agreed that if an individual or community was deprived of the potential for the best possible outcome then they were living in poverty.

Any measurements or indicators used within an Anti-Poverty Strategy need to aim to support government to work toward improving a persons or a community's quality of life.

A holistic approach to measuring poverty is essential.

Indicators need to take account of things like nutrition, infant mortality, safe play areas, 16-18 year olds not in training, and employment or at school, homeless people etc.

It was recommended that OFMDFM should look at the work that has already been carried out on indicators by groups such as Belfast Healthy Cities health indicators, to be published at the end of August. It was also stated that it was important to take social capital indicators into account when measuring and monitoring anti-poverty policies.

KEY PRIORITIES

- 1 Needs a specific budget
- 2 Need clarity on links and relationships with other key strategies.
- 3 The aim of the APS should be to eradicate poverty and social exclusion

- 4 The NI Assembly needs to be up and running to support the development of this strategy and inform the process
- 5 The Regional Action Plan should provide an opportunity for consultation and influence on Government department targets etc.

CLANMIL HOUSING, BELFAST- 11TH AUGUST 2005

WORK SHOP 2 FAMILY AND CHILD POVERTY WORKSHOP- GREEN

FACILITATOR & RAPPOTEUR: MARIE CAVANAGH

SCRIBE: CAREY ANN CLARKE

1. What are your initial reactions/ comments/ questions to what has been presented today?

Mainstreaming has already proved itself to be ineffective.

The children's strategy and the need for concrete measures to address child poverty within the Anti-Poverty Strategy are crucially needed as the child poverty situation in Northern Ireland is continuing to worsen. With the proposed inter-departmental method of work it is likely (and indeed very worrying) that children will suffer as they risk falling between departments as a result of this overlap. There is a fear that no key department will take direct responsibility for eradicating child poverty in NI.

There are problems with the mechanisms of targeting as they are not specific and unquantifiable.

There is an immediate need to clarify and to set a target for child poverty in Northern Ireland similar to equivalent structures already in place in other regions of the UK and Ireland.

Obtaining a separate source of funding to implement the strategy is imperative so that the aims of the new high level strategy can be achieved. In the current environment of cuts an Anti-Poverty Strategy without its own budget is likely to fail if funding is not secured and unlikely to lead to the desired elimination of poverty in Northern Ireland.

Pushing for such an immediate deadline to end the current consultation is inappropriate. The structures of consultation have been unsatisfactory in that

there has been little engagement with children, single families and other vulnerable groups. It is feared that rapid entry into the final consultative phase would be accepting an inappropriate process i.e. one which has been informed in a top down manner.

There is no mention of raising the national minimum wage as a practical means to tackle poverty. Providing jobs is not enough unless you address the increasingly levels of low wage employment our economy is recognised for.

2. What are the gaps/ weakness with the current Phase II document?

There is a very apparent lack of reference to cross sector work to feed input into the proposed strategy. Those currently experiencing poverty and working with those experiencing poverty have an expertise which should form and shape a more target oriented anti-poverty strategy.

The experience of many working in an anti-poverty and equality capacity is that the lack of a defined budget will be a major obstacle to the implementation of continued and effective anti-poverty work. It was the view and experience of the majority of participants that the skewing of resources has not been sufficient in the past and it will not be sufficient to deliver for an Anti-Poverty Strategy in the future.

The push towards partnership within the document means that now all government departments will be included in the remit of an Anti-poverty strategy; however there is a visible lack of reference to induct all departments into the ethos of the NEW TSN.

There was broad agreement that a failure of the current document lies in the fact that it is too suggestive and not directive enough. The targets for government departments need to be set and then departments need to deliver on them not the other way round. It was stated that unless in the tone of the document changes and adopts a much more directive approach that government departments could continue as they are and may not be take the Anti-Poverty strategy as seriously as they should.

Long-term funding of projects must be secured for the continued implementation of serious anti-poverty work. Little acknowledgement is made in the document that funding projects on a short term basis, such as three year projects, is viewed by those directly working in an anti-poverty capacity as an inappropriate means by which to tackle poverty. There is a lack of understanding by the department that it is the experience of many in project work that recruitment and project establishment can be a lengthy procedure and a project may often be achieving its first significant results when funding is up for review.

Participants were very concerned over the apparent lack of learning demonstrated by government particularly with regard to previous consultations such as the Child Poverty Strategy and the Gender Strategy. The poor timescale and small number of consultations for this central strategy would indicate that there has been little change in the level of influence on Government for people experiencing poverty or for those working alongside them.

The use of language throughout the consultative document is confusing and worryingly vague. For example the 'Anti-Poverty Strategy cascading through other strategies' would allow for too open an interpretation. The inclusion of jargonistic phrases is unacceptable to the majority of those already working in the anti-poverty sector and looking to engage in a meaningful way on this consultation.

Continually promoting employment as one of the major ways out of poverty is unrealistic as it does not take into consideration those already in employment and experiencing poverty.

Lack of political will to take on board the formation of an anti-poverty strategy is particularly difficult in an environment where there is no Northern Ireland assembly.

There is no mention of the current department budget cuts (e.g. health & education) and their relationship to TSN or and Anti-Poverty Strategy. There is not enough detail on the current 'skewing' of resources that is supposedly already taking place within government departments. Without its own specific budget the anti-poverty strategy will be unable to deliver.

3. What are the strengths within the current Phase II document?

The fact that there is a preparedness to develop an Anti-Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland but we should take the time to get it right to make it truly effective.

The link between the NI APS and the European National Action Plans for Social Inclusion is one strength of the current document. This will allow for some leverage from Europe to be brought to bear on such an important strategy. It is hoped that the relationship between the objectives of the NAPsincl and the APS will be clarified in the next document.

The ministerial forum has the potential to be a 'strength' if it develops inclusive and participative processes that take account of geography and don't simply rely

on the usual 'gate keepers'. Positions need to be allocated to those working in the community and voluntary sectors as well as those living with poverty.

Participants welcomed the acknowledgement that this is not the finalised proposed strategy and that it has some way to go to become a strategy for action not just another piece of paper involving a tick box exercise.

4. What should a strong Anti-Poverty Strategy do and how?

It must be informed and directed by people experiencing poverty and their advocates.

There must be a greater concentration on specific, time based and measurable outcomes.

There must be a stated commitment to resource a strong and independent advice sector.

Proactive anti-poverty initiatives actioned in other parts of the UK (such as those outlined in the Save the Children paper) must be implemented and resourced to protect the most vulnerable in NI.

There should be a greater focus on prioritising initiatives to support and protect the working poor while acknowledging that work is not an option for many disadvantaged groups. These groups need particular policies and initiatives.

5. Are there any other comments you would like to make in general or on the proposed measurements to be used within the Strategy?

People need to be informed and consulted on proposed government department targets. It is not good enough to let departments set their own targets.

There is a need for greater clarity around monitoring and evaluation of the proposed strategy. Consultees need to be actively involved in these processes.

There is a need for real joined up action in the production and implementation of the Anti-Poverty strategy in order that it addresses the needs of all Section 75 groups.

CLANMIL HOUSING, BELFAST- 11TH AUGUST 2005

WORKSHOP 3 RED DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

FACILITATOR & RAPPOTEUR: GERRY MACLOCHLAINN

1. What are your initial reactions/ comments/ questions to what has been presented today?

What is the difference between Phase II and Phase I – it appears much the same.

Getting fed up with STRATEGIES – where is the vision and the real difference with what is going on already. This does not feel as if it has a new real vision.

There is an omission of children except through their parents.

It is felt that resources drive the process with Civil Service working within existing limitations.

It was felt that Section 75 categories can place limitations on work and can mitigate against real work. An example was in Newry where Travellers were initially within the scope of a TSN area but their site was closed and they were moved and then found themselves outside a TSN area and beyond the scope of a programme. It was pointed out by another participant that this was a distortion of Section 75.

There was a view that the section 75 categories needed to be reviewed. Ex-prisoners and those with convictions, for example, were not included and yet they faced real barriers to advancement, exclusion from certain types of job, mortgages, insurance and so on.

There was a need to evaluate PSI groups. There is a proposal to establish a PSI on lone parents and yet there had been others including on Travellers and those with disabilities and they were not all successful. Indeed the report from OFMDFM included figures showing the lack of impact on those with disabilities.

There was too much emphasis on economic versus social issues and no mention of health at all despite the clear connections with poverty.

There was a view that strategies led to policy and then implementation but these could be cut short by budgetary considerations despite the effect on the strategic commitments. IE a budget overspend elsewhere could lead to a claw back on C&V sector funds which negates the implementation of the strategy.

There is a need for long term funding which can delivery and a decision on funding the project to be held accountable back to the overall strategy. There should be no sudden stops in funding which undermines the work being built up. There were questions asked about the commitment to "Joined Up Working" which is in its 14th year. Why had it not worked before and why would it work now? What is different in this approach?

There was a view expressed that in place of genuine joined up working there was actually a cross-referencing approach. There needed to be genuinely shared strategic objectives and targets with a collective responsibility to deliver.

The Anti-Poverty strategy is held up as a model of good practice but it has not been implemented yet.

Issues were raised concerning "Skewing" We need to examine what it is and what its effects are. If it skews resources away from something that is being done to something that needs to be done it may be ineffective if the money taken from the other source leads to problems arising from that undermining the new intervention.

There needs to be a consideration of the issue of minimum wage and its ability to impact on poverty. The effect of promoting Northern Ireland as a low wage economy for a long period was also questioned and its effect on an anti-poverty strategy. This led to the issue of impact assessments and "poverty proofing." The issue of education cuts was also raised as the cuts have impacted on some of those most affected by poverty.

2. What are the gaps/ weakness with the current Phase II document?

It fails to show how to tackle failure to achieve "Joined – Up Govt" e.g. in fuel poverty and for people experiencing poverty while in work.

The objectives at EU level are different to those at local level.

3. What are the strengths within the current Phase II document?

There is a vision although it needs to be brought forward but it is there. The ministerial forum is a potential strength. But who is on it will be important. Will it start soon? (Nov date given)
Will the membership reflect the Community & Voluntary Sector and those experiencing poverty.

1. What should a strong APS aim to do and how?

It should focus on outcomes.

It should provide support for people in work but suffering financial hardship. (Affordable child care, tax credit problems).

Needs to be more proactive and positive.

Needs to deal with contradictions in government policy and the Anti-Poverty Strategy. Poverty Proofing! Integrated Impact Assessments of new and existing policies.

Areas where these arise

PPP's and PFI's have impacts on some of the lowest paid and those experiencing poverty such as women.

Introduction of Water Tax.

Anti-Poverty Measures in UK should be ring fenced so that they are introduced here.

Current pensions strategy has major problems for the future. It might be better to introduce a flat state pension.

Those who are outside the private pensions schemes and will be reliant on state pensions will suffer poverty

This leads to more people requiring means tested benefits which many are reluctant to take up and which therefore is a significant cause of poverty.

Payments are diverted from services to those in need to finance these pensions policies.

5. Are there any other comments you would like to make in general or on the proposed measurements to be used within the Strategy?

Eradication of poverty for all should be a clear aim of the strategy.

There should be targets, milestones and evaluation of strategy

There should be proper resourcing and mainstream funding for a sustainable, independent advice sector – recognising its vital role in evaluating anti-poverty outcomes and encouraging take up of any measures.

KEY PRIORITIES

1 The most important thing that a strong anti-poverty strategy should contain is a clear vision backed up by the necessary commitment to eradicate poverty for all by a certain date and with milestones and targets along the way.

2 The major issue which kept coming up in the workshop related to the need for real "Joined Up" action. This means that government has to get out of its various silos to deliver on targets. Targets have to be clear and should be applied to all relevant departments so that they have a collective responsibility to deliver and cannot pass it between each other.

3 There is a need for an anti-poverty strategy to ensure that all government policies are poverty proofed just as they should be equality, gender or disability proofed. There was a call for an "integrated impact assessment" process to deal with contradictions in policies where they can lead to poverty issues elsewhere.

- E.g. introduction of water tax
- Tax credits system and problems arising from its processes
- Overall pension strategy which can lead to long term issues of those outside the private pension system.

4 There is a need for EU/UK and regional plans to be made consistent and all strategies are implemented throughout. A specific issue here relates to the need for the regional plan to commit to the 4 European objectives rather than having different ones.

5 Genuine partnership is vital for delivery of effective anti-poverty strategies. This will require mainstream long term funding for the community and voluntary sector so that they can be effective in representing those they work with and on behalf of. In particular there is a need for a secure and independent advice sector. This sector is vital in ensuring that an anti-poverty strategy is implemented on the ground and in evaluating the success or otherwise of the strategy. Following from this there is a need for measures to evaluate and monitor whether or not partnership is working and is effective.

6 The issue of aspirational targets was raised in particular as being totally unacceptable. There needs to be clear, SMART targets laid at the door of government departments (including the same targets across several departments where there is overlap) so that accountability can be ensured.

7 There needs to be a system to measure progress and revise and review the strategy accordingly. It is important that any strategy be transparent with clear resource commitments so that everyone can see where these are being spent and their effects.