

# Policylink

## Bulletin 17

December 2007

Please note that individuals and organisations outside of government also contribute items to the bulletin; consequently, the content of this bulletin should not be assumed to reflect government policy or opinion.

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## Introduction

### Editorial

Please note that individuals and organisations outside of government also contribute items to the bulletin; consequently, the content of this bulletin should not be assumed to reflect government policy or opinion.

Welcome to the seventeenth issue of the policylink bulletin!

In this edition we have included an article from Belfast Healthy Cities on their role in developing public policy on health. Also see the short summary below of some of the issues flowing from a consultation meeting on 'Effective Consultation' which was held in the Maynard Sinclair Pavilion on 11 October.

In chapter 3 'Support for policy-making' we have included information about 'The Participation Network' which has been set up to assist agencies and government to engage with children and young people.

In chapter 5 we provide links to information about published and upcoming research on topics such as 'Youth Poverty in Europe', 'The Housing Pathways of New Immigrants' and 'Inter-School Collaboration: A Literature Review'.

In chapter 8 'Conferences and Seminars Coming Up' – readers should note the lecture series hosted by Belfast Healthy Cities which looks at the links between policy and better health.

As usual, this edition includes details of:

- New policy relevant publications;
- Current and forthcoming consultations;
- Newly announced policies and strategies; and
- Policy reviews coming up.

Hopefully there is something of interest for everyone! As always, you can email us at [policylink@ofmdfmi.gov.uk](mailto:policylink@ofmdfmi.gov.uk) with your views or suggestions.

## **Special Feature - 'Belfast Healthy Cities'**

### **Background**

Belfast Healthy Cities shapes, influences and develops healthy public policy. The organisation promotes equity and health improvement through inter-sectoral collaboration. Belfast Healthy Cities is also a leading member of the World Health Organization (WHO) European Healthy Cities Network, which currently has around 80 member cities.

### **Healthy Urban Planning**

One of the current core issues of the Healthy Cities Network is healthy urban planning, a concept developed by WHO since the mid-1990s. Healthy urban planning aims to re-establish the link between health and planning, and highlight the impact that planning can have on health. For example, areas that are well connected, include green space and integrate jobs and services within residential areas, can significantly support health through encouraging physical activity and facilitating social contacts. Conversely, policies that promote the private car and offer few natural meeting spaces contribute to obesity and ill health.

The goal of healthy urban planning is to incorporate health objectives within spatial plans, and improve collaboration between planners and health professionals. A key objective is also to increase understanding of the linkages between different policy areas.

Belfast Healthy Cities is working to introduce this concept to Northern Ireland, and is working closely with the Planning Service, as well as the Eastern Health and Social Services Board, Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety and Queen's University of Belfast.

The policy briefing series being organised (more details below) aims to further develop understanding of the links between health and planning among a wider audience. It is intended to provide evidence and recommendations that can underpin health objectives for policy being developed. It is also intended to act as a basis for debate.

### **Regeneration: limited evidence of health improvement**

The inaugural issue of the policy briefing series looks at the health impacts of regeneration. Evidence is primarily found from evaluations of regeneration funding schemes in England and Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) of regeneration initiatives. In addition, it includes a review of current regeneration policy for Belfast and the impact of Area Partnerships on improving health and wellbeing.

The conclusion is that limited studies have been undertaken in this area, and that evidence is therefore tentative. Evaluations provide some evidence of small positive impacts, such as reduced reliance on benefits, reduced crime and improved educational attainment. HIAs, meanwhile, have identified significant potential for regeneration to improve health, for example by improving access to training and employment, or improving social cohesion.

The overview of current regeneration policy in Belfast concludes that the disjointed picture of plans is limiting opportunities for improving health and working effectively across sectors. There is limited evidence of the impact initiatives have had on health in Belfast.

### **Recommendations**

The paper concludes that there are significant opportunities to improve health within regeneration. It makes seven recommendations, including:

- Setting out clear health objectives and outcomes, linked to the main determinants of health, and accompanied by targets and indicators

- Engaging other sectors at an early stage
- Building on the existing skill base in the area, utilising local expertise
- Conducting a HIA on all major projects
- A key recommendation is the joining up of the City Council, NIHE and Belfast Regeneration Office, regeneration/economic development strategies so that they work towards common objectives etc.

### **Future issues**

The second issue of *Planning for Healthier People* will examine the health impacts of transport and set this in the context of local policy. This issue is due in January 2008.

### **Planning for Healthier People – evidence for healthy public policy**

Belfast Healthy Cities have recently launched a series of policy briefings, Planning for Healthier People. The series aims to explore and highlight the health impacts of policy that has an impact on health and outline evidence based recommendations for how policy can best support health and wellbeing.

Planning for Healthier People is aimed at policy and decision makers at all levels in the public sector, as well as professionals developing and influencing policy in the voluntary and community sector. The papers present key academic and research evidence on the health impacts of a given policy area and utilise this to critically examine current policy.

Ultimately, Planning for Healthier People is intended to build the evidence required to include explicit health objectives within all policies. The intention is that the series will be ongoing with briefings covering topical policy issues published approximately quarterly. Future issues will include transport, housing and open space.

Planning for Healthier People is available through Belfast Healthy Cities' website at [www.belfasthealthycities.com](http://www.belfasthealthycities.com).

For further information contact Jonna Monaghan at Belfast Healthy Cities on (028) 9032 8811 or [jonna@belfasthealthycities.com](mailto:jonna@belfasthealthycities.com).

### **Special Feature - Consultation on 'Effective Consultation'**

The Better Regulation Executive in the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform in Whitehall has conducted a review of Consultation Policy to see how Government consultations can be improved. A paper entitled "[Effective Consultation](#)" was published in June 2007 to seek advice on Government consultations. The exercise was aimed at anyone with an interest in responding to government consultation exercises and those who regularly do so.

The Better Regulation Executive held a round table consultation meeting in Northern Ireland on 11 October in the Maynard Sinclair Pavilion, Stormont. The meeting was facilitated by the Policy Innovation Unit, in the Office of the First Minister & Deputy First Minister and attended by representatives from organisations such as the NI Council for Voluntary Action, NI Council for Ethnic Minorities, Equality Commission, General Consumer Council, Rural Community Network, Citizens Advice, the Consultation Institute etc.

The discussion covered issues such as:

**Good practice:**

- Pre-consultation exercises involving local people and representation by senior officials at public meetings – consistent attendance throughout by the same officials was seen as important in developing relationships.
- Government would benefit from making better use of agencies in consultation exercises as they often have closer links to people on the ground.
- A central consultation website should be kept up-to-date. It would be useful to provide early warning of consultations coming up. Pre-notification of consultations would be helpful to consultees in relation to work planning.
- Government should ensure that the right questions are being asked. Questions need to be posed as open rather than closed.

**Bad practice:**

- Timing was quoted here – often not enough time given to the consultation process or consulting during holiday periods. This was thought to undermine the consultation process.
- At times decisions appear to have already been made before the consultation process begins.
- Lack of feedback from departments on consultation responses and an explanation of any changes either made or not made, in light of the process.

**Consultation methods:**

- Face to face meetings are seen as more worthwhile and crucial to real engagement.
- Alternative methods should be considered and piloted.
- Consultation should not be a nine to five process – evening events should be considered.

The government's response to this consultation is to be published at the end of November on <http://bre.berr.gov.uk/regulation/consultation/>





support for policy-making

**Summary**

**Support for Government to include children and young people in their decision-making processes**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, places particular duties on statutory authorities to take account of the impact of their services and policies on children and young people. **The Participation Network**, an OFMDFM supported initiative, has been established to support statutory agencies, local government and government departments in Northern Ireland to effectively engage with children and young people in public decision making, in line with their **Section 75** obligations.

**If you are a statutory agency, local government or government department looking to develop your capacity to involve children and/or young people in the development of policies and services that affect them contact:**

[The Participation Network](#),  
Children in Northern Ireland,  
Unit 9, 40 Montgomery Road  
Belfast  
BT6 9HL

**Tel: 028 90401290  
Fax: 028 90709418**

This will be done through:

- **FREE training and consultancy** support to statutory agencies, local government and government departments.
- The creation of a **network of organisations** with expertise in children and young people's participation in public decision making.
- The development of **standards of good practice** in child and youth participation in public decision making for statutory agencies, local government and government departments.
- The development of a web-based bank of **resource materials**.

The Participation Network is currently offering two workshops that can be delivered in your workplace on:

Including children and young people in public decision making?

*Module 1: Why should we?*

This module is aimed at those leading organisations such as Senior Managers, Chief Executives and Directors.

*Module 2: How to involve children and young people?*

**E-mail:**  
[participation@ci-ni.org.uk](mailto:participation@ci-ni.org.uk)

This module is aimed at staff involved in policy development and service design.

Alternatively, training can be designed and delivered to meet your organisations specific needs.

**[Policy Hub Bulletin - November 2007](#)**

You will find a host of items in the Policy Hub Bulletin which is published on the HM Treasury website. There are articles under the headings of: better policy-making; improving delivery; and evaluating policy, plus a “website of the month” feature.

**[Policy Training Courses](#)**  
**Centre for Applied Learning**

The Centre for Applied Learning (CAL) is the training provider for all staff in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. CAL has recently revamped their training courses on Policy Development and Evaluating Policy. Participants on the policy development course will gain an understanding of the nature of policy, the policy cycle and the role of impact assessments. The Policy Evaluation course explores the concept of evaluation and develops skills in using tools and techniques for evaluation.





new policy relevant publications

### Summary

**25 October 2007**

[Programme for Government](#)

The Northern Ireland Executive recently published its draft Programme for Government which sets out in detail their plans and priorities for 2008/09 and beyond. The over-arching aim is to build a peaceful, fair and prosperous society in Northern Ireland, with respect for the rule of law and where everyone can enjoy a better quality of life now and in years to come.

Five key priorities:

- To grow a dynamic innovative economy
- To promote tolerance, inclusion, health and well-being
- To protect and enhance our environment and natural resources
- To invest to build our infrastructure
- To deliver modern high quality and efficient public services.

**29 October 2007**

[Health & Social Care Inequalities Monitoring System: Second Update Bulletin](#)

The Health & Social Care Inequalities Monitoring System comprises a basket of indicators which are monitored over time to assess area differences in mortality, morbidity, utilisation of and access to health and social care services in Northern Ireland. Inequalities between the 20% most deprived areas and Northern Ireland as a whole are measured. Results for rural areas are also compared against Northern Ireland overall. This report is the second update of the Inequalities Monitoring System.

**1 November 2007**

[Investment in Early Years can transform society](#)

Nobel laureate economist Professor James Heckman presented the findings of his study to members of the new Executive on 1 November 2007. He said that investing in very young

children can lead to lower divorce rates, less crime, a more competitive workforce, lower divorce and teen pregnancy rates and a healthier population. The Chicago based economist reached this important conclusion after his study of a range of early childhood programmes over the last thirty years.

**November 2007**

**NI Response to Leitch Review of Skills**

Many of the Leitch Review's specific recommendations relate to England only and the Northern Ireland inter-Departmental response will focus on measures that will apply in the Northern Ireland context.

**For further details contact:**

[Tim.Devine@delni.gov.uk](mailto:Tim.Devine@delni.gov.uk)

**19 November 2007**

[A competitive response to climate change](#)

This paper published by the Institute of Directors considers the route to effective policy design, and discusses the relative merits of a range of policy instruments that are available to tackle global warming. It does not attempt to play down the practical difficulties of implementing the policies discussed in the paper. Rather it tries to indicate the broad direction in which policy should be heading. The sooner that consensus can be reached on this, the sooner everyone can devote their energies to solving the detailed problems of implementation.

**December 2007**

**Publication of minimum care standards for Nursing and Residential Homes**

**For further information go to:**

[Standards@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:Standards@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

The publication of minimum standards for a range of regulated care services is one of the key elements in the Department's framework for raising the quality of health and social services in Northern Ireland. The standards will help to ensure a greater consistency in the quality of services provided across Northern Ireland and will help to safeguard people who use the services. Residential and nursing homes are required to be registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, who will inspect homes against the new standards, and will report on the quality of services delivered by both HSC and independent providers.

**December 2007**

**Launch of [www.noiseni.co.uk](http://www.noiseni.co.uk)**

**For further information contact:**

[Colin.nugent@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:Colin.nugent@doeni.gov.uk) or

**Telephone: 028 9054 4501**

DOE will launch a dedicated noise website for NI, offering advice to those suffering from noise problems from any source and hosting Departmental research and publications. Main feature will be a web-viewer tool to enable user interrogation of inter-active maps of environmental noise levels throughout NI.

**Publication late November or early December 2007**

The report summarises air quality monitoring data across NI for the year 2006 and discusses long term trends.

**Air Pollution in Northern Ireland  
2006**

For further details contact:  
[Dan.kennedy@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:Dan.kennedy@doeni.gov.uk) or  
Telephone: 02890 544523

**December 2007**

**Executive Review of Domestic  
Rating – Outcomes Paper**

For further details go to:  
<http://www.ratingreviewni.gov.uk/>

This paper will document the outcomes of the Executive Review of Domestic Rating which was launched by the Minister for Finance and Personnel in June 2007. The review was split into two separate strands – Strand 1 which deals with changes that can be made to the current capital value rating system and Strand 2 which looks at longer term options for replacing or supplementing that capital value system.

**December 2007**

**Small Business Rate Relief Scheme  
for Northern Ireland**

For further details go to:  
[www.erini.ac.uk](http://www.erini.ac.uk)

The Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland (ERINI) is carrying out a study on behalf of the Department of Finance & Personnel, to look at the case for a Small Business Rate Relief Scheme for Northern Ireland.

**January 2008**

**Climate Change Indicators for  
Northern Ireland (Issue 2)**

For further details contact:  
[barry.mcauley@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:barry.mcauley@doeni.gov.uk) or  
Telephone: 028 9054 4586

14 indicators of climate change for Northern Ireland are contained in this report, including temperatures and rainfall records going back more than 150 years. More recent datasets include arrival dates of the swallow and grass flowering dates, and how these are linked to temperature.

**February 2008**

**Advisory leaflet on neighbour noise**

For further details contact:  
[Eamonn.murray@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:Eamonn.murray@doeni.gov.uk) or  
Telephone: 028 9054 4578

A new version of 'Bothered by Noise?' leaflet for Northern Ireland, offering updated advice to people suffering from neighbour related noise problems.

**February 2008**

**Children and Young People Funding  
Package (CYPFP): An Evaluation of  
Early Developments**

For further details go to:  
[www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk)

This report will provide an evaluation in the greater Newry area of five strands of the CYPFP, including the extent to which the strands join up in the best interests of children and young people. The field work was undertaken by members of the Education and Training Inspectorate, supported by colleagues from the Social Services Inspectorate (DHSSPS).

**March 2008**

**First 5-Year Review of the Regional  
Development Strategy for Northern  
Ireland 2025 (RDS)**

For further details contact:

The Regional Development Strategy is the strategic planning framework for the North. It sets out strategic planning guidance on a range of social, environmental, and economic matters. There is a commitment in the RDS to a first 5-year review of the Strategy in 2005/06. This work has taken the form of a focused assessment to

[lan.raaphael@drdni.gov.uk](mailto:lan.raaphael@drdni.gov.uk)

consider the need for any adjustments to strategic guidance. A major review is planned for 2010. The outcome of this 5-year Review will be published in March 2008 in two documents which detail the process involved and the adjustments to be made to the RDS.

**March 2008**

**Education (Student Support) Regulations (Northern Ireland)**

For further details go to:  
[www.opsi.gov.uk](http://www.opsi.gov.uk)

This Statutory Rule will provide support for Northern Ireland domiciled students taking designated higher education courses in respect of an academic year beginning on or after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008.

**March 2008**

**A guide to financial support for higher education students in 2008/09**

[www.studentfinanceni.co.uk](http://www.studentfinanceni.co.uk)

This booklet will set out the financial help the Government has put in place for the 2008/09 academic year for higher education students whose homes are in Northern Ireland (whether they are studying in Northern Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland or the Republic of Ireland). It will outline the application process to access financial help. It applies to the 2008/09 academic year only. The booklet will be available from March 2008.

**March 2008**

**Student Loans – a guide to terms and conditions**

[www.studentfinanceni.co.uk](http://www.studentfinanceni.co.uk)

This guide will issue to students who take out loans to support their study at higher-education institutions in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. It will explain in detail what students are committing to when taking out a student loan.

**Spring 2008**

**Incapacity Benefit Claimants: Geography, Households, Decision Making and Welfare Reform**

For further details go to:  
[www.reb@delni.gov.uk](http://www.reb@delni.gov.uk) or  
Telephone: 028 9025 7738/028 9025 7609

The study was funded by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) with the aim of learning more about Incapacity Benefit claimants, their characteristics, their behaviour, and their labour market contexts. Part of the study involved a survey of over 800 Incapacity Benefit claimants in six locations across Northern Ireland.

**Spring 2008**

**New Deal Leavers Survey**

For further details go to:  
[www.reb@delni.gov.uk](http://www.reb@delni.gov.uk) or  
Telephone: 028 9025 7738/ 028 9025 7609

The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) commissioned research into the destinations, attitudes and experiences of a sample of people who had recently participated in the New Deal for 18 to 24 Year Olds and New Deal 25+.





new from research institutes and think tanks

### Summary

#### [Youth poverty in Europe](#)

This research carried out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation examines poverty among young people aged 16 to 29, across 13 countries of the pre-enlargement European Union. It charts how poverty rates vary between countries, looks at the factors associated with being poor and examines the events that are linked with moving in and out of poverty. Using this comparative approach, it suggests relevant policy lessons for the UK.

#### [The Use and Impact of Dispersal Orders](#)

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 gives the police powers in designated areas to disperse groups of two or more where their presence or behaviour has resulted, or is likely to result, in a member of the public being harassed, intimidated, alarmed or distressed. The powers are controversial due to the discretion they accord to police and the infringements of individual's rights they entail. This study from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation explores the implementation and impact of dispersal orders and highlights implications for policy.

#### [Comparing models of housing with care for later life](#)

Interest is growing in the role of housing schemes for older people that combine independent living with relatively high levels of care. This comparative study undertaken by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation of seven schemes in England examines different models of housing with care for older people.

#### [Providing Traveller and Gypsy sites: contentious spaces](#)

Local authorities face new duties to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, and to incorporate sites in local development plan documents where a need is demonstrated. This study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation examined the barriers to new site provision and

analysed some of the methods for conflict resolution, in the context of these legal requirements.

[Political devolution, regional governance and tackling deprivation](#)

This study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation claims that there is only sporadic evidence that the economic and employment needs of deprived areas are being addressed under current governance arrangements. Where interventions have successfully linked deprived areas into wider local economic and employment opportunities, this is often in spite of governance arrangements rather than because of them.

[Attachment to place, social networks, mobility and prospects of young people](#)

This study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation explores how young people's attitudes towards education, training and work opportunities are shaped by their social networks and attachment to place, and looks at how interventions might widen their horizons and improve their prospects.

[Street policing of problem drug users](#)

Street policing involves policing personnel having frequent contact with problem drug users. Although many in this group are considered to be prolific offenders, little is known about the nature, processes and outcomes of their routine interactions with police. This study from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation aims to fill that gap.

[Towards Richer Decision-making](#)

The Institute of Governance at QUB is currently working on this project with the aim of increasing understanding of factors that enable more effective public service decision-making. This will be carried out through an evaluation of inclusive decision-making processes in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, along with in-depth case studies in public policy making and implementation, principally in the areas of urban renewal and health policy. On the basis of the research, the project team plans to make recommendations for enhancing policy-making and public management practice.

[The Northern Economy in the Next Decade](#)

This report published by the Institute for Public Policy Research, presents recommendations for the three northern regions of England, the North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber, on:

- how to improve their economic performance; and
- how to narrow the gap in prosperity between these regions and more prosperous parts of England, while also delivering a socially just and environmentally sustainable northern economy

[Reclaiming the public realm with children and young people](#)

This report published by Demos says that until now, action to improve the lives of children and young people has tended to focus on the institutional spheres of home and school. Yet quality of life also depends on the access to and quality of shared resources such as

streets, parks, town centres and playgrounds. And here, in the everyday spaces of our towns and cities, we increasingly exclude and marginalise the young. In the pursuit of sustainable communities and urban renaissance, children and young people are too often left out of the script.

[Transforming Neighbourhoods: Lessons from Local Work in Fifteen Areas](#)

This report from the Young Foundation says that for the last decade, there has been increased political focus – both in Whitehall and in local government – on the need to boost opportunities for residents, both as individuals and collectively, to influence what happens in the local areas in which they live. In 2005, when the Young Foundation set up its Transforming Neighbourhoods programme, Ministers began to talk of ‘double devolution’, a debate which culminated in a White Paper with a strong message about the need to involve citizens in decision making and service provision.

[Inter-school collaboration: a literature review](#)

This literature review is part of a project being conducted by NFER at Queen’s, exploring the possibility that collaboration between schools in Northern Ireland, in the context of post-primary review, might be used to promote interconnections between the denominational education sectors as part of a contribution to improving community relations. NFER reviewed the literature on school collaboration in order to gain information on the different ways in which schools work in partnership. The review sought to illustrate the various models and approaches implemented by schools and to highlight strategies that have been particularly effective.

- Different types of inter-school collaboration
- Main drivers and aims of collaboration
- Managing collaborations
- Collaborative activities
- The role of outside agents in supporting collaborative working
- The gains of inter-school collaboration
- Factors influencing inter-school collaboration

[The housing pathways of new immigrants](#)

This research from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation explores the arrival experiences and settlement stories of new immigrants. It focuses on the housing experiences of new immigrants and considers the consequences of their arrival for local housing markets and neighbourhoods.





newly announced policies and strategies

**Summary**

**28 June 2007**

**HSC Safety Forum**

**For further details contact:**  
[qualityandsafety@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:qualityandsafety@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

A new Safety Forum was established in June 2007 to support health and social care organisations in implementing internationally recognised measures that save lives and reduce harm to patients. Members will promote a safety culture within their organisations and share best practice from around the world. The Forum will also influence the patient/client safety agenda in Northern Ireland. The Forum's first learning set takes place in November and there will be a continued work programme to promote the work of the Forum throughout 2008, including a conference to discuss the patient safety successes which occurred during 2007.

**December 2007**

**The Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificates and Inspections) Regulations (NI)**

**For further details go to:**  
[www.buldingregulationsni.gov.uk](http://www.buldingregulationsni.gov.uk)

These regulations will be made in December 2007 and will implement the remaining requirements of the EU Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings, including a requirement to produce an Energy Performance Certificate when a building is constructed, sold, leased or rented. The requirements will be introduced via a rolling programme throughout 2008.

**Proposed operational date: 1 March 2008**

**The Nitrates Action Programme Amendment Regulations 2008**

**For further details contact:**  
[Gerard.Mcclarey@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:Gerard.Mcclarey@doeni.gov.uk)  
[David.Watson2@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:David.Watson2@doeni.gov.uk)  
**Or telephone: 02890 257378**

This Statutory Rule will transpose the decision of the European Commission awarding derogation to Northern Ireland farmers. The rule will allow farmers who have 80% of their farm under grassland to make an application to increase the limit on livestock manure application to land from 170kg of nitrogen per hectare per year to 250. The rule will also contain specific criteria to be met by farmers who achieve derogation.

**1 April 2008**

The Executive Review of Domestic Rating

**Single Pensioner Discount (for pensioners aged 70 and over) on rates**

recommended that the Department implement a policy to introduce a single pensioner discount for pensioners aged 70 and over. This discount will be set at 20% and will be subject to consultation prior to finalisation.

**For further details go to:**

<http://www.ratingreviewni.gov.uk/>

**1 April 2008**

**Increase in the rate relief savings allowance for pensioners**

The Executive Review of Domestic Rating recommended that the Department increase the existing savings limit for pensioners within the rate relief scheme that was introduced in April 2007. It is intended that this savings limit will be raised to £50,000 from £16,000. This policy will be subject to consultation prior to finalisation.

**For further details go to:**

<http://www.ratingreviewni.gov.uk/>





## conferences and seminars coming up

### Summary

**November 2007 to March 2008**

[A new vision for health – Belfast Healthy Cities](#)

This lecture series, hosted by Belfast Healthy Cities, will look at the links between policy and better health, aiming to stimulate new thinking amidst the RPA challenges. The programme features expert speakers from the World Health Organisation (WHO), England and Scotland. The topics covered are:

- The Biology of Poverty: Keynote Speaker: Dr Harry Burns, Chief Medical Officer, Scotland (this took place on 27 November – see the note in Key Past Events about this seminar)
- The Power of Wellbeing: Keynote Speaker: Dr Derek Cox, Director of Public Health, Dumfries and Galloway
- Climate Change and Health: An Intersectoral Approach: Keynote Speaker: Dr Bettina Menne, Medical Officer, WHO
- The Art of Citymaking: Keynote Speaker: Charles Landry, Author and Founding Director, Comedia UK

**15 January 2008, NICVA, Belfast**

**ESRC/NICVA Public Policy Seminar  
Public Participation  
12.30 pm to 2.00 pm**

**Please register using the email provided  
by 21 December 2007**

**For further details go to:  
[knowledgetransfer@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:knowledgetransfer@esrc.ac.uk)**

The seminar will explore how much the conflict in Northern Ireland has precluded or influenced individuals from becoming more active citizens. It also will look at the cultural and historical differences in Northern Ireland compared to the rest of the UK in relation to individuals becoming active and political citizens.

**25 January 2008**

**Cancer Prevention, Treatment and Care Service Framework - Stakeholder Workshop:**

**Venue TBC**

**For further details contact:**  
[btourish@nican.n-i.nhs.uk](mailto:btourish@nican.n-i.nhs.uk)

Stakeholder engagement workshop is planned to further develop the Cancer Prevention, Treatment and Care Service Framework

**13 February 2008, NICVA, Belfast**

**ESRC/NICVA Public Policy Seminar  
Volunteering and its unintended consequences**

**12.30 pm to 2.00 pm**

**For further details go to:**  
[knowledgetransfer@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:knowledgetransfer@esrc.ac.uk)

The benefits an individual accrues from being involved in voluntary activity are well documented but the wider, often less tangible impacts of volunteerism are not as well developed. This seminar explores whether volunteerism is a route towards greater reconciliation and understanding between the two communities. Please register using the email provided.

**6 March 2008, NICVA, Belfast**

**ESRC/NICVA Public Policy Seminar  
Community relations and the voluntary and community sector**

**12.30 pm to 2.00 pm**

**For further details go to:**  
[knowledgetransfer@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:knowledgetransfer@esrc.ac.uk)

There is a clear recognition that the voluntary and community sector has made a powerful contribution to the achievements of better relations between communities. This point is not refuted but this seminar asks what future capacity does the voluntary and community sector have to deliver on A Shared Future? Please register using the email provided.

**Spring 2008**

**Proposed Noise Action Planning Workshop**

**For further details contact:**  
[colin.nugent@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:colin.nugent@doeni.gov.uk) or  
Telephone: 028 9054 4501

Competent authorities are required to develop noise action plans in accordance with the Environmental Noise Regulations (NI) 2006. DOE is co-ordinating the process and may provide guidance in the form of this workshop.





## current consultations

### Consultation period

### Summary

9 October 2007 to 9 January 2008

[Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport & Physical Recreation 2007-2017](#)

Over the past 2 years, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), has been developing, in partnership with Sport Northern Ireland (SNI), a new 10-year Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation in Northern Ireland. The purpose is to establish the key priorities for the future development of sport and physical recreation in Northern Ireland and to inform the direction of future investment.

Work on the Strategy has culminated in the production and publication of a draft of 'The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation, 2007-2017' which was published by the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Edwin Poots MLA on 9th October 2007.

22 October 2007 to 18 January 2008

[The Waste Management Licences \(Consultation and Compensation\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2008](#)

Where the DOE proposes to include conditions on a waste management licence that would necessitate the granting of rights in land, under these proposed Regulations those who may be affected will be required to be consulted. In addition, the Regulations will also provide that people who grant rights in relation to their land, may receive fair compensation for loss and damage caused as a result. The overall aim of the Regulations is to ensure that a balance is struck between fairly compensating such people, without unduly hampering or delaying the operator of a waste management site in fulfilling licensing conditions.

6 November 2007 to 7 January 2008

**Consultation on the Curriculum provided by Further Education Colleges**

Curriculum policy is a key element in the implementation of the wider "Further Education Means Business" strategy for further education in Northern Ireland. The strategy identifies the main aim for further education as being to strengthen economic and workforce development, to enhance social cohesion and to advance the individual's skills and learning.

The policy being developed will seek to determine the

most appropriate curriculum to be provided by FE colleges in order to meet the strategic priorities of the FE sector, and to meet the needs of colleges' main customers, namely individual learners and employers. For further details contact: [daryl.young@delni.gov.uk](mailto:daryl.young@delni.gov.uk) or [marian.cree@delni.gov.uk](mailto:marian.cree@delni.gov.uk)

**7 November 2007 to 31 January 2008**

**Mussels (Prohibition of Fishing) (Amendment) Regulations 2007**

The proposed Regulations will extend the prohibition on fishing for mussels for human consumption to include retaining on board a fishing boat and extend the scope of the exemption to include any person operating under the authority of a seed mussel licence granted by the Department. For further details contact: [kenny.parker@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:kenny.parker@dardni.gov.uk)

**14 November 2007 to 20 February 2008**

**[Consultation on the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups \(NI\) Order 2007](#)**

A consultation on the operation of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (SVG) Scheme in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This consultation sets out in detail how it is proposed SVG scheme will operate and invites views on a range of issues that are fundamental to its implementation.

**15 November 2007 to 16 January 2008**

**[Consultation on a possible change to the Common Funding Formula](#)**

The Department of Education (DE) is undertaking a consultation exercise with schools on a possible change to the Common Funding Formula. The consultation period will run from 15 November 2007 until 16 January 2008. The possible change has been put forward following deliberations with the Local Management of Schools (LMS) Steering Group, which includes representatives from the Education and Library Boards, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), the Governing Bodies Association (GBA), NI Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG).

**Closes on 7 December 2007**

**[Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy \(CAP\) Fruit and Vegetable Regime](#)**

A consultation on the possible allocation of new Single Farm Payment entitlements/reference amounts to fruit, vegetable, potato, orchard and nursery stock producers.

**For further information contact:**

**Joe O'Reilly, DARD  
Room 810, Dundonald House,  
Upper Newtownards Road,  
BELFAST  
BT4 3SB**

**Or email:**

**[joe.oreilly@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:joe.oreilly@dardni.gov.uk)**

**or fax: 028 9052 4676**

**9 October 2007 to 9 January 2008**

**[Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport & Physical Recreation 2007-2017](#)**

Over the past 2 years, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), has been developing, in partnership with Sport Northern Ireland (SNI), a new 10-year Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation in Northern Ireland. The purpose is to establish the key priorities for the future development of sport and physical recreation in Northern Ireland and to inform the direction of future investment.

Work on the Strategy has culminated in the production and publication of a draft of 'The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation, 2007-2017' which was published by the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Edwin Poots MLA on 9th October 2007

**16 October 2007 to 4 January 2008**

**[Accessible Transport Strategy Action Plan 2007 - 2009](#)**

**For further details contact:**  
**[janet.watson@drdni.gov.uk](mailto:janet.watson@drdni.gov.uk) or**  
**[atsinfo@drdni.gov.uk](mailto:atsinfo@drdni.gov.uk)**

The Accessible Transport Strategy Action Plan contained an action plan for 2005-2007 designed to achieve the objectives outlined within the ATS. This was to be reviewed every two years. The consultation is now taking place to ask for views on the Action Plan for 2007-2009.

**22 October 2007 to 18 January 2008**

**[The Waste Management Licences \(Consultation and Compensation\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2008](#)**

Where the DOE proposes to include conditions on a waste management licence that would necessitate the granting of rights in land, under these proposed Regulations those who may be affected will be required to be consulted. In addition, the Regulations will also provide that people who grant rights in relation to their land, may receive fair compensation for loss and damage caused as a result. The overall aim of the Regulations is to ensure that a balance is struck between fairly compensating such people, without unduly hampering or delaying the operator of a waste management site in fulfilling licensing conditions.

**22 October to 14 December 2007**

**Consultation on Preparing for Success – A Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance Strategy for Northern Ireland**

**For further details contact:**  
**[Judith.shaw@delni.gov.uk](mailto:Judith.shaw@delni.gov.uk)**

This is a joint consultation between DE and DEL. This project is being taken forward under the Northern Ireland Skills Strategy. The aim of the proposed strategy is to develop better informed decision makers, leading to increased participation in education, training and employment.

**6 November 2007 to 7 January 2008**

**Consultation on the Curriculum provided by Further Education Colleges**

Curriculum policy is a key element in the implementation of the wider "Further Education Means Business" strategy for further education in Northern Ireland. The strategy identifies the main aim for further education as being to strengthen economic and workforce development, to enhance social cohesion and to advance the individual's skills and

For further details contact:  
[daryl.young@delni.gov.uk](mailto:daryl.young@delni.gov.uk)  
or  
[marian.cree@delni.gov.uk](mailto:marian.cree@delni.gov.uk)

**6 November 2007 to 7 January 2008**

[Consultation on the future of Higher Education in Further Education colleges, including Foundation Degrees.](#)

For further details contact:  
[karen.doran@delni.gov.uk](mailto:karen.doran@delni.gov.uk)

**7 November 2007 to 31 January 2008**

**Mussels (Prohibition of Fishing) (Amendment) Regulations 2007**

For further details contact:  
[kenny.parker@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:kenny.parker@dardni.gov.uk)

**15 November 2007 to 16 January 2008**

[Consultation on a possible change to the Common Funding Formula](#)

**23 November 2007 to 15 February 2008**

**(Draft) Inshore Fishing (Prohibition of Fishing and Fishing Methods) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008**

For further details contact:  
[paddy.savage@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:paddy.savage@dardni.gov.uk)

learning.

The policy being developed will seek to determine the most appropriate curriculum to be provided by FE colleges in order to meet the strategic priorities of the FE sector, and to meet the needs of colleges' main customers, namely individual learners and employers.

DEL is currently reviewing the existing policy and processes in relation to higher education courses delivered in the further education sector (HE in FE) including Foundation Degrees. The consultation paper puts forward recommendations for improvements to the approval, quality assurance, funding and allocation of student numbers for HE in FE courses as well as recommendations for the future development and delivery of Foundation Degrees.

The proposed Regulations will extend the prohibition on fishing for mussels for human consumption to include retaining on board a fishing boat and extend the scope of the exemption to include any person operating under the authority of a seed mussel licence granted by the Department.

The Department of Education (DE) is undertaking a consultation exercise with schools on a possible change to the Common Funding Formula. The consultation period will run from 15 November 2007 until 16 January 2008. The possible change has been put forward following deliberations with the Local Management of Schools (LMS) Steering Group, which includes representatives from the Education and Library Boards, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), the Governing Bodies Association (GBA), NI Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG).

Consultation on proposal to prohibit all sea fishing within two non-disturbance zones in Strangford Lough. This is to meet requirements of the Modiolus recovery plan.

Aim is to bring this into operation during 2008.

**December 2007 to March 2008**

**Draft Planning Policy Statement  
18: Renewable Energy**

**For further details contact:**

[Stephen.hamilton@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.hamilton@doeni.gov.uk)

**Or go to:**

[www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk)

Draft policy to assist consideration of planning applications for the development of renewable energy sources of electricity generation and heat production.

**December 2007 – 6 weeks**

**Consultation on Pensioner  
Measures arising from the  
Executive Review of Rating**

**For further details go to:**

<http://www.ratingreviewni.gov.uk/>

A targeted consultation will take place on measures for pensioners proposed following the Executive Review of Domestic Rating.

It intended that new provision for pensioners will be introduced as a result of the review from 1 April 2008.





## forthcoming consultations

Consultation start date/period	Summary
<b>December 2007</b> <b>Consultation on the proposed Control of Salmonella in Poultry (NI) Regulations 2007 which enforce a National Control Programme (NCP) for laying flocks of domestic fowl that implements EU Regulations 1168/2006 and 2160/2003.</b>	The legislation enforces the NCP which introduces new sampling and testing requirements for laying flocks in all member states to ensure that information on salmonella status can be more easily compared across the EU and the aim for a more unified approach to the control of salmonella.
<b>For further details contact:</b> <a href="mailto:anne-maire.mcconn@dardni.gov.uk">anne-maire.mcconn@dardni.gov.uk</a>	
<b>December 2007</b> <b>Consultation on Stakeholder Forum for Salmon and Inland Fisheries</b>	The Fisheries Conservancy Board (FCB) which is responsible for the conservation and protection of salmon and inland fisheries, is to be abolished under RPA and its functions transferred to DCAL. The FCB currently provides a forum for various fishery interests who nominate representatives to sit on its Board. DCAL recognises the importance of such stakeholder involvement and is to consult on how stakeholders can be represented in the future. This consultation was due to issue in August 2007 but will not now commence until December 2007.
<b>For further details contact</b> <a href="mailto:liam.devlin@dcalni.gov.uk">liam.devlin@dcalni.gov.uk</a> <b>Or telephone 028 9025 4257</b>	
<b>Estimated Start Date: December 2007</b> <b>Access to Driver Licensing Records</b>	Road Traffic (NI) Order 2007 gave power to make regulations determining and controlling access to driver licensing information. Public consultation is required as part of preparation for the introduction of regulations. This is a replication of an existing GB measure.
<b>For further details contact:</b> <a href="mailto:Stephen.monaghan@doeni.gov.uk">Stephen.monaghan@doeni.gov.uk</a>	

**Estimated December 2007**

**Consultation on Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses: Proposed Changes to Investigation Powers and Penalty Regime**

For further details contact:  
[andrew.dawson@delni.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.dawson@delni.gov.uk)  
Or Telephone: 028 9025 7536

The Department is responsible for legislation governing the NI recruitment industry. We will be consulting on proposals to include permitted offences to be triable either in the Magistrate's Court (as at present) or the Crown Court, thereby allowing the award of increased fines and the creation of attempted offences; and the creation of a power to compel third parties, such as banks, to produce financial information about agencies for investigation purposes.

**Mid December 2007**

**Introduction of 'approved operator' system for the EU Aid for Energy Crops Scheme**

For further details contact:  
[lesley.nelson@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:lesley.nelson@dardni.gov.uk)

Consultation to seek views on whether an 'approved operator' system for the Aid for Energy Crops Scheme would be adopted for Northern Ireland.

**From December 2007 to February 2008**

**(Draft) Sea Fishing (Enforcement of Community Measures) (Penalty Notices) Order (Northern Ireland) 2008**

For further details contact:  
[alan.brown@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:alan.brown@dardni.gov.uk)

Consultation on proposals to introduce a UK system of financial administrative penalties for certain Common Fisheries Policy fisheries offences during 2008.

Aim is to simplify and improve effectiveness of enforcement.

**To be issued late December/January 2008**

**Consultation on the Diseases of Animals (Northern Ireland) Bill**

For further details contact:  
[colette.connor@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:colette.connor@dardni.gov.uk)

The purpose of the Bill is to update and strengthen powers in the Diseases of Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 to deal quickly and effectively with any disease outbreak. The Bill will also enable policies to be introduced reflecting current and future developments in research and technology to prevent, trace and combat animal and poultry diseases.

**December 2007 – January 2008**

**Environmental Impact Assessment of Reserved Matters Applications.**

For further details contact:  
[robert.mackey@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:robert.mackey@doeni.gov.uk)  
Or Telephone: 028 9041 6982

Consultation paper on proposed regulations to amend the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (NI) 1999 to place on a statutory footing the requirement that consideration must be given to the need for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) before determining an application for approval of reserved matters.

**Anticipated consultation period:**

Under current arrangements for road traffic and

**December 2007 – March 2008**

**Consultation on the implementing detail of Graduated Fixed Penalty and Deposit Schemes**

**For further details contact:**

[iain.Cleland@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:iain.Cleland@doeni.gov.uk)

**Or Telephone: 028 9054 0608**

roadworthiness offences, penalties are not related to the severity of the offence. However, under the new powers it will be possible to graduate penalties, so that they reflect the level of offending, and to collect deposits from those offenders who do not have a UK address suitable for later proceedings. In addition the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) will be empowered to issue fixed penalty notices in respect of many of the offences they are charged with enforcing.

**Anticipated consultation period:  
December 2007 – March 2008**

**Consultation on proposed changes to current health and driver licensing arrangements**

**For further details contact:**

[Tim.Ford@dvla.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Tim.Ford@dvla.gsi.gov.uk)

**Or telephone: 01792 765 252**

[cathy.johnston@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:cathy.johnston@doeni.gov.uk)

**Or Telephone: 028 9054 1173**

The arrangements for addressing health and driving issues through the licensing process have been in place since the early 1970s. These are now facing a number of issues - most significantly: a lack of evidence for any road safety benefit; growing volumes and costs; and, an increasing reliance on the car for mobility. For these reasons an independent review of DVLA's medical driver licensing process was commissioned in January 2005. Following announcement of the results of this in February 2006, a cross departmental initiative - the Health and Driver Licensing Review - was begun by DfT to identify further areas for change to be put to public consultation. These changes are aimed to put in place a system that will deliver on road safety and mobility and provide value for money.

**December 2007 to March 2008**

**The Building Regulations (NI) 2000 – Proposed amendments to Part D (Structure) and Part J (Solid waste in buildings).**

The consultation proposes amendments to two parts of the Building Regulations (NI) 2000, namely Part D (Structure) and Part J (Solid waste in buildings)

**For further details go to**

[www.buildingregulationsni.gov.uk](http://www.buildingregulationsni.gov.uk)

**Early 2008**

**Review of employment dispute resolution in Northern Ireland**

Subject to Ministerial approval, it is intended to conduct public consultation on systems for resolving employment rights disputes. The review will explore the respective roles of workplace procedures, alternative dispute resolution and tribunals in addressing conflict at work.

**For further details contact:**

[lynne.taylor@delni.gov.uk](mailto:lynne.taylor@delni.gov.uk)

Following initial pre-consultation with stakeholders in late 2007, formal consultation is expected to commence in early 2008 for twelve weeks.

**January 2008**

**Consultation on the Transposition of Council Directive 2002/99/EC (known as Hygiene 4 or H4) laying down the animal health rules governing the production,**

The purpose is to control meat from animals from premises located near disease outbreak sites and to ensure treatment of this meat before it enters the food chain. This is in order to prevent the spread of animal diseases via products of animal origin such as meat and meat products, in accordance with Council Directive 2002/99/EC of

**processing, distribution and introduction of products of animal origin for human consumption. Following consultation it is proposed to introduce the legislation - Meat (Disease Control) Order (NI) 2007.**

**For further details contact:**  
[anne-maire.mcconn@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:anne-maire.mcconn@dardni.gov.uk)

**January 2008**

**NI Operational Plan for European Fisheries Fund 2007-2013**

**For further details contact:**  
[paddy.campbell@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:paddy.campbell@dardni.gov.uk)

**To be issued January to March 2008**

**Consultation on the Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008**

**For further details contact:**  
[kate.davey@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:kate.davey@dardni.gov.uk)

**January/February 2008**

**The Goods Vehicles (Licensing of Operators) Bill**

**For further details contact:**  
[john.brogan@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:john.brogan@doeni.gov.uk)

**Estimated start date Jan/Feb 2008**

**Proposed changes to the Blue Badge Scheme**

**For further details go to:**  
[www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/consultations](http://www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/consultations)

**Start date Jan/ Feb 2008**

16 December 2002. The Directive includes European Community measures covering both domestic trade and export. The animal diseases covered by the Directive are Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Classical Swine Fever (CSF), Swine Vesicular Disease (SVD), African Swine Fever, Rinderpest, Newcastle Disease, Avian Influenza and Peste des Petit Ruminants (Sheep and Goat Plague).

The new European Fisheries Fund will run from 2007-2013. The NI Operational Plan will contribute to the overall UK Operational Plan that will outline funding priorities and objectives. All member state Operational Plans will be subject to EU approval.

The 2008 TSE Regulations will amend the existing 2006 TSE Regulations and implement amendments to EC Regulation 999/2001 laying down rules for the prevention, control and eradication of certain transmissible spongiform encephalopathies.

Awaiting definitive timetable in line with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

A Bill that seeks to reform the regulation of road freight operators and vehicles in Northern Ireland, it will extend licensing requirements to operators who carry their own goods in the course of their business. It will also contribute to improvements in road safety, ensure fairer competition, improve environmental conditions for operating centres, enable more effective enforcement and contribute to a reduction in organised crime.

To revise the form of the badge and introduce a new category of eligibility for children under the age of 2 who need to travel with bulky medical equipment.

Judgement of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of ASLEF-V-UK. In relation to

**Trade Union & Labour Relations (NI)  
Order 1995: Impact of the ASLEF  
case**

**For further details contact:**  
[brian.patterson@delni.gov.uk](mailto:brian.patterson@delni.gov.uk)

**Start date Jan/Feb 2008**

**Statutory Annual Leave Entitlement  
- additional two days**

**For further details contact:**  
**Contact:**  
[brian.patterson@delni.gov.uk](mailto:brian.patterson@delni.gov.uk)

**January to March 2008**

**Review of Speed Management  
Policy**

**For further details contact:**  
**Graeme Brown, Roads Service  
TEPU, Clarence Court, Belfast  
Or E-mail :**  
[graeme.brown@drdni.gov.uk](mailto:graeme.brown@drdni.gov.uk)

**Anticipated consultation period:**  
**January – April 2008**

**Consultation on the implementing  
detail of a scheme of continuous  
enforcement of motor insurance  
requirements from the record**

**For further details contact:**  
[emma.rodgy@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:emma.rodgy@doeni.gov.uk)  
**Or Telephone 028 9054 0661**

**February 2008**

**Intended consultation of the  
recommendations of the Deliotte  
review of bovine Tuberculosis  
testing arrangements within  
Northern Ireland.**

**For further details contact:**  
[colette.mcmaster@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:colette.mcmaster@dardni.gov.uk)

GB law, the Court decided that trade unions must be given greater autonomy to decide whether the political party membership of individuals should debar them from belonging to the union. Article 38 of the 1995 Order may require amendment in light of this decision. Awaiting developments in GB before finalising NI policy proposals. Formal consultation with stakeholders should commence early 2008.

Consideration to be given to increasing the statutory minimum leave entitlement by a further two days, to reflect the 10 bank and public holidays in NI. Research proposals are being developed to help inform policy development. Consultation with stakeholders should commence early 2008.

DRD has led a review of speed management which was undertaken in co-operation with the PSNI and the Department of the Environment's Road Safety Branch. It mirrors a similar review undertaken by the Department for Transport in England and reviews undertaken by the regional governments in Scotland and Wales. The draft policy is currently with the DRD Minister for approval. Following approval, there would be a 12 week period of public consultation which is expected to begin in early January 2008 with final publication of the policy estimated in Autumn 2008.

The scheme will make it possible to prosecute for having control of an uninsured vehicle without first having to detect the person using it on a road. The primary legislation – the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order – is already in place.

Following informal discussions with the veterinary associations, and agreement from the Minister, it would be the intention to go to public consultation in February 2008 on the recommendations of the report.

**February 2008**

**Consultation on new signage and lighting for school buses**

**For further details contact**  
[susan.dolan@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:susan.dolan@doeni.gov.uk)

The consultation will invite views on the requirement for an illuminated sign and flashing warning lights to be fitted to school buses and used when children are getting on and off.

**March 2008**

**[Cardiovascular Health and Wellbeing Service Framework](#)**

The Cardiovascular Health and Wellbeing Service Framework will set out, at high level, the type of service that patients and users should expect, and will specify Northern Ireland standards and supporting actions - linked to recognised good practice guidance. It will promote and secure better integration of service delivery along the whole pathway of care from prevention of disease/ill health to diagnosis/treatment and rehabilitation, and on to end of life care.

**March 2008 to May 2008.**

**DARD Research & Development Strategy 2007-2015.**

**For further details contact:**  
[rosalind.dempsey@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:rosalind.dempsey@dardni.gov.uk)  
or Telephone: 028 90524625

The Department is drawing up an R&D Strategy to help identify key knowledge and information required to support the development, implementation and evaluation of DARD policies as well as new products, processes and ideas which will assist the sustainable development of the agri-food industry and wider rural community. The research identified in the Strategy will be commissioned from the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute and other research providers.

The new Strategy signals a more open and transparent approach to deciding priorities for DARD-funded R&D.

**March 2008**

**Review of Support Arrangements for Less Favoured Areas**

**For further details contact:**  
[fiona.browne@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.browne@dardni.gov.uk)  
Or Telephone: 028 9052 4725

Review of the rationale for the provision of support within LFA, to determine whether the current LFA Scheme meets the identified needs and represents value for money and to present options for the future of LFA support.

**March 2008**

**Consultation on the need for sports grounds public order offences.**

**For further details contact:**  
[ciaran.mee@dcalni.gov.uk](mailto:ciaran.mee@dcalni.gov.uk)

DCAL in conjunction with NIO is currently considering the need for the introduction of new legislation to create public order offences at sports grounds

**Estimated start date March 2008**

**Strategy paper on non-agricultural diffuse water pollution**

The strategy paper will set out what has been identified by the Department as the priority areas of non-agricultural diffuse water pollution in Northern Ireland and suggestions for how this may be addressed. A programme of measures

**For further details contact:**  
[gerard.mcclarey@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:gerard.mcclarey@doeni.gov.uk)  
Or  
[david.watson2@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:david.watson2@doeni.gov.uk)  
Or Telephone: 02890 257378

**Start date March/April 2008**

**Draft Regulations to facilitate  
Industrial Court Appointments**

**For further details contact:**  
[brian.patterson@delni.gov.uk](mailto:brian.patterson@delni.gov.uk)

**Estimated Start Date: Spring 2008**

**Consultation on legislative  
proposals to permit vehicle seizure**

**For further details contact:**  
[donald.starritt@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:donald.starritt@doeni.gov.uk)  
or  
[jennifer.mccay@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:jennifer.mccay@doeni.gov.uk)  
or Telephone: 028 9054 455

**Estimated start date Spring 2008**

**Consultation on proposed action  
planning guidance for  
environmental noise**

**For further details contact:**  
[Colin.nugent@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:Colin.nugent@doeni.gov.uk)  
Tel 028 9054 4501

**Estimated start date: Spring 2008**

**The Future of Rural Proofing and the  
Role of Rural Champion.**

**For further details contact:**  
[ruralpolicy.branch@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:ruralpolicy.branch@dardni.gov.uk)

will be completed for inclusion in River Basin  
Management Plans as required under the Water  
Framework Directive.

Draft Regulations are being prepared which will  
facilitate appointment of Industrial Court members  
under the Industrial Relations (NI) Order 1992.  
The revisions to 1992 Order are to be  
implemented via the Public Authorities Reform  
Bill, subject to Assembly approval. Consultation  
with stakeholders should commence in March  
2008.

A consultation on regulatory proposals which will  
permit authorised officers of the Department of the  
Environment to seize vehicles suspected of  
involvement in illegal waste activity.

The Department of the Environment is required to  
produce guidance for competent authorities under  
the Environmental Noise Regulations (NI) 2006

Following the publication of a new Rural Strategy,  
DARD will consult on how to most effectively  
deliver on its new role as Rural Champion. It will  
also examine how to further embed rural proofing  
within the policy making process.





policy reviews coming up

### Summary

**November 2007**

**Review of DEL Postgraduate Policy and Funding**

For further details contact:  
[patrick.smyth@delni.gov.uk](mailto:patrick.smyth@delni.gov.uk)

To review policy and funding in light of current and emerging needs for higher level skills in the labour market and in comparison with provision in the rest of the UK, Ireland and further afield.

**December 2007**

**Evaluation of the Employment Right Project managed by the Northern Ireland Law Centre and supported financially by DEL**

For further details contact:  
[jim.hanna@delni.gov.uk](mailto:jim.hanna@delni.gov.uk) or  
Telephone: 028 9025 7485

DEL provides the NI Law Centre with financial support (c£150k per annum) to run an Employment Rights project. The project provides advice, support and representation to people who have employment problems and who have no other source of professional support and expertise because of personal financial constraints or other disadvantage. This project has been subject to the normal financial accountability processes and these will continue to apply to this project or any future similar initiative

**December 2007**

**Evaluation of the Training Services and Advisory projects managed by the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.**

For further details contact:  
[jim.hanna@delni.gov.uk](mailto:jim.hanna@delni.gov.uk) or  
Tel: 028 90257485

DEL provides financial support to two NIC ICTU projects, namely Training Services and Advisory Services.

Training is provided in Union Reps Training Stages 1&2, Health and Safety Representative Stages 1&2, Employment Law for TU Representatives, induction and several other short courses.

The Advisory Services scheme enables NIC/ICTU to develop policies and programmes to promote equality of opportunity, especially in relation to women, including the provision of training on handling job evaluation, equal pay/equal value and related topics. Issues relating to work study will also be included. The total provision for both schemes is £180k per annum. It is intended to carry out an evaluation of

both schemes

**Early 2008**

[Commencement of the next round of Service Framework Development](#)

Work is ongoing to determine the next round of service frameworks to be developed in 2008/9.

The result of this process will be announced in early 2008. Current frameworks in development are: Cardiovascular health and wellbeing; Respiratory health and wellbeing; Cancer prevention, treatment and care; Mental Health; and Learning disability.

**Mid to late January 2008**

**Joint Interim Evaluation of Employment Service Delivery Model project, Steps to Work and Pathway for Lone Parents pilot programmes**

**For further details contact:**  
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The aim of the Employment Service Delivery Project is to establish an infrastructure in Jobs & Benefits offices which can accommodate the implementation of the Government's ongoing Welfare Reform Programme and provide an Advisory Service that will deal effectively with the diverse needs of the Employment Service's current client base. The Department is also piloting a more flexible, menu based, modular approach to provision, better tailored to the individual's needs, with a clear emphasis on increasing the participants' employability prospects; and Pathways to Work for Lone Parents Project, of which the overall aim of is to test a comprehensive package of support measures to increase the number of lone parents participating in the labour market.

**March 2008**

**Review of Building Regulations**

**For further details go to:**  
[www.buildingregulationsni.gov.uk](http://www.buildingregulationsni.gov.uk)

An amendment to building regulations primary legislation will be before the Assembly in December 2007. The proposed amendments will require a complete revision of two pieces of supporting legislation, namely the Building Regulations (NI) 2000 and the Building (Prescribed Fees) Regulations (NI) 1997. It is not proposed to include an uplift to the technical requirements of the regulations as part of this review.

**Due Spring 2008.**

**Interim Evaluation of Pathways to Work Programme**

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Pathways to Work, a new and innovative approach to helping people with health conditions and disabilities access the labour market has been operational in Northern Ireland since October 2005. The service is now in operation in 20 areas of Northern Ireland and is available to 60% of annual new and repeat claims to incapacity benefits. A first interim evaluation is now due and findings will help to inform full roll-out of the service.





summary of key past events

### Summary

**28-31 August 2007**

**Society of Archivists Annual Conference**

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The Society of Archivists Annual Conference on the theme of 'Differing Directions: Challenging Directions' covered a range of subjects from archive buildings (important to PRONI as it prepares for its new premises), and records management, including the management of electronic records, to the conservation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the American Declaration of Independence. The programme attracted participants from across the UK and the Republic of Ireland but also from abroad. The feedback from participants (up to 250 on some days) at the conference was extremely positive in terms of the organisation and planning (which had significant input from a local committee), the content of the papers and the warm welcome they received.

**27-28 September 2007**  
**Ramada Hotel Belfast**

**Cardiovascular Health and Wellbeing Service Framework Workshop**

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A workshop was held to discuss the Cardiovascular Health and Wellbeing Service Framework Draft Standards

**17 October 2007**  
**Ramada Hotel Belfast**

**[Future Service Frameworks Workshop](#)**

The next stage of the service frameworks programme is to identify further priority areas for the development of the next round of frameworks, to commence in early 2008. In support of this, a workshop was held to enable all key stakeholders to inform and influence the prioritisation process.

Attendees included HSC organisations, and voluntary and community groups.

**30-31 October 2007**

**European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval (ECWVTA) seminars for local vehicle manufacturers/convertors**

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[richard.crawford@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:richard.crawford@doeni.gov.uk)

Two half-day seminars were held for the local vehicle manufacturing industry in Antrim and Cookstown at the end of October. Their purpose was to make initial contact with the industry and to set out some of the implications of the new ECWVTA regime which will be phased in from 2009 onwards.

**27 November 2007**

[A new vision for Health](#)

This seminar entitled 'The Biology of Poverty' is the first in a series being hosted by Belfast Healthy Cities. This seminar provided an invaluable opportunity to hear contributions from the Chief Medical Officers for Northern Ireland and Scotland. Dr Harry Burns, Chief Medical Officer in Scotland, looked at the links between deprivation and ill health. Read more on the website.



# Policylink

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December 2007

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