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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 eighteenth issue of the policylink bulletin!

There are a number of sections in this edition and hopefully there will be something of interest to everyone.

In this edition we draw your attention to the Strategy Unit discussion paper entitled "Realising Britain's Potential: Future Strategic Challenges for Britain". The Strategy Unit were tasked by the Prime Minister to undertake an assessment of the future challenges facing Britain drawing on an analysis of trends and drivers of change. The paper provides a comprehensive assessment of the long term challenges and opportunities facing Britain.

We also highlight a recent report from the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment entitled "Better Regulation Annual Report 2006/07". The Northern Ireland Better Regulation Strategy requires Departments to undertake a Regulatory Impact Assessment when considering new policy proposals/legislation or amendments to existing policies which may impact on businesses. This annual report provides details of action taken by NI Departments to reduce burdens on business.

We have also included an article from Monica O'Mullane, Department of Government, School of Business and Law, University College, Cork entitled "Evidence from research on the feasibility of Health Impact Assessments in policy". This article summarises Monica's ongoing research on the role of health impact assessment in the policy process.

In Chapter 4 – new publications – we highlight a range of new or forthcoming publications covering topics such as child poverty, dementia services and support, and citizenship.

In Chapter 5 – new from research institutes and think tanks – we highlight research on issues such as: poverty and exclusion; migration and migrant workers in NI; planning for affordable housing; community empowerment; youth crime; hidden life of youth on line; etc.

As usual, this edition includes details of:

- Conferences and seminars coming up;
- Current and forthcoming consultations; and
- Policy reviews coming up.

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

Articles

“Realising Britain’s Potential: Future Strategic Challenges for Britain” (Summary)

Introduction

Britain is one of the most prosperous, successful countries in the world. It has made great progress over the past decade, maintaining its traditional strengths of an open economy and tolerant society while tackling poverty, improving health and educational outcomes and becoming a better place for the many rather than the few.

If Britain and its people are to continue to prosper, new and growing challenges must be faced and new opportunities embraced. The Prime Minister therefore asked the Strategy Unit in the Cabinet Office to undertake a major assessment of the future challenges facing Britain.

This assessment has now been completed and is available as a Strategy Unit discussion paper, *Realising Britain’s Potential: Future Strategic Challenges for Britain*. Drawing on an analysis of trends and drivers of change, future projections and scenarios from inside and outside government and a detailed analysis of Britain’s strengths and weaknesses, it provides a comprehensive assessment of the long term challenges and opportunities facing Britain, covering:

- globalisation
- economic prosperity
- life chances, talent and social mobility
- the ageing and increasing diversity of the population
- family life and communities
- crime and public safety
- public services
- climate change, and
- the modernisation and renewal of the constitution and democratic institutions

The assessment suggests Britain is well placed to address these challenges and opportunities, and sets out a wealth of facts and insights to back this up.

Key themes and messages

The world around us is going to change profoundly. By 2020 China will be the second and India the sixth largest economy in the world; 40% of the world’s labour force will be in China and India; the world’s population will have grown by another 1.2bn; and there will be increasing effects of climate change and increased pressure on global resources.

These global changes will inevitably increase competitive pressures on Britain. Notwithstanding future challenges, the UK economy is fundamentally strong. Global changes will in any case open up a host of opportunities for Britain. Not just huge new markets in countries such as China and India but opportunities to create value from new technologies and innovation. The transition to a low carbon, low waste economy for example will open up vast new markets in environmental technologies. 400,000 people in the UK already have jobs in environmental goods and services, and this market is expected to at least double in size over the next ten years.

This doesn’t mean global change isn’t without risks. Clearly, as economies become increasingly interconnected, what happens in one country can quickly impact on others as the

recent US credit crunch has shown. Britain needs to respond to the growth of developing economies by moving increasingly into high value added sectors. The key is to manage and mitigate these risks through, amongst other things, open, flexible and adaptable markets; investment in skills, talent and opportunity for all; promoting a climate favourable to enterprise; and engaging all regions and localities of the UK in contributing to future prosperity.

Promoting skills, talent and opportunity will be especially important. Though substantial progress has been made in tackling poverty and promoting opportunity over the past ten years, there remain persistent gaps between the life chances of people from different backgrounds starting from birth and continuing throughout their lives. Countries with strong investment in early years rank highly on measures of educational excellence and equity. As businesses move increasingly into high value added sectors, where the UK has comparative advantage, and seeks employees with high skills, it will be ever more important to give those adults with no or low skills second chances to find and progress in work.

For many jobs softer skills (such as good inter-personal, communication and team working skills) will be increasingly important and, for those young people that do not go onto university, the apprenticeships programme will have a central role to play in helping them to develop such skills.

There will be major demographic and social changes. As a result of ageing and net migration, the UK population is likely to grow to 67m by 2020. The number of people over 85 is expected to grow by 50% by 2020 adding further pressures to health, social care and other services. Family life will continue to change with average family size continuing to get smaller, more women delaying or having no children and more people living alone. This doesn't mean people don't value family life – on the contrary the evidence shows families are crucial to our well being. Strong, safe communities without crime and anti-social behaviour which provide healthy, happy and vibrant places to live will be increasingly important in supporting families and family life.

Public and individual expectations will continue to rise. People will increasingly access information and opinion from more diverse sources, impacting not only on their attitudes, but also their values, expectations and behaviours. Rising expectations will have particular consequences for public services.

Allied to economic, social and demographic change, technological innovation and other trends, public services will need to be tailored and personalised to individual needs. Public services will have to place greater emphasis on innovation, diversity of supply, user responsiveness, collaboration between users and providers, prevention, professionalism and value for money for the taxpayer.

Climate change, driven by human activity, is the greatest long-term threat facing the world today. Taking action to mitigate it is possible, but this will require decisive international action. The UK will need to play its role both as a leader of international change but also through its own domestic commitments.

The increasing skew in political and civic participation - with the young and disadvantaged half as likely to participate in politics as other groups – will need to be addressed. The Government's agenda for modernising the constitution and renewing our democracy at national and local level will be central to addressing this.

Further information

Copies of the full Strategy Unit report are available on the [Cabinet Office](#) website.

This report describes the current arrangements for ensuring regulatory best practice in Northern Ireland. This report gives an account of how NI Departments are taking active steps to reduce the adverse effects of government regulation on businesses. Within the UK, the Better Regulation agenda is being actively pursued in Whitehall through various initiatives based mainly on the recommendations of the Better Regulation Task Force. To ensure that NI businesses are at least as well placed as their counterparts in the rest of the UK with regard to regulation, DETI as lead department in this regard, has maintained contact with colleagues in the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR), formerly the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Cabinet Office. In 2006/2007, it also undertook a review of the Northern Ireland Better Regulation Strategy. One of the recommendations of this review was that DETI, on behalf of all Government Departments would prepare and publish a Better Regulation Annual Report.

The Northern Ireland Better Regulation Strategy requires Departments to undertake a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) when considering new policy proposals / legislation or amendments to existing policy which may impact on business. Departments are required to consult with all stakeholders at an early stage and to draw up a preliminary RIA which includes cost implications to business. Departments are also required to carry out a micro business test, assessing the impact of any proposals on businesses of less than 5 employees. To assist business, Departments have also to provide guidance on new legislation at least twelve weeks before it comes into operation. (The only exception to this requirement is where timetables are dictated by either emergency situation such as risks to health or by EU requirements).

This annual report provides details of action taken by Departments to reduce burdens on business, social enterprise organisations, charities and voluntary groups, for example legislation which has been simplified or repealed; simplification of forms; the introduction of new systems or websites.

The current arrangements for ensuring regulatory best practice are discussed and set in the context of the European Union and the UK. In addition the report provides a very useful list of final Regulatory Impact Assessments completed by NI Departments and their availability in terms of the appropriate Departmental websites.

The report is available on the DETI dedicated [Better Regulation Website](#).

For further information contact Janette Devlin ext 29276 or Amanda Tomlinson, ext 29660

Editorial Note:

On the theme of health impact, this article provides an overview of Health Impact Assessment (HIA) as a policy support tool. The author, Monica O'Mullane, Department of Government, University College Cork summarises her ongoing research on the role of health impact assessment in the policy process.

Evidence from research on the feasibility of Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) in policy, Monica O'Mullane, Department of Government, School of Business and Law, University College Cork:

Introduction

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a policy-support tool, which is concerned with the biomedical and social health of populations. It seeks to enable political actors to make evidence-based decisions. The tool endeavours to involve all relevant stakeholders in the political process, and to ensure that evidence, as derived from this process, is utilised in policy formulation. Previous academic and practitioner work has been concerned with the input of stakeholders in the policy process (Cooke, 2006). However, there is increasing interest in examining the extent of utilisation of HIA knowledge and evidence in policy making (Kemmer, 2006).

Impact assessment, as a framework for facilitating better informed policy making, comes in a variety of forms. Decision makers and government officials will be familiar with the most institutionalised types, namely Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), and impact assessments relating to poverty, equality, and regulatory impact. As noble as the notion of enabling better informed policy making is, the abundance of impact assessments in the daily running of government business can sometimes be perceived as placing further requirements on those responsible for the management of policy initiation and formulation.

What is Health Impact Assessment (HIA)?

HIA is a relatively “young field of endeavour” (Kemmm, *et al.* 2004: vi). It is grounded in two conceptual roots, specifically EIA and the public health / health promotion movement. It is the fundamental goal of HIA to ensure that all policies, projects and programmes are essentially ‘health proofed’, so that risks upon population health are reduced, and benefits for health are maximised.

The WHO Gothenburg Consensus Paper (1999) offers one of the most widely accepted definitions of HIA, stating that it comprises of:

“A combination of procedures, methods and tools by which a policy, a programme, or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the health of a population and the distribution of effects within the population”

(Kemmm and Parry, 2004a:2)

It is currently accepted knowledge that health is determined by factors outside the control of the health services (Marmot and Wilkinson, 2003). HIA seeks to ensure all public policies are, in the very least, aware of the health consequences upon population health. Health inequality is a determinant of health as it has long been recognised that those wealthier are healthier, and those poorer live shorter lives (Acheson, 1998; DHSSPNI, 2004). The fact that HIA aims to reduce health inequalities, both in health service provision and within all spheres of public policy making, indicates its relevance in promoting healthier public policy (Kearns and Pursell, 2007; Belfast Healthy Cities, 2007).

The HIA framework enables the estimation of possible health effects. It has been deemed by those working with health considerations within the EIA process as the best method for eliciting base-line data for the long-term follow-up of the impact of development on health. It focuses upon the complex determinants of health, involves a wide range of stakeholders, and a short-timescale for the HIA process and report production is the norm (Mindell, *et al.* 2004).

The methodological origins of HIA are genetically linked to the EIA process and framework (McCarthy, *et al.* 2002). The stages of the HIA model are similar to those in EIA, as seen from Figure 1.

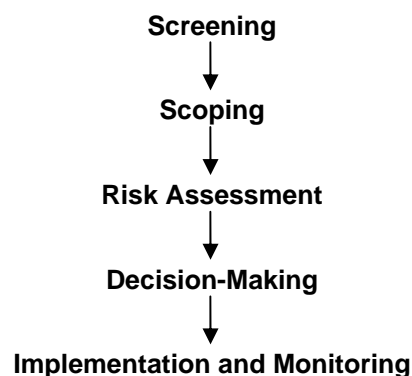


Figure 1: Stages of the Health Impact Assessment Model (Kemmm and Parry, 2004b:16)

HIA activities have a number of common features. Most HIAs will range in scope and will use both qualitative and quantitative evidence operating within a particular timescale. The HIA framework seeks to operate as a mediator in the health promotion movement and in shaping the decision making process, although its influence in this process has yet to be precisely established. Further research examining on the policy process and the decision making procedures is required.

Health Issues in Environmental Impact Assessment or Strategic Environmental Assessment?

The rationale behind EIA is accepted as essential for better informed policy making, and in the protection of the environment. However, although EIAs are obliged to consider the indirect and direct effects that projects or plans may have on 'human beings,' this seldom occurs (Sutcliffe, 1995). One survey conducted in the UK found that 28 per cent of EIAs analysed considered health impacts of project or plans satisfactorily (Birley, *et al.* 1998). Research has been conducted into the feasibility of the satisfactory incorporation of health impacts consideration as part of the EIA (Fehr, 1999). As a generalisation, the EIA view of impacts upon health tend to focus on mitigating harmful risks as opposed to considering opportunities whereby health could be promoted or where the health benefits of plans could be increased.

The SEA framework allows for strategic planning and management of environmental considerations. It aims to feed evidence and knowledge into the policy making processes. A holistic perspective of health does not form part of the central focus in this impact assessment. There is more attention paid to biophysical environmental concerns. However, there is potential for greater incorporation of health considerations into the framework, and this is increasingly the case (Cave, 2006).

Policy context: enablers and barriers to the utilisation of HIAs in policy:

The implementation of impact assessment processes and frameworks has been found to be reliant upon the overall political administrative context of the decision making procedures (Gazzola, 2006). This has been found to be the case in an examination of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) practices throughout the EU (Glasson and Gosling, 2001). Indeed, as much as impact assessment is deemed an appropriate, informative and methodologically-systematic decision-aiding tool (Van der Vorst, *et al.* 1999), the importance of such tools to inform policy making remains marginalised to a large extent. Most work pertaining to impact assessment is based upon the assumption that by providing decision makers with predictive and systematic information, the policy making process overall will be improved.

Such an approach, rational though it is, faces a number of barriers which often characterise decision making in the real-world. These include: cognitive constraints, behavioural biases as well as a variability of preferences and norms. Limitations also relate to the distribution of decision making over actors and time, and the concept that it is a process composed of bargaining and negotiation between multiple actors and institutional layers.

Ongoing doctoral research by the author is examining the factors that hinder and aid the assimilation of HIA knowledge into the policy process. For the purpose of this particular research, certain enablers and barriers, as presented in Table 1 below are being tested through the examination of four project-level HIA cases. This research should contribute to our understanding of the contextual conditions for effective usage of HIA in policy in ways which are both practical and effective.

Table 1: Enablers and Barriers of the Decision-makers and Policy Process in the Ballyfermot (Dublin) HIA (Hayes, 2007).

Enablers	Barriers
Involved in planning and conduct of HIA	Lack of awareness of health by other sectors
Input from outside decision-making process	Lack of knowledge of policy-making environment
Clear organisation commitment to HIA	
Subject matter did not arise controversies	
Realistic recommendations were presented to the decision-makers	

Conclusions and reflections:

Policymakers now have a good track record in the assimilation of various impact assessment frameworks. Nevertheless, there is a case for a more integrated approach to impact assessment which allows for the assessment of several different impacts on policy proposals in a single process as in the case of the Policy Toolkit produced by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in Northern Ireland (OFMDFM 2007). Amalgamating the tenets of all impact assessments (IAs) makes common sense so long as the centrality of each IA foci (ie. environment, regulation, poverty and health) can be addressed. Currently, ongoing doctoral research in University College Cork is investigating the utilisation of knowledge and evidence from HIA cases from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This research will indicate the feasibility, and provide suggestions for the usefulness, of HIA in contributing to local and national policies (O’Mullane, 2007).





support for policy-making

Summary

[Policy Hub Bulletin](#)

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

[Policylink](#)

We have recently updated our Policylink web pages. There are now more policy case studies available and we have added information on the critical friend service.

[Policy Toolkit](#)

The Policy Toolkit is intended to provide a practical overview of the key steps and phases in the policy development process. It is divided into individual workbooks, structured around the key stages of the policy process to enable policy-makers to dip into the guidance as appropriate. The Toolkit is available on OFMDFM's Policylink web pages. Amendments and updates to the Toolkit will be undertaken as required.

[Evidence Network](#)

Established by the Economic and Social Research Council following a major initiative taken in 1999 to bring social science research much nearer to the decision process, the UK Centre for Evidenced Based Policy and Practice provides a focal point for those interested in evidenced based policy and practice. So far some 1350 researchers, practitioners and policy makers from 25 countries have signed up to the Evidence Network over the last seven years. The Network maintains a useful website and is a useful source for tracking down social science evidence and expertise.

[www.C4ni.com](#)

This web-based project aims to encourage active participation in which citizens actively engage in the decision and policy making processes. Using the internet as a delivery mechanism, the project provides valuable explanations and insights into a range of policy related areas such as:

- what is policy
- different levels of government
- the role of devolved government

- how to make a change
- expert advice from 4 highly respected campaigners on how to influence policy decisions.
- the project has potentially a large interested constituency including public, community and voluntary sectors as well as universities, colleges and schools.





new policy relevant publications

Summary

NI Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) Review

Download a free copy of the [Winter 2007-2008 Review](#) or order by contacting the Commission on (028) 9024 3987.

The latest edition of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission magazine NIHRC Review, has been published. This special extended edition explores the theme of dealing with the legacy of the conflict. A number of experts in this field such as Jane Winter, Director of British Irish Rights Watch and Brandon Hamber, Chair of Healing through Remembering, have contributed articles. Also in this issue, Lord Chief Justice, Sir Brian Kerr, helps mark the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Maggie Beirne, former Director of CAJ, reflects on her work in Northern Ireland.

[ENABLE Newsletter](#)

UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

The new ENABLE Newsletter is produced by the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to keep you informed about the work of the UN system on disability issues.

The Convention is a human rights instrument with an explicit social development dimension. It reaffirms that *all* persons with *all* types of disabilities must enjoy *all* human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others. It clarifies and qualifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for persons with disabilities to effectively exercise their rights, where their rights have been violated, and where protection of rights must be reinforced.

[Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing](#)

This report from the Communities and Local Government Department tells us that the ageing of the population will be one of the greatest

Society

challenges of the 21st century for housing. It outlines plans for making sure that there is enough appropriate housing available in future to relieve the forecasted unsustainable pressures on homes, health and social care services.

Impact Assessment of National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society: Advice and Information, Rapid Repairs Service

Changing demographics resulting from England's ageing population makes it vital to plan for the future needs in older people's housing and related services. Evidence suggests that if no action is taken, care costs for older people could rise by 325 per cent by 2041. Older people need better access to information on housing and related services to find options and make correct choices. Decisions are often made in crises, reducing scope for effective preventative approaches. There is also need for better access to home adaptations and repairs allowing independent living at home.

Child Poverty in Scotland

On 4 February 2008, the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs published a report (Child poverty in Scotland) which looks in detail at those factors which underpin the success or failure of Government policy in relation to child poverty, including the extent to which work can offer families a route out of poverty, the tax and benefits system, the availability of childcare and the status of young people.

Dementia services and support

On 24 January 2008, the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (PAC) published a report (Sixth report: improving services and support for people with dementia (HC 228)). For the key findings of this report see the attached link.

Life chances of families at risk

On 10 January 2007, the Social Exclusion Task Force (SETF) in the Cabinet Office published a report (Think family: improving the life chances of families at risk) which launches a new approach to local services to improve support for the most disadvantaged families and prevent problems passing down from excluded parents to their children.

Citizenship: Our Common Bond

This report from Lord Goldsmith tells us that it is easy to imagine that British citizenship should denote a strong connection with membership of the community in the UK; that British citizenship denotes a strong commitment to, and connection with, this country. However, that is not historically the case.

The report discusses measures to address that and makes a range of proposals that touch every stage of an individual's life. The recommendations

are intended to promote the meaning and significance of citizenship within modern Britain.

March and June 2008

[HSC Workforce Key Facts Bulletin](#)

March Bulletin published in April

June Bulletin published in July

For further information contact:
workforcestatistics@dhsspsni.gov.uk
k
or telephone 028 9052 2468

This is a quarterly overview of Human Resource Management System workforce data provided by the organisations within the Health Service. It includes the number of staff in each Trust or Organisation by working group.

March 2008

New guidance on the Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations (NI) 2005

For further details contact
andrew.dawson@delni.gov.uk
or telephone 028 9025 7536

The Regulations, which establish a right for employees (or their representatives) to be informed and consulted by their employer on certain matters, have applied to undertakings with at least 150 employees since 2005 and with at least 100 employees since 2007. From 6 April 2008, they will apply to undertakings with at least 50 employees. The Department is distributing summary guidance to all such undertakings and in addition will update its online detailed guidance.

March/April 2008

Research on Statutory Annual Leave Entitlement - additional two days

For further information contact:
brian.patterson@delni.gov.uk
or telephone 028 9025 7545

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 have been drafted to help inform policy development.

April 2008

Publication of revised NI Highway Code

For further information contact:
harry.green@doeni.gov.uk

The 2003 NI Highway Code has been updated and modernised to take account of legislative changes since 2003.

The revised Code provides the reader with up to date information on road safety legislation and sound advice for all road users.

Early April

An Evaluation of Early Developments - The Children and Young People Funding Package (CYPFP)

For further information contact:
stanley.goudie@deni.gov.uk

The report by the Education and Training Inspectorate sets out the background to the CYPFP and considers the strengths and areas for improvement in the implementation of the Package in the Greater Newry Area.

April 2008

Survey of the Quality of the Provision for Vulnerable Children and Young Adults

For further information contact:
maureen.bennett@deni.gov.uk

The survey focused on the needs of young people who come to school with (or experience in school) issues so serious as to disadvantage their education progress and potential.

This survey selected samples of primary, post-primary and alternative provision, including juvenile justice provision, to evaluate the extent of the problem in these organisations, to identify best practice and make recommendations to raise the awareness of, and improve the provision for these children and young people.

April 2008

Report on Alternative Education Provision in the Southern Education & Library Board (SELB)

For further information contact:
maureen.bennett@deni.gov.uk

This survey focused on the provision made by SELB for young people unable to attend mainstream education for reasons to do with severe behavioural, emotional or social issues.

This report will have relevance to the Department of Education's Special Educational Needs Review and the review of Additional Education Needs Provision

April – July 2008

Inspection of the Youth Council for Northern Ireland

Inspection of the Curriculum Development Unit

Inspection of Youth Work in the Greater Lisburn Area

maureen.bennett@deni.gov.uk

These reports will contribute to an impending review of Youth Work in Northern Ireland and to the responsibility to be exercised by the Educational Skills Authority.

May 2008

**[HSC Workforce Vacancy Report](#)
September 2007**

For further information contact:
workforcestatistics@dhsspsni.gov.uk
or telephone 028 9052 2468

This is produced from a vacancy survey carried out on all staff groups within all of the HSC organisations in Northern Ireland. The information is also available by Programme of Care.

May 2008

[NI Health & Social Care Workforce Census March 2007](#)

This publication provides a specific profile of HSC workforce data by working group, specialism and locations.

For further information contact:
workforcestatistics@dhsspsni.gov.uk
or telephone 028 9052 2468

May 2008

**Research Report from the Rural
Community Network**

For further information contact:
mark@ruralcommunitynetwork.org

This report will look into the interactions between migrants and indigenous populations within the Cookstown and Dungannon Council areas.

Expected Spring 2008

**The Importance of Qualifications in
Achieving High Wages and
Productivity**

For further information contact:
wendy.lecky@delni.gov.uk
or telephone 028 9025 7672

This research examines the links between qualifications and their impact on wages and productivity at personal and national scales. At the regional scale, where skills are more mobile, the author argues that graduate skills have most impact on wages and productivity. It also draws out some possible implications for policy in the Northern Ireland context – including the importance of upskilling those with poor skills and improving Northern Ireland’s attractiveness to graduates.

Expected Spring 2008

**Attitudes and intentions towards
entering higher education, further
education, training and employment**

For further information contact:
wendy.lecky@delni.gov.uk
or telephone 028 9025 7672

The Department has commissioned research examining the factors that are important to pupils as they consider their applications to enter Higher and Further Education and employment and training. The research will include an examination of why many pupils choose to study outside Northern Ireland.

Expected Spring 2008

**An Analysis of UK Graduate
Earnings**

For further information contact:
alan.ramsey@delni.gov.uk
or telephone 028 9025 7755

This report sets out the extent and source of variation in UK graduate earnings. It focuses in particular on estimating the effect of factors such as degree subject, degree classification, and Institution attended, as well as a range of personal and social characteristics. It concludes that estimates of the average rate of return to a university degree are likely to conceal much variation about the average. The paper also offers an assessment of the extent of graduate deprivation and inequality in the UK.

Expected June 2008

**Equality of Opportunity and
Sustainable Development in Public
Sector Procurement**

Central Procurement Directorate and the Equality Commission have jointly drafted guidance on integrating equality of opportunity and sustainable development into public sector procurement.

The guidance, which has been approved by the

Further information is available on the [Central Procurement Directorate website](#).

Procurement Board and the Executive, aims to provide practical examples and case studies to assist policy makers and procurement professionals to more effectively integrate the existing statutory duties related to equality and sustainable development (including environmental, economic and social considerations), into public sector procurement.

The guidance will be accompanied by a separate summary and a statement of the key points. It will also be supported by awareness and training sessions specifically tailored to the needs of policy makers and procurement practitioners.

Expected July 2008

Survey of Provision for Special Educational Needs in Primary Schools

For further information contact: maureen.bennett@deni.gov.uk

This report looks at the provision made for special educational needs across a number of mainstream primary schools. The work was carried out as part of normal individual school inspections but will be written up as a separate report. It will have relevance to the Department of Education's Special Educational Needs Review

Early Summer 2008

Report on Public Library Standards, 2006-2007

For further information contact: david.polley@dcalni.gov.uk or telephone 028 9025 8966

This is a baseline year report of the achievements of the five Education and Library Boards in meeting the 10 Public Library Standards set out in 'Delivering Tomorrow's Libraries'.

Summer 2008

New Deal Leavers Survey

For further information telephone: 028 9025 7738 or 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+.

Expected Summer 2008

Statistics on Essential Skills

For further information contact: stephen.mcgonagle@delni.gov.uk or telephone 028 9025 7708

This first report will provide a statistical overview of progress to date regarding the Essential Skills for Living Strategy. It will present some key learner characteristic details along with an assessment against the PSA Essential Skills target.

Expected End-August 2008

Survey of the Quality of Provision in Nursery Units in Primary Schools.

These reports will contribute to the Department of Education's 0-6 Strategy

Routine reports on pre-school provision

For further information contact:
maureen.bennett@deni.gov.uk

[The impact of poverty on young children's experience of School](#) pdf (394 kb)

Improving educational attainment is vital if the goal of eradicating child poverty in a generation is to be met, but children growing up in poverty are rarely asked how this impacts on their school life. The researcher interviewed 220 children aged four to eleven in advantaged and disadvantaged schools in Northern Ireland, and talked to parents and teachers. This research will be of interest to policymakers, researchers, teachers and students interested in child poverty or education.

[Ten Steps to Equity in Education](#) pdf (234.90 kb)

This policy brief published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) tells us that education plays a key role in determining how you spend your adult life – a higher level of education means higher earnings, better health, and a longer life. By the same token, the long-term social and financial costs of educational failure are high. Those without the skills to participate socially and economically generate higher costs for health, income support, child welfare and social security systems. So a fair and inclusive system that makes the advantages of education available to all is one of the most powerful levers to make society more equitable.





new from research institutes and think tanks

Summary

[Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion](#)

Published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation - The New Policy Institute has produced its tenth annual report of indicators of poverty and social exclusion in the United Kingdom, providing a comprehensive analysis of trends and differences between groups. Its principal conclusion is that the strategy against poverty and social exclusion pursued since the late 1990s is now largely exhausted.

[How local planning authorities are delivering policies for affordable housing](#)

This study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation provides an update on how local planning authorities have been implementing affordable housing policies (Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) in the context of changing and uncertain policy.

[Cannabis supply and young people](#)

This report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation provides a snapshot of how young people in a large city and rural villages obtain cannabis. The study interviewed 182 young people aged 11–19, all of whom had used cannabis and/or been involved in cannabis transactions in recent months.

[Is poverty in the UK a denial of people's human rights?](#)

This report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation tells us that being poor in the United Kingdom can mean being subjected to discrimination on the grounds of poverty. Both poverty and discrimination are contrary to the spirit and the terms of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Damian Killeen argues that the refusal of successive governments to incorporate the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights into UK law has compounded common social attitudes that denigrate people who experience poverty and that undermine popular support for policies to eradicate poverty.

[Local Links – Developing active networks in local communities](#)

From the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Senior decision-makers are increasingly well networked at local authority level through governance partnership structures such as Local Strategic Partnerships, health and regeneration boards, business forums and leadership programmes. The advantages are demonstrable: increasing mutual understanding, developing common aims, creating a shared language and establishing trust among partners from diverse backgrounds and sectors.

However, these benefits are not sufficiently available to more locally based decision-makers and active citizens. Hence Common Purpose piloted Local Links programmes in four areas of West Yorkshire to promote active neighbourhood networking and information sharing.

Person or place-based policies to tackle disadvantage? Not knowing what works

This study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation reviews evaluations of person-based policies (targeted directly at individuals) and place-based policies (designed to tackle neighbourhood deprivation) to find out what kind of interventions are most effective at tackling disadvantage. The review concentrated on policies to improve employment and educational outcomes and to increase incomes.

Community empowerment in practice: lessons from Communities First

Community empowerment in local governance and service delivery has become a key component of government policy in the UK. However, there are critical challenges to achieving this in practice. This study from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, examined a community-based programme in Wales that aims to increase opportunities for community empowerment and potential influence over service providers.

Neighbourhood identity: effects of time, location and social class

This study from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation details the construction of neighbourhood identity, its relationship to social class and status, and its resilience to change, through examining three neighbourhoods within the city of Stirling.

Make me a Criminal: Preventing youth crime

Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR)

This report makes the case for a more therapeutic and family-based approach to youth offending, as opposed to the present, more punitive, system. The arguments for the proposed approach appear persuasive – not only on humanitarian grounds, but also in terms of economics and efficacy.

The full version of this report is in its final editing stages and will be posted shortly, for more information please contact info@ippr.org.

Beyond Naturalisation: Citizenship policy in an age of super mobility

International migration to (and from) the UK has increased since the early 1990s. Rising asylum inflows, labour migration responding to strong economic conditions, student migration to the UK's large higher

**Institute of Public Policy
Research (IPPR)**

education sector and large-scale movements from new European Union member states have together added some 2 million over the last decade to the foreign-born population resident in the UK.

This report examines how a government committed to progressive notions of citizenship might respond to the fact that fewer people are willing to take up British citizenship or able to establish long-term roots within communities.

**[Driving Down CO2 Emissions:
Using mandatory targets to
improve vehicle efficiency](#)**

**Institute of Public Policy
Research (IPPR)**

Emissions of carbon dioxide from passenger cars make up around 12 per cent of Europe's total emissions. Substantial reductions in tailpipe emissions will be necessary if the sector is to meet its share of responsibility for achieving targets for combating climate change.

Reducing the tailpipe emissions from cars will require a package of policies focused across four contributory factors: fuel carbon intensity, vehicle efficiency, driving technique and distance driven. The focus of this paper is on the second of these, increasing vehicle efficiency, and the role that mandatory targets can play in bringing forward improvements in this area.

**[Culture and Learning
Consultation Paper](#)**

In the context of recent government announcements about cultural education, Demos challenged cultural professionals and educationalists to provide a new and coherent direction for creative learning and for encouraging creativity through culture. Culture and Learning: Towards a New Agenda, a consultation paper written by John Holden, has been published to invite debate and responses. The paper's primary focus is on England, although many of the issues are equally relevant in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

[Making it Personal](#)

This report from DEMOS advocates a simple yet transformational approach to public services – self-directed services – which allocate people budgets so they can shape, with the advice of professionals and peers, the support they need. This participative approach delivers personalised, lasting solutions to people's needs at lower cost than traditional, inflexible and top-down approaches, by mobilising the intelligence of thousands of service users to devise better solutions.

**[What difference does a decade
make? Satisfaction with the
NHS in Northern Ireland in 1996
and 2006](#) pdf (642.88 kb)**

This report from ARK tells us that Northern Ireland is an area with historically high levels of social need and this impacts on the health profile of the region. Data from a wide range of sources used to monitor indicators of poverty and social exclusion show that Northern Ireland continues to compare unfavourably with many

other regions of the United Kingdom (UK) (Kenway et al., 2006) contributing to more adverse health outcomes. Mortality and morbidity levels from major diseases are higher and there are higher levels of disability (Appelby, 2005).

[Migration and Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland pdf \(142.59 kb\)](#)

In 2006 the Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) survey incorporated a number of questions on attitudes towards migration and migrant workers. This Research Update published by ARK uses data from the 2006 survey along with UK and Northern Ireland government data on international migration to examine some public attitudes towards migration and (immigrant) migrant workers in Northern Ireland and to put these into a wider context.

[Launch of 'Discovery, Argument and Action'](#)

Civil society in its many forms plays vital roles in discovering and then meeting social needs - from poverty and disability to discrimination. This report by the Young Foundation investigates the many ways in which these roles have been played, analysing civil society's role as a campaigner, innovator, researcher and service provider. It includes new data on how people meet their needs in contemporary Britain, as well as providing a new analytical framework for understanding civil society. The report warns that civil society's legal structures often risk becoming frozen around past needs, and advocates using the new 'public benefit test' to ensure that civil society organisations remain focused on the most pressing contemporary needs.

[Routes and barriers to citizen governance](#)

Government policies for neighbourhood and civil renewal, community cohesion and devolution emphasise participative governance. Local government and other public bodies are increasingly required to develop local partnerships and other structures that enable communities to participate in and influence local decision-making.

This study explored the realities of citizen governance through the testimonies of 50 women from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities actively engaged in Birmingham and Wolverhampton, and participants from selected affluent and disadvantaged Birmingham wards.

[A Picture of Health – tackling health inequalities in NI](#)

'Health is as good or bad as the society we create.' This simple statement (Politics of Health Group, 2005: 5) gets to the heart of the matter at a time when the UK

political, and so media, focus on health is overwhelmingly on the 'choice' agenda with regard to hospital provision. This vaguely presumes that health *conditions* will be improved by competition between secondary-care providers—and, even more tendentiously, that the needs of the most disadvantaged will be particularly attended to in this process—even though most hospital admissions are not elective. This report was published by Stratagem in November 2007.

[Behind the Screen: The Hidden Life of Youth Online](#)

This report from IPPR looks at the generational divide between children and young people and their parents which is perhaps most widely seen in their views and approaches to the internet and media literacy. With this in mind, how do we ensure that children and young people are safeguarded from harm in way that is not over the top in principle and draconian in style, while at the same time maintaining the internet as a place for freedom, expression, creativity and socialisation?

[Providing nursing support within residential care homes](#)

This study from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation examines a joint NHS-Local Authority initiative providing a dedicated nursing and physiotherapy team to three residential care homes in Bath and North East Somerset. The initiative aims to meet the nursing needs of residents where they live and to train care home staff in basic nursing.

[Stockholm Environment Institute Annual Report 2007](#) – published March 2008

In 2007 Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) has been strongly devoted to bridging science and policy in the field of climate change and development. In the future SEI will continue to commit all its efforts to advancing social-ecological understanding and driving a transition towards a sustainable future, says Johan Rockström, SEI Executive Director.

The report highlights SEI's high-profile activities, such as its contribution to the Nobel Prize-winning IPCC and its work at last year's Bali climate conference. It also presents SEI's efforts in a range of other areas, such as:

- Advising government on climate policy;
- Progressing ecological sanitation;
- Advancing sustainability in the Mekong region;
- Connecting air pollution and climate change for joined-up policy;
- Communicating environmental issues.

**[Making Sense of the Voluntary Carbon Market](#)
[A Comparison of Carbon Offset Standards](#) – published March 2008**

The report published by Stockholm Environment Institute, discusses the role of the voluntary carbon offset market. It provides an overview and guide to the most important currently available standards, using the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) as a

benchmark. The report compares the standards side-by-side and outlines the most pertinent aspects of each. It also includes a handy one page reference table for a quick comparison of the standards.

[Free choice at the point of referral](#)

Briefing paper published by the King's Fund

This briefing asks if reforms to give patients a choice of provider for their planned hospital care will impact on the quality of hospital services.

Free choice' – allowing patients being referred for non-urgent treatment to choose a hospital anywhere in England – begins in the NHS in England in April 2008. It is another milestone in a policy that aims, among other things, to use consumer pressure to improve the quality of hospital services provided by the NHS. How significant a development is this for the NHS in England? Will patients choose and will those choices have an impact on hospital trusts? This briefing summarises the most recent official data relating to choice of hospital at the point of GP referral.

[Why Money Matters pdf \(1.29 mb\)](#)

Family income, poverty and children's lives

This report from Save the Children asks does money matter? More than at any time in recent years, this question is central to policy debates. One such debate is concerned with whether the continued pursuit of a more affluent society and personal wealth enhances our collective and individual happiness and wellbeing.

A different debate is focused on the least well off in our society and is at the heart of a political concern over how to eradicate child poverty in the UK: to what extent is supporting the incomes of families living in poverty fundamental to achieving this goal?

[Regeneration in European cities: making connections](#)

European cities can provide valuable insights into how to tackle deep-seated urban problems, such as the regeneration of run-down industrial areas. This research from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation is based primarily on case studies of major urban regeneration schemes in Gothenburg (Sweden), Rotterdam (The Netherlands) and Roubaix (in Metropolitan Lille in France) and draws conclusions for UK policy and practice.

[The impact of benefit and tax uprating on incomes and poverty](#)

Each year, the Government decides how much to raise benefits and tax allowances. The basis for these upratings is rarely debated, yet has major long-term consequences for the relative living standards of different groups and for public finances. This research considers the implications of present uprating policies, and aims to stimulate debate on this hidden area of policy-making.

[Residents' views of new forms of high-density affordable living](#)

New forms of high-density, affordable housing are often advocated as a response to current policy concerns related to housing shortages, containing suburban sprawl, and the desire to promote an 'urban renaissance' in some cities. This study from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation explored residents' views about living in new affordable higher density housing and how far residents' expectations of living in high-density developments were met.





conferences and seminars coming up

Summary

1st May 2008, Oxford Island

10am – 3.30pm

'Peace land and bread – rights and equality for a sustainable rural community' - Rural Community Network conference

For further information contact:
charo@ruralcommunitynetwork.org

Those who live and work in rural areas are facing a number of challenges and opportunities in ensuring a sustainable future. To address these will require building strong relationships based on trust, equality and rights.

Our conference during Community Relations will address key questions:

- Do relationships matter?
- What are the costs of not building inclusive relationships?
- What would need to happen in our own practice as volunteers, workers and civil servants?

12 May 2008

12.30pm -14.00pm

The future for Advertising

Further information is available on the [Institute of Directors website](#)

Lunch with Hamish Pringle, Chairman of the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising – the future for advertising.

15 May 2008

7.45am - 9.00am

The Law – Your Duties: boardroom practice and the implications of the Companies Act 2006

Further information is available on the [Institute of Directors website](#)

This breakfast briefing will be presented by Kerry Canavan of Arthur Cox Solicitors. This event will provide a brief introduction to the Companies Act 2006 and the timetable for implementation.

22 May 2008

12.30pm - 14.15pm

Davy Lunch – Newry Speaker (to be confirmed)

Further information is available on the [Institute of Directors website](#)

The Institute is partnering Davy, Ireland's leading provider of stockbroking, wealth management and financial advisory services, to host a series of regional business lunches on the theme of 'Global Issues, Local Impact'.

Tuesday, 3 June 2008

[FOI Live 2008](#)

Victoria Park Plaza – London

FOI Live will give delegates the opportunity to explore the benefits and challenges of working with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and to learn from others at this event - the Sixth Annual Information Rights Conference for the Public Sector in the UK. Confirmed speakers include Michael Wills MP, Minister of State, Ministry of Justice with responsibility for FOI, and Richard Thomas, the Information Commissioner.

10 June 2008

[Developments in Housing, Health and Technology for Older People: Showcasing Research and Practice](#) – Seminar Programme pdf (56.53kb)

Grosvenor House, Belfast

[Register](#) on line for this event.

For further information telephone - (up to 21st May) 0044 028 9069 0066

The Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland (CARDI) and the Strategic Promotion of Ageing Research Capacity (SPARC) are delighted to announce a one day seminar/workshop entitled: "Developments in Housing, Health and Technology for Older People: Showcasing Research and Practice".

This event has been organised to help share a range of developments in the fields of health, housing, and technology relating to older people.

It has been designed to appeal to a range of stakeholders, professionals (including policy makers, health, housing and social services providers), industry, voluntary and community organisations, researchers with an interest in ageing, carers and older people.

The event will promote the value and role of ageing-related research for policy and practice and will highlight opportunities for further research, including a special session on funding opportunities.





current consultations

Consultation period

Summary

15 February 2008 – 9 May 2008

[The Draft Quality of Bathing Water \(Northern Ireland\) Regulations 2008](#)

For further information contact:
david.steele@doeni.gov.uk

These Regulations are necessary to transpose the revised Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC).

The Regulations require the monitoring, assessment and classification of identified bathing waters; the development of bathing water profiles; the undertaking of management measures in the event of specified pollution incidents; and the provision of appropriate, timely and standardised information to the public on bathing water quality.

13 March to 4 June 2008

[Consultation on the draft All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy](#)

For further information contact:
john.terrington@dardni.gov.uk

The draft All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy, which has been developed in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in Dublin, provides the strategic framework for future co-operation through a number of Working Groups. These Working Groups were set up under the auspices of the North South Ministerial Council to look at different aspects of animal health and welfare. The ultimate aims of the Strategy are to facilitate trade through the freer movement of animals and to optimise the animal health status of the island through alignment of policies to control animal disease.

March 2008 – June 2008

Review of Old Mineral Permissions - Environmental Impact Assessment

For further information contact:
wilfred.reavie@doeni.gov.uk
or telephone 028 9025 6506

The Planning Reform Order 2006 introduced legislation to require the review of old mineral planning permissions to ensure that they meet modern operating standards. The application of the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (NI) 1999 to the review of old mineral permissions will ensure that where a project is likely to have a significant effect on the environment an environmental impact assessment is carried out and taken into consideration before new conditions are approved.

Consultation closes 9 May 2008

[Pandemic Influenza - Guidance on Preparing Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland](#)

This document is designed to assist those providing mental health services in developing their plans for responding to an influenza pandemic. The document sets out the key planning assumptions, principles, roles and responsibilities that should inform the development of local plans.

Consultation closes 9 May 2008

[Northern Ireland Interim Contingency Plan for Health Response for an Influenza Pandemic](#)

This document describes the strategic approach for responding to an influenza pandemic. The Plan provides information and guidance to planners in the Health and Social Care sector developing regional plans. It updates and expands upon health advice and information contained in the 2005 Northern Ireland Contingency Plan and is intended to replace that document.

Consultation closes 9 May 2008

[Pandemic Influenza and Northern Ireland Ambulance Service \(NIAS\) - Guidance for Northern Ireland Ambulance Service and their Staff](#)

This document provides NIAS with clear guidance to assist with planning and preparations for an influenza pandemic. It advises on strategy, clinical management (including infection control), and business continuity plans. We are seeking wider comment at this stage and would particularly welcome views and comment from those individuals and organisations involved in pandemic influenza planning and preparedness.

Consultation closes 9 May 2008

[Pandemic Influenza - Guidance on Preparing Acute Hospitals in Northern Ireland](#)

This guidance document is designed to assist Health and Social Care Trusts in developing their plans for responding to an influenza pandemic. The guidance provides general information to support the preparations necessary for the operational response to an influenza pandemic. We are seeking wider comment on this draft and would particularly welcome views and contributions from those individuals and organisations involved in pandemic influenza planning and preparedness.

Consultation closes 12 May 2008

[Health & Social Care Reform Consultation](#)

The Consultation document sets out proposals to reform the health and social care system that will serve the clear strategic purpose of improving health and social care services and thereby the health and well-being of the people of Northern Ireland, by making services more efficient, more patient and client-centred, and more focused on prevention and primary care and less on institution-based care.





forthcoming consultations

Consultation start date/period	Summary
<p>Proposed date of publication: March 2008</p> <p>Consultation on draft Regulations amending the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007</p> <p>For further information contact: deirdre.wilkinson@doeni.gov.uk or telephone: 028 90544591</p>	<p>The Department of the Environment will be consulting on proposed changes to the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007. The changes would give the Department more discretion over what constitutes "sound evidence" that waste packaging metals processed outside the EU for recycling will be reprocessed under environmental standards broadly equivalent to those governing reprocessing in the EU.</p>
<p>Estimated Start Date: April 2008</p> <p>Consultation on Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses: Proposed Changes to Investigation Powers and Penalty Regime</p> <p>For further information contact: andrew.dawson@delni.gov.uk or telephone 028 9025 7536</p>	<p>The Department for Employment and Learning 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.</p>
<p>April 2008</p> <p>Trade Union & Labour Relations (NI) Order 1995: Impact of the ASLEF case etc.</p> <p>For further information contact: brian.patterson@delni.gov.uk or telephone 028 9025 7545</p>	<p>Judgement of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of ASLEF-V-UK. In relation to 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 will require amendment in light of this decision. The document will also address a range of minor miscellaneous employment law changes. NI policy proposals are currently being finalised. Formal consultation with stakeholders should commence April 2008.</p>

Estimated Start Date: April 2008

The Planning (Control of Advertisements) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008.

For further information contact:
irene.kennedy@doeni.gov.uk
or telephone: 028 9025 6506

Consultation on proposed regulations to amend the Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992 to include provisions and associated safeguards which give consent to advertisements on sites used for the preceding 10 years for the display of advertisements without express consent. This is a replication of existing measures in England.

April 2008

Consultation on introduction of 'approved operator' system for the EU Aid for Energy Crops

For further information contact:
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.

April 2008

Consultation with Inshore Stakeholder Advisory Group on Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (DARD) Position Paper on recommendations of the Review of Inshore Fisheries

For further information contact:
patrick.savage@dardni.gov.uk

To seek comment from inshore stakeholders on the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development response to stakeholder recommendations for the development of inshore fisheries in Northern Ireland.

April 2008

Consultation on how best to implement responsibility and cost sharing in Northern Ireland.

For further information contact:
philip.gilmore@dardni.gov.uk
or telephone 028 9076 5851

The aim of the responsibility and cost sharing agenda is to achieve a new relationship which delivers a lasting and continuous improvement in the health and welfare of kept animals whilst protecting the general public, the economy and the environment from the effects of animal disease.

April 2008

Consultation on UK Operational Plan for European Fisheries Fund and Accompanying NI Investment Plan

For further information contact:
stephen.archer@dardni.gov.uk

To seek comments on the proposed Operational Plan and spending priorities for Northern Ireland.

Mid-April 2008

'Every School a Good School: A Strategy for Raising Standards of

The aim of this strategy is to raise standards in literacy and numeracy through learning and teaching strategies designed to help young people acquire and develop core literacy and numeracy

Literacy and Numeracy'

For further information contact:
angela.kane@deni.gov.uk
or telephone: 028 9127 9708

skills.

The strategy is designed to work in conjunction with other strategies, particularly the new school improvement strategy "Every School a Good School" to:

- Raise the levels of attainment for all young people in literacy and numeracy;
- Narrow the current gaps in relation to the outcomes achieved by boys compared with girls and between those most and least disadvantaged; and
- Narrow the gap between the highest performing and lowest performing pupils and schools, after 12 years of compulsory education.

Mid – late April 2008

Draft Equality Impact Assessment on DARD Direct (Working title)

For further information contact:
john.mckee@dardni.gov.uk

The draft Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) will explore the potential equality impacts of the implementation of DARD Direct, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's new service delivery model for farmer focused services. The EQIA will consider the implications for staff and customers of having services provided from 10 strategic locations from within Northern Ireland and make recommendations for mitigations that may need to be considered.

April/May 2008

Review of designations under the Shellfish Waters Directive

For further information contact:
carol.oboyle@doeni.gov.uk
or telephone: 028 9025 7381

The Shellfish Waters Directive requires waters to be designated to protect them against pollution and safeguard shellfish from its harmful consequences. The Department of the Environment will consult on a review of existing designations and in addition will seek views on proposals for new designations as required under the Directive.

April/May 2008

UK wide consultation on The Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance

For further information contact:
dan.kennedy@doeni.gov.uk
or telephone: 028 9054 4523

This revised guidance provides local authorities and district councils with the technical guidance to enable them to carry out their statutory duties with regard to the review and assessment of local air quality.

Early April 2008

Lowering the maximum cap

End April 2008

Introduction of the rating of vacant domestic property

Following the publication of the outcomes of the Executive Review of Domestic Rating at the end of last year, the Department of Finance and Personnel will be consulting separately on these policy proposals in the coming months. Indicative dates for the start of the consultation periods are provided. Further details on each of the proposals, as well as the

May 2008

Introduction of Energy Efficiency Rebates

outcomes of the Executive Review of Domestic Rating, and the analysis upon which those outcomes were based, can be accessed at the rating review website

May 2008

Introduction of a rates deferment scheme for pensioners

Further information is available on the [Rating Review website](#)

April/May 2008 – June/July 2008

Transposition of the Groundwater Daughter Directive – 2006/118/EC

For further information contact: michelle.hull@doeni.gov.uk

The Groundwater Daughter Directive (GWDD) is a 'daughter' Directive to the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Its aim is to clarify objectives for groundwater quality in the WFD. The three key requirements of the GWDD are to establish criteria for the assessment of good chemical status, for identifying and reversing upward trends in pollution and to establish measures to prevent or limit discharges to groundwater. Member States have until 16 January 2009 to transpose the GWDD.

Planned for April – June 2008

Consultation on regulations requiring new signage and lighting on school buses.

All school buses will be required to fit an illuminated 'schoolchild' sign and flashing amber lighting to be used when children are getting on and off.

For further details please contact: susan.dolan@doeni.gov.uk

April to June 2008

Consultation on DE/DHSSPS Food in Schools Policy

For further information contact: sam.gunning@deni.gov.uk

Consultation to seek views on the Food in Schools policy drawn up by the Department of Education and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. The policy sets out the overall aims and objectives of Government policy in relation to food in schools and describes the range of strategies and plans that are being put in place to deliver improved nutrition for our school children.

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

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

**For further information contact:
iain.cleland@doeni.gov.uk**

Under current arrangements for road traffic and 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.

Proposed Start date: 21 April 2008

**Consultation on the Implementation
of European Council Directive
2007/33/EC on potato cyst nematode
control measures**

**For further information contact:
seamus.hughes@dardni.gov.uk**

Due to the expansion of the EU, bringing in more potato growing countries with varying levels of pest and disease numbers and types, and a general review of the provisions for controlling Potato Cyst Nematode, the previous EC Directive has been replaced. The new Directive mainly updates testing and sampling methods. The main change is that there is to be more stringent sampling rates and regular sampling of ware potato land.

**Anticipated Consultation Period – 14
April 2008 to 4 July 2008**

**The Fifth Review of the Capitation
Formula**

**Allocating Resources to Health and
Social Services Boards: Proposed
Changes to the Weighted Capitation
Formula**

**For further information contact:
lynn.campbell@dhsspsni.gov.uk**

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety allocates funds using a weighted Capitation Formula to determine the target fair share that HSS Boards should receive. This takes account of population sizes, age profiles and additional need.

The formula is made up of nine formulae, one for each of the nine programmes of care. The Fifth Review proposes changes to the way in which funds are allocated in Acute Care and Elderly Services.

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

**Consultation on driver training,
testing and licensing**

**For further information contact:
emma.rodgy@doeni.gov.uk
or telephone: 028 9054 0661**

As part of the review of driver training, testing and licensing in Northern Ireland, including the future direction of the "L" and "R" driver schemes, the Department for the Environment will issue a consultation document seeking views on proposed changes.

April 2008

**Cardiovascular Health and
Wellbeing Service Framework**

June 2008

Service Frameworks 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

**Respiratory Health and Wellbeing
Service Framework**

July 2008

**Cancer Prevention, Treatment and
Care Service Framework**

These items will be published on the
[DHSSPS website](#)

For further information contact:
veronica.gillen@dhsspsni.gov.uk

along the whole pathway of care from prevention of disease/ill health to diagnosis/treatment and rehabilitation, and on to end of life care.

Proposed start date: 7 April 2008

**Consultation on statutory
notification arrangements for
imported seed potatoes**

For further information contact:
seamus.hughes@dardni.gov.uk

Statutory notification arrangements for potatoes introduced from specified origins have been in place for a number of years. Recent EC monitoring results indicate that the situation has changed, which warrants a review of the arrangements. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Scottish Government Rural Directive and the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development are recommending that stakeholders consider more appropriate arrangements than those currently in place.

**Estimated May 2008 – Subject to the
agreement of the Executive**

**Consultation on Draft Planning
Policy Statement 14: Sustainable
Development in the Countryside**

For further details please contact:
john.linden@doeni.gov.uk or
telephone: 028 9025 7363

Draft policy based on the principles of sustainability which will support rural communities and allow the rural economy to flourish, both socially and economically, whilst at the same time protecting the countryside from unnecessary development.

May 2008

**Review of Support Arrangements for
Less Favoured Areas (LFAs)**

For further information contact:
fiona.browne@dardni.gov.uk
or telephone: 028 9052 4725

Review of the rationale for the provision of support within Less Favoured Areas, 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.

May/June 2008

**UK wide consultation on REACH
(Registration, Evaluation,
Authorisation and Restriction of
Chemicals) Regulation.**

For further information contact:

The REACH regulation aims to address a number of issues, mainly lack of available information on risks to human health and the environment for the majority of chemical substances on the EU market and the inefficiency of the current system. The UK is required to have an enforcement and penalties regime in place by December 2008. The proposed enforcement authorities in NI will be the Health &

barry.mcauley@doeni.gov.uk
or telephone: 028 9054 4586

Safety Executive NI in respect of supply and retail of chemical substances and Department of the Environment (Environment & Heritage Service) in respect of use of chemical substances and environmental protection.

**Estimated consultation start date
May/June 2008**

This consultation is designed to seek views on appropriate drink drive limits in order to reduce deaths and injuries due to drink driving. It will propose that the current blood alcohol limit should be reduced and powers should be provided for PSNI to administer random breath testing. I

**Consultation on measures to
address drink driving**

**For further information contact:
pauline.hughes@doeni.gov.uk**

**Proposed start date for
consultation: May /June 2008**

The Department of the Environment will be consulting on draft regulations which would permit an authorised officer of the Department to seize a vehicle, suspected of involvement in illegal waste activity, without a court warrant.

**Consultation on draft seizure
regulations**

**Consultation will be a 12 week
consultation (excluding July and
August).**

These new seizure powers should therefore allow Departmental enforcement teams to act quickly to deprive unlawful operators of the main 'tools of the trade' – their vehicles.

**For further information contact:
donald.starritt@doeni.gov.uk
or telephone: 028 9054 4511**

**Proposed consultation period May
to July 2008**

Comments to be sought on the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety draft standards which have been prepared to support the regulation of these services by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority. The draft standards set out the minimum requirements for good quality service and cover issues such staff qualifications, staff recruitment, provision of care, premises, staff vetting, record keeping, and management practice.

**Public consultation on minimum
standards for adult placement
agencies, adoption agencies and
boarding schools**

**For further information contact:
russell.george@dhsspsni.gov.uk**

Estimated start date – May 2008

These regulations implement EC law and will consolidate existing legislation about the labelling of beef on sale in Northern Ireland and incorporate additional requirements relating to the labelling of meat derived from animals aged 12 months or less. The rules require all operators in the supply chain, down to retail level but excluding food service, to label their beef and veal with traceability and origin information. Meat derived from animals aged 12 months or less must also be labelled with the age of the animal at the time of slaughter and a specified sales description.

**Consultation on the Beef Labelling
Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008**

**For further information contact:
niall.heaney@dardni.gov.uk**

Estimated start date – May 2008

Consultation on The Charges for Residues Surveillance Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008

For further information contact:
niall.heaney@dardni.gov.uk

Anticipated consultation period:
May – August 2008, subject to progress in GB

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

For further information contact:
emma.rodny@doeni.gov.uk
or telephone: 028 9054 0661

June 2008

Consultation on CAP Health Check legislative proposals for reform

For further information contact
seamus.mcerlean@dardni.gov.uk

Proposed date of publication: June 2008

Consultation on draft regulations transposing the Batteries Directive

For further information contact:
janice.harvey@doeni.gov.uk
or telephone: 028 90544505

Proposed date of publication:
June/July 2008

Consultation on draft Regulations transposing Article 2 of the Public Participation Directive

These regulations implement EC law which requires the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development to charge the relevant industry sectors for surveillance for residues of veterinary medicines and other substances in foods of animal origin.

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 2007 – is already in place.

To seek Stakeholder views on legislative proposals for reform under CAP Health Check.

The Department of the Environment will be consulting on draft regulations which will transpose the Batteries Directive. The Batteries Directive applies to all types of. It seeks to improve the environmental performance of batteries and of the activities of all economic operators involved in the life cycle of batteries. Member States are required to transpose the Directive into national law by 26 September 2008.

The consultation will seek the views of producers, distributors, collectors and recyclers of batteries and accumulators and items containing batteries and accumulators, and any other interested parties, on draft regulations for implementing provisions in the Directive.

The Department of the Environment will be consulting on draft Regulations transposing Article 2 of the Public Participation Directive in respect of waste issues. Article 2 ensures public participation procedures/rights in the preparation or review of relevant plans and programmes relating to the environment.

For further information contact:
clifford.maxwell@doeni.gov.uk
or telephone: 028 9054 4506

Proposed date of publication:
June/July 2008

Consultation on draft Regulations amending the Landfill Allowances Scheme (NI) Regulations 2004

The Department of the Environment will be consulting on draft amending Regulations implementing those recommendations of the Review of the NI Landfill Allowance Scheme (NILAS) requiring legislative action. The Review of NILAS is due for completion by 30 April 2008.

For further information contact:
paul.burns@doeni.gov.uk
or telephone: 028 9054 4592

Anticipated consultation period:
June – September 2008, subject to progress in GB

Consultation on proposed changes to current health and driver licensing arrangements

For further information contact:
tim.ford@dvla.gsi.gov.uk
or telephone: 01792 765 252
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.

July 2008

Consultation on Electronic Recording of Fishing Activities and on Means of Remote Sensing

For further details contact
alan.brown@dardni.gov.uk

To reduce burden on industry of keeping and submitting paper records of logbooks; landing declarations and sales notes and need to hail in and out with catch on board reports for certain fishing areas for those businesses affected.

July 2008

Consultation on action planning for environmental noise.

For further information contact:
colin.nugent@doeni.gov.uk
or telephone: 028 9054 4501

The Department of the Environment is required to produce action plans for industrial noise and the urban area of Belfast under the Environmental Noise Regulations (NI) 2006.

**Anticipated consultation period:
July – September 2008**

**[Consultation on reform of the
planning system in Northern Ireland](#)**

**For further information contact:
planning.reform@doeni.gov.uk**

This consultation paper will bring forward proposals for reform of the planning system in Northern Ireland. The purpose of the reform agenda is to bring about improvements in the planning system so that it supports the future economic and social development needs of Northern Ireland and manages development in a sustainable way, particularly with regard to large, complex or strategic developments; is delivered at the right level with the appropriate managed processes for regionally significant, major and local applications; has streamlined processes that are effective, efficient and improve the predictability and quality of service delivery; and allows for full and open consultation and engages communities.

July to October 2008

Taxi Construction

**For further information contact:
adele.willis@doeni.gov.uk**

Amendments to Public Service Vehicles
(Conditions of Fitness, Equipment and Use)
Regulations (NI) 1995 to adopt a revised taxi
construction assessment policy.





policy reviews coming up

Summary

14 December 2007

Review of policy on the location of public sector jobs.

For further information contact:
olive.maybin@dfpni.gov.uk

This review was established in December 2007 following approval of the terms of reference by the NI Executive. It is an independent review chaired by Professor Sir George Bain and is intended to put forward a set of practical recommendations for the longer term approach to the location of public sector jobs in NI and propose an agenda for action. The team is due to report in Summer 2008. The terms of reference and membership of the review team are available on the [Department of Finance & Personnel website](#).

February 2008 (ongoing)

ICT in Schools

For further information contact:
joe.reynolds@deni.gov.uk

To review the impact of ICT in schools and to review targets for educational outcomes. It is expected that ESA and schools will deliver enhanced educational outcomes for pupils as a result of the review.

February to June 2008

Review of Postgraduate Policy and Funding.

For further information contact:
sean.mcgarry@delni.gov.uk or
linda.bradley@delni.gov.uk

The review will centre on an objective assessment of the Postgraduate environment in Northern Ireland and will include coverage of Postgraduate funding and policy and the extent to which these are aligned with the needs of the local economy and take account of policy and funding in other parts of the UK and in the Republic of Ireland.

April 2008

Issues Paper on Review of the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS)

For further information contact:
gregor.kerr@drdni.gov.uk

The Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) 2002-2012 contained a commitment to undertake a review.

The review will take into account, inter alia:

- the rate of implementation;
- its effectiveness;
- transport budgets secured; and
- changes in the wider environment.

The issues paper will seek to elicit the views of stakeholders on the scope of the RTS Review.

By July 2008

**Tendering for Organiser of
Courses for Drink Drivers**

The Minister for the Environment has agreed that as courses have now been made permanent, the Department should appoint a course organiser by competitive tender.

For further information contact:
harry.green@doeni.gov.uk





summary of key past events

Summary

19 February – 12 March 2008

[Goods Vehicles \(Licensing of Operators\) Bill – Industry Briefings pdf \(43.21kb\)](#)

For further information contact:
donald.armstrong@doeni.gov.uk

Eight industry briefing sessions were held throughout Northern Ireland for all operators of goods vehicles of over 3.5 tonnes weight. At present only those who carry goods for other people are required to be licensed; the new legislation will extend licensing requirements to those who carry their own goods in the course of their business. The purpose of the briefings was to make initial contact with the industry and to provide them with information on the Department's proposals for operator licensing in Northern Ireland.

**Wednesday 12 March 2008,
Rosspark Hotel, Kells, Ballymena.**

**Guidelines & Audit Implementation
Network (GAIN) Conference**

For further information contact:
nicola.porter@dhsspsni.gov.uk

GAIN's first annual conference. GAIN was formed in June 2007 from the amalgamation of the two regional clinical and social care audit groups in Northern Ireland with CREST – the local clinical guidelines development. GAIN is responsible for promoting, commissioning and sharing the learning from region audit and guideline development. The conference provided an overview of the GAIN work programme and the role of audit and guidelines in improving the safety and quality of services. In addition, a guideline on the Use of Laboratories was launched and regional audits of consent, respiratory services, diabetes, and HIV were presented. Speakers included, Dr Michael McBride, CMO, Dr Tom Trinick, Chairman of the Strategic Committee of GAIN, Professor Patrick Morrison, Non-Executive Director of NICE, Dr Frank Harsent, Chief Executive of Salisbury Foundation Trust, Mr Martin Ferris, Clinical Audit & Effectiveness Manager, Sheffield PCT.

February 2008

[Health Conference Proceedings:
Health on the Agenda](#)

A major international conference on health and human rights took place on 7 February in Northern Ireland. The conference, which was organised by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, examined the relationship between health and human rights and aimed to promote the application of rights within the health service.

A number of high profile local and international speakers discussed the most recent thinking on issues such as oversight and standards in residential homes, patient safety, medical advances and mental health. Speakers included the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health, Paul Hunt; Dr Elizabeth Wicks, a Senior Lecturer in the Birmingham Law School; and Professor Richard Wilkinson, a Professor at the University of Nottingham Medical School. A number of the papers and presentations from the conference are available to download from the [special focus](#) section of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission website.

8 April 2008

[Equity in Health Training Event](#)

[Belfast Healthy Cities website](#)

Forming part of a series of training events for middle managers on the theme of equity in health organized by the Belfast Healthy Cities Project, this event sought to examine the conditions needed to promote healthy urban planning. Guest speakers included Ben Cave of Ben Cave Associates (Consultants), Sam Kendal, Chartered Town Planner with the Planning Service and Geraint Ellis from the School of Planning at QUB.





contact us

Contact details

Policy Innovation Unit
Economic Policy Unit
Block E
Castle Buildings
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3SR

Telephone: 028 9052 2542

Email: policylink@ofmdfmi.gov.uk

