



Contents

Introduction
Policy making
Publications
Think tanks
Workforce
New policies

Conferences
Consultations
Forthcoming
Coming up
Past events
Contact us

Policylink
Bulletin 13
September 2006

1

Contents

- | | | | |
|---|--|----|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Contents | 8 | Conferences and seminars coming up |
| 2 | Introduction | 9 | Current consultations |
| 3 | Support for policy-making | 10 | Forthcoming consultations |
| 4 | New official publications | 11 | Policy reviews coming up |
| 5 | New from research institutes and think tanks | 12 | Summary of key past events |
| 6 | Special theme: workforce issues | 13 | Contact us |
| 7 | Newly announced policies and strategies | | |





Contents
Introduction
Policy making
Publications
Think tanks
Workforce
New policies

Conferences
Consultations
Forthcoming
Coming up
Past events
Contact us

Policylink
Bulletin 13
September 2006

2

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 thirteenth issue of the policylink bulletin! This month marks the third anniversary of circulation of the quarterly policylink bulletins.

We have included a number of special features in this edition of the bulletin. The first article below looks at sustainable development and the ongoing work on the Implementation Plan, following the launch of the 'First Steps Towards Sustainability' strategy in May 2006. The second article looks at sustainable development from the voluntary sector's perspective, with The Cresco Trust Ltd highlighting two of its key projects. The third article has been provided by the Departmental Solicitor's Office, the professional legal resource for the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS), and gives an insight into its roles and responsibilities.

In Chapter 3 'Support for policy-making', we look at NISRA's new Equality website, the ongoing policy improvement work across the NICS and the results from the first tranche of Capability Reviews in Whitehall.

In Chapter 5 'New from research institutes and think tanks', there are a number of interesting research articles from Democratic Dialogue, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Foresight Programme and many more.

Chapter 6 is a special theme chapter focusing on workforce issues. It includes items examining the effects of changing demographics on the workforce, the issue of flexibility, as well as a number of workforce-related reports and consultation documents.

As usual, this edition includes details of:

- official reports and publications;
- current and forthcoming consultations;
- conferences and seminars;
- 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 with your views or suggestions.

Read on below for our special features...

'First Steps Towards Sustainability'

The strategy document is available at <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/sustain-develop.pdf> (PDF 5,589KB)

The Northern Ireland Sustainable Development strategy (First Steps Towards Sustainability) is a key cross-departmental strategy, launched by the Secretary of State on 9 May 2006. During the launch, he announced that strategic responsibility for Sustainable Development and implementation of the strategy would transfer from the Department of the Environment (DOE) to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). This transfer took place on 1 July 2006.

The strategy focuses on the following six priority areas:

- Sustainable consumption and production
- Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement
- Sustainable communities
- Climate change and energy
- Learning and communication
- Governance and sustainable development

Within these priority areas each department is responsible for delivery on key targets relevant to their respective remits. How this will be taken forward across departments will be set out in an initial overall Implementation Plan to be published in autumn 2006.

OFMDFM will contribute to the Implementation Plan while overseeing overall implementation of the strategy. The Implementation Plan will underpin government's commitment to Sustainable Development, further develop the key targets, and seek to embed sustainable development into the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Sustainable Development principles need to be integrated into every aspect of government's business, from the policy development process through to the way we run our buildings.

To facilitate delivery, departments have a Sustainable Development Champion who is responsible for co-ordinating departmental contributions to the Implementation Plan and also for ensuring actions are progressed within their own departments. A key aspect will be the development of departmental "green housekeeping" actions covering e.g. energy use, procurement, waste and estate management.

Although the strategy is Government-led, and will initially focus on leadership by Government, the strategy is a national one in which all sectors have a part to play and must play if the right outcomes are to be achieved. Therefore the initial Implementation Plan will need to be followed by actions that embrace wider society. These will include local government, business and the voluntary and community sector which are invaluable for the promotion and embedding of sustainable development on the ground. The Cresco Trust Ltd is one such organisation within the voluntary and community sector and has been raising the profile of sustainable development in the North West.

The Cresco Trust Ltd

The Cresco Trust was established in 2003 as a not-for-profit social enterprise committed to providing opportunities to learn, engage, and progress, for those people who are disadvantaged within their own community. Based in the North West, The Cresco Trust was the vision of professionals working within the community and voluntary sector who had many years experience of engaging with individuals from both sides of the divided community within Northern Ireland. They knew from experience that employment offered real chances for these disadvantaged individuals to take charge of their lives and make more positive life choices, that is, to become more empowered.

Principles

As a social enterprise, The Cresco Trust seeks to embody a number of principles or attributes in fulfilling its mission:

- Innovation – expressed through the piloting of new initiatives (including mentored employment) to provide employment opportunities for disadvantaged individuals.
- Collaboration – the exercise of a partnership approach between the public, private and the not-for-profit sectors.
- Strategic outlook – the facilitation of strategic thinking in the development of the social economy in Northern Ireland, facilitating reflection between funders, practitioners and policy-makers.
- Professionalism – the application of good business practice to all of its activities.

Approach

Cresco has used a variety of methods to enhance the employability of socially excluded groups. This article details just two of the projects with which Cresco is currently involved.

The Key Project

Viewing the transition from benefit dependency to the world of work as a journey is at the very core of the Key Project. It is funded through the European Social Fund under the EQUAL Community Initiative. The EQUAL Initiative is a laboratory for testing new community initiatives to help implement the European Employment Strategy and develop the social inclusion process. It is designed to promote new ways of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in the labour market, both for those employed and for those seeking work.

The Key Project aims to enhance employability for socially excluded groups within the Derry and Strabane areas primarily through attendance on the STRIVE© workshop. STRIVE© (Support and Training Result In Valuable Employees) originated in East Harlem in 1985 to help individuals facing significant barriers to employment achieve economic independence through work. Since its inception in 1985, STRIVE© has grown into a network of nineteen affiliates across North America and London committed to 'the development and advancement of responsive workforce development policy'. The Cresco Trust Ltd is one of the newest members of the network and the first in Northern Ireland. STRIVE© provides a three-week workshop aimed at enhancing the job readiness of participants and improving soft skills amongst job-seekers which has been highlighted as invaluable by employers. Mid-term results for the Key Project show that 25% of graduates of the STRIVE© programme (that is, the 'hardest to reach' target group) are being placed in employment. This reflects the success rate of other STRIVE© affiliates throughout the United States of America and London.

Ben & Jerry's Homemade Inc

An important aspect of Cresco's strategic development has been its burgeoning relationship with the Ben & Jerry's Foundation. This is a non-profit, charitable foundation based in the United States of America which

developed from Ben & Jerry's Homemade Inc based on an original ice cream scoop shop established in a renovated gas station in Vermont. Today Partnerships are run by charities to help those who may not otherwise have been able to secure employment, get their first foothold on the job ladder. The Ben & Jerry's Foundation offers grants to not-for-profit grassroots organisations throughout the USA which facilitate progressive social change by addressing the underlying conditions of societal and environmental problems. The Partnership initiative adopts a social enterprise approach where the aim is to create a sustainable enterprise which employs those most disadvantaged in the labour market. The Cresco Trust Ltd, recognising the potential for training and support to get unemployed kids from both sides of the community in Belfast back into employment, is currently responsible for two Partnerships in Northern Ireland – one in Richmond Shopping Centre, Derry/Londonderry (opened in 2004) and the other in Castlecourt Shopping Centre, Belfast (opened in 2005).

Under the Partnership initiative, a scoop shop is independently owned and operated by a community based non-profit organisation. Ben & Jerry's waive the standard franchise fees and provide additional support with functions such as marketing and training and development. The common aim is to provide supportive employment, job and entrepreneurial training to young people thus enabling them to progress into further employment when their fifty week contract in the Partnership comes to an end.

Cresco is committed to the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy because the aim of stable social and economic growth for all closely reflects the organisation's social mission. Moreover, Cresco's own organisational light-footprint environmental policy further complements the existing social and economic strands of the Sustainable Development Strategy. Cresco closely identifies with the strategic objective of increasing the economic well-being of the people of Northern Ireland and recognises that moving people towards employment remains a significant means of doing so. Cresco's delivery of programmes furthers the sustainable development agenda through the provision of targeted interventions which lead to skill development, and ultimately, labour market access. This article was provided by Dr Annette Begley, The Cresco Trust Ltd.

Sustainable development

For more information, contact Dr Annette Begley by email at annette@crescotrust.com

1. See: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/index_en.htm

2. For more information on STRIVE©, see: <http://www.strivenational.org/strive.html>

3. IFF Research Ltd. (2005) National Employers Skills Survey 2004: Main Report. Coventry: Learning and Skills Council National Office, p.4.

4. Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland (2006) A Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland: First Steps Towards Sustainability. Belfast: DOENI.

Departmental Solicitor's Office

For further details visit the NICS intranet site at <http://dso.intranet.nics.gov.uk/>
Please note that, as this is an intranet site, members of the public will not be able to access this link.

The Departmental Solicitor's Office (DSO) is the professional legal resource which aims to advance and protect the interests of Northern Ireland Government Departments by the provision of high quality, cost effective legal services. DSO employs over 70 lawyers who can contribute their expertise to the development and implementation of policies across all Northern Ireland Departments. Most of the lawyers are based at DSO Headquarters at Victoria

Hall in Belfast City Centre and in the Litigation and Commercial Divisions in the nearby Centre House. Some staff are also out-posted to particular Departments, Agencies, and projects and there is a sub-regional office at Orchard House, Londonderry.

The principal role of DSO is to advise Northern Ireland departments on the scope and exercise of their powers and duties. In particular, this includes offering advice on law specific to each department and on cross cutting issues such as European Law, Freedom of Information, Human Rights, Employment Law, Equal Opportunities and State Aid. DSO is also able to offer advice and carry out professional functions in relation to the drafting of subordinate legislation, contracts and procurement, property ownership and leases, and departmental involvement in prosecutions, tribunals, arbitrations and inquiries. As part of a modernisation process, DSO is continually examining how it delivers its services. This may see a re-emphasis on core functions of advising departments and a focusing of legal resources to meet evolving challenges, while finding innovative solutions for the delivery of non-core functions.

For officials in departments wishing to draw on the legal expertise of DSO, the first point of contact is usually the Head of the Legal Division which covers their department or leads on the relevant cross-cutting issue. Contact details are available from the intranet on the left hand side. This article was provided by Tony Canavan, Departmental Solicitor's Office.

Government Legal Service for Northern Ireland

For further details visit <http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/law-and-regulation/government-legal-service-for-ni.htm>

DSO is currently part of the Department of Finance and Personnel but, in April 2007, it will transfer to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. This is part of a wider programme of change which will see the creation of a new Government Legal Service for Northern Ireland (GLSNI). This will be an umbrella service, bringing together lawyers working in the DSO, the Crown Solicitor's Office (which works with the Northern Ireland Office and UK Departments operating in Northern Ireland) and some other legal units. While not an organisational merger, GLSNI will bring together over 100 Government lawyers, networked in a way which will improve career development, training and responses to central initiatives. It will increase the sense of corporacy between Government lawyers in Northern Ireland, raising their profile in the administration and providing a sharper focus on the challenges of the future.

GLSNI will not affect the responsibilities or the chain of command within participating legal units, such as DSO. Nor will it affect the relationship between NI Departments and DSO. Though an innovation for professional staff working for Government in Northern Ireland, it reflects parallel organisations for Government lawyers in England and in Scotland.

The new Head of Legal Services in DSO will also be Head of GLSNI. It is hoped to fill this position later in the year.





Contents
Introduction
Policy making
Publications
Think tanks
Workforce
New policies

Conferences
Consultations
Forthcoming
Coming up
Past events
Contact us

Policylink
Bulletin 13
September 2006

3

Support for policy-making

Summary

NISRA Equality website

For further details visit:
www.equality.nisra.gov.uk

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has recently launched an Equality website. The website is designed to collate and disseminate statistics and research relevant to the equality of opportunity and its promotion within the Northern Ireland public sector. The website provides equality related statistics in one central source. Information is stored according to the relevant Section 75 category and general policy area. The website is available at the weblink provided.

Ongoing policy improvement work in the Northern Ireland administration

This article highlights a number of projects and initiatives intended to help improve policy development across the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS). The article focuses on work under three broad categories:

1. Audit of policy making and legislative capacity in the NICS
2. Evidence based policy making
3. Policy training

1. Audit of policy making and legislative capacity in the NICS

The Response to Devolution report recommended that each Department should conduct an 'audit' of its policy and legislative capacity with a view to putting forward proposals to strengthen capacity. In August 2004, Permanent Secretaries Group Sub-Committee D commissioned the Policy Innovation Unit in OFMDFM to set a framework to facilitate departments in undertaking the audits, to take stock of the results of the individual departmental reports, and to make recommendations on the way forward. The results are summarised in the 'Report on the Outcome of an Audit of Policy Making and Legislative Capacity in the NICS'.

The report makes a number of short to medium term recommendations which seek to build upon existing good practice and address the gaps and weaknesses identified in responses to the audit exercise. The focus of the recommendations is on improving capacity through practical experience supported by relevant training and guidance and dissemination of best practice and expertise within and across departments.

2. Evidence based policy-making

In line with the recommendations, the Policy Innovation Unit has initiated work on a number of areas, including the development of a series of Policy Toolkits and a revised Integrated Impact Assessment.

Flowing from the Audit Report, there are a number of initiatives across the NICS designed at promoting evidence based policy-making.

These include:

- Liaison with the new Centre for Applied Learning and the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Library Service

The Policy Innovation Unit has been in discussions with the new Centre for Applied Learning (the central training provider for the whole of the NICS) and the NICS Library Service in relation to a number of potential initiatives aimed at improving access to, and utilisation of, information to promote evidence based policy-making and joined-up working.

A key requirement of evidence based policy-making is access to high quality information. The sharing of information across departments, particularly in relation to policy initiatives and evidence bases, is also essential for effective joined-up working.

An online NICS e-Library is part of the plan to create a wider policy information source. The NICS Library Service is currently finalising the e-Library, which is expected to go "live" on 26 September 2006. The Policylink website already exists as a source of policy-related information and support material; it is the intention to make the site more comprehensive whilst ensuring that it remains accessible, easily navigable and avoids duplication with the online library.

The potential of an on-line forum is also being considered as a means of facilitating ongoing engagement across the policy-making community. This has the potential to provide a valuable mechanism to share experience and best practice across the NICS, providing a forum for discussion of problems and dissemination of expertise.

- Policy seminar on 'Evidence based policy-making'

On 4 October 2006, the Policy Innovation Unit will host a policy seminar focusing on evidence based policy-making. The key speaker will be Stephen Aldridge, Director of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. His presentation will focus on the role of the Strategy Unit in relation to evidence based policy making. Michelle Frew (Office of Science and Innovation) will also participate by way of a presentation focusing on some of the key messages contained within the Guidelines on Scientific Analysis in

Policy Making (October 2005) (PDF 40KB). Nigel Hamilton, Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, will chair the seminar. The event is targeted at civil servants and nominees will be sought from departments during September.

- Northern Ireland Research Database

The Policy Innovation Unit created a research database to help make research, commissioned by the Northern Ireland Administration, more widely available. Research is an essential part of the policy development process, necessary to ensure that there is a robust evidence base supporting the decision-making. The research database website recently went "live" and is available at www.researchni.gov.uk. It is intended that the research database will be regularly updated. Any feedback on the new website would be welcomed – you can email your views to policylink@ofmdfmi.gov.uk.

3. Policy training

The Policy Innovation Unit has also been in discussions with the new Centre for Applied Learning regarding policy training provision. In particular, the focus has been on the potential gaps in training which may need to be addressed following the outcome of the Audit Report.

We will keep you updated on developments in all the areas outlined above.

Capability Reviews: the findings of the first four reviews (Whitehall)

For further details visit:
www.civilservice.gov.uk/reform/capability_reviews/index.asp

The findings of the first four Capability Reviews in Whitehall were published during July. The Capability Review Programme is part of a wider Civil Service reform agenda. For the first time, government departments are being publicly assessed on how well placed they are to meet the demands of the future. The reviews provide a set of assessments, reached with the help of independent experts, to judge the relative capabilities of departments to meet future expectations; hence the focus is on future needs rather than auditing the past. The reviews provide an assessment of capability for departments, identify key areas for improvement and set out key actions. Each department has created, in response to the reviews, detailed plans to address areas where capabilities need to be strengthened, and to which they can be held to account.

The first four Capability Reviews – on the Department for Constitutional Affairs, the Department for Education and Skills, the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions – have identified much good progress across the departments. However, the reviews have suggested key areas where these departments must improve their capability. Some of the common themes emerging include that each of these four departments will:

- strengthen its governance within a clear and well understood framework of accountability and responsibility.
- transform its central headquarters; the role of the centre of each department will be to act as a strategic headquarters.
- deliver a step change in the professional skills of the Civil Service in policy and strategy, operational delivery, and corporate

services, such as finance, people management, procurement and information technology.

- improve the way they engage with the individuals and communities they serve.
- look ahead to the future challenges and anticipate new models of delivery; and shorten the chains of delivery from the centre to the front line.

The reviews form a rolling programme across Whitehall, with 17 reviews to be completed and published. The next round of reviews includes the Cabinet Office.





Contents
Introduction
Policy making
Publications
Think tanks
Workforce
New policies

Conferences
Consultations
Forthcoming
Coming up
Past events
Contact us

Policylink
Bulletin 13
September 2006

4

New official publications

12 June 2006

New Deal Statistical Bulletins:
(i) New Deal for 18 to 24 Year Olds in Northern Ireland: Statistics from April 1998 to March 2006
(ii) New Deal 25+ in Northern Ireland: Statistics from June 1998 to March 2006

For further details visit:
<http://www.delni.gov.uk/new-deal-statistics.htm>

3 July 2006

Best practice guidance on providing public services to deaf people who use British Sign Language or Irish Sign Language

For further details visit:
<http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/allpages/allpages.asp?pname=sign>

Summary

These Statistical Bulletins are part of a regular series analysing key statistical information for the New Deal programmes in Northern Ireland. Data has been provided on numbers participating in New Deal, on key personal characteristics of participants (such as gender and community background), on the New Deal Options chosen within the programme and on destinations after leaving the programme.

The guidance includes examples of good practice for employers, useful tips on how to communicate with deaf people and how to ensure that the method of communication is the most efficient and cost effective for the situation. The guidance also gives details of how to book an interpreter, what levels of qualification are desirable, and for what types of situation.

July 2006

Local Government Reform

For further details visit:

www.doeni.gov.uk/lgd/localgovreform

A Local Government Taskforce has been established to help drive and inform the reform programme to implement the Review of Public Administration (RPA) decisions announced by the Secretary of State, which relate to local government. The Taskforce is charged with producing proposals for modern and effective local government in the light of the RPA and other drivers for change. Nine sub-groups have now presented proposals to help inform legislation and wider policy development to the Taskforce Working Group and Political Panel. Work will be taken forward over the coming months with local government to develop the implementation plans flowing from these proposals.

July 2006

Health impacts of the built environment: a review

<http://www.publichealth.ie/index.asp?locID=500&docID=588>

The Institute of Public Health in Ireland has developed a range of supporting resources for organisations interested in health impact assessment (HIA). In July 2006, the Institute published a review of the health impacts of the built environment. This review is the third in a suite of documents which looks at health impacts in identified areas. Looking at three key elements of the built environment (buildings, open spaces and transportation networks), this review draws together international research which has been carried out in the identified areas.

July 2006

Progress report on the 'emPowering Schools Strategy' (ICT in Schools)

For further details visit:

www.empoweringschools.com

or

http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/85-schools/15_ict_in_schools_classroom2000_pg.htm

This report to the Minister summarises returns from eighteen of the main schools stakeholder organisations on their progress so far in achieving the milestones in the current Department of Education's strategy for ICT in schools.

19 July 2006

Changes that might affect your business – European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval (ECWVTA) for commercial vehicles

For further details email:

christopher.taylor@doeni.gov.uk

A letter was sent out to over a hundred businesses in Northern Ireland to gauge the level of interest in being involved with the Department of the Environment's work in bringing forward changes to the ECWVTA scheme, which will extend to commercial vehicles over the next few years. It is intended to form part of the Department's research into the industry in NI so that it can provide the best service to meet industry's needs. It included a questionnaire to be returned to the Department by 2 September 2006. There will be further consultations in the future on this policy.

11 August 2006

Statistical bulletin: destinations of leavers from higher education 2004/05

For further details visit:

http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-stats/destinations-of-leavers-from-higher-education/destination-of-leavers-he-2004_05.htm

This bulletin provides details of the destination location and activity of leavers from higher education in the 2004/05 academic year and is available to view on the Department for Employment and Learning's website.

September 2006

"Protect Life – A Shared Vision"

The consultation document is available here:

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/showconsultations?txtid=15454>

For further details contact Gary Maxwell by email at gary.maxwell@dhsspsni.gov.uk

The suicide prevention strategy aims to tackle the issue throughout the general population, but also contains actions aimed at those individuals and communities at most risk, particularly young males.

September 2006

StatisDCAL – The Arts in Northern Ireland

For further details contact Irene Gilmore by email at

irene.gilmore@dcalni.gov.uk

This bulletin presents statistical analysis of arts questions asked in the 2004/05 Continuous Household Survey. The bulletin examines arts participation and attendance, and satisfaction with arts provision in Northern Ireland. The various questions are analysed by a wide range of socio-economic variables.

September 2006

StatisDCAL – Experience of sport in Northern Ireland

For further details contact Nikki Graham by e-mail at nicola.graham@dcalni.gov.uk

This bulletin presents statistical analysis of sports questions asked in the 2004/05 Continuous Household Survey. The bulletin examines sports participation, spectating at sports events and satisfaction with sports provision in Northern Ireland. The various questions are analysed by a wide range of socio-economic variables.

October 2006

Strategic Resources Framework 2006/07

For further details contact Lynn Campbell by email at

lynn.campbell@dhsspsni.gov.uk

The Strategic Resources Framework is to be published for the second year. It provides a detailed analysis of planned expenditure by Health and Social Services Boards and Trusts for the financial year 2006/07. Analysis is provided on planned expenditure and activity volumes by Programme of Care and by Key Services with Hospitals, Community and Personal Social Services (PSS). This allows the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) to provide a comprehensive breakdown of Health and PSS expenditure at a local level throughout Northern Ireland.

October 2006

Roadside evasion survey

For further details email:

keith.murray@doeni.gov.uk

This publication will show the results of the survey to assess the level of vehicle excise duty (VED) evasion. It will compare the results with those from previous surveys.

October 2006

Autistic spectrum disorders

For further details contact Helen McClure by email at helen.mcclure@deni.gov.uk

This research identifies the current extent of early needs (i.e. from the point of diagnosis) across Northern Ireland in relation to autistic spectrum disorders and provides a literature review of best early intervention practices to inform effective planning. It makes recommendations to ensure that parents of children with autism receive support tailored to individual needs and circumstances from the point of diagnosis until pre-school.

October 2006

Alternative Education Provision (AEP)

For further details contact Helen McClure by email at helen.mcclure@deni.gov.uk

This project examined the Alternative Education Provision (AEP) experience of young people in terms of effective engagement with learning, re-integration into mainstream provision, accreditation achievement and transition to the labour market with a view to assessing the effectiveness of this means of intervention and helping guide further planning of provision in each of the three types of AEP.

October 2006

Progress reports on published commitments in the First Annual Implementation Action Plan, Racial Equality Strategy

For more details contact the Racial Equality Unit on 02890 522293 or visit the website www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/race

Following on from a commitment given in the Racial Equality Strategy, the Racial Equality Unit published the first annual implementation action plan on 27 April 2006. Progress reports on published commitments in the first annual implementation action plan will be reported to the Minister by early October.

October 2006

Progress reports on published commitments in the Triennial Action Plan, Shared Future Policy

For further details contact the Community Relations Unit on 02890 522658 or visit the website www.asharedfutureni.gov.uk

As part of the Shared Future policy, the Community Relations Unit published the First Triennial Action Plan on 27 April 2006. Progress reports on published commitments in the Triennial Action Plan will be sent to the Minister by early October.

Autumn 2006

The recruitment and retention of teachers in post-primary schools in Northern Ireland

For further details contact Helen McClure by email at helen.mcclure@deni.gov.uk

The main aim of this research was to identify subjects that currently, or may in the near future, present schools with staffing difficulties. The project investigated whether there is a shortfall in the recruitment of teachers in any subject areas in post-primary schools in Northern Ireland.

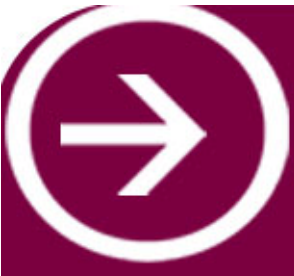
Late 2006

Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy Annual Report 2005

For further details visit: www.roadssafetyni.gov.uk or contact Brian Moore by email at brian.moore@doeni.gov.uk

The Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy 2002-2012 gives a commitment to carry out a review of the progress made on delivering the measures highlighted in the strategy and in achieving its objectives and targets to allow reappraisal of the targets and the effectiveness of the measures introduced to deliver them. The first review will look at progress made on delivering the measures highlighted in the strategy. The outcome of the review will be reported within the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy Annual Report 2005.





Contents
Introduction
Policy making
Publications
Think tanks
Workforce
New policies

Conferences
Consultations
Forthcoming
Coming up
Past events
Contact us

Policylink
Bulletin 13
September 2006

5

New from research institutes and think tanks

'What works? Distilling good practices from reconciliation'

For more details visit:
www.democraticdialogue.org

Summary

This is a guide to good practice derived from the often inspirational experience of eight longstanding non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in the arena of reconciliation long before the development of the 'A Shared Future' policy framework. Based on extensive interviews, this will not only provide helpful advice to other NGOs wishing to pursue a reconciliation agenda but also offers lessons which those in the public sector, anxious to make the pursuit of 'good relations' meaningful, will find useful. The guide has been written by Robin Wilson, Democratic Dialogue, and is due to be published during September 2006.

'The media are not the enemy: evaluating victim/survivor and media relations in Northern Ireland'

For more details visit:
www.democraticdialogue.org

This paper is based on the evidence of focus-group discussions with victims/survivors, examining how they are represented in the Northern Ireland media. The paper contains recommendations for improving relations, including the training of journalists. The paper is written by Erin Parish and Brandon Hamber, Democratic Dialogue, and is due to be published during October 2006.

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC): new-look website

For more details visit:
www.nihrc.org

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) is an independent, statutory body set up in 1999. Its role is to promote awareness of the importance of human rights in Northern Ireland, to review existing law and practice and to advise government on what steps need to be taken to fully protect human rights in Northern Ireland. The NIHRC has a new-look website, available at the web link on the left.

Racial prejudice in Northern Ireland

For more details visit:

<http://www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update44.pdf> (PDF 109KB)

In recent years, there has been a lot of public discussion about the extent of racial prejudice in Northern Ireland. In 2005, the Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) Survey incorporated a module on attitudes towards minority ethnic communities, including questions on racial prejudice. This research update – by Chris Gilligan and Katrina Lloyd – uses data from the 2005 survey, along with comparative data, to explore the changes in attitudes in Northern Ireland over the last decade. The data from the 2005 NILT survey clearly shows a widespread sense among respondents that there is more racism in Northern Ireland today compared to five years ago. There is also evidence that more people say they are racially prejudiced in 2005 than in 1994.

Devolution Monitoring Report – September 2006

For further details visit:

www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/research/devolution/devo-monitoring-programme.html

This is the latest in a series of reports, compiled by a team of Northern Ireland researchers, as part of UK-wide devolution-monitoring project collated by the Constitution Unit at UCL. This report addresses the prospects for the restoration of devolution by the November 2006 deadline set by London and Dublin.

Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI)

For further details visit:

www.ci-ni.org.uk

Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI) is the regional umbrella organisation for the children's voluntary sector in Northern Ireland. It represents the interests of children and the voluntary sector that works on their behalf. CiNI also provides training, policy and information services to member organisations, relating to their work with children and young people.

'Securing the Future'

For further details visit:

www.democraticdialogue.org/harm.htm

You can access the proceedings from a series of round tables, organised by Democratic Dialogue and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland, addressing crime and justice issues.

'A Picture of Health?'

For further details visit:

www.democraticdialogue.org/health.htm

You can access the proceedings from a series of round tables, organised by Democratic Dialogue and Stratagem, on public health and health inequalities.

'Planned' teenage pregnancy: views and experiences of young people from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds

For more details visit: www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/0336.asp

Through in-depth interviews with young mothers and fathers, this study looked at what influenced their decisions to 'plan' a pregnancy. The study, by Suzanne Cater and Lester Coleman of the Trust for the Study of Adolescence, is published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Findings included that most 'planned' pregnancies were not directly related to the desire for a child, but to young people's background or their current situation. The study shows that 'planned' teenage pregnancy has different motivations. But, given their disadvantaged backgrounds, teenagers saw young parenthood as a reasonably rational choice and, unlike most alternative ways of changing their life, one within their own control.

The value added by community involvement in governance

For more details visit: www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/government/0406.asp

Wider community engagement in governance is frequently argued to be vital to improving public services and tackling the 'democratic deficit'. This study by Future Perspectives Co-operative Ltd explores participants' views of the value added by community involvement in governance through Local Strategic Partnerships. The benefits, costs and difficulties identified hold lessons for community engagement in other governance structures, particularly those also including professionals and multi-agency groups.

Can current policy end child poverty in Britain by 2020?

For more details visit: www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/0376.asp

Part of a broader programme of work, this study – by researchers in the Centre for Analysis of Social Policy at the University of Bath – looks at the major policy areas that will potentially deliver the Government's aim to eliminate child poverty by 2020. It examines the strengths and weaknesses of how policy works in 2005/06 and – using hypothetical models – examines how far current policy will reduce child poverty by 2020.

What will it take to end child poverty?

For more details visit: www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/0366.asp

The Government aims to halve child poverty by 2010, and to end it by 2020. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation brought together experts in this field to consider the policies needed to make further progress. This study included modelling work co-ordinated by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, which estimated the future effect of existing and new policies needed to reach government targets.

What makes parenting programmes work in disadvantaged areas?

For more details visit: www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/0386.asp

There is increasing enthusiasm in government and the community for parenting programmes. However, little is known about what influences their effectiveness in poor, ethnically diverse areas. In this study, Stephen Scott, Thomas O'Connor and Annabel Futh from King's College London conducted a controlled trial of a parenting programme – PALS – in primary schools. The study found that, in this open access parenting programme, a remarkably high proportion of parents – two-thirds of those eligible – enrolled. The rate was equal for African, African-Caribbean, and white parents. Active engagement strategies were the key to success.

A comparison of how young people from different ethnic groups experience leaving school

For more details visit:
www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/0426.asp

Relatively little is known about how young people from minority ethnic communities make the move from school to independent adulthood. Based in Scotland, this study – by Clare Cassidy, Rory O'Connor and Nike Dorrer – looks at the experiences of young people from minority ethnic communities compared with those of their white peers. Research findings include that, while most minority ethnic young people, like their white peers, chose to attend further and higher education after leaving secondary school, their choice of courses was less varied and concentrated primarily around the medical sciences. Family and community expectations also featured more in the decision-making process leading to these choices for minority ethnic young people.

The journey to the interface: how public service design can connect users to reform

For more details visit:
<http://demos.headshift.com/publications/thejourneytotheinterface>

Attempts to reform public services will only succeed if they focus on the experiences of service users and become more 'customer friendly', according to this new report from the think-tank Demos. The report – by Sophia Parker and Joe Heapy – argues that reform of schools, hospitals and other public services have focused too much on competition and contestability, at the expense of service users.

Hidden work: co-production by people outside paid employment

For more details visit:
<http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/uploads/oea2yfnd2bbddle4o2svbf5526062006180147.pdf>
(65KB)

The government's emphasis on full employment threatens to strip neighbourhoods of the people who make the difference between success and failure of public services – like volunteers, care workers and 'co-producers' – according to new research from the New Economics Foundation (nef), published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The paper was prepared by David Boyle, Sherry Clark and Sarah Burns

Fade or flourish: how primary schools can build on children's early progress

For more details visit:
<http://www.smf.co.uk/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=217&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>

A new report, from the Social Market Foundation, claims that the most disadvantaged children are losing out, despite preschool programmes, and will continue to do so without primary school changes. The success of the government's early years strategy will depend on addressing the failure of primary schools to sustain and capitalise on the early progress made by disadvantaged children through preschool programmes such as Sure Start.

UK think tanks

For more details visit:
www.policyjobs.net/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=1049

The Policy Library provides a list of UK think tanks, including a summary of their history and remit, with links to the individual websites. To access the list of think tanks, visit the web link on the left.

New Foresight project: sustainable energy management and the built environment

The UK Foresight Programme will be undertaking a Foresight project on sustainable energy management and the built environment as a result of the Government's Energy Review (report is available at http://www.dtistats.net/ereview/energy_review_report.pdf). The project will consider the potential future role and relationship of centralised and decentralised energy generation in delivering the UK's long-term energy goals. In order to do this it will look at scientific, technical and economic issues including: future systems for generating heat and power that are low carbon and distributed; transmission and distribution networks; and demand management. Demand management would range from reducing use of energy in buildings through materials and intelligence to exploring behavioural, attitudinal and information barriers to changes in behaviour. The project is expected to report its findings in autumn 2008.

Asia Task Force

For further details visit you can access information on the Asia Task Force via:

http://www.foresight.gov.uk/esight/2006_July/Index.htm

The UK Foresight Programme has been supporting the work of the Asia Task Force, which has brought together experts from industry, education and government to focus on boosting British exports to, and investment in, Asian countries. They sought the perspectives of key individuals from across Asia on the factors they thought would influence UK trade with Asia over the next 15 years. The resulting report is available via the weblink provided.

The future of globalisation

The Foresight Horizon Scanning Centre has been asked by the Government's Co-ordination of Research and Analysis Group (CRAG) to undertake a major scenarios project on the future of globalisation. Data gathering and research work will take place during the summer, determining the area of focus of the project which will be decided during September. The analysis and scenario-building phase of the project will then run for six months, followed by a series of events during 2007 to draw out the policy implications of the scenarios generated.

Retirement, health and relationships in the older population in England: the 2006 English Longitudinal Study of Ageing

For more details visit:

http://www.ifs.org.uk/press.php?publication_id=3657

Individuals who are 50-59 years old and from the poorest fifth of the population are over 10 times more likely to die than their peers from the richest fifth. This and other key findings emerge from the latest results of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA). The multidisciplinary study follows the life experiences of a cohort of people born before 1952 through detailed interviews on many aspects of their life at two year intervals.

Latest edition of House Price Index (Ireland)

For more details visit:

<http://www.esri.ie/content.cfm?t=ESRI%20/%20Permanent%20tsb%20House%20Price%20Index&mId=4>

House prices in Ireland continue to increase, rising by 1.6% in May this year, according to the latest edition of the permanent tsb/ESRI (Economic and Social Research Institute) House Price Index. In the first five months of 2006, average national prices have risen by 6.7%, compared to just 1.8% in 2005. Looking specifically at May the price of houses nationally rose by 1.6% during the month, up slightly from the rate of 1.4% recorded in April this year. The average price paid for a house nationally in May this year was EUR296,361, up EUR18,500 on that recorded for December 2005

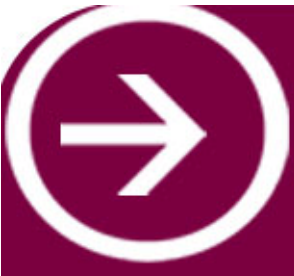
**The future is now: healthy choices for
Canada's children and youth**

For more details visit:

[http://action.web.ca/home/crru/
rsrscs_crru_full.shtml?x=89913&AA_EX_
Session=05a5efbd81548109137
5edb015d1dab3](http://action.web.ca/home/crru/rsrscs_crru_full.shtml?x=89913&AA_EX_Session=05a5efbd815481091375edb015d1dab3)

In June 2006, the Health Council of Canada (HCC) published this report which highlights the inequalities that continue to threaten child and youth health, reinforces what we know about how to improve child health, and challenges governments and communities to put that knowledge into action. The report showcases some initiatives that help adolescents to steer clear of crime, children to be more physically active, and young students with hearing problems to do better in school. It also describes a highly integrated parenting, early learning, child care and kindergarten programme, located in schools, that is helping parents give their young children the best start in life.





Contents
Introduction
Policy making
Publications
Think tanks
Workforce
New policies

Conferences
Consultations
Forthcoming
Coming up
Past events
Contact us

Policylink
Bulletin 13
September 2006

6

Special theme: workforce issues

Demographic change and the labour market: summary of the presentation by Robert Wright, University of Strathclyde, at the Scott Policy Seminar on 17 May 2006

Summary

In considering the issue of demographic change, while there is a general awareness of issues such as the pensions crisis and the implications for the economy of an ageing population, few analysts have followed this through with an examination of the precise implications of demographic change on the labour market and the subsequent implications for policy.

Focusing on Scotland, Professor Robert Wright addressed this issue through his analysis of the main features of the region's current demographic situation. These are:

- (i) a below replacement fertility rate
- (ii) declining mortality (i.e. increased life expectancy)
- (iii) zero-net migration (i.e. the number of immigrants equals the number of emigrants).

If this situation remains unchanged, he estimates that Scotland's population will decline. Its population will age rapidly with an increase in the number of people aged 65+ (including an increase in those aged 85+) and a decrease in those aged between 20-64, including a decrease in the number of people below 15 years. The most alarming finding from this analysis concerns the size of the population aged 20 to 64, which on current trends could plummet significantly over the next 40 years.

Professor Wright makes a convincing argument that public debate is fixated by the ageing of the population and the implications for pensions. The key issue in his view is the reduction in the 20-64 age cohort. It is difficult to imagine growth in any economy with a reduction in the numbers within this age cohort as it means a significant reduction in the pool of people that firms need and a shrinking labour force. In Scotland, a combination of an ageing labour force and a declining

workforce will have serious policy implications. In a changing demographic situation a reduction in the labour supply will mean a leftward shift of the labour supply curve which results in upward pressure on wages and the economy becoming less competitive. The typical age to earnings profile points to the “ageing effect” (as age increases, wages normally increase as well). For young workers, a reduction in the labour supply will place an upward pressure on wages. For older workers, an increase in their supply will tend to place a downward pressure on wages – a situation of “inter-generational conflict”.

Using a micro-macro model of the Scottish economy, Professor Wright’s analysis allows for different scenarios to be considered assuming for example different net migration levels and their effects in terms of output, wage rates, employment and competitiveness. The conclusion from this analysis is if Scotland is to avoid labour shortages in the future, significant in-migration is required. Professor Wright argues that in policy terms to wait and do nothing is not an option. A regional dimension needs to be built into migration policy. Further policy implications include for example the need to increase the employment rate for women with children and the need to address skill shortages. He cautions against a reliance on migration from East European economies as they do not have an unlimited supply of labour.

1 Professor Wright’s research was funded by a joint initiative between the Scottish Executive and the Economic and Social Research Council.

Changing demographics

For more details visit:

<http://www.theworkfoundation.com/products/publications/azpublications/changingdemographics.aspx>

Changing demographics – by Laura Williams and Alexandra Jones from The Work Foundation – examines how an ageing workforce will affect UK employers and the way people work. It also looks at flexible working arrangements, the generation gap, and the gender gap. It is relevant for employers, employees of all types, and policy-makers.

Occupation forecasts and replacement demand analysis for Northern Ireland 2005 – 2015

For further details visit:

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/occforecasts.pdf> (PDF 1,430KB)

This report, published in June 2006, examines occupation and replacement demand forecasts for the Northern Ireland economy. It provides annual employment projections for 24 separate occupation groups for each year until 2015. The forecasts provide a measure of the scale of likely job vacancies in each occupation caused by labour turnover as well as by the expansion or contraction of demand.

Flexible working: employer research report

For further details contact Lynne Taylor by email at lynne.taylor@delni.gov.uk
or visit: www.delni.gov.uk/erresearch

The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) will publish the findings of research into the views and practices of employers with regard to flexible working amongst their employees during October 2006. This follows publication during the summer of a similar report on employee views and practices. The employer report will mirror a similar document prepared in respect of research carried out in 2003. A report comparing the 2003 and 2006 findings and examining the comparable employee surveys will be published at a later date.

Who's afraid of labour market flexibility?

For more details visit:
http://www.theworkfoundation.com/Assets/PDFs/labour_flex_summary.pdf
(PDF 48KB)

The widespread conviction that low levels of employment regulation and weak trade unions are the cause of Britain's good record at creating jobs and keeping unemployment down is exposed as a myth in a new study by The Work Foundation. The report, by David Coats, argues that several European countries (Denmark, Sweden, Austria and the Netherlands) have achieved comparable or better levels of labour market dynamism to the UK while at the same time allowing for much greater levels of "workplace justice". The report says that it is wrong to believe that the most lightly regulated countries are the most successful. Very different models of employment can yield equally good outcomes and there is no single path to full and fulfilling employment, according to the report. The study calls for a series of specific reforms, aimed at improving the level of 'workplace justice' offered in Britain.

Work and families: choice and flexibility – consultation on regulations and policy

For more details visit:
www.delni.gov.uk/workandfamilies

This consultation document, issued on 3 April 2006, was divided into two discrete parts. The first asked for feedback on draft regulations relating to the extension of maternity and adoption leave and of the right for employees to request flexible working arrangements. The second part dealt with outstanding policy matters concerning the implementation of a new right to additional statutory paternity leave and pay. A Departmental response to Part 1 will be published in the autumn, whilst further consideration is being given to Part 2. The consultation period ran from 3 April to 30 June 2006.

Toward squaring the circle: work-life balance and the implications for individuals, firms and public policy

For more details visit:
<http://www.irpp.org/choices/archive/vol12no3.pdf> (PDF 145KB)

This report, by Richard Chaykowski, Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP) Canada, claims that while the majority is satisfied, work-life conflict is a concern for a significant minority of workers.

Public consultation on extending dispute resolution legislation to cover additional employment rights jurisdictions

For more details visit:

www.delni.gov.uk/resolvingdisputes

In April 2005, new procedures designed to help employers and employees resolve disputes in the workplace were introduced. The Department for Employment and Learning is currently consulting on a small extension of these procedures to cover three additional areas of employment rights law ("jurisdictions"). The effect of the proposed regulations would be to make complaints relating to certain types of employee representative subject to the existing dispute resolution procedures. This consultation is running from 4 July to 27 October 2006.

Amendment to Working Time Regulations – extension of holiday entitlement

For more details visit:

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/>

[consultation-zone/public-consultation](http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/consultation-zone/public-consultation)

[-on-a-proposal-to-increase-paid-holiday-entitlement.htm](http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/consultation-zone/public-consultation-on-a-proposal-to-increase-paid-holiday-entitlement.htm)

The Department for Employment and Learning will initiate the first of two intended consultation exercises outlining Government's proposals to increase the current statutory minimum holiday entitlement. Views will be sought from businesses, trade unions, representative bodies, individuals and other stakeholders on the implementation of this change. The consultation is running from 28 July to 19 October 2006.

Amendment to Working Time Regulations to clarify position of off shore workers

For further details contact Jeff Ard by email at jeff.ard@delni.gov.uk

The Department for Employment and Learning plans to amend the Working Time Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998 to clarify their application to off shore workers employed in the Northern Ireland portion of the continental shelf. The consultation is expected to commence during September 2006.

Revised Guide on Public Interest Disclosures

For further details contact Jeff Ard by email at jeff.ard@delni.gov.uk

This Guide covers the Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, an Order which protects workers who 'blow the whistle' about wrongdoing. Appendix 1 (List of Prescribed Persons) is to be updated. The revised guide is due to issue during September 2006.

Collective Redundancies (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2006

For further details contact Andrew Dawson by email at andrew.dawson@delni.gov.uk

A consultation was held between May and July on amending Article 221 of the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996. At present, notification of proposed collective redundancies can be made to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment after the issue of redundancy notices to staff. A European Court of Justice decision has stipulated that such notification must be made before redundancy notices are issued and the Collective Redundancies (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2006 will give effect to this change. The Order is planned to come into operation on 1 October 2006.





Contents
Introduction
Policy making
Publications
Think tanks
Workforce
New policies

Conferences
Consultations
Forthcoming
Coming up
Past events
Contact us

Policylink
Bulletin 13
September 2006



Newly announced policies and strategies

June 2006

Planning Policy Statement 15: Planning and Flood Risk

For further details visit:

www.planningni.gov.uk/AreaPlans_Policy/PPS/pps15/publication_pps15.htm

Summary

This Planning Policy Statement sets out the Department of the Environment's planning policies to minimise flood risk to people, property and the environment. It embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development and the conservation of biodiversity. It adopts a precautionary approach to development and the use of land that takes account of climate change and is supportive to the wellbeing and safety of people.

13 June 2006

Architecture and the built environment for Northern Ireland

For further details visit:

www.dcalni.gov.uk/ContMan/includes/upload/file.asp?ContentID=1271&file=c_23

By making design quality a priority, Northern Ireland Government departments aspire to excellence in the design of buildings, landscapes, urban spaces and infrastructure. Evidence shows that people respond positively to buildings and places which are visually attractive and efficient in use. In all areas social, economic and environmental benefit results from investment in good design. Over the next ten years the scale of strategic investment provides a significant opportunity to raise design standards in educational and healthcare environments, as well as transport and water infrastructure. Government departments are committed to the achievement of excellence in the design and construction of publicly funded projects. Through advocacy, exemplary public sector projects and collaboration with key stakeholders Government aims to challenge and inspire high standards in the private sector.

3 July 2006

Raising awareness of British and Irish Sign Languages: best practice guidance and exhibition

For further details visit:

www.dcalni.gov.uk/allpages/allpages.asp?pname=sign

On 3 July 2006, the Minister Maria Eagle launched the Best Practice Guidance on Providing Public Services to Deaf People who use British Sign Language or Irish Sign Language. The Minister also launched an exhibition aimed at raising awareness of British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language. The 'Raising Awareness' exhibition was designed by a sub group of the Sign Language Partnership Group, led by one of the Group's deaf members. The exhibition gives a brief history of British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language, some helpful signs, and useful facts and figures. The exhibition will be touring Government departments from Autumn 2006. A copy is also available for related seminars or conferences.

Early September 2006

Submission of the draft Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 to the EU Commission for approval

For further details contact Keith Morrison by email at keith.morrison@dardni.gov.uk or visit <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/consultations>

The new rural development programme will be the single successor to the current Rural Development Regulation Plan, LEADER+ and the agri-rural elements of the Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity (BSP) and PEACE II. The new programme will need to be in place by the end of the year to allow for implementation from 1 January 2007. The EU Regulation provides for rural development activity under four axes:

- improving competitiveness of the agriculture and forestry sector;
- improving the environment and the countryside;
- the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy; and
- a horizontal LEADER approach to the delivery of appropriate measures.

September 2006

New Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Code of Ethics

For further details contact Peter Houston by email at peter.houston@dfpni.gov.uk

A new NICS Code of Ethics will be published on the NICS website in September. This follows closely the new GB Civil Service Code, which was launched on 6 June 2006, but also takes account of the Northern Ireland context. The new Code sets out the core values of the Civil Service and the standards expected of civil servants. The new Code is the result of the responses received to the consultation exercise on a draft new Code held earlier this year.

Expected September/October 2006

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's (DARD) Rural Strategy

For further details contact Esther Moore by email at esther.moore@dardni.gov.uk

A review of rural development policy has been undertaken by DARD, in consultation with the Rural Stakeholder Forum. The emerging strategy will guide future rural development in Northern Ireland. The overall theme of the strategy will be 'diversifying the rural economy and sustaining rural communities'.

Expected September/October 2006

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's (DARD) Renewable Energy Strategy

For further details contact Esther Moore by email at esther.moore@dardni.gov.uk

DARD is developing a needs based policy for the use of agriculture and forestry resources to assist the competitive development of land based renewable energy sources. The forthcoming strategy is likely to focus on:

- the opportunities for alternative land uses (biomass and biofuels) to broaden the economic base of agriculture;
- the integration of sustainable waste management with renewable energy production; and
- the opportunities to deploy renewable energy technologies within the rural economy, particularly small scale, embedded heat and power systems.

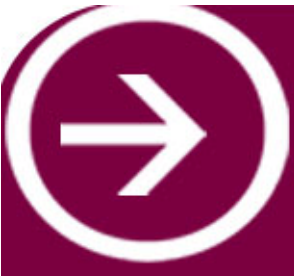
November 2006

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

For further details contact Elaine McFeeters by email at elaine.mcfeeters@deni.gov.uk

The Department of Education (DE) is in the process of developing a policy for English as an Additional Language (EAL), which should be finalised by the end of 2006. DE has recently completed consultation with interested parties whose ideas have helped to shape a proposed new EAL service. These have included principals and teachers, children who are at different stages of EAL development, their parents and non-governmental organisations whose responsibilities include EAL. In parallel, DE is actively working with the Education and Library Boards in pursuing a proposal for the five Boards to set up a single EAL service managed by one Board.





Contents
Introduction
Policy Making
Publications
Think Tanks
Workforce
New Policies

Conferences
Consultations
Forthcoming
Coming Up
Past Events
Contact Us

Policylink
Bulletin 13
September 2006

8

Conferences and seminars coming up

Summary

14-15 September 2006

Tower Hotel, Derry/Londonderry

Inaugural meeting of the Global Social Enterprise Forum

For further details email:

www.crescotrust.com or contact Emma by telephone on 02871 269400

Given the move towards greater corporate social responsibility on the part of both the public and private sectors and the growing role for the social economy, there seems to be an opportunity for all sectors to meet their own particular objectives by working in close collaboration and partnership. Thus, this conference explores 'Collaborative Partnerships and the Social Economy'. Attendance at the conference costs £50 for private sector and statutory bodies. There is no charge for not-for-profits/social enterprises.

19 September 2006

W5, Odyssey, Belfast

Shifting Brilliances Conference

For further details contact David Mann by e-mail at

david.mann@dcalni.gov.uk

This one day conference will bring together key players in the arts and broadcasting sectors from across the UK and Ireland. The conference will be opened by a keynote speaker, followed by speeches and panel contributions from senior broadcast executives, producers, writers, directors, performers and leading industry figures. The conference will explore what needs to be done to increase television drama production in Northern Ireland.

21 September 2006

Wellington Park, Belfast

'Securing the Future'

For further details contact Ellen by email at

ellen@democraticdialogue.org

Proceedings from previous events are available at www.democraticdialogue.org/harm.htm

This is the third of four round tables organised by Democratic Dialogue and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland, addressing crime and justice issues – this time crime prevention and support for victims.

26 September 2006
Ramada Hotel, Belfast

'How can we deliver better services for children and young people in Northern Ireland?'

For further details contact Aideen Donnelly by email at aideen.donnelly@ofmdfmi.gov.uk

In light of recent developments across government, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the Department of Education and the Northern Ireland Office are jointly hosting a one day workshop to give consideration to the future shape of services for children and young people.

3-4 October 2006
St George's Market, Belfast

Opportunity Europe Fair and Exhibition

For further details contact Catherine McShane by email at:
catherine.mcshane@cec.eu.int

This two-day fair and exhibition will highlight Northern Ireland's links with Europe and opportunities for young people to work, study and volunteer in other European countries.

4 October 2006
Belfast

Policy seminar: Evidence based policy-making

For further details email:
policylink@ofmdfmi.gov.uk

This seminar is part of a programme of policy seminars hosted by the Policy Innovation Unit (PIU) in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). Stephen Aldridge, Director of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, will be the key speaker and will speak about the role of evidence in the work of the Strategy Unit. Michelle Frew from the Office of Science and Innovation will also contribute focusing on 'Where's the evidence?' The event is targeted at policy-makers and invitations will issue during September.

5 October 2006
Hilton Hotel, Park Lane, London

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) enforcement conference

For further details contact Imelda Law by email at imelda.law@doeni.gov.uk

The theme of this conference is working in partnership to reduce vehicle related crime and to improve road safety and the environment. Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland (DVLNI) senior management and enforcement staff will attend this conference.

17-18 October 2006
The Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co Louth

'Action for Equity' conference

For further details visit
<http://www.publichealth.ie/?locID=456>

The Institute of Public Health in Ireland is holding a flagship event 'Action for Equity'. The aim is to stimulate debate and secure action on equity in health through defining equity, identifying effective action, deciding on policies and approaches to improve equity, and committing to action and accountability.

18 October 2006
Belfast City Hall
'The Future of Local Government'

For further details contact Brian McClure by email at brian.mcclure@dfpni.gov.uk

This major one day conference will include a keynote address by Sir Michael Lyons, Chair of the Lyons Inquiry into English Local Government. The event will also feature top speakers from Northern Ireland, together with a speaker from a Scottish local authority who guided the authority through a local government reorganisation. The event is being hosted by the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV), in partnership with the Chief Executives' Forum and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

Topics to be covered include:

- implementing the Review of Public Administration;
- reorganisation of Local Government – the Scottish experience;
- future functions and funding of Local Government – Sir Michael Lyons; and
- managing change/transforming public service delivery.

20 October 2006
Europa Hotel, Belfast

'A Picture of Health?'

For further details contact Ellen by email at ellen@democraticdialogue.org

Proceedings from previous events are available at www.democraticdialogue.org/health.htm

This is the final of four round tables organised by Democratic Dialogue and the public-affairs company Stratagem, exploring public health and health inequalities. These will look respectively at a future policy agenda, building on Investing for Health, and the mechanisms and means needed to implement it. The first in particular will be of interest to many outside the health field, given the holistic nature of the public-health challenge.

24-25 October 2006
24th: Belfast; 25th: Dublin

Introductory level Health Impact Assessment courses

For further details contact Gary Maxwell by email at gary.maxwell@dhsspsni.gov.uk

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a practical, systematic methodology that can be used to assess the impacts on health of policies, programmes and projects that may not have health as their primary objective. It provides an evidence base to support improved decision-making at all levels and across many sectors.

October to December initially
Analytical skills for policy-makers

For further details please contact Carol Hamilton by email at carol@redhat-consulting.com or by telephone on 02890 428444

This Autumn, Red Hat Consulting is launching a new range of bespoke workshops that will address the challenges facing policy-makers over the next five years. In this workshop, participants will be taken through a structured approach to policy-making which takes account of up-to-date thinking and good practice in this area. Using practical case studies, it will identify the analytical skills required at each stage of the process and tools and techniques that can be applied. This is a broad based workshop which will be of interest, either to those who are relatively new into this area, or to those who want to update their relevant skills. This is a one-day programme for which the cost per participant will be £175. This new workshop will be delivered by Dorothy McKee and Denise Wheatley.

October to December initially

Policy-making in a partnership environment

For further details please contact Carol Hamilton by email at carol@redhat-consulting.com or by telephone on 02890 428444

The Review of Public Administration will place partnership working centre stage. This will create a new set of challenges for those involved in policy-making. This workshop, by Red Hat Consulting, explores different models of partnership, frameworks for making partnerships work and the implications of partnership in effective decision-making and policy evaluation. This workshop is targeted at those who work in a partnership context or are involved in monitoring policies delivered on a partnership basis. The cost of this one-day workshop is £175 per person. This new workshop will be delivered by Dorothy McKee and Denise Wheatley.

October to December initially

Effective consultation for policy-makers

For further details please contact Carol Hamilton by email at carol@redhat-consulting.com or by telephone on 02890 428444

Consultation in Northern Ireland has developed significantly over the last 5-6 years and many examples of good practice have evolved. This workshop, by Red Hat Consulting, will clarify how to more effectively target consultation at various stages of the policy-making process. Perspectives will be provided from practitioners who have developed good practice in this area and those who have influenced policy-making through consultation. Day One will focus on the appropriate techniques at each stage of the policy-making process. Day Two will provide practical experience of applying the learning from Day One. This workshop will be of interest either to those new into this area or those who simply want to update their skills. This is a two-day programme and the cost per participant is £300. This new workshop will be delivered by Dorothy McKee and Denise Wheatley.

October to December initially

Master class in policy-making and evaluation workshop

For further details please contact Carol Hamilton by email at carol@redhat-consulting.com or by telephone on 02890 428444

This one day workshop by Red Hat Consulting is aimed at Grade 7s and above. It has been expanded and updated to place more emphasis on the political context for policy-making in Northern Ireland. This workshop will be highly beneficial for those involved in managing and directing the teams involved in policy-making. The cost of this one-day workshop is £175 per person. This new workshop will be delivered by Dorothy McKee and Denise Wheatley.

7 November 2006**Venue to be confirmed**

Ministerial Essential Skills committee meeting

For more details contact Deirdre McGill by email at deirdre.mcgill@delni.gov.uk

The Essential Skills Committee was established in 2002 to review progress and direct the future development of the Essential Skills Strategy to ensure it addresses low levels of adult literacy and numeracy and impacts on the wider government agenda, in particular, the recommendations of the Taskforce on Employability. It is chaired at Ministerial level and meets twice a year.

13-15 November 2006
Waterfront Hall, Belfast

National Cancer Institute 3rd All Ireland Cancer Conference

For further details visit
www.aicc2006.co.uk

The All Ireland/National Cancer Institute (NCI) Cancer Consortium was established in 1999 by the governments of Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and the USA to further collaboration on enhancing cancer research, care and treatment on the island of Ireland. The NCI 3rd All Ireland Cancer Conference aims to bring together professionals working in the cancer field to share their expertise and experiences, whilst discussing new and important developments in the area.

22 November 2006
Queen's University, Belfast

ESRC Survey Link Workshop

For further details visit:
<http://qb.soc.surrey.ac.uk/workshops/Workshops.htm>

This ESRC Survey Link Scheme Workshop will focus on the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey. This is the first time that the Scheme has held a workshop in Northern Ireland.

23 November 2006
Venue to be confirmed

Freedom of Information seminar

For further details contact David Lammey by email at:
david.lammey@ofmdfmi.gov.uk

This Freedom of Information event will be hosted by the Chief Executives' Forum. Richard Thomas, Information Commissioner, and John Angel, Chair, Information Tribunal, will be the guest speakers. The event is targeted at Chief Executives from the wider public sector and Senior Civil Servants in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.





Contents
Introduction
Policy Making
Publications
Think Tanks
Workforce
New Policies

Conferences
Consultations
Forthcoming
Coming Up
Past Events
Contact Us

Policylink
Bulletin 13
September 2006

9

Current Consultations

13 February to 30 September 2006

Northern Ireland Community Festivals Policy and Guidance Framework

<http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/newsStory/default.asp?id=1206>

The Community Festivals Fund was launched on 13 February 2006.

The policy will ensure:

- a co-ordinated approach that is open to all community festivals with decisions based on merit;
- a clear and co-ordinated single source of advice for festival organisers on the availability of funding and support services and the criteria and timescales for accessing them;
- the co-ordinated collection of information on festivals and its use in evaluation; and
- capacity building and development for festivals building on existing strengths, and also supporting new or emerging festivals.

31 March to 23 June 2006

Draft Sub-Regional Transport Plan

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/DRDwww_Consultations/currentConsultation.asp?id=con83

The Sub-Regional Transport Plan (SRTP) is the last of three Transport Plans developed to assist in the delivery of the Regional Transportation Strategy 2002 – 2012 (RTS). The SRTP is concerned with the main towns and cities outside the Belfast Metropolitan Area, and the rural areas. The consultation documents included an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

In total:

- Consultation meetings were held with 15 Councils;
- Consultation meetings were held with representatives from 25 umbrella groups from Section 75; and
- To date there have been 53 written responses to the consultation.

27 April to 21 July 2006

The draft Housing (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and Explanatory Memorandum

[http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/consultation_results_archived?description=Draft%20Housing%20Amendment%20\(NI\)%20Order%202006](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/consultation_results_archived?description=Draft%20Housing%20Amendment%20(NI)%20Order%202006)

The draft Order is intended to effect the transfer of responsibility for the Social Housing Development Programme from the Department for Social Development to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. The consultation period has ended and it is hoped that the Order will be laid in October 2006.

May to September 2006

Regional Development Strategy Five Year Review

<http://consultations.drdni.gov.uk>

<http://www.drdni.gov.uk/DRDwww%5Fconsultations/currentConsultation.asp?id=con84>

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) contains a commitment to carry out a 'focused assessment' after five years to identify any aspects where 'in-course adjustments' may be required to particular Strategic Planning Guidelines.

22 May to 1 September 2006

Ports Policy Review – Department of Transport (London)

http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_shipping/documents/divisionhomepage/611692.hcsp

The Department for Transport's (DfT) consultation paper is in the form of a discussion document seeking views to inform the Review of Ports Policy in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

1 June to 24 August 2006

Proposal for a draft Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

[http://www.waterreformni.gov.uk/index/draft_water_and_sewerage_services_\(northern_ireland\)_order_2006.htm](http://www.waterreformni.gov.uk/index/draft_water_and_sewerage_services_(northern_ireland)_order_2006.htm)

The proposed draft Order (which is accompanied by an explanatory memorandum):

- Provides for the appointment of a company, wholly owned by Government, as a water and sewerage undertaker to deliver water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland ;
- Establishes a regulatory regime by extending the remit of the current energy regulator, the Department for Regional Development and the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland to oversee the new utility;
- Sets out a framework for the levying of charges for water and sewerage services;
- Sets out the duties and powers of a water and sewerage undertaker in relation to the provision of those services; and
- Makes changes to existing environmental legislation dealing with water to accommodate the new arrangements.

Following the consultation exercise, it is planned to lay the draft Order in October 2006.

14 June to 11 September 2006

EU Regulation 1/2005 – Welfare of animals during transport

<http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/consultations/active-consultations/consultations-the-welfare-of-animals-during-transport.htm>

This consultation is on the new EU Regulation 1/2005 which comes into force in January 2007. The Regulation aims to improve animal welfare by raising transportation standards and ensuring enforcement of those standards.

19 June to 14 August 2006

Consultation on the new Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

<http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/consultations/archived-consultations/consultations-ni-rural-development-programme-2007-2013.htm>

The new rural development programme will be the single successor to the current Rural Development Regulation Plan, LEADER+ and the agri-rural elements of the Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity (BSP) and PEACE II. Consultation closed on 14 August 2006 and responses will be published on the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's website.

20 June to 22 September 2006

Ports Policy Consultation (Northern Ireland) – Powers, Status and Governance of Public Trust Ports in Northern Ireland

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/DRDwww_Consultations/currentConsultation.asp?id=con91

This consultation seeks views on the development of policy on the powers, status and governance of public trust ports in Northern Ireland . Consultation is supplementary to the UK ports policy consultation.

26 June to 1 September 2006

All Ireland free travel scheme for older people

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/DRDwww_Consultations/currentConsultation.asp?id=con92

This consultation is on proposals to introduce free travel for older people throughout the island of Ireland .

4 July to 17 October 2006

Consultation on revision of the Northern Ireland Highway Code

<http://www.doeni.gov.uk/foi/search/details.asp?docid=3547>

The Department of the Environment issued a consultation on revision and update of the Highway Code on 4 July 2006 with a proposed deadline for replies by 17 October 2006.

5 July to 22 September 2006

Training for success: professional and technical consultation document

www.delni.gov.uk/index/consultationzone/trainingforsuccess.htm

The Training for Success: Professional and Technical Training Consultation Document, launched in July 2006, sets out how the Department for Employment and Learning proposes to take forward its commitments under the Skills Strategy in relation to the reconfiguration of Training and Adult Skills. In doing so, it draws together three separate but inter-related strands and sets out the Department's views on a way forward which repositions professional and technical (formerly vocational) training as an economically focused route to highly skilled employment which will contribute to the prosperity of Northern Ireland.

14 July to 3 November 2006

Draft Planning Policy Statement 5: Retailing, Town Centres and Commercial Leisure Development

<http://www.drdni.gov.uk/DRDwww%5Fconsultations/currentConsultation.asp?id=con93>

Draft Planning Policy Statement 5 sets out the policy for retailing and commercial leisure developments, in cities, towns and other centres and settlements throughout Northern Ireland

17 July to 13 October 2006

Charities Review

http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/consultation_results_current?description=DSD%20Charities%20Review

The aim of these proposed changes will be to provide a structure and process through which charities can demonstrate their contribution to society, the public can be assured how charities are spending any donations and government can assist in the better governance of the charity sector.

19 July to 19 October 2006

Track width increase for small street cleansing vehicles

<http://www.doeni.gov.uk/foi/search/details.asp?docid=3610>

This consultation focuses on the increase of the track width for small street cleansing vehicles from 810mm to 1100mm in the Goods Vehicles (Testing) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2003 and Motor Vehicles Testing (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2003.

24 July to 5 September 2006

Environmental report on the draft Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-13

<http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/consultations/active-consultations/consultations-environmental-report-on-the-nirdp-2007-2013.htm>

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) has prepared a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the draft Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-13 in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004. The draft report is published alongside (and should be read in conjunction with) the consultation on the draft Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme.

27 July to 15 September 2006

Draft Rates (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

[http://www.ratingreviewni.gov.uk/rates_\(amendment\)_2006.pdf](http://www.ratingreviewni.gov.uk/rates_(amendment)_2006.pdf) (PDF 578KB)

This draft Order in Council aims to give effect to the main reform of the domestic rating system, that is, rates based on individual capital values from April 2007. It also provides for the introduction of the remaining domestic and non-domestic rating reforms, including a series of reliefs and the introduction of a new tribunal service for domestic ratepayers. The consultation exercise aims to seek views on whether the draft legislation gives effect to the Government's policy intentions, rather than the underpinning policy measures themselves as these have already been subject to a number of separate lengthy consultation exercises.

28 July to 18 September 2006

Sir David Henshaw's Report – Recovering child support: routes to responsibility

For more details contact Colm McLaughlin by email at colm.mclaughlin@dsdni.gov.uk

Sir David Henshaw's report on proposals towards a simpler system of child support and the Government's response to it were published on 24 July 2006. As a first step in the consultation process, on 28 July the report and the Government's response were issued to relevant stakeholders in Northern Ireland . The consultation period ends on 18 September 2006.

31 July to 29 September 2006

Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015

<http://www.roadsni.gov.uk/consultation/consultation.htm>

This consultation is on the proposed £400m package of major road upgrades throughout Northern Ireland on the Strategic Road Network. The announcement is part of the ongoing investment being undertaken in Northern Ireland 's infrastructure, which is essential to encourage economic development. The package is to be funded as part of the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI). This is over and above the £1 billion already in the pipeline, and means that proposed investment in Northern Ireland 's Strategic Road Network now stands at £1.4 billion – the highest in real terms for over 30 years.

1 August to 30 October 2006

Consultation on the Review of the Northern Ireland Teachers Superannuation Scheme (NITSS)

http://www.deni.gov.uk/review_of_nitss_a_consultation_document.pdf (PDF 113KB)

This consultation document seeks views on a package of reforms to the Northern Ireland Teachers Superannuation Scheme (NITSS) that has been agreed between teacher and lecturer unions, employer representatives and Government as part of the UK Wide Review of Teachers Pensions.

15 August to 6 November 2006

Flood management policy review

For further details visit:

www.floodpolicyni.co.uk

Consultation on the independent review report which identifies the issues surrounding flood risk, how these impact on the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Rivers Agency and draws up a policy framework for future direction, including options for delivery. The Flood Management Policy Review will also inform the ongoing Review of Environmental Governance.

15 August to 7 November 2006

Draft Taxis (Northern Ireland) 2006

<http://www.doeni.gov.uk/foi/search/details.asp?docid=3619>

The proposed draft Order creates a new framework for taxi regulation which will cover the licensing of taxi operators, drivers and taxis; fares and taximeters; hiring taxis at separate fares, and enforcement. The new Order will give effect to proposals for the reform of taxi regulation resulting from the Taxi Review conducted by Department of the Environment.

Consultation commenced 22 August 2006

Draft Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015

For further details contact John Coulter by email at john.coulter@doeni.gov.uk

The Draft Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 is a development plan being prepared under the provisions of Part III of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 by the Planning Service, an Agency within the Department of the Environment. Development plans inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested bodies of the policy framework and land use proposals that will be used to guide development decisions within the local area. The Draft Area Plan was published on the 22 August 2006 there now follows an eight week public consultation period due to close on the 17 October 2006 (refer to Draft Plan and appropriate Public Notices for details) through which representations / objections may be lodged. Later, there will be a public display of these representations / objections and a period of eight weeks in which to lodge counter objections.

Consultation commenced during August 2006

Proposals for new animal welfare legislation in Northern Ireland

For further details contact John Terrington by email at animal.welfare@dardni.gov.uk

Consultation on proposals for new animal welfare legislation that takes account of the provisions of new animal welfare legislation for England and Wales . Amongst other issues, the consultation proposes enabling preventive action to be taken before suffering occurs and provides for stronger penalties for more serious breaches.

August to October 2006 (anticipated)

Consultation on a Bilateral Agreement between the UK and the Republic of Ireland on mutual recognition of driving disqualifications

The purpose of the Bilateral Agreement is to allow each administration to recognise and take action on the other's driving disqualifications, regardless of where the offences took place, as envisaged by the EU Convention on Driving Disqualifications.

For further details contact Cathy Johnston by email at cathy.johnston@doeni.gov.uk

Consultation commenced during August 2006

The Immobilisation and Removal of Vehicles (Prescribed Conditions) Regulations (NI) 2006

For further details email: roads.legislation@drdni.gov.uk

August to October 2006

Draft Building Regulations (Amendment) Order

For further details contact Gerry McKibbin by email at gerry.mckibbin@dfni.gov.uk

Late August to October 2006

Proposals for changes to factors within the Local Management of Schools Common Funding Formula

For further details contact Jennifer McBride by email at jennifer.mcbride@deni.gov.uk

Consultation runs until 25 September 2006

Getting equal: proposals to outlaw sexual orientation discrimination in the provision of goods and services in Northern Ireland

For more details visit:

<http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/sexual-orientation>

Consultation runs until 23 October 2006

Sexual Orientation Strategy and Action Plan 2006-2009

For more details visit:

<http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/sexual-orientation>

These regulations prescribe the conditions to be satisfied before the Department for Regional Development can immobilise or remove a vehicle for debt recovery purposes in connection with decriminalised parking enforcement.

The Department of Finance and Personnel is reviewing the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) Order 1979 and will be issuing a draft bill for consultation. The main elements of the review are to extend the principles of, and matters for which, Building Regulations may be made to include promotion of sustainable development and enhancement and protection of the environment, and to move to a system of regulations supported by guidance.

This consultation, starting in late August 2006 and ending in October, seeks the views of schools and other education partners on proposals for amendments to the Local Management of Schools Common Funding Formula for grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland .

This consultation focuses on proposals to outlaw sexual orientation discrimination in the provision of goods and services in Northern Ireland .

This draft strategy sets out a framework of objectives under which will sit measurable actions by departments to address the issues and tackle the inequalities to make a difference to the lives of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people living in Northern Ireland.





Contents
Introduction
Policy making
Publications
Think tanks
Workforce
New policies

Conferences
Consultations
Forthcoming
Coming up
Past events
Contact us

Policylink
Bulletin 13
September 2006



Forthcoming Consultations

September 2006

Recovery of health services costs in all cases involving personal injury compensation: a consultation on draft regulations

For further details contact Stephen Popplestone by email at

stephen.popplestone@dhsspsni.gov.uk

The Recovery of Health Services Charges (NI) Order 2006 was made on 19 July. It provides for the current recovery of hospital costs scheme in respect of people injured in road traffic accidents to be extended to all accidents in respect of which compensation is paid. The Order empowers the making of regulations dealing with the details of the extended scheme and the consultation will be about their content. The target for starting the extended scheme is 29 January 2007.

September 2006

Proposal for a Draft Diseases of Animals Order

For further details contact Rae Watts by email at rae.watts@dardni.gov.uk

Following consultation on proposed changes to animal health legislation between May and August 2004, consultation on the Proposal for a Draft Diseases of Animals Order affords consultees a further opportunity to consider and comment on the detail of the proposed changes to primary legislation.

September 2006

The Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations (NI) 2006

For further details email:
roads.legislation@drdni.gov.uk

These Regulations amend the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) Regulations (NI) 1993 by amending the provisions relating to a 'relevant conviction'.

September 2006

Review of governance arrangements within colleges of further education

For further details contact Richard Monds by email at richard.monds@delni.gov.uk

The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, which came into operation on 1 August 2006, contains powers to enable the Department for Employment and Learning to alter the composition of membership of a governing body of an institution of further education and to pay remuneration to the members. The Department will consult with interested parties with a view to introducing changes through subordinate legislation.

September 2006

Taxi Construction Assessment

For further details contact Adele Willis by email at adele.willis@doeni.gov.uk

This consultation focuses on the amendment to the Public Service Vehicles (Conditions of Fitness, Equipment and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 to clarify front passenger carrying capacity and use of sliding doors in taxis

September to November 2006

Road Transport Licensing (Fees) Regulations

For further details contact Trevor McCullough by email at trevor.mccullough@doeni.gov.uk

This consultation will focus on the review of the fee levels in respect of road service licences; road freight operators' licences; and road freight vehicle licences.

September to November 2006

Further education strategy

For further details contact Daryl Young by email at daryl.young@delni.gov.uk

Consultation on a number of key policy areas as part of the implementation of the Further Education (FE) Strategy for Northern Ireland . These are: the provision, through FE colleges, of a more economically focused curriculum up to, and including, level 3; the support FE colleges can provide to employers and the economy; and widening access for learners to FE provision.

September to November 2006

Occupiers' Liability

For further details contact Ethne Harkness by email at ethne.harkness@dfpni.gov.uk

September to November 2006

Occupiers' Liability is an area of law which governs the duties owned by owners or occupiers of land towards users of that land. This consultation will examine the inter-relationship between this area of law and the Department of the Environment's policy on access to the countryside.

Late September or early October 2006

Pre-consultation on the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's (DARD) 5 year Research and Development (R&D) strategy

For further details contact Elaine McCrory by email at elaine.mccrory@dardni.gov.uk

A full formal consultation on the new DARD R&D Strategy will be launched later in the year, but at this stage DARD intends to engage in preliminary discussions with stakeholders to seek views on what might be included in the strategy. This may involve questionnaires and focus groups.

September/October 2006

New District Council Good Relations Challenge Programme (DCGRCP)

For more details contact the Community Relations Unit on 02890 522658 or visit the website www.asharedfutureni.gov.uk

As part of the Shared Future policy there will be a new District Council Good Relations Challenge Programme (DCGRCP). A key consultation exercise with key stakeholders on the new DCGRCP is provisionally planned to take place during September/October.

October to December 2006

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 – Guidance on matters to be taken into account in determining questions relating to the definition of disability

For further details contact Ken Walker by email at ken.walker@ofmdfmi.gov.uk

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 includes a definition of who a disabled person is for the purposes of the Act. Only those people who are defined as disabled in accordance with the Act are entitled to the protection that the Act provides. Under the Act, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) can publish statutory guidance which provides advice on matters to be taken into account by adjudicating bodies, such as courts and industrial tribunals, when they are determining whether a person is a disabled person for the purposes of the Act. The existing guidance was written in 1996 and is now being revised and updated.

October 2006 to January 2007

Planning permitted development rights for small scale renewables development

For further details contact Wilfrid Reavie by email at wilfrid.reavie@doeni.gov.uk

This consultation paper will seek views on changes to planning permitted development rights to facilitate small scale development associated with generation of energy from renewable resources.

October 2006

Sports Policy Framework and Strategy for Northern Ireland 2006-2016

For further details contact Ciaran Mee by e-mail at

ciaran.mee@dcalni.gov.uk

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) – in partnership with the Sports Council – is developing a new sports strategy for Northern Ireland . This will detail the vision and rationale for sport and establish key priorities and actions for the future development of sport in Northern Ireland . The overall aim will be to produce a ten-year strategy for sport which reflects Government's policy and priorities for sport and with which key stakeholders can identify. DCAL is hoping to publish a draft strategy in the autumn.

October 2006

Control of Development in Airport Public Safety Zones

For further details contact John Linden by email at john.linden@doeni.gov.uk

This document will provide general information on Airport Public Safety Zones (PSZ) and will set out updated planning guidance for the control of development in PSZs. It will also address the role of the airport operator and deal with compensation issues that may arise as a result of the guidance. PSZs currently exist at Belfast City and Belfast International Airports .

October/December 2006

EU Peace III Programme 2007-2013

For further details contact Bill Pauley by email at bill.pauley@dfpni.gov.uk

The EU budget for 2007-13 included €200 million for a further PEACE Programme. The future Programme will continue to focus on reconciliation issues and will help give practical support for the achievement of the principles in the document entitled "A Shared Future". The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) is taking forward programme development and has already sought (during May to June 2006) inputs from the general public and key programme stakeholders as to the make-up of Peace III. SEUPB are currently developing formal programme proposals, which will be available for further public consultation between October and December 2006.

End October/December 2006

Future EU Competitiveness Programme 2007-2013

For further details contact Bill Pauley by email at bill.pauley@dfpni.gov.uk

There will be two EU Competitiveness and Employment programmes for Northern Ireland in the next period 2007-13; one concentrated on boosting Northern Ireland 's competitiveness and sustainable development, and the other designed to help more people get into jobs and improve the skills levels among the working population. The EU programmes will complement national policies for Northern Ireland 's future economic and social development, to help create a dynamic forward-looking region with opportunities for all to share in its growing prosperity.

Late October 2006 (anticipated start)

Consultation on careers education, information advice and guidance strategy

For more details contact Judith Shaw by email at judith.shaw@delni.gov.uk

This project is being taken forward under the Northern Ireland Skills Strategy and will result in the development of an all-age Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (EIAG) Strategy. It will enhance the Careers Education offered to young people and adults and will also ensure that the mechanisms are in place to enable Careers EIAG to be based on up to date labour market information. Through better-informed decision-making, the project is aimed at encouraging increased participation in education, training and employment. The strategy is being developed jointly with the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Education as well as other key stakeholders.

Autumn 2006

Legislation to empower the Loughs Agency to licence aquaculture in the Foyle and Carlingford areas

For further details contact Jackie McQuillan by email at

jackie.mcquillan@dardni.gov.uk

This consultation focuses on legislation to empower the Loughs Agency to licence aquaculture in the Foyle and Carlingford areas. Aquaculture in Lough Foyle is currently operating unregulated.

Autumn 2006

The Proposed Drainage (Infrastructure Charges) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007

For further details contact Ann Sloan by email at ann.sloan@dardni.gov.uk

Consultation on the proposed charging policy has taken place and attracted general support. Subordinate legislation is required to implement the charging regime and this consultation invites comments on the proposed legislation.

Mid November 2006

Revision of the Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Water, Air and Soil

For further details contact Alan Morrow by email at alan.morrow@dardni.gov.uk

The Code of Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Water, Air and Soil is a practical guide for farmers, growers, contractors and others involved in agricultural activities. The Code covers the main agricultural activities that can give rise to the pollution of water, air and soil. It describes some of the management practices that can be adopted to minimize the risk of causing pollution.

November 2006

Review of the Northern Ireland concessionary fares scheme

For further details contact David Lynch by email at david.lynch@drdni.gov.uk

This consultation is on proposals produced by the review of the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme.

November 2006

Public Consultation on Draft Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2007

For further details contact Irene Armstrong by e-mail at

irene.armstrong@dcalni.gov.uk

Public Consultation on legislation and Parliamentary Explanatory memorandum to create and confer functions on the Northern Ireland Library Authority following a decision of the Review of Public Administration.

November 2006 (date to be confirmed)

Employment Agencies – consultation on amending the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005

For further details contact Andrew Dawson by email at andrew.dawson@delni.gov.uk

December 2006

Draft Planning Policy Statement 21: Managing the Release of Development Land

For further details contact Jim Hetherington by email at jim.hetherington@drdni.gov.uk

Late 2006

European Fisheries Fund

For further details contact Paddy Campbell by email at paddy.campbell@dardni.gov.uk

Late 2006

Residents' Parking Policy

For further details contact Stephen Hughes by email at stephen.hughes@drdni.gov.uk

February/April 2007

Draft Planning Policy Statement 20: Coastal Development

For further details contact Jim Hetherington by email at jim.hetherington@drdni.gov.uk

The Department for Employment and Learning will initiate a consultation concerning Government's proposals to amend the Regulations, e.g. on charging of fees, requirement to provide information, etc. As well as distributing consultation documents the Department intends to engage sector specific representatives.

Draft Planning Policy Statement 21 sets out the new process of monitoring how housing growth indicators will work and how this will feed into the Area Development Plan.

The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) will be the new fund for EU fisheries grants from January 2007 to December 2013. The draft Northern Ireland Strategic Plan issued to industry for consultation on 7 April 2006 and sought views on the Northern Ireland strategic priorities for inclusion in the UK National Strategic Plan. Responses were due by 19 May 2006. It is anticipated that the UK Operational Plan will issue for consultation by the end of 2006.

This policy will enable Roads Service to implement residents' only parking in areas that suffer from a high level of all-day commuter parking.

This Planning Policy Statement – PPS 20 “Coastal Development” – has been prepared to assist in the implementation of the Regional Development Strategy. It will guide coastal development and land use through the preparation of development plans prepared by the Department of the Environment's Planning Service.





Contents
Introduction
Policy making
Publications
Think tanks
Workforce
New policies

Conferences
Consultations
Forthcoming
Coming up
Past events
Contact us

Policylink
Bulletin 13
September 2006

11

Policy review coming up

November 2005 to December 2006

Review of inshore fisheries management in Northern Ireland

For further details contact Paddy Campbell by email at paddy.campbell@dardni.gov.uk

A review of inshore fisheries management in Northern Ireland is being undertaken as part of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's contribution to the UK Fisheries Administration joint response 'Securing the Benefits' – available at <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-dard-fisheries-farming-and-food/fisheries-review-of-inshore-fisheries-securing-the-benefits.htm> - to the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report on UK Fisheries 'Net Benefits' available at <http://www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/su/fish/index.htm> The review will identify, evaluate and recommend options for the management of the inshore fisheries sector. It is anticipated the group will consider various options for the management of the inshore sector and report to the Minister recommending a way forward.

May 2006

Review of frontline service in Jobs and Benefits Offices

For further details contact Sheena Mairs by email at sheena.mairs@delni.gov.uk

This review is examining a new fully integrated front line model to all Jobs and Benefits Offices (JBOs) within the network. It is envisaged that the proposed new structure will provide more flexibility for personal advisers and give greater emphasis to support for all customers, especially those furthest from the labour market.

June 2006

Final evaluation of the Department for Employment and Learning's Targeted Initiatives – Londonderry, Strabane, West Belfast and Greater Shankill

For further details contact Tom Hunter by email at tom.hunter@delni.gov.uk

Targeted Initiatives have been operating in pilot form since 2003. They are testing innovative ways of helping those with barriers which are preventing them securing work. An interim evaluation was completed in 2005-06 and the final evaluation will focus on the effectiveness and performance of three key elements, namely Job Assist Centres; a Transitional Employment Programme; and the community based Stakeholder Forums. Deloitte's has been appointed to conduct this final evaluation with a report due by September 2006.

26 June 2006

Review of the Northern Ireland concessionary fares scheme

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/DRDwww_Consultations/current/Consultation.asp?id=con92

The review will carry out an assessment of options for the future provision of concessionary travel on public transport.

September 2006

Review of the Northern Ireland Scrapie Plan, Ram Genotyping Scheme (RGS)

For further details contact Andrew Kell by email at andrew.kell@dardni.gov.uk

A review of the RGS in Northern Ireland and GB is to take place following the European Parliament's view that breeding programmes should be voluntary, and not compulsory as required at present. The aim of the review is to produce options for Ministers, by the end of 2006, on the possible future breeding programme. A public consultation will follow in 2007.

September 2006

School transport review

For further details contact Brian Hill by email at brian.hill@deni.gov.uk

The Department of Education is currently undertaking a review of its policy on home to school transport. The review is designed to identify how best to ensure that spending on home to school transport supports the education sector strategic framework while at the same time delivering published efficiency targets. The research phase of the review has now been completed and work is underway to develop policy options and proposals which will be shared with other departments later in the year.

Late September 2006

Establishment of a Good Relations Panel and civic mechanism

For more details contact the Community Relations Unit on 02890 522658 or visit the website www.asharedfutureni.gov.uk

As part of the Shared Future policy, by the end of September a Good Relations Panel and civic mechanism will be established.





Contents
Introduction
Policy making
Publications
Think tanks
Workforce
New policies

Conferences
Consultations
Forthcoming
Coming up
Past events
Contact us

Policylink
Bulletin 13
September 2006



Summary of key past events

Summary

7 June 2006

Creative Youth Partnerships
conference 'Inside Out'
Waterfront Hall, Belfast

For further details, contact David
Mann by email at
david.mann@dcalni.gov.uk

Creative Youth Partnerships is a three-year initiative aimed at creating, developing and sustaining creative arts programmes for children and young people. Developed in the context of Unlocking Creativity and in partnership with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Department of Education, Education and Library Boards and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. The conference was a one day event for everyone interested in the exploration of creativity with children and young people including teachers, youth leaders and members of the arts community. It provided a unique opportunity for delegates to network, collaborate and develop new creative synergies.

7-9 June 2006

Xchange 2006 conference

www.xchange2006.com

The successful Xchange Conference 2006 took place in the Europa. It was formally opened jointly by Will Haire (Permanent Secretary, Department of Education in Northern Ireland) and Sile De Valera (Minister of State, Department of Education and Skills in the Republic of Ireland). 350 educators attended from most EU countries and beyond: 60% of delegates coming from outside Northern Ireland . The conference made significant use of interactive technologies over the three days. Presentations and numerous podcasts of the event are available – via the weblink on the left – as a basis for continued online debate leading up to Xchange 2007, which will be held in Edinburgh on 5-7 June 2007.

8 June 2006

Health and Safety at Roadworks

For further details contact Ciaran McAleenan by email at ciaran.mcaleenan@drdni.gov.uk

The Department for Regional Development's Road Service, the Quarry Products Association Northern Ireland, Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland, Construction Employers Federation and the Institution of Highways and Transportation launched three key documents designed to improve health and safety performance in the Northern Ireland road construction industry. Due to demand, a rerun of this conference was held on 6 September 2006.

31 July to 3 August 2006

Conference of Commonwealth Heads of Valuation Agencies (CHOVA)

For further details contact Brian McClure by email at brian.mcclure@dfpni.gov.uk

Delegates from the valuation agencies of commonwealth countries, and observers from other invited countries, converged on the host nation to discuss contemporary valuation and related topics of interest. This was a particularly exciting time for Northern Ireland to host the conference, as it coincides with publication of the first revaluation of residential properties here in 30 years – which also sees a move from a rental to a capital value base. The topical and comprehensive programme centred on the key professional, leadership and management challenges facing public sector valuation organisations. The programme included: presentation of papers; panel discussion; and opportunities to share regional experiences for the benefit of international colleagues.





Contents
Introduction
Policy making
Publications
Think tanks
Workforce
New policies

Conferences
Consultations
Forthcoming
Coming up
Past events
Contact us

Policylink
Bulletin 13
September 2006



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