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Centre for Ageing Research
and Development in Ireland

Stocktake of Ageing Public Policy Initiatives in Ireland, North and South

This is a work in progress. Readers are welcome to send comments or additions to
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RESOURCE DOCUMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document aims to provide researchers, policy makers and voluntary and community representatives with an overview of ageing policy initiatives in Ireland, north and south, and at EU and International level. It aims to be an easy to navigate guide that will be updated as developments occur. Production of a *Stocktake of Ageing Initiatives* aims to give context to the public policy agenda in Ireland, North and South, and to assist those working in ageing research and public policy. The web addresses for published policy documents are provided throughout the document. Ireland, like other European countries, is facing demographic changes that impact on public policy. The economic, social and political consequences of an ageing population are a challenge for policy makers. Both jurisdictions have begun to address the issue and there is evidence of an increased focus on older people at policy level, as the following initiatives highlight.

This document is intended as a reference guide only. Further information is available on the websites cited.

2. SPECIFIC PUBLIC POLICY INITIATIVES IN IRELAND, NORTH AND SOUTH

The main age related public policy frameworks identified are:

Republic of Ireland

- The Irish Programme for Government
- The National Development Plan
- Towards 2016 Agreement
- The National Action Plan on Social Inclusion
- The Green Paper on Pensions
- Quality and Fairness in Health
- Vision for Change (mental health)

Northern Ireland

- The Northern Ireland Programme for Government
- Lifetime Opportunities: Towards an Anti-Poverty Strategy
- Ageing in an Inclusive Society
- UK Pensions Reform
- Bamford Review (mental health)
- Investing for Health
- A Healthier Future

2.1 Public Policy Frameworks in the Republic of Ireland in detail

2.1.1 Irish Programme for Government 2007 -2012

The Programme for Government, 2007-2012, was launched in June 2007. This five year programme was designed to face the major challenges of:

- Rolling out infrastructure nationwide;
- Combating climate change; and
- Delivering a fully modern, patient-centred health service.

The Programme for Government (PfG) provides for the following:

- **Social Partnership:** This reinforces the implementation of the *Towards 2016 Agreement* which sets out the strategic framework for meeting the economic and social challenges that individuals face at different stages of life, including older people.

- **Health:** The Programme refers to personal health checks, primary health care, acute care, accident and emergency, infection control, cancer services, mental health services and suicide. Maximising independence, nursing homes and palliative care are other issues referred to which have implications for an ageing population. The emphasis is on older people remaining in their own homes, with support for carers and local voluntary and community organisations providing the necessary care.

- **Better Supports for Older People:** This puts the proposals in the context of the *Green Paper on Pensions* (a commitment in *Towards 2016). T*hese include improving income and employment conditions, a new National Positive Ageing Strategy, education and retraining for older people and making it easier for older people to stay in their own homes.

- **North and South Co-operation:** This outlines the need to deepen co-operation on health services for the benefit of both jurisdictions and to maximise the use of valuable facilities and expertise in both jurisdictions. Current projects include:

  - A joint feasibility study that would identify a strategic approach to co-operation on health and well-being;
  - Continued co-operation on accident and emergency services;
  - Examining the implementation of a cross-border out-of-hours GP service;
  - Co-operation on paediatric and congenital cardiac services between the Royal Victoria Hospital Belfast and Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children in Dublin; and
  - Co-operation on training and planning for major emergencies such as pandemic flu.

www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached_files/Pdf%20files/Eng%20Prog%20for%20Gov.pdf

2.1.2 National Development Plan 2007 – 2013: Transforming Ireland – A Better Quality of Life for All

The National Development Plan 2007 – 2013 (NDP) was published in 2007 to plan for the next seven years. It recognises that the economy and society will undergo radical transformation due to the continuing increase in the population, which is projected to reach over five million by 2021. The priorities and approach set out in the NDP are consistent with the ten year social partnership framework agreement, *Towards 2016.* Within the priorities set out in the plan the following are significant in terms of age:

- **Social Infrastructure Priority -** Hospital services to concentrate on the demographic pressures of an ageing population and the need for ongoing investment in residential and community care for the elderly.
  It proposed a capital investment of €5 billion in effectiveness, safety and quality of care. In addition to investment in hospital infrastructure (€2.4 billion), 1,000 additional public hospital beds, and a new National Children's Hospital, it envisaged 500 primary care teams and extension of community care services to enable older people to remain at home.

- **Social Inclusion Priority – Older People Programme –** This detailed the investment of €9.7 billion under *The Older People Programme* for living at home programmes (€4.7billion) and improvements in residential care (€5 billion). Living at home packages were designed to deliver a wide range of services based on existing pilot schemes such as nursing services, home helps, therapists and respite/day care services to be extended to evenings and weekends.

- **All-Island Co-Operation project –** The NDP details the that had been agreed with the Northern Ireland administration. The most relevant to age include:

Science, Technology and Innovation

- The importance of making the knowledge economy a reality by increasing the quantity and quality of research and enhancing its contribution to economic and social development on the island. A key component is co-operation on both planning and delivery of health services and facilities. Areas such as health promotion, collaboration on research and development, and services in border areas were identified. Other potential areas for further co-operation have been identified, and include: addressing regulatory and professional issues; co-operation on the provision of high technology medical care; and a population based approach to health service delivery on the island.

Social Inclusion

- The National Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion in both the UK and Ireland contain common text outlining how they are committed to developing and promoting co-operation to combat poverty and social exclusion.

Other areas of related interest include:

- **PEACE III** – The priority of this grants programme will be on promoting reconciliation and social and economic stability in Northern Ireland and the six border counties (Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo).
- **Ireland/Northern Ireland/Scotland Territorial Co-operation** – This is the successor to the 2000-2006 INTERREG Community Initiative to strengthen and deepen co-operation. Eligible activities include developing collaboration, capacity and joint use of infrastructures, particularly in sectors such as health, culture, tourism and education.
- **International Fund for Ireland** – The objectives are to promote economic and social progress and to encourage dialogue and reconciliation between nationalists and unionists throughout Ireland. This programme will cease in 2010.
- **A New Programme of Investment in North-South Co-Operation** – This outlines proposals for significant investment by the Irish Government in North-South projects and initiatives for mutual benefit.
- **New Strategic Projects** – This includes a comprehensive study on health co-operation to be overseen by the responsible departments and agencies, North and South, to maximise the potential for cross-border cancer services.
- **Development Funding** – It is proposed to develop all-island funding in education and skills, energy research, regional development, tourism and poverty, social inclusion and community infrastructure.

www.ndp.ie/documents/ndp2007-2013/NDP-2007-2013-English.pdf

2.1.3 Towards 2016: Ten Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006 – 2015

Towards 2016 provides a strategy for meeting the economic and social challenges in Ireland. The lifecycle framework, set out in the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) report, *The Developmental Welfare State,* places the individual at the centre of policy development and delivery. This means a focus on the needs

of children, young adults, people of working age, older people and disabled people.

The vision and goals on older people are useful in building a public policy agenda on age, including Section 32 which states:

"The parties to this agreement share a vision of an Ireland which provides the supports, where necessary, to enable older people to maintain their health and well-being, as well as to live active and full lives, in an independent way in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.

To achieve this vision, the Government and social partners will work together over the next ten years towards the following long-term goals for older people in Ireland in the context of increased longevity and greater possibilities and expectations for quality of life of older people:

- *Every older person would be encouraged and supported to participate to the greatest extent possible in social and civic life;*
- *Every older person would have access to an income which is sufficient to sustain an acceptable standard of living;*
- *Every older person would have adequate support to enable them to remain living independently in their own homes for as long as possible. This will involve access to good quality services in the community, including: health, education, transport, housing and security, and;*
- *Every older person would, in conformity with their needs and conscious of the high level of disability and disabling conditions amongst this group, have access to a spectrum of care services stretching from support for self-care through support for family and informal carers to formal care in the home, the community or in residential settings. Such care services should ensure the person has opportunities for civic and social engagement at community level."*

The priority actions to deliver the vision are themed around the following title areas:

- Pension/Income Supports
- Long-Term Care Services for Older People
- Housing and Accommodation
- Ensuring Mobility for Older People
- Ensuring Quality Health Services for Older People
- Promoting Education and Employment Opportunities for Older People.

Measures that respond to emerging needs include "Pilot Programmes of Care for Older People/Home Support Packages" and "Community Intervention Teams."

The Department of Health and Children (DHC) and the Department of Social and Family Affairs will have lead roles in achieving progress on the targets for older people. The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Pensions Board will also have roles to play.

www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached_files/Pdf%20files/Towards2016PartnershipAgreement.pdf

2.1.4 National Strategy on Positive Ageing - Office for Older People

On 30th January 2008 two new offices were created to support the Minister for Health and Children: a Minister for Disability and Mental Health and Minister for Older People. These new Offices are linked to the lifecycle approach of *Towards 2016.* The Minister for Older People's title changed in April 2009 to the Minister for Older People and Health Promotion.

The key function of the Office for Older People and Health Promotion will be to develop a National Strategy on Positive Ageing to include issues such as:

- The development of operational plans by Government Departments clearly setting out objectives relating to older people;
- Joined up thinking on initiatives serving older people;
- Ongoing mechanisms to monitor progress and identify challenges; and
- Liaison with recognised voluntary groups in the area.

The re-constitution of the National Council on Ageing and Older People (NCAOP) to the National Advisory Council on Older People will also take place later in 2009. One of its functions will be to advise the Minister on better co-ordination and delivery of services.

www.dohc.ie/about_us/divisions/services_older_people.html

2.1.5 National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2007-2016 (NAPinclusion)

The NAPinclusion, launched in February 2007 by the Office for Social Inclusion (OSI)[1], identified a number of high level strategic goals to reduce consistent poverty. Targeted actions are designed to mobilise resources to remove long-standing and serious social deficits. These include:

- Supporting working age people and people with disabilities through activation measures and the provision of services to increase employment and participation;
- Providing the type of supports that enable older people to maintain a comfortable and high-quality standard of living;
- Building viable and sustainable communities, improving the lives of people living in disadvantaged areas and building social capital.

The overall poverty goal is:

To reduce the number of those experiencing consistent poverty to between 2% and 4% by 2012, with the aim of eliminating consistent poverty by 2016, under the revised definition.

High level goals are aimed at:

- Introducing an active case management approach to support those on long-term social welfare into education, training and employment, with an overall aim of reducing by 20% the number of those whose total

[1] OSI is the Government office, based in the Department of Social and Family Affairs, with overall responsibility for co-ordinating and driving the government's social inclusion agenda which includes the *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016* (NAPinclusion) and the social inclusion elements of the National Social Partnership Agreement *Towards 2016* and the new *National Development Plan 2007-2013.*

income is derived from long-term social welfare; Maintaining the relative value of the lowest social welfare rate;
- Continuing to increase investment in community care services for older people;
- Maintaining, and if possible enhancing, the value of the State Pension;
- Increasing the employment and participation of people with disabilities;
- Building more houses to meet the needs of some 60,000 new households, the homeless, Travellers, older people and people with disabilities; and
- Developing 500 primary care teams to improve access to services in the community, with particular emphasis on meeting the needs of holders of medical cards.

In addition to the high level goals, there are 154 targeted actions and interventions set out in the Plan designed to ensure that an impact is made on poverty.

Based on the life cycle approach of *Towards 2016,* commitments to older people in the NAPinclusion are linked to two main areas:

- **Community Care:** Community care services are essential to enable older people to maintain their health and wellbeing, in order to live active, full independent lives at home for as long as possible. A commitment is given to continue to increase investment in community care services for older people, including home care packages and enhanced day care services.

- **Income Support:** Income also has a key role to play in alleviating poverty in old age. The goal is to maintain a minimum payment rate of €200 per week, in 2007 terms, for all social welfare pensions over the course of the NAPinclusion and, if possible, having regard to available resources and the Government's commitment in *Towards 2016*, to enhance this provision. The overall pension structures and system to provide income supports for pensioners will be reviewed in the light of the Green Paper on Pensions. This will review all the pillars of pension provision.

Other targets and actions related to age include long-term care, housing and accommodation, education and employment, home support packages, Community Intervention Teams and participation and activation.

Ireland has defined poverty as:

"People are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society."

Common Text – North/South

The National Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion in Ireland and the UK contain common text outlining their commitment to working across national boundaries to alleviate social exclusion, poverty and deprivation. This principle provides a useful framework for an all Ireland approach to age.

The common text commits both jurisdictions to preparing a report on existing North South work and this process will be used to determine where further work is needed. Areas for potential co-operation which could deliver mutual benefits may include:

- The compilation and sharing of information on areas of common interest and/or;
- Specific topics of common interest for research and analysis; and
- Areas where joint approached should be developed.

www.socialinclusion.ie/documents/NAPinclusionReportPDF.pdf

2.1.5 Green Paper on Pensions

The Green Paper on Pensions was published in October 2007 to fulfil a commitment in *Towards 2016* and builds on two previous reports from the Pensions Board, *The National Pensions Review 2006* and *Special Savings for Retirement 2006.* The pensions system in Ireland comprises two main elements – a state run social welfare system and voluntary supplementary pensions. The purpose of the Green Paper is not to recommend any particular course of action but to clarify the current situation and implications of various courses of action that have been suggested.

www.pensionsgreenpaper.ie

2.1.6 Quality and Fairness: A Health System for You

The National Health Strategy, *Quality and Fairness: A Health System for You,* launched in 2001, is the central document on health policy in Ireland. It describes a vision of health services in the coming years and describes the actions needed to achieve this.

The Strategy proposes an integrated approach to meeting the needs of ageing and older people. A number of actions are detailed and focus on better health, fair access and responsive and appropriate care delivery for older people. An action plan for dementia, based on recommendations by the National Council for Ageing and Older People, is also mentioned.

www.dohc.ie/publications/quality_and_fairness.html

2.1.7 A Vision for Change

A Vision for Change, launched in 2006, outlines mental health services for older people and makes recommendations based on the premise that mental health services for older people should be person-centred and promote self-determination. The report details the gaps in information and knowledge in mental health in Ireland. The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) was established in 2006 and will be responsible for health information, promoting and implementing quality assurance programmes and overseeing health technology assessment.

Recommendations are made for further research on mental health, including the preparation of a National Mental Health Services Research Strategy. The report recognises the limited funding given to mental health research and argues that the model in the UK, where central government funds are ring-fenced for mental health research, should be adopted by Government.

www.dohc.ie/publications/quality_and_fairness.html

2.1.8 Health Service Executive – Older People Expert Advisory Group

The Health Service Executive (HSE) provides a wide range of services for older people, including in-patient, acute services, step down and convalescent care, day services, rehabilitation, community services, home care and home helps. The HSE also pays a subsidy toward the cost of a private nursing home beds. The subvention is designed to help with nursing home costs and is subject to a means test and a dependency test i.e. how much care the person needs. The Minister for Health and Children has announced plans for a significant change in how nursing home care is provided and paid for. From January 1, 2008, the subvention and public nursing home schemes will be [tense issue again] replaced by A Fair Deal - The Nursing Home Care Support Scheme. This scheme is designed to ensure that everyone who enters a nursing home, public or private, pays a fair portion of their income as a contribution to the cost of their care.

Within the HSE the Older People Expert Advisory Group, set up in November 2006, has several priorities including the development of a “Successful Ageing Code”, examination of societal aspects and population models of care and recommending the development of a National Institute for Ageing Studies.

www.hse.ie/eng/About_the_HSE/Whos_Who/Older_People_Expert_Advisory_Group.html

2.1.9 The National Disability Strategy

The National Disability Strategy, launched in 2004, is designed to support the provision of disability specific services to disabled people, and to improve their access to mainstream public services.

Part 3 of the Disability Act 2005 places obligations on six government departments to prepare plans to set out how they will deliver specific services for disabled people. The departments specified are:

- Health and Children
- Social Affairs and Family
- Transport
- Communications, Marine and Natural Resources
- Environment, Heritage and Local Government
- Enterprise, Trade and Employment.
- Each plan includes arrangements for complaints, monitoring and review procedures.

www.nda.ie

2.2. Public Policy Frameworks in Northern Ireland

2.2.1 Northern Ireland Programme for Government 2008 - 2011

The Northern Ireland Executive launched *Building a Better Future: Programme for Government 2008 – 2011* (the Budget and Public Service Agreement Framework) in January 2008. The *Investment Strategy* was also published at this time. All documents are inter-related.

The Programme for Government (PfG) is the overarching policy framework for Northern Ireland and provides useful principles for ageing research and public policy. The PfG vision is to build a peaceful, fair and prosperous society in Northern Ireland with respect for the rule of law and outlines five inter-dependent priorities to achieve this including:

- Grow a dynamic, innovative economy;
- Invest to build our infrastructure;
- Deliver modern, high quality and efficient public services;
- Promote tolerance, inclusion, health and well-being; and
- Protect and enhance our environment and natural resources.

These priorities are underpinned by two cross-cutting themes:

- A better future: fairness, inclusion and equality of opportunity will be watchwords for all policies and programmes; and

- Sustainability: building a sustainable future will be a key requirement for our economic, social and environmental policies and programmes.

Public Service Agreements

There are 23 cross cutting Public Service Agreements (PSA) with key actions to support the priorities, outcomes and targets of the Government. The PSAs cut across departmental boundaries and many of the issues are interdependent. The PSAs are backed up by Delivery Agreements which set out in more detail how departments intend to deliver the goals and commitments set out in the PSA; they provide the basis on which monitoring and reporting on progress will take place.

Public Service Agreements and Ageing Research

Listed are PSAs that can be utilised to promote research in the ageing field:

PSA 7: Making Peoples' Lives Better: Drive a programme across Government to reduce poverty and address inequality and disadvantage

- Objective 1 refers to Section 16 of *The St Andrews Agreement* 2006 on the adoption of a strategy to tackle poverty, social exclusion and patterns of deprivation based on objective need. The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, Department for Social Development and Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety are listed as being responsible for this component.
- Objective 2 refers to action to promote social inclusion for older people among others.
- Objective 3 refers to speedier access to mental health and learning disability community services and fewer long stay patients in hospitals.

PSA 16: Investing in the Health and Education Estates: Take forward a programme of investment to provide a modern fit-for-purpose health and education estate in line with best practice and ensuring value for money.

This PSA focuses on integrated networks of health and care centres and the use of ICT to support better clinical care and treatment.

PSA 18: Deliver High Quality Health and Social Services: Provide timely and appropriate access to high quality, integrated and cost effective health and social services, to deliver improved outcomes.

The first three objectives are:

- Objective 1: Promote independent living and a reduction in avoidable admissions to hospital. Associated actions and targets refer to enhanced community services to 45% of people with assessed community care needs supported at home by 2010; no older person with continuing care needs should wait more than eight weeks for a completed assessment, with main components of care met within a further 12 weeks by April 2008.

- Objective 2: Shorter waiting time for access to specialist drugs, a range of specialist hospital services and elective treatment. Actions and

targets refer to enhanced provision of specialist drugs and, by March 2009, no patient to wait longer than nine weeks for a first outpatient appointment, nine weeks for a diagnostic test, and 17 weeks for inpatient or day treatment.

- Objective 3: Improve outcomes and survival rates in key specialisms. Actions and targets mainly refer to cancer, stroke and renal specialisms with corresponding targets for these areas.

www.pfgbudgetni.gov.uk

2.2.2 Lifetime Opportunities: Governments Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland

Lifetime Opportunities: Government's Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland was launched in November 2006. It takes a life cycle approach and includes older citizens and its goals and objectives for older people are defined as follows:

"Our goal is to ensure older people are valued and respected, remain independent, participate as active citizens and enjoy a good quality of life in a safe and shared community.

For those older people who choose to remain or re-enter the labour market, government is committed to tackling age discrimination in order that these people can make this choice. However for some, as economic activity reduces, employment is less relevant as an insulator against poverty. For these older people the emphasis must be on having sufficient income to meet needs, including through increasing awareness and take-up of financial entitlement, particularly for those reliant on benefit income."

Since 1998, *New Targeting Social Need* (New TSN) has been the Northern Ireland Government's high level policy for combating unemployment and the causes of social exclusion. It is not a separate programme with a dedicated budget, but a policy of skewing resources towards disadvantaged people, groups and areas.

Common Text – North/South

As outlined previously, both National Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion in Ireland and the UK contain common text outlining their commitment to working across national boundaries to alleviate social exclusion, poverty and deprivation. Creating a more inclusive society by alleviating social exclusion, poverty and deprivation is a continuing challenge for administrations in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The common text commits the Irish and UK governments to developing and promoting further North/South consultation, co-operation and common action concerning policies on poverty and social exclusion over the period of this plan. To this end, a report outlining common and current areas of cross-border work and initiatives between Northern Ireland and Ireland will be prepared. Potential areas suitable for further cross-border co-operation will be identified as will the mechanisms by which this work could be undertaken and delivered.

www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/index/equality/central-anti-poverty-unit.htm

2.2.3 Ageing in an Inclusive Society

Ageing in an Inclusive Society, launched in March 2005, is the main public policy framework for older people in Northern Ireland. It sets out the approach to be taken by Government to promote the inclusion of older people in Northern Ireland. The vision is:

"To ensure that age related policies and practices create an enabling environment, which offers everyone the opportunity to make informed choices so that they may pursue healthy, active and positive ageing."

The six strategic objectives are:

- To ensure that older people have access to financial and economic resources to lift them out of exclusion and isolation;
- To deliver integrated services that improve the health and quality of life of older people;
- To ensure that older people have a decent and secure life in their home and community;
- To ensure that older people have access to services and facilities that meet their needs and priorities;
- To promote equality of opportunity for older people and their full participation in civic life, and challenge ageism wherever it is found; and
- To ensure that Government works in a coordinated way interdepartmentally and with social partners to deliver effective services for older people.

Actions plans have been developed in 2005/06 and 2006/08. There is also an Older Advisory People's Panel to advise and assist in the development of future action plans and monitor progress.

www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/index/equality/age.htm

2.2.4 Older People's Advocate

The Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) announced in November 2008 the appointment of the Older People's Advocate, Dame Joan Harbison. Her role includes providing a focus and highlighting issues and concerns to the Junior Ministers for Equality in the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister; and facilitating public consultation events on the proposed role, function and powers of the Older People's Commissioner.

www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/index/equality/age/older_peoples_advocate.htm

2.2.5 UK Pensions Policy

Policy for state pensions and benefits is a reserved matter i.e. decisions are made at Westminster and not the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Pensions Act became law in 2007 and links pensions increases with earnings as opposed to prices from 2012. Additional credits were introduced to boost the pensions of people raising children and caring for older people. Some protections are included for those who lost occupational pensions as a result of underfunded schemes being wound up before April 2005. Further changes are to be made to Personal Accounts

a new Pensions Bill. A national trust-based occupational pension scheme is due to be introduced in 2012. Eligible employees will automatically be enrolled into a work-based pension – either the new personal account scheme or another qualifying occupational pension scheme. The Pensions Act will bring significant changes to state pensions and benefits in future. It places the pension credit element on a permanent, statutory footing.

W www.dwp.gov.uk/pensionsreform/pensions_act_2007.asp

2.2.6 Investing for Health Strategy

The *Investing for Health (IfH) Strategy* is the main public policy framework for health in Northern Ireland and was published in 2001.The aim of IfH is to reduce health inequalities and to improve the health and well being of all citizens in Northern Ireland. Therefore IfH has the potential to positively impact on the quality of life of older people and provides a useful framework for ageing research in the health area.

The Strategy identifies the following priority areas:

- The principles and values that should guide future action to improve health;
- The cost of poor health to the individual, families and the economy;
- A broad range of economic, social and environmental issues, all of which are recognised as major determinants of health and wellbeing; and
- The commitment of the Northern Ireland Executive to ensuring equality of opportunity and tackling social disadvantage.

2.2.7 A Healthier Future: A 20 Year Vision for Health and Well-being in Northern Ireland

This strategy acknowledges that the causes of poor health and health inequalities are neither acceptable nor sustainable and that health and well-being is the responsibility of everyone. Special emphasis is placed on vulnerable groups such as carers, older people and disabled people, all of which can provide the impetus for further research on age.

A Healthier Future takes account of strategies and policies, both emerging and established, such as IfH and seeks to place them within a broad and inclusive framework.

A Healthier Future does not amend or alter these specific strategies but builds on them by seeking to ensure that they are part of our overall vision for health and social care over the next 20 years.

W www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/healthyfuture-main.pdf

2.2.8 Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability

In October 2002, the DHSSPS initiated an independent review of the law, policy and provision affecting people with mental health needs or a learning disability in Northern Ireland. The *Review* made recommendations on future policy, strategy, service priorities and legislation to reflect the needs of users and carers.

The last of 11 reports was published in August 2006 One report in particular, *Living Fuller Lives: Dementia and Mental Health Issues in Older Age,* is significant for people in the ageing research field. The aim of the report is to provide a vision of what mainstream and specialist health and social care services for older people with dementia and functional mental illnesses should look like. The report acknowledges the need for this report to relate to other reports from the *Bamford Review* such as:

- Adult Mental Health Services
- Learning Disability
- Legislation
- Alcohol and Substance Misuse
- Mental Health Promotion.

www.rmhldni.gov.uk

2.2.9 Delivering the Bamford Vision: The Response of the Northern Ireland Executive to the Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability

The Northern Ireland Executive issued a consultation document called *Delivering The Bamford Vision* in June 2008.

It proposed a number of actions across Departments to deliver on *The Bamford Vision* and provide the potential for further research into ageing and mental health for older people. These are:

- An inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Mental Health and Learning Disability;
- An inter-Departmental Implementation Group of senior officials;
- A Health and Social Care Task Force;
- A Bamford Monitoring Group;
- A review by 2009 of the *Promoting Mental Health Strategy and Action Plan (2003);*
- The enactment of mental health legislation by 2011 and 2014;
- The Regional Health and Social Care Board will have a lead role in commissioning services;
- New service frameworks for mental health and learning disability; and
- The commissioning of a workforce planning study to support the implementation of *The Bamford Vision*.

The Northern Ireland Executive's response to *Older People's Mental Health and Dementia* is closely aligned to the commitments in the PfG and includes:

- The development of a strategy for dementia services, including the needs of younger people by December 2008; and
- Working to identify the funding to enable the Dementia Services Development Centre, funded by Atlantic Philanthropies until 2009, to continue beyond the pilot period.

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/bamford_response_summary.pdf

3. ADDITIONAL POLICY INITIATIVES IN IRELAND, NORTH AND SOUTH

3.1 Free travel in Ireland, North and South for Older People

Since 1995, Northern Ireland older people (aged 65 and over) have been entitled to free cross border public transport to and from any destination in the Republic of Ireland, for example from Belfast to Dublin by train, free travel is available on any onward journeys also with a Smartpass. By the same arrangement, older people from the Republic of Ireland (aged 66 and over) have been entitled to free cross border travel to and from any initial destination in Northern Ireland and on to further destinations. Each administration will pay for the free travel taken by eligible senior citizens within its own jurisdiction. That is, the Republic of Ireland will cover the cost of travel taken by Northern Ireland seniors in the Irish Republic and the Department for Regional Development will cover the cost of travel taken by Republic of Ireland seniors in Northern Ireland.

www.welfare.ie/EN/Publications/SW40/Pages/Appendix3.aspx

www.translink.co.uk/seniorcitizenpass.asp

3.2 Fuel Allowances

The direct and indirect effects of fuel poverty have been identified by the Institute of Public Health in Ireland through its *All-Ireland Policy Paper on Fuel Poverty and Health* in December 2007. The Paper acknowledges that older people are among groups who are particularly vulnerable to fuel poverty and to suffering its health consequences. Both jurisdictions provide fuel allowances for older people.

www.publichealth.ie/publications/allirelandpolicypaperonfuelpovertyandhealth

In Ireland Fuel Allowance is a payment under the National Fuel Scheme to help with the cost of heating your home. It is paid to people who are dependent on long-term social welfare or Health Service Executive (HSE) payments and are unable to provide for their own heating needs. The scheme operates for 32 weeks from the end of September to mid-April. Only one payment is paid to a household.

www.citizensinformation.ie/categories/social-welfare/social-welfare-payments/extra-social-welfare-benefits/fuel_allowance

In Northern Ireland the Winter Fuel Payment is a non-means tested annual payment to help older people with their winter heating bills. Older people don't have to be receiving any particular benefit to get a Winter Fuel Payment but must be aged 60 or over in the September before the winter in question.

www.dsdni.gov.uk/ssa/benefit_information/az_of_benefits/winter_fuel_payments.htm

4. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS NORTH AND SOUTH

There are a number of laws in both jurisdictions on age discrimination, mainstreaming and positive action measures that merit attention for the ageing research agenda.

4.1 Laws in the Republic of Ireland

The legal status of older people in Ireland is covered by the Constitution, equality legislation, European Union treaties and common law. There is no specific legislation dealing with older people.

4.1.1 The Constitution

Article 40 of the Constitution provides that:

"All citizens shall, as human beings, be held equal before the law. This shall not be held to mean that the State shall not in its enactments have due regard to differences of capacity, physical and moral, and of social function."

The Constitution Review Group recommended that this should be amended as follows:

"All persons shall be held equal before the law. This shall not be taken to mean that the State may not have due regard to relevant differences.

No person shall be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly, on any ground such as sex, race, age disability, sexual orientation, colour, language, culture, religion, political or other opinion, national, social or ethnic origin, membership of the Travelling community, property, birth or other status."

Whilst this pre-dated the Amsterdam Treaty[2], it is still considered relevant as a strong anti-discrimination provision in the Constitution and underpins existing legislation to make a clear statement of the value of equality in Irish society.

W www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached_files/Pdf%20files/Constitution%20of%20IrelandNov2004.pdf

4.1.2 The Employment Equality Act / Equal Status Act, 2000

The Employment Equality Act 1998 and the Equal Status Act 2000 have provisions for direct and indirect discrimination, with a number of exemptions related to age. These include:

- The age provisions in The Employment Equality Act do not apply to people over 65, except for vocational training provisions. Setting different ages for retirement for employees does not constitute discrimination under the Act; and

[2] Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty gives the EU power to take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

- The Equal Status Act does not contain the upper age limit of 65, but there are a number of exceptions such as different treatment in annuities, pensions and insurance matters. Housing authorities and voluntary bodies are able to treat people differently on the grounds of age. The Equal Status Act permits positive action for older people to promote equality of opportunity or to cater for special needs.

www.equality.ie

4.2 Laws in Northern Ireland

The legal status of older people in Northern Ireland is covered in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Employment Equality (age) Regulations (NI) 2006.

4.2.1 Section 75

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 is unique to Northern Ireland. It places a statutory duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. The introduction to the revised Guidance for Implementation of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act states that all public authorities in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between 9 groups, one of which includes age, and to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religions, political opinions or racial group.

A number of elements exist to ensure that the public authority meets its duty such as the development of an equality scheme stating how it proposes to fulfil the duty; consultation as an integral part of the policy making process; and conducting equality impact assessments to determine the extent of differential impact, either positive or negative, on the groups involved. Most relevant to ageing are monitoring and the equality impact assessment (EQIA) process, as they can provide a framework for furthering the ageing research agenda.

Monitoring

- In fulfilling the statutory duty under S75 public authorities must monitor any adverse impact of polices adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity. An effective monitoring system will enhance an authority's capacity to fulfil its S75 duties, enabling it to make better decisions about what actions would best improve equality of opportunity.

The basic purpose of monitoring is to highlight possible inequalities, investigate the cause and what action needs to be taken to remove any disadvantage. A core element of this is the identification of data requirements and gaps.

EQIA

- Under the procedure for conducting an EQIA, step two of the recommended seven step process is consideration of available data and research. The approach to be adopted at this stage refers to:

  - Collect and analyse existing data
  - Use qualitative or evaluative research
  - Identify gaps

- If necessary commission new data – both qualitative and quantitative
- Relevant and reliable up to date information

4.2.2 DDO Duties

Under Section 49 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, public authorities, when carrying out their functions, must have due regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life. As incidences of disability rise significantly with age, this is a potential area for further research.

4.2.3 The Employment Equality (age) Regulations

The Employment Equality (age) Regulations (NI) 2006 governs discrimination in employment. Unlike other anti-discrimination provisions, these Regulations do not cover goods, facilitates and services. The age provision allows employers to restrict employment for older workers where there is an objective justification; to refuse to recruit older workers; and to force older workers to retire at 65.

www.equalityni.org/site/default.asp?secid=home

5. International Policy Developments

There have been a number of important developments in the international arena in relation to ageing, including *The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing* (MIPAA) and *The Research Agenda on Ageing for the 21st Century*. These two United Nations initiatives provide important mechanisms for furthering research into ageing and both the United Kingdom and Irish Governments have signed up to them.

5.1 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002)

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing, is the first international agreement that specifically recognises the potential of older people to contribute to the development of their societies. Both the United Kingdom and Ireland have signed up to this plan.

MIPAA calls for changes in attitudes, policies and practices at all levels, in all sectors so that the potential of ageing in the twenty first century may be fulfilled. Its aim is:

"To ensure that persons everywhere are able to age with security and dignity and to continue to participate in their societies as citizens will full rights."

Governments have the primary responsibility for implementing the recommendations of MIPAA, which identified three priority directions:

- Older Persons and Development;
- Advancing Health and Well-being into Old Age; and
- Ensuring Enabling and Supportive Environments.
- MIPAA commits member states to a systematic review of the plan through "Regional Implementation Strategies."

W www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/mipaa.html

5.2 The UN Research Agenda on Ageing for the 21st Century

This agenda was designed to support the implementation of the MIPAA and identifies priorities for policy related research and data collection. It encourages researchers to pursue studies in policy related areas of ageing where findings have practical and realistic applications. The United Nations Programme on Ageing, together with the International Association of Gerontology, developed the *UN Research Agenda on Ageing in the 21st Century* in 2002. This was updated in 2007 and is recognised as an important tool for supporting the implementation and monitoring of policy actions proposed in MIPAA.

The UN Research Agenda on Ageing consists of four sections:

- Major Priority Areas;
- Critical Research Areas;
- Key Methodological Issues; and
- Implementation.
- These areas are linked to the priority directions of the MIPAA. The following tables outline the main components of these two initiatives.

www.un.org/ageing/documents/AgeingResearchAgenda-6.pdf

Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and Research Agenda on Ageing (MIPAA)

MADRID International Plan of Action on Ageing	RESEARCH AGENDA ON AGING	
	Major Research Priorities	**Critical Research Areas**
Priority direction I: Older Persons and Development	**Priority 1.** Relationships of population ageing and socio-economic development **Priority 2.** Current practices and options for maintaining material security in old age **Priority 3.** Changing family structures, intergenerational transfer systems and emergent family and institutional dynamics	1. Social participation and integration 2. Economic security 3. Macro-societal change and development 4. Poverty 5. Social security systems
Priority direction II: Advancing health and well-being into old age	**Priority 4.** Determinants of healthy Ageing **Priority 5.** Basic biological mechanisms and age associated diseases **Priority 6.** Quality of life and ageing in diverse cultural, socio-economic and environmental situations	6. Healthy ageing 7. Biomedical 8. Physical and mental Functioning 9. Quality of life
Priority direction III: Ensuring enabling and supportive environments	**Priority 3.** Changing family structures, intergenerational transfer systems and emergent family and institutional dynamics **Priority 6.** Quality of life and ageing in diverse cultural, socio-economic and environmental situations	10. Care systems 11. Changing family structures and functions
Implementation and follow-up		12. Policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation

KEY METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES
IMPLEMENTATION

Mapping the UN Framework (MIPAA and RAA-21) to Public Policy Initiatives in Ireland – North and South

Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing	Research Agenda on Ageing		Policy Initiatives in Ireland	Policy Initiatives in Northern Ireland
	Major Research Priorities	**Critical Research Area**		
Priority Direction I: Older Persons and Development	**Priority 1.** Relationships of population ageing and socio-economic development **Priority 2.** Current practices and options for maintaining material security in old age **Priority 3.** Changing family structure, intergenerational transfer systems and emergent family and institutional dynamics	1. Social participation and integration 2. Economic Security 3. Macro-societal change and development 4. Poverty 5. Social security systems Equal Status Act6. Healthy ageing	Equal Status Act Employment Equality Act Part 3 of the Disability Act 2005 Green Paper on Pensions Social Welfare Benefits/assistance ECrtJ Decision on Heyday (mandatory retirement age) NAPinclusion (poverty): • life cycle approach • community care • income support Office of Older People (Strategy 09) Programme for Gov: • health • supports for older people – education, re-training and remaining in own homes.	Employment Equality Age Regulations (not GFS) Section 75 (I) and (II) Pensions Act 2007 Social Security Regulations – Pension Credits ECrtJ Decision on Heyday (mandatory retirement age) Lifetime Opportunities (poverty): • life cycle approach • sufficient income
Priority Direction II: Advancing Health and Well-being into Old Age	**Priority 4**. Determinants of healthy ageing **Priority 5.** Basic biological mechanisms and age	7. Biomedical 8. Physical and mental functioning 9. Quality of life	Towards 2016: • pensions • long-term care • housing • mobility • quality health services • education and employment • information gaps	Ageing in an Inclusive Society: • economic • health • services • ageism • inclusion • cross-departmental working
Priority Direction III: Ensuring Enabling and Supportive Environments	**Priority 6.** Quality of life and ageing in diverse cultural, socio-economic and environmental situations **Priority 3**[3]**.** Changing family structures, intergenerational transfer systems and emergent family and institutional dynamics **Priority 6.** Quality of life and ageing in diverse cultural, socio-economic and environmental situations MIPAA Implementation and follow-up	10. Care systems 11. Changing family structures and functions 12. Policy design, implementation , monitoring and evaluation	**National Development Plan:** • Infrastructure – hospital services and the need for ongoing investment in residential and community care; palliative care and mental health • Inclusion – living at home and residential care Census Quality and Fairness (health) Vision for Change (mental health) Free Travel 66	Programme for Gov • PSA 7: older people and mental health • PSA16: health estates • PSA18: high quality services Census Investing for Health Bamford Review Free Travel 65 (60 in Oct 08) Fuel Poverty Strategy

3 Two Major Research Priorities (3 and 6) are listed twice, as they correspond to two different Priority Directions of the MIPAA

5.3 UN Commission for Social Development

The Commission for Social Development at its 46th session in February 2008[4] conducted the first five year review of the MIPAA. It recognised "*the successful conclusion of the first review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action (…) and its results at the international, regional and national levels.*" It encourages governments to continue to implement MIPAA and to strengthen their capacities in this respect and calls for enhanced international co-operation to make sure the challenge presented by population ageing is met globally.

www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/2008.html

5.4 The World Health Organisation (WHO)

WHO is the directing and coordinating authority for health in the United Nations system. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends. WHO has recognised the issue of ageing in its work and has a dedicated section on its website, along with numerous tools and publications, to inform discussion and formulation of action plans that promote healthy and active ageing.

www.who.int/topics/ageing/en/

5.5 The European Union and Older People

There is no overall capability for the EU to act on ageing issues, but a new method has been adopted (the Open Method of Co-ordination), which promotes stronger co-operation among Member States on social issues. This method applies in employment, social protection (pensions), social inclusion and education. After the adoption of the Lisbon Strategy by Heads of States and Governments, a new goal was formulated which stated that economic and social policies should go hand in hand. As a result an ambitious social agenda was formulated which sets out the social priorities of the EU. Older people and ageing issues are part of this agenda.

- For information on employment related issues go to:

ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/pdf/legisln/2000_78_en.pdf

- For information on social protection (pensions) go to:

ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/pensions_en.htm

For information on social inclusion and poverty go to :

ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/common_objectives_en.htm

[4] United Nations Commission for Social Development E/CN.5/2008/L.5

ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/strategy_reports_en.htm

- For general information on age in the European Union go to the European Older People's Platform: www.age-platform.org/EN/