



## **Government Structures in Ireland, North and South**

This is a work in progress. Readers are welcome to send comments or additions to Judith Cross, Policy Officer at CARDI, Tel: 0044 28 9069 0066; email: [Judith@cardi.ie](mailto:Judith@cardi.ie)

(This publication is currently being designed into an online, graphically designed resource to assist with easy navigation).

## Introduction

This document outlines the system of government in Ireland, North and South, by local, regional and national levels. It includes the functions of Dáil Éireann and the Northern Ireland Assembly, departmental roles and an outline of all-Island bodies created under the Belfast Agreement 1998. This resource aims to give a greater understanding of government structures in order to assist and encourage collaboration and cooperation in the area of ageing research within Ireland (North and South). Web links have been provided to guide the reader to original texts. Links to the original definition of titles and technical terms have also been added.

## Republic of Ireland Systems of Government

There are 29 Local Authorities or County Councils, 5 Borough Councils and 5 City Councils.

[www.environ.ie/en/LocalGovernment/LocalGovernmentAdministration](http://www.environ.ie/en/LocalGovernment/LocalGovernmentAdministration)

There are 2 Regional Assemblies (Southern & Eastern and Border, Midland West).and 8 Regional Authorities.

The Cross-Border Area Network (established to respond the unique economic and social needs of the central border region).(Note these are not regional governments, but consist of elected representatives from the Councils and have limited functions.

The Oireachtas is made up of Dáil Éireann (42 Constituencies) and Seanad Éireann. Dáil Éireann has 166 elected Teachtaí Dála (TD's). There are 60 nominated or elected members of the Seanad Éireann.

The Cabinet consists of the Taoiseach and Ministers.  
There are 15 Government Departments.

## Northern Ireland Systems of Government

There are 26 Local Authorities or Councils. Note: The Review of Public Administration (RPA) in 2011 will reduce the number of Councils to 11. Other bodies are also being restructured as a result of the RPA.

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

The Northern Ireland Office (located at Westminster with offices at Stormont).

The Northern Ireland Assembly is made up of 108 elected Members of the Legislative Assembly MLA's (18 Constituencies).

The Northern Ireland Executive comprises of the First Minister and the deputy First Minister, and 10 Ministers.

There are 11 Government Departments.

Northern Ireland has 18 elected Members of Parliament (MP's) to the House of Commons.

The powers of the Northern Ireland Assembly do not cover 'reserved' matters or 'excepted' matters. These are the responsibility of Westminster and include issues such as, tax, social security, policing, justice, defence, immigration and foreign affairs.

<b>Departments and Subjects</b>	<b>Roles and Functions of Departments</b>	
<b>OFMDFM/Taoiseach</b>	<p><b>The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM):</b>  Support for the Executive and liaison with the Assembly, the North South Ministerial Council, the British Irish Council and the UK Departments; overseas international relations and the Programme for Government; promoting and monitoring implementation of equality of opportunity and good relations; tackling poverty and social inclusion; children and young people; victims and survivors and sustainable development.  <a href="http://www.ofmdfmini.gov.uk">www.ofmdfmini.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><b>The Department of the Taoiseach:</b>  Supporting and advising the Taoiseach; administrative support to the Government Chief Whip and provides the Secretariat to the Government; development and co-ordination of policy in relation to economic and social development; supports the process of social partnership; social inclusion, digital inclusion; Northern Ireland affairs; European Union affairs; public sector change; and Oireachtas Reform.  <a href="http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie">www.taoiseach.gov.ie</a></p>
<b>Justice/Law Reform</b>	<p>Criminal justice issues are currently dealt with at Westminster.  Equality is overseen by the OFMDFM</p>	<p><b>Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform:</b>  The protection of life and property; the prevention and detection of crime; maintaining and promoting equality of treatment between people; the provision of services for the buying and selling of property; the management of inward migration to the State; supporting integration and providing a courts service and other forms of investigative tribunals; European Union affairs; Council of Europe; and the United Nations affairs.  <a href="http://www.justice.ie">www.justice.ie</a></p>
<b>Health</b>	<p><b>Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety:</b>  Public health; primary care services ,community health and personal social services; family practitioner services; community and elderly care; childcare and child protection; family policy; mental health; learning disability; physical and sensory disability;</p>	<p><b>The Department of Health and Children:</b> Acute hospitals and cancer services; primary care; social inclusion; public health; disability and mental health; Office for Older People; community care; blood and organ donation; dental, optical and aural services; GP services; alcohol and drug treatments;</p>

	<p>provision of hospital services and clinics; accident and emergency; public safety; ambulance and fire and rescue services.  <a href="http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk">www.dhsspsni.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>children's health; food safety; health insurance; alternative health; and emergency health services.  <a href="http://www.dohc.ie">www.dohc.ie</a></p>
<b>Education</b>	<p><b>Department of Education:</b> School funding including administrations, pre-school, primary, post-primary and special education, youth service, teacher education and salaries; and school planning and provision.  <a href="http://www.deni.gov.uk">www.deni.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>Department of Employment and Learning:</b> Higher education; further education; vocational training; employment services; employment law and labour relations; student support and postgraduate awards; and careers advice and guidance.  <a href="http://www.delni.gov.uk">www.delni.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Department of Education and Science:</b> School funding including administration, transport, student support grants, adult literacy and community education, vocational education and training programmes for early school leavers, the unemployed, Travellers and participants on Post Leaving Certificate courses; staffing and financial resources for third-level institutions; and teacher training.  <a href="http://www.education.ie">www.education.ie</a></p>
<b>Environment and Planning</b>	<p><b>Department of the Environment:</b> Planning control; environment and heritage; protection of country side and wildlife; waste management; pollution control; local government reform; driver and vehicle testing and road safety, enforcement and transport licensing. <a href="http://www.doeni.gov.uk">www.doeni.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>Department for Regional Development:</b> Strategic planning; transportation strategy; ports and public transport; roads and water policy; providing and maintaining roads; water and sewerage services.  <a href="http://www.drdni.gov.uk">www.drdni.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources:</b> Telecommunications, Broadcasting and Energy sectors; regulates, protects and develops the natural resources.  <a href="http://www.dcenr.gov.ie">www.dcenr.gov.ie</a></p> <p><b>Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government:</b> Environment and environmental protection; climate change; conservation of natural heritage and biodiversity; conservation of our built heritage; water resources and the quality of drinking water; sustainable and balanced regional development; housing in sustainable communities; and local government. <a href="http://www.environ.ie">www.environ.ie</a></p> <p><b>Department of Transport:</b> National roads programme; road safety; public transport</p>

		and infrastructure; aviation; airport infrastructure; maritime safety and security standards; and ports and shipping policy. <a href="http://www.transport.ie">www.transport.ie</a>
<b>Employment and Trade</b>	<p><b>Department of Employment and Learning:</b> Higher education; further education; vocational training; employment services; employment law and labour relations; student support and postgraduate awards; and careers advice and guidance. <a href="http://www.delni.gov.uk">www.delni.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment:</b> Economic development policy; economic advice and research; research and statistic services; business regulation; health and safety at work; social economy; Invest NI; NI Tourist Board; and the Consumer Council for NI. <a href="http://www.detini.gov.uk/cgi-bin/gethome">www.detini.gov.uk/cgi-bin/gethome</a></p>	<p><b>Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment:</b> Labour Force Development; competitiveness and international affairs; employment rights and industrial relations; science, technology and intellectual property; corporate services and economic policy; consumers, competition and commerce; and enterprise and agencies. <a href="http://www.entemp.ie">www.entemp.ie</a></p>
<b>Social</b>	<p><b>Department of Social Development:</b> Housing programmes; urban regeneration; Social Security Agency; Child Support Agency; support for the voluntary and community sector; charities policy and legislation; Rent Assessment Office; Social Fund Commissioner; Northern Ireland Housing Executive; and the Disability Living Allowance Advisory Board. <a href="http://www.dsdni.gov.uk">www.dsdni.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Department of Social and Family Affairs:</b> Social protection policies; administers and manages the delivery of statutory and non-statutory schemes and services; social insurance and social assistance schemes including provision for unemployment, illness, maternity, caring, widowhood, retirement and old age. <a href="http://www.welfare.ie">www.welfare.ie</a></p>
<b>Finance</b>	<p><b>Department of Finance and Personnel:</b> Personnel; civil service accommodation; legal services; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency; Land Registers; Land and Property services Agency; central procurement; Civil Law Reform Division; General Register Office</p>	<p><b>Department of Finance:</b> Taxation and financial services; budget, economic and pensions; personnel and remuneration; economic planning and development. <a href="http://www.finance.gov.ie">www.finance.gov.ie</a></p>

	and building regulations. <a href="http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/">www.dfpni.gov.uk/</a>	
<b>Culture and Arts</b>	<b>Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure:</b> Arts and creativity; sport and leisure; inland fisheries and waterways; public libraries and museums; language diversity; Ordnance Survey of NI; Public Records Office; and advising on National Lottery distribution. <a href="http://www.dcalni.gov.uk">www.dcalni.gov.uk</a>	<b>Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism:</b> Arts and creativity; development of Irish film industry; national cultural institutions; sport and its infrastructure; and tourism. <a href="http://www.arts-sport-tourism.gov.ie">www.arts-sport-tourism.gov.ie</a>
<b>Agriculture/ Rural Development</b>	<b>Department of Agriculture and Rural Development:</b> Food; farming and agri-environment policy; agri-food development; rural payments and inspection; veterinary matters; rural development; forestry; sea fisheries and rivers. <a href="http://www.dardni.gov.uk">www.dardni.gov.uk</a>	<b>Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food:</b> Agriculture; food; rural development and rural environment; food safety; animal and plant health and animal welfare. <a href="http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/">www.agriculture.gov.ie/</a>  <b>Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs:</b> Community development programmes; local development; the RAPID programme; National Drugs Strategy; volunteering; rural development initiatives including CLÁR, LEADER, INTERREG and a number of measures under the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation; Irish language; and the Gaeltacht. <a href="http://www.pobail.ie">www.pobail.ie</a>

<p><b>Defence, Foreign Affairs</b></p>	<p><b>Westminster:</b>  <b>Foreign and Commonwealth Office:</b> Foreign policy; security and good governance of the overseas territories; support British nationals abroad; Borders and Immigration Agency; counter terrorism and weapons proliferation; prevent and resolve conflict; and develop effective international institutions.  <a href="http://www.fco.gov.uk/en">www.fco.gov.uk/en</a></p> <p><b>Ministry of Defence:</b> Air safety and aviation; defence estate and environment; defence management; doctrine operations and diplomacy; equipment and logistics; civilian and armed forces personnel and their families; and reserve forces and cadets.  <a href="http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/home">www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/home</a></p>	<p><b>Department of Defence:</b> Defence matters; legal, regulatory and litigation and lands policy; delivery of security, emergency and community services by the Defence Forces; overseas operations; international security and peacekeeping; and emergency planning coordination and oversight.  <a href="http://www.defence.ie">www.defence.ie</a></p> <p><b>Department of Foreign Affairs:</b> Foreign policy; international developments; reconciliation in Northern Ireland, and between North and South of the island; and deepening Ireland's relationship with Britain.  <a href="http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx">www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx</a></p>
--	---	--

### Relevant North South Bodies

**British Irish Council (BIC):** Created under the Agreement reached in the Multi-Party Negotiations in Belfast in 1998, The BIC aims to promote positive, practical relationships among its Members including British and Irish Governments, the devolved administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man.  
[www3.british-irishcouncil.org](http://www3.british-irishcouncil.org)

**North South Ministerial Council (NSMC):** Brings together those with executive responsibilities in Northern Ireland and the Irish Government to develop consultation, co-operation and action within the island of Ireland; including through implementation on an all-island and cross-border basis on matters of mutual interest and within the competence of each Administration, North and South. The NSMC comprises of Ministers of the Northern Ireland Administration and the Irish Government, working together to take forward co-operation between both parts of the island to mutual benefit. There are six implementation bodies: Waterways; Food Safety; Trade and Business; Europe; Language; and Folye, Carlingford and Irish Lights. The six areas of co-operation are: Agriculture, Education, Environment, Health, Tourism, and Transport. [www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org](http://www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org)

CARDI  
Forestview  
Purdy's Lane  
Belfast BT8 7ZX  
Tel + 44 28 90690066 Fax + 44 28

CARDI  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Bishop's Square  
Redmond's Hill  
Dublin 2  
Tel + 353 1 4786308 Fax + 353 1 478 6319  
Email: [info@cardi.ie](mailto:info@cardi.ie) Website: [www.cardi.ie](http://www.cardi.ie)