

Policy Briefing

This document aims to inform ageing research and add to existing discussion on policy and research developments.

Public Transport and Older People in Ireland, North and South

Introduction

This CARDI policy briefing outlines the main public policy initiatives for public transport in Ireland, north and south, relevant to older people. It also highlights the international and European frameworks that impact transport on the island of Ireland, and includes a section on equality legislation for both jurisdictions as it relates to transport.

Transport Policy Initiatives in the Republic of Ireland

A Sustainable Transport Future: A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020

Launched in February 2009, *A Sustainable Transport Future: A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020* recognises that transport is vital for the economy and that safe and comfortable travel is important. The objective of this policy document is not to restrict travel but to facilitate smarter ways of meeting public needs. It plans to improve the quality of life and access to transport for all, in particular for people with reduced mobility and those who may experience isolation. *A Sustainable Transport Future* recognises that bus use is particularly important for older people and people with mobility issues.

www.transport.ie/upload/general/11284-0.pdf

Transport 21

Transport 21 is the ten-year capital investment framework agreed by the Government for the development of transport infrastructure from 2006 to 2015. It is a key component of the *National Development Plan 2007- 2013, Transforming Ireland – A Better Quality of Life for All*¹.

Transport 21 aims to increase access by making it easier to travel and enhance quality by improving safety, accessibility, integration, reliability, speed and comfort. It complements the policy objectives of the Department of Transport's Sectoral Plan under the Disability Act 2005, *Transport Access for All* (See page 3).

www.transport21.ie/Home/Home_Page/index.html

¹ www.ndp.ie/docs/NDP_Homepage/1131.htm

Transport Sector Action Plan on Age Friendly Transport Services

Implementing An Action Plan to Promote More Age Friendly Transport Services, was launched in June 2007. The Action Plan was developed and implemented by Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus, Iarnród Éireann, Rural Transport Programme and Veolia Transport. It focuses on dialogue with older people, providing age awareness training for staff and an enhanced focus on older people in their internal and external communications. It was launched as part of the 'Say No to Ageism' campaign of the Equality Authority, the Health Service Executive and the National Council on Ageing and Older People.

www.equality.ie/index.asp?docID=686

Rural Transport Programme (RTP) and Older People

The RTP was officially launched in 2006 following a pilot action research initiative, *The Rural Transport Initiative 2003 – 2006*. It is a response to the growing acknowledgement of the economic and social impacts of inadequate transport in rural areas and the increasing level of interest amongst community groups in developing and implementing locally based solutions. It is in line with commitments in *Towards 2106 - The New Social Partnership Agreement*.²

The Programme aims and objectives relating to older people include:

- To provide, enhance and sustain a nationwide community based public transport system in rural areas;
- To ensure equality of access for all, including older people as well as people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments;
- To maintain, promote and develop models of good practice; and

- To continue to contribute to rural public transport policy.

www.pobal.ie/Funding%20Programmes/RTP/Pages/Background.aspx

Transport Policy Initiatives in Northern Ireland

The Programme for Government 2008-2011: Building a Better Future

The Programme for Government 2008-2011: Building a Better Future gives explicit recognition of the importance of transport infrastructure in relation to economic growth and social inclusion across the region. Objective 3 of Public Service Agreement (PSA) 13: Improving the Transport Infrastructure, refers to increasing the use of public transport. Targets here include all Metro and Ulsterbus buses and coaches to be 100% accessible by 2012.

www.pfgbudgetni.gov.uk

The Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (Imtac)

The Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (Imtac) is a committee of disabled people, older people and others, including key transport professionals. Their role is to advise Government and others in Northern Ireland on issues that affect the mobility of older people and disabled people. Imtac works closely with policy makers and transport providers to ensure that accessibility for disabled people and older people is a major consideration in the development of transport policy and transport services.

www.imtac.org.uk

² www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached_files/Pdf%20files/Towards2016PartnershipAgreement.pdf

Accessible Transport Strategy for Northern Ireland 2015

The Accessible Transport Strategy for Northern Ireland 2015 (ATS) was published in March 2005 and its vision is to have an accessible transport system that enables older people and disabled people to participate more fully in society, enjoy greater independence and experience a better quality of life.

Five main areas identified as constituting significant barriers for older people and disabled people include:

- Physical barriers
- Attitudinal or psychological barriers
- Accessible information
- Services needed by older and disabled people
- Affordability.

Seven strategic objectives, coupled with a range of supporting policies, have already been developed to help achieve the vision and overcome the identified barriers.

www.drdni.gov.uk/index/accessible_transport.htm

The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for Northern Ireland 2002-2012

The RTS sits within the framework of the *Regional Development Strategy: Shaping our Future*.³

The RTS recognises that transport is essential to provide access to employment and training opportunities, to services such as health and social services, to shops and education. Its vision is to “have a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone’s quality of life.”

www.drdni.gov.uk/index/transport_planning.htm

Legislative Provisions in Ireland, North and South

There are a number of equality laws in both jurisdictions relevant to the ageing research and policy agenda.

Ireland

The Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004

Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004 prohibit discrimination when providing goods, services and facilities to the public and this includes transport. The Acts relate to discrimination based on nine grounds, one of which is age. In addition, sections 17 and 18 of the Acts enable the sponsoring Minister, with agreement of the Minister for Transport, to make regulations about the accessibility of public transport vehicles and facilities at stations for persons with a disability. Section 18, which relates to station equipment specifically, refers to making “regulations requiring operators of bus and rail stations to provide facilities so that they are readily accessible to and usable by persons with a disability.”

www.equality.ie/index.asp?locID=106&docID=226

The Disability Act 2005 - Department of Transport’s Sectoral Plan

The Sectoral Plan of the Department of Transport has been developed in accordance with the provisions of the Disability Act 2005. It seeks to meet the transport accessibility needs of people with mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments in the shortest possible time, having regard to resources, technical and other constraints.

www.transport.ie/viewitem.asp?id=11491&lang=ENG&loc=1512

³ www.drdni.gov.uk/index/regional_planning.htm

Rural Transport Fund Northern Ireland and Older People

The Rural Transport Fund (RTF) has been in existence in Northern Ireland since November 1998. Its primary objective is to support transport services in rural areas and to improve access to work, education, shopping and recreational activities.

The RTF subsidises rural services provided by Translink. It also provides funding for Rural Community Transport Partnerships that offer a range of services for its members. In 2009 the Fund supports 43 rural bus routes and 18 Rural Community Transport Partnerships. www.drdni.gov.uk/index/public_transport/pt-rural_transport.htm

The Transport Programme for People with Disabilities (TPPD)

Since 1991 *The Transport Programme for People with Disabilities* (TPPD) has developed a number of specialised transport services for disabled people. The Programme supports initiatives such as:

- **Door-2-Door Transport** - an urban transport service for older people and disabled people like a regular bus services for those who experience difficulty accessing and using mainstream public transport facilities.

- **Easibus** - There are 15 services which provide accessible local bus services for mobility impaired people who cannot use existing services.
- **Shopmobility** - This scheme lends manual and powered wheelchairs and scooters to members of the public with limited mobility to shop and use leisure and commercial facilities.

www.drdni.gov.uk/index/public_transport/pt-programmeforpeoplewithdisabilities.htm

Northern Ireland

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 Transport and Older People

The Act aims to eliminate discrimination against disabled people. Two Parts of the Act have a particular relevance to transport and older people: Part 3 which deals, among other things, with access to services and Part 5 which allows access standards to be set for certain types of vehicle.

Draft Disability Discrimination (Transport Vehicles) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 ("the draft 2009 Regulations"), extend duties under the DDA 1995 to providers of transport services in relation to a number of types of vehicles.

www.equalityni.org/sections/default.asp?cms=The%20Law_The%20legislation&cmsid=4_278&id=278&secid=5#disabilityeur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0816:FIN:EN:PDF

All Ireland Transport Policy Developments and Older People

All Ireland Free Travel

Since 1995, older people (aged 65+ in NI and 66+ in ROI) have been entitled to free cross border travel to any initial destination in Ireland, North and South. Free travel is available on most services operated by companies within Ireland, North and South, including: Translink; Dublin Bus (except Nitelink and special airport buses), Bus Éireann, Iarnród Éireann DART, the LUAS and private transport companies. Permanent residents in Northern Ireland aged between 60 - 64 years are eligible for free transport within Northern Ireland only.

www.welfare.ie/EN/Schemes/FreeTravel/Pages/FreeTravel.aspx

www.translink.co.uk/seniorcitizenpass.asp

North South Ministerial Council - Cross Border Rural Transport Pilot

The Department of Regional Development (NI) and the Department of Transport (ROI) are working on a pilot project on cross border transport services and potential demand for cross border services. It is anticipated that a full report will be sent to the NSMC in December 2009.

www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org/index/areas-of-co-operation/transport.htm

International Transport Policy Initiatives and Older people

United Nations Developments

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) 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.

Priority Direction III: Ensuring Enabling and Supportive Environments, Issue 1: Housing and the Living Environment, Objective 3: Improved availability of accessible and affordable transportation for older persons, lists a series of actions for Governments to take to make transportation accessible for older persons.

Governments have the primary responsibility for implementing these recommendations. The Regional Implementation Strategies (RIS) commit Member States to a systematic review and reporting on how they meet these commitments in the MIPAA.

www.un.org/ageing/madrid_intlplanaction.html

Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD)

In 2001 the OECD conducted a study '*Ageing and Transport: Mobility Needs and Safety Issues,*' to identify current and emerging mobility and safety issues and to develop policy and research recommendations to meet older people's transport needs. Although this study was conducted in 2001, many of the issues raised in this report are relevant today.

www.oecd.org/dataoecd/40/63/2675189.pdf

European Policy Initiatives

European Commission Green Paper on Urban Mobility

The European Commission Green Paper, *Towards a new culture for Urban Mobility* was launched in 2007 to promote EU debate on smarter urban mobility and urban transport that is accessible, safe and secure for all European citizens. This Paper provides detailed information on older people in the EU and how EU cities face similar challenges to ensure that everyone, including older people, can enjoy their freedom of movement within the EU.

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/clean/green_paper_urban_transport/index_en.htm

Conclusion

Ireland's proportion of older people is increasing. This group, especially older women, is likely to be affected by low incomes, limited access to a private car and suffer from one or more disabilities. Access to public transport can help older people to avail of goods, services, employment and other activities. Inclusive public transport is a passport to independent living and full participation in society. In rural areas, where distances to services are greater, 'transport poverty' can be more profound. In general where services are centralised or closed, older people are often those most affected.

Key Policy Issues

- It is essential that we prepare for future transport needs of our ageing population and the growing proportion of older people likely to be dependent on public transport;
- Transport policies are an integral part of supporting the inclusion and independence of older people;
- Greater use of public transport will require the availability of a safe, accessible, integrated and reliable service; and
- Equality legislation exists in both jurisdictions to protect the public on access to services and discrimination on the grounds of age and disability.

Further Reading

On the Move: Attitudes to Transport in Northern Ireland, May 2002. Liz Fawcett, Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey

www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update11.PDF

Public Transport - On the Right Track? A Consumer Council Summary Report into Attitudes to Public Transport in Northern Ireland, General Consumer Council, June 2009

www.consumerCouncil.org.uk/publications

Towards Best Practice in Provision of Transport Services for People with Disabilities in Ireland, National Disability Authority, 2004

[www.nda.ie/cntmgmtnew.nsf/0/05F69E6DCA8CBFE580256E6300311E57/\\$File/transport.pdf](http://www.nda.ie/cntmgmtnew.nsf/0/05F69E6DCA8CBFE580256E6300311E57/$File/transport.pdf)

Progressing Rural Public Transport in Ireland: A Discussion Paper, July 2006. Fitzpatrick Associates

www.pobal.ie/Funding%20Programmes/RTP/Beneficiaries/Publications/2006%20report%20Progressing%20Rural%20Public%20Transport.pdf

Towards A Sustainable Rural Transport Policy, May 2009. Louise J. Weir and Fintan McCabe, Comhar, Sustainable Development Council

www.comharsdc.ie/_files/Final%20Rural%20Transport%20Report_Website%20Version.pdf

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