

Equality Impact Assessment

SECTION 75 OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND ACT 1998

“promotion, through the Youth Service, of the personal and social development of young people”

Page Nos

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between certain different individuals and groups, namely: -

- . between persons of different religious belief;
- . between persons of different political opinion;
- . between persons of different racial group;
- . between persons of different age;
- . between persons of different marital status;
- . between persons of different sexual orientation;

- . between men and women generally;
- . between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- . between persons with dependants and persons without.

1.2 The legislation requires public authorities to conduct an equality impact assessment where a proposed policy is likely to have a significant impact on equality of opportunity. In response to this, the Department of Education (DE) has decided that its policy for the promotion, through the youth service, of the personal and social development of young people, as set out in the report of The Youth Service Policy Review, requires an equality impact assessment. The policy was screened using the following criteria: -

- . Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by the different groups within the 9 categories referred to above?
- . Is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the policy area?
- . Is there any potential to enhance equality of opportunity for any of the 9 categories through the policy in question?
- . Have consultations in the past with relevant representative organisations or individuals within groups indicated that a particular policy creates problems that are specific to them?

1.3 As a result of the screening process it emerged that due to the lack of insufficient qualitative data it was difficult to respond to the first 3 criteria with any authority. In order to supplement the qualitative data available, qualitative research was conducted through a consultation exercise. This consultation process is set out in paragraph 3.2.

1.4 The Department is supported in the implementation of the policy by the 5 Education and Library Boards and the Youth Council for Northern Ireland. It has been agreed that the Department of Education will co-join with the Youth Council for Northern Ireland and the 5 Education and Library Boards, on the conduct of an Equality Impact Assessment for this policy. On completion of the various elements of an Equality Impact Assessment the decision-making authority will rest with the Department and/or the Non-Departmental Public Bodies as per their area of responsibility.

1.5 The purpose of this consultation document is to record the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment.

1.6 The document can be made available, on request, from the Department, in alternative forms, including Braille, disk and audio cassette, and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.

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2. BACKGROUND TO YOUTH SERVICE POLICY REVIEW

2.1 The Youth Service in Northern Ireland encompasses a wide diversity of provision and includes all those organisations and projects whose primary purpose is the personal and social development of children, young people and young adults. Involvement by young people is on an entirely voluntary basis and no young person is ever under any obligation to participate in youth activities. Around 200,000 young people, aged 4-25 years, participate in youth service activities.

2.2 The current policy for the Youth Service in Northern Ireland, introduced in 1987, was to “support and encourage young people to mature and reach their potential as valued individuals and responsible citizens”. In 1997, the Education Minister, Tony Worthington decided to initiate a review with a remit to “prepare recommendations for a policy framework for the future development of the Youth Service and an action agenda for strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of its contribution within the context of promoting a holistic approach to meeting the needs of children and young people”. A Review Group was set up to carry this out. In May 2000 the Report “A Youth Service for the New Millennium” was launched.

2.3 The Department accepted the recommendations in the Review Report that: -

- . the Mission Statement for the Youth Service should be “to ensure opportunities for children, young people and young adults to gain for themselves knowledge, skills and experience to reach their full potential as valued individuals”;
- . “the Youth Service should include all those organisations and projects whose primary purpose is the personal and social development of children, young people and young adults”;
- . the Youth Service “should provide services for those between the ages of 4?25 years”, ie for children under 10, for young people between 10?16 and for young adults over 16. Previously the target range was 5?25 with an emphasis on the 10?20 age band.

Department of Education Policy for the Youth Service

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2.4 The policy aim is “to ensure the provision of opportunities for children, young people and young adults to gain for themselves knowledge, skills and experience to reach their full potential as valued individuals; to encourage the development of mutual understanding and promote recognition of and respect for cultural diversity.” The associated target in the Programme for Government is that, by 2004, the membership of Youth Service organisations, as a percentage of the youth population, will have increased from 32% to 34%. It is also incumbent on the Department to ensure that, as far as possible, the policy is carried out with uniformity across Northern Ireland. The policy has not yet been fully developed but it is being taken forward by a Policy Implementation Body, which was set up by the Minister in September 2000 with the remit of producing an action plan for the future development of the Youth Service. In turn, the Policy Implementation Body has set up a series of Implementation Panels (the membership of which comprises one?third young people) to look specifically at the needs of:

- Under 10s;
- Young Adults;
- Youth Affairs;
- Curriculum Development;
- Those with Disabilities;
- European/International Awareness;

and has expanded the remit of other groups to consider:

- Human Resources;
- Equity, Diversity and Interdependence.

(The Policy Implementation Body (PIB) has, with the agreement of the Minister, been replaced by the Youth Service Liaison Forum, which will subsume the work of PIB.)

The remit of these Panels is available from the Department of Education on request.

The core principles (as set out in the document 'Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice') will continue to underpin and permeate youth work including:

- i. commitment to preparing young people for participation;
- ii. the promotion of acceptance and understanding of others; and
- iii. the development of appropriate values and beliefs.

These core principles underpin the personal and social development of young people and are a means of addressing the development of knowledge, skills, expertise and potential.

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There are also less direct references in the Department's Public Service Agreement, for example: -

"We need to give children the best possible start by responding and considering education provision" and "we will ensure that all our young people have the skills and qualifications to gain employment in a modern economy".

The Role of the Education and Library Boards

2.5 The 5 Education and Library Boards are the main providers for the Youth Service and under the 1986 Order are required to "secure provision for their areas of adequate facilities for recreational, social, physical, cultural and Youth Service activities". In meeting this requirement they: -

- . specialise in ongoing projects of an area/detached nature;
- . provide and fund controlled youth clubs and outdoor pursuits/activity centres;
- . assist with the recurrent costs of registered voluntary youth organisations;
- . provide advice, support and guidance for youth groups;
- . operate summer activity schemes;
- . assist individual young people/groups visiting other parts of the United Kingdom, Ireland and overseas in connection with annual camps and various award schemes.

The Role of the Youth Council for Northern Ireland

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2.6 The Youth Council for Northern Ireland was established in January 1990, by the Youth Service (Northern Ireland) Order 1989. This legislation directs the Council to: -

- . advise the Minister for Education, Education and Library Boards, and other bodies on the development of the Youth Service;
- . assess and pay grant?aid to Regional Voluntary Youth organisations;
- . encourage cross?community activity by the Youth Service;

- . encourage the provision of facilities for the Youth Service which are especially beneficial to young people;
- . develop international work involving young people within youth organisations;
- . advise on the training of part-time and full-time youth workers;
- . encourage and assist the co-ordination and efficient use of the resources of the Youth Service.

The Role of the Community/Voluntary Sector

2.7 In addition to these statutory bodies, the Northern Ireland Youth Forum represents the views and interests of young people at local, national and international levels while YouthNet is an independent agency which represents the interests and aspirations of the voluntary sector and has a major role in relation to the allocation of Peace 2 funding. There is also a considerable amount of inter-agency and inter-sectoral activity as the needs of young people are so diverse. Information on the activities of the "Children and Young Persons Inter-sectoral Forum" can be obtained from the Youth Council for Northern Ireland.

2.8 As the Department does not fund any provision directly, it follows that any policy can only be implemented through, and with the support of, these other bodies.

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3. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Consideration of Available Data and Research

3.1 Assessing the adverse impacts of policies cannot be fully effective unless all quantitative and qualitative data is available and accessible. At present not all data necessary to fully monitor the promotion through the Youth Service of personal and social development of young people is available. However, in conjunction with youth sector partners, more effective monitoring and research systems are being developed to improve this. Included in this is a geo-mapping initiative, which began in October 2001, which will provide new data, indicators and their graphical representations, and will integrate physical and social data to enable targeting to be an objective and demonstrable process. The appropriate hardware and software has been purchased by the Youth Council for Northern Ireland, and geo-mapping and primary or secondary research is underway. This is the first co-ordinated attempt to collect data in the Youth Service and will take time. Statistics have been obtained on the profile of youth membership in the main from the 5 Education and Library Boards, the Youth Council for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. A Youth Council publication, "Barometer 2001" sets out some statistics which are relevant and some of these have been used in this section.

3.2 In order to supplement the quantitative data, qualitative research was conducted through a consultation exercise. This consultation exercise involved:-

- a. an initial publicity poster and letter which were distributed to all groups at the launch of the Review. This letter sought comment and views from all groups;
- b. the publication of the 'Initial Considerations' document through mail shot and a public meeting held in January 1998;
- c. The launch of the Youth Service Policy Review – Consultation Report in October 1998. This was a very extensive consultation exercise and received hundreds of replies.

A copy of the list detailing distribution of the above-named reports is available. Up to 3,000 people were involved at various stages of the process.

The Review included many issues regarding the Equality agenda in its discussions on Community Relations. The conclusions of these discussions are included in the final report. During the process of the Review the Steering Committee sought expert opinion from groups who could be perceived as under-represented in the youth sector, eg ethnic minorities, disabled and interface groupings.

The formal report was discussed by 120 delegates at a conference held on 5/6 June 2000 and the document has been placed on the Department of Education's website.

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3.3 The Youth Service has an extensive infrastructure for consultation on an ongoing basis with a wide range of stakeholders/young people/communities/statutory and voluntary bodies.

3.4 Under Executive Programme Funding, 7 pilot projects are underway which will help inform the Equality Impact Assessment process: -

- . North-Eastern Education and Library Board in partnership with Mencap.
- . South-Eastern Education and Library Board in partnership with Phab.
- . Western Education and Library Board working with young travellers.
- . Southern Education and Library Board looking at rural isolation.
- . Belfast Education and Library Board working with the Deaf Youth Association and also considering youth counselling and city centre initiatives.
- . YouthNet considering issues around gay and lesbian young people.
- . Youth Council for Northern Ireland working with ethnic minorities.

These pilot projects will provide substantial qualitative and quantitative data and the learning experience will be shared.

3.5 A Youth Service Curriculum Development Unit has been established to provide a service that will: -

- . support a sense of common purpose for youth work practice;
- . assist in developing standards of good practice within the Youth Service;
- . raise awareness and common understanding of the central theme and 3 core principles;
- . promote the process of self-evaluation in youth work.

Assessment of Impacts

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3.6 In accordance with the guidelines, the Department is required to assess whether there is a differential or adverse impact on the Section 75 groups. In making this assessment the

Department is aware that the duty goes beyond the necessity not to discriminate (either directly or indirectly) in respect of the groups.

3.7 An assessment of the possible impacts of the Department's policy (the promotion, through the Youth Service, of the personal and social development of young people) has a differential impact on the groups which may be adverse in terms of the 9 equality dimensions set out below.

Access to Information

3.8 Persons of Different Religious Belief

The Education and Library Board's data on membership of registered youth groups does not specify religious background but steps are being taken to address this.

RELIGIOUS GROUPS AGED 4 TO 25 YEARS

All persons aged 4 to 25 years

4 to 15 years

16 to 25 years Total

4 to 25 years

Valid cases % of total cases Valid cases % of total cases Valid cases % of total cases

Catholic

Protestant

Other or no religion

Unwilling/Undefined

Total 738

805

48

19

1,610 46%

50%

3%

1%

100% 487

432

42

14

975 50%

44%

4%

1%

100% 1,225

1,237

90

33

2,585 47%

48%

3%

1%

100%

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Continuous Household Survey 2000/01

Notes:

Religion derived from others in same household if missing, unwilling or undefined. Only 23% stated their religion.

Religion taken from the first person in the same household to state Catholic, Protestant, None or Other.

3.9 Persons of Different Political Opinion

The following is the outcome of the Young Life and Times Survey 2000 in relation to 18?24 year olds.

18?24

Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)
12%

Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP)
10%

Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)
9%

Alliance Party
3%

Sinn Fein
12%

Progressive Unionist Part (PUP)
1%

Ulster Democratic Party (UDP)
1%

Women's Coalition
3%

UK Unionist Party
1%

Other Party
1%

Other Answer
4%

Northern Ireland Unionist Party
0%

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The above table was part of a general survey – political activity has not been statistically measured in respect of youth service activities.

Most young people aged between 12 and 18 do not appear to have a ready desire to be involved in politics. Only 21% stated that they had “quite a lot” or a “great deal” of interest in contemporary politics. Males are more likely to have a definite opinion than females. (M Smyth and M Scott: The Youthquest 2000 Survey: A Report on Young People’s Views and Experiences in Northern Ireland INCORE 2000).

3.10 Persons of Different Racial Groups:

- Screening of the main Youth Service activities has identified that not many young people from ethnic minorities are involved.

- The numbers of young people aged 4?25 from ethnic minority backgrounds are not known, but can be gauged from the 2000/01 statistics in relation to those at school:

Primary Schools Secondary Schools

Irish Travellers	410	153
Chinese	420	352
Indian	146	117
Pakistani	109	33
Bangladeshi	41	4
Black Caribbean	22	11
Black African	64	34
Other ethnic pupils	221	251
Mixed ethnic pupils	433	140
	1,866	1,095

Total No of Pupils 172,384 155,553

% ethnic pupils 1.1 0.7

Paul Noonan (Travelling People in West Belfast – Save the Children 1994) found that young travelling people did not attend local youth clubs and consequently they felt isolated, bored and tempted to commit offences.

A Brighter Future (A Needs Audit and Social Profile Survey of the Chinese and Vietnamese Communities in the Greater Craigavon and Banbridge Areas) shows that almost half the study population was under 18 years of age. The need to provide a youth club was identified because those surveyed (in the 16?24 age range) do not access local youth provision because they fear rejection, a lack of understanding and abuse as the only Chinese in the group. A large number of younger Chinese emerging (65 in the 5?15 age group) also need access to appropriate youth facilities. Research with the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities and geo-mapping will provide further data.

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3.11 Persons of Different Age

The estimated population of those aged under 25 in Northern Ireland is estimated at 36.9% of the total population with the biggest percentage in the 10?14 age group (7.96%).

- The Department wishes the outreach of the Youth Service to be as wide and inclusive as possible. Traditionally the age band for the Youth Service was 5?25. The Youth Service Policy Review recommended this change to 4?25 years of age and this was accepted by the Department. Since the Review Report was published in 2000 no expressions of disagreement about the age range have been received by the Department.

- The available statistics for 2000/01 (with 1995/96 figures in brackets for comparison) show that the percentages of young people involved in Youth Service activities are: -

Age Nos

Involved Nos in

Age Band % of Population in this Age Band

5-9 58,121

[52,070] * 127,902

[134,476] 45.4

[38.7]

10-15 86,641

[69,180] * 161,415

[153,887] 53.7

[45.0]

16-18 25,812

[21,735] * 76,461

[75,350] 33.8

[28.8]

19-25 10,264

[10,736] * 160,150

[179,453] 6.4

[6.0]

*2000 mid-year population estimates.

Significant numbers of those in the 5?15 age group would be involved in uniformed organisations.

Nineteen to twenty-five year olds generally opt out of "youth club" type activities and tend to be involved in short-time specialist projects run by a variety of agencies. The numbers involved in these projects are not reflected in the previous table.

The proportions of young male and young female members of registered groups can be gauged from the research undertaken by the Youth Council in 1998 (in the report entitled "Benefits of the Youth Service" – a study of experiences of 14?18 year olds). This showed that, out of the 726 young people surveyed, the percentages were: -

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Male Female

- full-time clubs 56% 44%

- part-time clubs 50% 50%

- uniformed 80% 20%

TOTAL 61% 39%

3.12 Persons of Different Marital Status

The available data on membership of registered youth groups does not specify marital status.

Marital status of 4 to 25 year olds

All persons aged 4 to 25

4 to 15 years

16 to 25 years Total

4 to 25 years

Valid cases
% of total cases
Valid cases
% of total cases
Valid cases
% of total cases

Single
Married
Separated
Divorced

Total
1,610
0
0
0

1,610
100%
0%
0%
0%

100%
917
49
8
1

975
94%
5%
1%
0%

100%
2,527
49
8
1

2,585
98%
2%
0%
0%

100%

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Continuous Household Survey 2000/01

3.13 Persons of Different Sexual Orientation

In its Booklet "Equality and Sexual Orientation" (June 2001, CoSO (Coalition on Sexual Orientation) highlighted that it is not uncommon for lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender people to feel marginalised by society, especially when they are not treated with dignity and respect when trying to access public and private sector services.

The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2000 interviewed 1,800 adults and broke the results down into age bands. The following shows the 18?24 age band:

Age 18?24

I am gay or lesbian (homosexual)
2%

I am heterosexual or straight
93%

I am bisexual
1%

Other (specify)
0%

I do not wish to answer this question
3%

YouthNet is currently being funded through the Executive Programme for a pilot project on work with Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual young people which includes carrying out an audit of existing services, facilitating expression of needs and developing models of good practice particularly in the youthwork field. It will include follow?up work in the form of focus groups where young people can further discuss their specific needs. YouthNet have also launched an online questionnaire to find out the needs of young people under 25 in Northern Ireland who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender.

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3.14 Men and Women Generally

This aspect includes boys and girls. Data is not available to show the breakdown in youth activity membership between males and females but geo?mapping will address this.

- specific provision exists for each gender within the various agencies.

2000 Mid?Year Population Estimates by Age (single years) and Gender

	Males	Females	Total
4	12,494	11,584	24,078
5	12,549	11,937	24,486
6	12,745	12,323	25,068
7	12,810	12,426	25,236
8	13,567	12,919	26,486
9	13,643	12,983	26,626
10	13,705	12,824	26,529
11	13,759	13,121	26,880
12	13,943	13,299	27,242
13	14,002	13,323	27,325
14	13,786	13,140	26,926
15	13,688	12,825	26,513

16	13,593	12,944	26,537
17	13,302	12,664	25,966
18	12,205	11,753	23,958
19	12,187	11,601	23,788
20	12,243	11,400	23,643
21	11,622	11,062	22,684
22	11,305	10,759	22,064
23	11,228	10,496	21,724
24	11,883	11,085	22,968
25	12,058	11,218	23,276

All Ages
282,317
267,686
550,003

Source – NISRA

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3.15 Persons with a Disability and Persons Without

Limited statistical information is available to determine the use of mainstream youth activities by those with a disability.

Specific references in the Policy Review Report to young people with disabilities are few, but relevant aspects include:

- para 1.4: the aims of the Youth Service include “to enable as many young people as possible, particularly those in social need, to benefit from youth services”;
- para 5.2: the values for the Youth Service include “open and equal access to all”.

In a discussion paper prepared for the Young Adult Policy Panel, a member from Disability Action wrote: -

“Disabled young people are an extremely diverse group who demand a range of services to meet their needs from discrete specialist provision to independent inclusion in mainstream activities. Planning services for them is hampered by lack of empirical information as to the numbers currently receiving a service, the numbers currently not participating and the reasons for their non-participation. Considerable research energy needs to be devoted to these questions to ensure an accurate starting point on which to build a strategy to meet the needs of this diverse and largely invisible group.”

- Screening of the main Youth Service activities has identified that not many people with a disability are known to be involved.

The PPRU Surveys of Disability and a secondary analysis of that material in a report by the University of Ulster’s Centre for the Study of Conflict indicate that in Northern Ireland there are an estimated 201,000 disabled adults and 14,600 disabled children. Of the 201,000 disabled adults: -

- . 41% are men and 59% are women;
- . 66% belong to Protestant religions and 33% are Roman Catholics;
- . there are higher proportions of Catholics in the most severely disabled categories.

Of the 14,600 disabled children: -

- 59% are boys and 41% are girls;
- 52% are Roman Catholic and 48% are Protestant.
- Research into the needs of young deaf people has shown that "limited communication and relative isolation can impact on those areas which characterise positive mental health such as high self-esteem, positive social interaction and a sense of identity".

In a Survey on "Making Progress? The Transition to Adulthood for Disabled Young People in Northern Ireland" carried out in 2000, 76 young people with a range of disabilities (physical, sensory and/or learning) aged between 16 and 21 years, took part.

The sample of young people seemed to have a wide range of leisure and social activities. Almost half (48.7%) belonged to a club, group or society. Some of these were for disabled young people but many were mainstream organised activities, including youth clubs, church clubs, sports clubs or Phab clubs aimed at facilitating interaction between young disabled and non-disabled people.

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3.16 Persons with Dependants and Persons Without

- The precise number of young carers in Northern Ireland is unknown but is estimated (Open University 'Northern Ireland Young Carers: an Exploration of their Needs and of the Response by Crossroads Caring for Carers (NI) Ltd') to be around 1,000 teenagers. The majority of young carers are female, with an average age of around 14, although some may be as young as 9 or 10. Most live in a lone parent family, and most provide care for a physically disabled parent, although around a fifth of the care recipients suffer from mental illness.

- 'Young Carers - Barnardo's Young Carers Scheme Annual Report 1998' has identified that many young carers feel they have a duty to care and may feel valued in performing this role. However, while young carers perform the same tasks as adult carers, their status as children can exclude them from support systems, advice, information, training and social security benefits and, as such, young carers have been called the 'silent victims of community care'. Their status as children, family poverty and issues such as fear, loyalty and stigma all contribute to the young carers' silence and maintain them as a "hidden workforce".

- Seventy-five per cent of young carers feel it is difficult to have a social life - they feel excluded from normal teenage liaison activities, from going out with friends, or inviting friends home.

Those with dependants include young single mothers. While the number of births to women under 20 has remained fairly constant over the past decade, the percentage of births within marriage has significantly decreased, ie:

Year Live Births to
Under 20s % of Births within
Marriage

1991
1,783
18.2

1995
1,428
9.5

1999
1,701
6.3

The number of live births, expressed per 1,000 women, in 1999, is:

15 and under 5
16 12
17 28
18 47
19 57

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A report prepared by Gingerbread in 1997 "A Wise Head on Young Shoulders" highlighted that 5,728 households in all are headed by a lone parent under 25 years of age. Only 7.3% of these are headed by a male.

Proportion of 16 to 25 year olds who have dependants
All persons aged 16 to 25 years

16 to 25 Years
Valid Cases Valid Cases

Yes – have dependant children
87
9%

No – have no dependant children
888
91%

Total
975
100%

Continuous Household Survey 2000/01

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Conclusion

3.17 Evidence suggests differential impact based on lower intake of services across the following equality categories:

- disability;
- age;
- gender;
- race;
- dependants.

There is insufficient data to conclude adverse impact but measures are being put in place to mitigate any adverse impacts (see para 3.18).

3.18 Consideration of Measures Which Might Mitigate Any Adverse Impact and Alternative Policies Which Might Better Achieve the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity

Persons of Different Racial Group

- Through a project being supported (from October 2002) by the Executive Programme Children's Fund, the Youth Council and the NI Council for Ethnic Minorities will initiate research into the needs of young people from minority ethnic or mixed race families in order to inform youth service provision.
- It is noted that the Traveller Movement (NI) has recommended that, in addition to the proposals outlined in the NI Human Rights Commission's Education Rights Working Group Report, Traveller children should have a right to equality of opportunity.
- Through a pilot programme being supported (from October 2002) by the Executive Programme Children's Fund, the Western Education and Library Board will seek to identify how to meet the needs and development of the young traveller population.

Persons of Different Ages

- The lowest level of uptake is in respect of young adults. As young people move into young adulthood their involvement in youth activities tends to decrease although issue-based programmes are valuable. The Young Adults Implementation Panel is developing frameworks of youth work in respect of the following categories: -
 - . young unemployed/volunteering/active citizenship;
 - . young gay man/personal choices/career development;
 - . young traveller/unemployed/accessing training;
 - . young care leaver/individual support/employment route;
 - . young disabled/personal and skills development;
 - . young man/inner city/contribution to community;
 - . young rural/isolation/involved in regeneration.
- The needs of young people in rural areas are also being examined, through a pilot programme being supported (from November 2001) by the Executive Programme Children's Fund, by the Southern Education and Library Board and Youth Action.
- One of the areas being considered for development by the Young Adults Panel relates to "Young gay men/personal choices".

Persons of Different Sexual Orientation

- Through a pilot programme, being supported (from November 2001) by the Executive Programme Children's Fund, YouthNet will seek to analyse the needs of young lesbian/gay/bisexual people, audit the services available to them, identify training needs of staff and volunteers and provide examples of good practice.

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Persons with a Disability and Persons Without

- From September 2001 Executive Programme Funding is available for capital works to improve access to youth clubs by disabled young people. Advice has been sought by the Department of Education from Phab and from Disability Action (September 2001) about the physical provision which needs to be made to the premises and the training which the youth workers will require.
- Discussion began (August 2001) between the NI Deaf Youth Association, Mencap and YCNI about the training needs of youth workers and the need to provide peer support to encourage access to mainstream youth provision.
- Through a pilot project, being supported by the Executive Programme Children's Fund, Mencap, in partnership with North?Eastern Education and Library Board's Youth Service, will provide a network of support and information to young people and their parents in order to promote the participation of the young people in mainstream youth provision. A package of training and information for staff will be required to enable them to understand the needs of the young people and thereby assist staff to engage effectively with this group, developing and enhancing youth work methods and practice as a result. The pilot is running initially from November 2001 to October 2002.
- A pilot scheme between Phab and South?Eastern Education and Library Board is running from November 2001 to October 2002 on somewhat similar lines to that being run by Mencap/NEELB. Integrated youth provision can make a vital contribution to the breaking down of barriers between people with and without disabilities and encourage young disabled people to become active members in their communities.
- One of the areas being considered for development by the Young Adults Panel relates to "young disabled".
- Funding has been made available by YCNI through its Curriculum Grant Scheme to Disability Action, Action Mental Health, Mencap and NI Deaf Youth Association to enable programmes of activity to be organised.
- Through projects being supported by the Executive Programme Capital/Infrastructure Fund, youth and community organisations can obtain a grant to refurbish their premises to include making buildings accessible to the disabled.

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Persons with Dependents and Persons Without

- A national survey "Young Carers in the UK 1998" recommended that "awareness raising needs to be ongoing, not simply within social care and social work agencies, but also within education, health and youth services".

As this policy is about the personal and social development of young people, it is essential that it should be developed and delivered with their full involvement. It is open to question whether this is happening as fully as it might. This is an area which is being addressed by the Policy Implementation Body (PIB), eg: -

- . the Youth Affairs Panel is looking at ways of increasing empowerment and participation, possibly through, for example, a NI Youth Assembly;
- . the NI Youth Forum and the various district youth councils encourage participation in decision?making.

Other Issues

. This aspect of the impact assessment should be reviewed in 12 months time. The programmes which are being piloted through the Executive Programme Children's Fund will be formally evaluated and lessons learned will be disseminated across the province. As a result of a process of ongoing review, new initiatives may be developed to meet evolving needs.

. The Department's New TSN Plan, and those of the ELBs and YCNI, include a series of actions specifically aimed at extending access to Youth Service activities by marginalised young people. Copies are available on request.

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4. FORMAL CONSULTATION

4.1 It is intended to consult representative groups, equality groups, individuals and those young people directly affected by the promotion, through the Youth Service, of personal and social development of young people. With this objective in mind the Department, Youth Council and Education and Library Boards propose to take the following actions: -

. Press releases will be prepared and submitted to various media outlets.

. Prominent advertisements inviting the public to comment on this matter will appear in the 3 main newspapers, ie Belfast Telegraph, Irish Times and Newsletter.

. A copy of the report will be posted on the websites of the Department, Youth Council and each Education and Library Board.

. Individual consultation meetings will be arranged with representatives of particular interest groups.

. Consultation meetings for the general public will be arranged with representatives at suitable venues in each Board area.

. Publicity material and a questionnaire inviting the public to comment will be available at Divisional Youth Offices, full-time Education and Library Board Youth Centres, Libraries and Regional Voluntary Youth Organisation Offices.

. This report can be made available, on request, in alternative formats including Braille, disk and audio cassette and in minority languages for those who are not fluent in English. A text phone (028 91279472) is available in the Department of Education.

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4.2 The arrangements for consultation are being co-ordinated by Ivan Houston, Youth Service Branch, Department of Education, Rathgael House, Balloo Road, Bangor, BT19 7PR, to whom all enquiries should be made.

Telephone: 028 91279563

Fax: 028 91279248

E-mail: ivan.houston@deni.gov.uk

4.3 The closing date for responses is Friday, 24 January 2003.