Research Paper 04/01   **21 August 2001**

NEW TARGETING SOCIAL NEED (NEW TSN)

This paper traces the development of the New TSN policy from its predecessor TSN.   The paper includes a review of critical commentary on the TSN policy and sets out the proposals to address some these criticisms through New TSN.   The paper contains an update on New TSN post devolution.

<p style="text-align: center;">**SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS**</p>

New Targeting Social Need (New TSN) policy was the Labour government's policy response to criticisms of the operation of the Targeting Social Need (TSN) policy introduced in 1991.

TSN

TSN stemmed from a realisation within the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) that *'on all major social and economic indicators, Catholics are worse off than Protestants',* the approach adopted by government tried also to encompass the view held within the NICS that *'socio-economic need existed in both communities'*.

TSN was launched as a third public spending priority after 'law and order' and 'strengthening the economy'.

Early criticism of the priority given to TSN as a public spending priority was reinforced later by criticism based on examination of the manner in which the initiative was being implemented.

New TSN

New TSN was formally launched in July 1998 by the then Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Dr Marjorie Mowlam MP, and presented as part of the Government's *'wider agenda for making Northern Ireland a more fair, just and prosperous society'*.

The stated aim of New Targeting Social Need (New TSN) was to tackle social need and social exclusion in Northern Ireland by targeting efforts and available resources on people, groups and areas in the greatest social need.

New TSN shared with it predecessor TSN the objective of contributing to the reduction of community differentials. This aim was to be achieved indirectly, as it was argued that *'by consistently addressing the problems of people who are objectively shown to be in greatest social need, New TSN should, over time, contribute to the erosion of the differentials'.* New TSN comprises three complementary elements:

- tackling the problems of unemployment and increasing employability;
- tackling inequalities in other areas such as health, education and housing; and
- tackling social exclusion, through Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI), a co-ordinated cross-departmental approach.

Following devolution, the Executive confirmed that it would carry the New TSN commitment forward in devolved areas of government

Reviewing the first years of its operation, commentators have suggested that the response to New TSN by government departments' has been to continue existing work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 New Targeting Social Need (New TSN) is a government policy which aims to tackle social need and social exclusion in Northern Ireland, by targeting efforts and available resources on people, groups and areas in the greatest social need.

1.2 New TSN policy was the Labour government's policy response to criticisms of the operation of the Targeting Social Need (TSN) policy introduced by the Conservative government in 1991. New TSN was formally launched in July 1998 by the then Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Dr Marjorie Mowlam MP, as part of the Government's *'wider agenda for making Northern Ireland a more fair, just and prosperous society'*.[1]

1.3 This paper examines New TSN and the background to it. It considers TSN and some comment on and criticism of TSN. It then examines New TSN, taking particular note of how it addresses some of the criticism that caused TSN to be reviewed. The operation of New TSN to date is considered, including comment on and criticism of New TSN. Some examples of New TSN at work are provided, and some comment is made on its relationship with section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

2 TARGETING SOCIAL NEED (TSN)

2.1 In February 1991, the Rt Hon Peter Brooke QC MP, then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, announced a new policy known as Targeting Social Need. TSN was described as a *'public expenditure priority'* and the aim of the policy was to focus policies and programmes *'more sharply on areas and people in greatest need'*.[2] This targeting of resources was necessary, Peter Brooke stated, *'if we genuinely wish to address the issue of social need that we have identified and achieve a reduction in community differentials'*.[3]

2.2 It has been noted[4] that, whilst TSN stemmed from a realisation within the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) that *'on all major social and economic indicators, Catholics are worse off than Protestants'*,[5] the approach adopted by government tried also to encompass the view held within the NICS that *'socio-economic need existed in both communities'*.

2.3 In order to identify the spatial distribution of disadvantage, the Government commissioned an analysis of data, mostly derived from the 1991 Census, from Manchester University. From this analysis, the 'Robson Measures'[6] were published in 1994. These measures allowed the classification of District Council areas and electoral wards in terms of relative deprivation, with further pinpointing of disadvantage at electoral enumeration district level.

---

[1] Vision into Practice, the First New TSN Annual Report1999, CCRU, para 1.2
[2] Quirk, P. and McLaughlin, E. (1996) "Targeting Social Need". In McLaughlin, E and Quirk, P (Ed) Policy Aspects of Employment Equality in Northern Ireland. Belfast, SACHR
[3] Quirk and McLaughlin
[4] Quirk and McLaughlin
[5] DED, internal memo, 1992, quoted in Quirk and McLaughlin, p 156
[6] Robson, B. Bradford, M. Deas, I. (1994) "Relative Deprivation in Northern Ireland". Belfast, PPRU

2.4 The Central Community Relations Unit (CCRU) was responsible for formulating, reviewing and challenging policy in order to further TSN. The CCRU predated the introduction of TSN: it was established in 1987 as part of the government's commitment to achieving better community relations in NI. It was also responsible for implementing the PAFT guidelines. However, it had no *power or authority to insist on a particular policy or form of action – ultimate responsibility lies with each department.*[7]

2.5 The Department of Finance & Personnel (DFP) was also ascribed a role: encouraging departments to bring forward TSN bids.[8] However, Quirk and McLaughlin identified amibiguity about the respective responsibilities of CCRU and DFP.[9]

2.6 Responsibility for the implementation of TSN in any particular policy area lay, therefore, with the relevant department.

3   TSN – A PUBLIC SPENDING PRIORITY

3.1 TSN was launched as a third public spending priority after 'law and order' and 'strengthening the economy'. In a report published by Democratic Dialogue in 1995, Teague and Wilson[10] saw

> a fundamental difficulty in how it [TSN] is implicitly perceived as qualifying, modifying or indeed contradicting the higher goal of 'strengthening the economy'. For as long as this obtains, social exclusion, and the socially excluded, will remain marginal.

and concluded that

> the separation between the second and third government priorities of 'strengthening the economy' and 'targeting social need' is intellectually, as well as morally, indefensible. In that context, the system of governmental priorities should be scrapped.

3.2 This early criticism of the priority given to TSN as a public spending priority was reinforced later by criticism based on examination of the manner in which the initiative was being implemented.

3.3 A NICVA report[11] in 1994, three years into TSN, revealed that four of the five service departments held to the view that social need was addressed by policies that pre-existed TSN. This argument has been described as 'tsn before TSN'.[12] NICVA

---

[7] Policy Aspects of Employment Equality in Northern Ireland, page 137
[8] PAFT Annual Report, 1994, CCRU
[9] Quirk and McLaughlin, page 164
[10] Teague, P and Wilson, R, Chapter 6 of Social Exclusion, Social Inclusion, ed. Wilson, R, Democratic Dialogue Report No. 2, 1995
[11] NICVA, The implementation of Targeting Social Need, 1994
[12] SACHR, Employment Equality: Building for the Future, 1997, Cm 3684, para 4.28

noted that this response *'[negated] the purpose of TSN, which was to target policies and programmes more sharply than before on disadvantaged areas.'*

3.4 In 1994, after five years' experience of the 1989 legislation on fair employment, the Government asked the Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights (SACHR) to review all aspects of employment equality. The review was wide ranging and included research into the approach government departments and public bodies had taken to TSN.

3.5 On the basis of that research, Quirk and McLaughlin[13] noted in 1996 that, as TSN was meant to be *'distinct from the general function of government addressing need through public expenditure'* and *'capable of skewing resources'* to areas and people most in need, it *'should be discernible in changes of public expenditure over time'* .[14]

3.6 They found, however, that over the first four years of operation there was *'little evidence that TSN … has had a substantial influence on the spending and decision making of departments'* and that *'TSN had taken only shallow roots in departmental policy making and strategy'*. The departments (especially DFP) Quirk and McLauglin suggested were still arguing that *'the general function of meeting need is the same as TSN'.*[15]

3.7 Furthermore, in relation to a policy which was aimed at achieving, albeit indirectly, a reduction in community differentials, Quirk and Mclauglin found it noteworthy that *'in general, policy outcomes and programme utilisation are not monitored by religion'*.

3.8 Rather than being a public expenditure priority, Quirk and McLaughlin concluded that TSN was *'a principle awaiting definition, operationalisation and implementation'*.

3.9 In November 1996, this view of TSN was supported by further research published by NICVA,[16] which also concluded from an examination of unemployment claimant count figures between 1994 and 1999 that there was no evidence that TSN had resulted in a much bigger fall in jobless figures in TSN areas than elsewhere.[17]

3.10 Further criticism of the operation of TSN was made by Osborne[18] when he observed that *'there is no evidence, three years after the launch of the policy [TSN], that it has extended into the priority setting of Departments or associated bodies'*.

3.11 TSN was not led at Ministerial level and it has been suggested that the resulting lack of direction *'fed through into the lack of advice, guidance and training offered by either the CCRU or the DFP to spending departments'.*[19]

3.12 In June 1997, SACHR published *Employment Equality: Building for the Future*, the report on the employment equality review.[20] In this report, SACHR expressly

---

[13] Quirk and McLaughlin

[14] Quirk and McLaughlin

[15] Quirk and McLaughlin, p 182

[16] McGill, P. (1996) Missing The Target: a critique of Government Policy on Targeting Social Need in Northern Ireland. Belfast, NICVA

[17] NICVA Response to Vision Into Practice, 2000, Belfast, p 6

[18] Osborne, B, Policy Dilemmas in Belfast, Journal of Social Policy, vol 25, no 2 (1996)

[19] Quirk and McLaughlin, p 182

[20] SACHR (1997) Employment Equality: Building for the Future. The Stationary Office Cm 3684

rejected the proposition that all public expenditure targets social need, and the suggestion that there was 'tsn before TSN'.[21] SACHR concluded that a fresh examination of TSN as a public expenditure priority was needed. Following on from this conclusion, the report contained 17 recommendations in relation to TSN policy. For example, it recommended:

- that the Secretary of State should take specific responsibility for the political direction and implementation of TSN.[22] SACHR commented that *'for policy to be implemented effectively, it must be taken, and be seen to be taken, seriously at the apex of power'*;

- that departments should set progressively more ambitious targets for future spending and achievements in TSN areas, along with programmes to meet them;[23]

- that departments and other public bodies should be required to develop and publish action plans (an implementation mechanism developed independently by DED, and not used by any other department);[24]

- that departments adopt a consistent defintion of TSN-designated areas, based on the Robson Measures;[25]

- rigorous monitoring of actual or potiential differential impacts of existing policies and proposed policy changes.[26]

3.13 The NIO admitted in 1998 that TSN had not been *'applied to date with the vigour and effectiveness which a policy of this importance should warrant'* .[27]

3.14 The Secretary of State proposed a relaunched initiative – 'New TSN' – in a White Paper. *'Partnership for Equality'* endorsed the rationale and general objectives of TSN, but also contained an acceptance of the *'general thrust of SACHR's conclusions and recommendations'* relating to TSN.

3.15 A few weeks later, in the Belfast Agreement, the government confirmed its commitment to *'a new more focused Targeting Social Need initiative'* .[28]

---

[21] Employment Equality,para 4.28
[22] Employment Equality: Building for the Future, para 4.34
[23] Employment Equality: Building for the Future, para 4.39
[24] Employment Equality: Building for the Future, para 4.41
[25] Employment Equality: Building for the Future, para 4.43
[26] Employment Equality: Building for the Future, para 4.44
[27] Partnership for Equality – The Government's proposals for future legislation and policies on employment equality in Northern Ireland, 1998, Cm 3890, para 4.16
[28] Agreement reached in the multi-party negotiations in Belfast on 10.04.1998 – Rights, Safeguards And Equality Of Opportunity – Economic, Social and Cultural Issues, paras 1 and 2

4   NEW TSN – THE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

4.1 New TSN was formally launched in July 1998 by the then Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Dr Marjorie Mowlam MP, and presented as part of the Government's *'wider agenda for making Northern Ireland a more fair, just and prosperous society'*.[29] It should therefore be been seen as being related to a range of other developments including: the section 75 duties; the Bill of Rights; and the Human Rights Act 1998.

AIMS

4.2 The stated aim of New Targeting Social Need (New TSN) was to tackle social need and social exclusion in Northern Ireland by targeting efforts and available resources on people, groups and areas in the greatest social need. It was suggested that New TSN would target social need objectively, without favouring any particular section of the community.[30] However, New TSN shared with TSN the objective of contributing to the reduction of community differentials.[31] This aim was to be achieved indirectly, as it was argued that *'by consistently addressing the problems of people who are objectively shown to be in greatest social need, New TSN should, over time, contribute to the erosion of the differentials'.*[32]

ELEMENTS

4.3 New TSN comprises three complementary elements:[33]

1. tackling the problems of unemployment and increasing employability;

2. tackling inequalities in other areas such as health, education and housing; and

3. tackling social exclusion, through Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI), a co-ordinated cross-departmental approach.

NATURE OF NEW TSN

4.4 New TSN was launched not as a spending programme but rather as a *'theme which runs through spending programmes'.*[34]

4.5 It involves, therefore, giving greater priority to the needs of disadvantaged people within a programme's objectives so that a greater proportion of the available funding can be channelled towards their needs. The logical basis for the initiative is that, even without any extra funding, it is possible to reorganise policies and deliver services in ways which are more helpful to disadvantaged people.

---

[29] Vision into Practice, para 1.2
[30] Vision into Practice, para 1.1
[31] Making it Work, The New TSN Action Plans Report (2000), CDS, para 2.1.3
[32] Vision into Practice, para 2.8.1 and Making it Work, para 2.1.3
[33] Making it Work, para 2.1.5
[34] Vision into Practice, para 2.5.1

4.6 Examples of how the money in existing programmes could be redirected (or 'skewed') so as to benefit those in greatest social need include:[35]

- building into the distribution of programme resources a factor which reflects disadvantage;
- taking account of disadvantage in economic appraisals;
- setting aside part of a programme budget and using this money to provide additional support to those in greatest need (known as 'topslicing');
- using impact on disadvantage as one of the criteria for awarding grants;
- making services available free or at a reduced rate to people who are disadvantaged; and
- giving priority to those in greatest social need in accessing services.

4.7 Before devolution, the Government warned, therefore, that *'it should not be assumed that extra money will be made available for it* [TSN] *in the future'*.[36] As regards transferred matters, funding decisions are now the responsibility of the Assembly.

ACCOUNTABILITY

4.8 New TSN's predecessor, TSN, had been criticised for lacking Ministerial direction and accountability.[37] In response, when New TSN was launched, just before devolution, the Secretary of State had been fixed with overall responsibility. Following devolution, the Secretary of State retains responsibility for New TSN in reserved and excepted areas. New TSN, however, accords joint direct responsibility to the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in transferred areas. Other Ministers are responsible for driving New TSN forward within their respective Departments.

4.9 The remit of the Committee of the Centre, which was established as a standing committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly, covers examination and reporting on functions carried out in the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister. The Committee of the Centre has therefore a role in the scrutinising the operation of New TSN and contributing to the development of the policy.

4.10 The Statutory Departmental Committees of the Northern Ireland Assembly have a similar role in terms of scrutiny and development of the New TSN policy as it relates to the functional Departments.

IMPLEMENTATION

4.11 The ambiguity and lack of clarity about the role of the CCRU were criticised by Quirk and McLaughlin,[38] and its ability to affect change was questioned by NICVA.[39]

4.12 The OFMDFM's New TSN Unit has central policy and executive responsibility for the development and implementation of New TSN policy. It is charged, therefore,

---

[35] Making it Work, para 3.6.2
[36] Vision into Practice, para 2.5.1 and Making it Work, para 3.7.1
[37] See above 3.11
[38] See below 2.5
[39] Missing the Target, p 58

with: promoting and driving forward the policy; setting overall objectives; advising and challenging Departments; and reporting progress.

4.13 The Research Unit within OFMDFM's Equality, Human Rights and Community Relations Directorate provides research and statistical support to the New TSN unit.

4.14 A cross-departmental Social Steering Group (SSG) promotes and co-ordinates New TSN. It is composed of senior officials from all Departments, and chaired by the Head of the Civil Service.[40]

4.15 The New TSN Steering Group[41] is composed of senior officials with responsibility for driving forward New TSN within their respective Departments. It is chaired by the Director of Equality, Human Rights and Community Relations. Its role is to forward in a co-ordinated way development of Action Plans, Promoting Social Inclusion and New TSN statistics.[42]

<u>ACTION PLANS</u>

4.16 One of the criticisms of TSN was that it failed to provide any formal mechanism for implementation, despite its status as the third public spending priority. As discussed earlier, SACHR expressly recommended *'new ways of progressing the policy'* and commended the Department of Economic Development's (DED) approach of formulating and implementing strategic plans which indicated how TSN would be implemented across its activities.[43]

4.17 New TSN requires each department to consult on and produce an Action Plan, stating how New TSN would be implemented over a 3 year period.[44] Progress on all aspects of New TSN is to be reported in Annual Reports, and Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) reports on specific types of social exclusion will be published.

4.18 The first New TSN Annual Report, entitled *'Vision into Practice'*, was published in November 1999. It was in fact a combination of report and consultation: it reported on progress on all aspects of New TSN to date, and put forward draft Action Plans for comment. This approach was described by NICVA as *'confusing'*.[45]

4.19 After consultation, finalised Action Plans were published by the Executive in its report *'Making it Work'*.[46] The Plans had been changed to reflect the departmental reorganisation caused by devolution. They also take account of the consultation process, new priorities, and progress made.[47]

---

[40] Making it Work, para 3.10.6
[41] An amalgamation of various previous groups: the Action Plans Subgroups and the PSI Priorities Subgroups
[42] Making it Work, paras 3.10.7 and 3.10.8
[43] See above 3.12
[44] Vision into Practice, para 1.6
[45] NICVA Response to Vision into Practice, Feb 2000, para 1.1
[46] Making it Work, The New TSN Action Plans Report (2000), CDS
[47] Making it Work, para 3.2.6. Annex 2 of Making It Work tracks action points from the (pre-devolution) draft Action Plans, indicating which (post-devolution) Department adopted responsibility for each action point

4.20 Progress on Action Plans will be continue to be reported annually and all Action Plans will be reviewed and updated in 2001 and 2002. An evaluation plan, to gauge the success of New TSN and the work of each department, is to be developed and implemented by the OFMDFM Research Branch and NISRA.[48] Recommendations for the future of New TSN will be made to the executive by 2002.[49]

RESEARCH

4.21 Statistical data is required in order to determine baselines, develop objectives, set targets, and measure progress. The need for such data was emphasised in many responses to the Action Plan consultations and is recognised by the Executive.[50] The New TSN Statistics Subgroup, chaired by the Chief Executive of NISRA, co-ordinates work and promotes cross-departmental collaboration on suitable research.[51] The Action Plans indicate planned research and data collection.

4.22 The Social Steering Group funds research which addresses New TSN issues across Departments. It has determined broad themes for research:[52]

- poverty and socio-economic need;
- targeting efforts and resources,
- monitoring effectiveness and related issues;
- Promoting Social Inclusion;
- creating employment and increasing employability;
- disadvantaged areas; and
- children and young people in need.

4.23 OFMDFM's Research Branch is commissioning projects relating to these themes, and preparing for consultation on *'a research strategy identifying current and long term research priorities'*.[53]

IDENTIFYING THOSE IN GREATEST NEED

4.24 The Executive has stated that New TSN

> is designed not to favour or discriminate unfairly against any section of society. This means that objective criteria must be used to identify those in greatest need and that they should be appropriate to the particular programme and the way in which it is delivered. Furthermore, the criteria should be applied consistently within each programme.[54]

4.25 The 11 Action Plans indicate how individuals and areas will be identified for targeting purposes: by use of research and 'indicators of deprivation'. Responding to

---

[48] OFMDFM has bid for £100k against the 2002/2003 budget in order to fund evaluation of New TSN, and noted that £100k is required for each of the following two years
[49] Making it Work, para 3.11.7
[50] Making it Work, para 3.9.1
[51] Making it Work, para 3.9.2
[52] Making it Work, para 3.9.3
[53] Making it Work, para 3.9.4
[54] Making it Work, para 3.8.1

the suggestion made by some consultation respondents that there should be a list of New TSN areas to be targeted by all Departments for all purposes, it was stated that:

> There are no plans to create such a list. Many disadvantaged people do not live in disadvantaged areas, and where it is possible to do so, assistance should be targeted towards individuals rather than the areas in which they live.

Furthermore the areas to which one type of programme is appropriate, for example, urban regeneration, may not be appropriate to other types of programme, such as rural development or forestry. The need for the particular service must also be taken into account. While areas may have similar overall levels of deprivation, their need for a particular service may differ. It would not be appropriate to increase services in an area which already has adequate provision; for example, it does not make sense to open a new library where one already exists. The level of resources available to a programme may influence its geographic scope. Where resources are limited, it may be more effective to target a small number of the most disadvantaged areas, rather than attempting to cover a larger list of New TSN areas defined for all purposes. [55]

4.26 Indicators of multiple deprivation provide a means of identifying the most disadvantaged areas. Currently, the Robson Measures are used in this context. These combine measures relating to jobs, income, education, families, physical environment, shelter and health to give an overall deprivation score. These scores are then used to rank areas in terms of the degree, intensity and spatial extent of their deprivation.

4.27 The Robson Measures, as noted above, were based on 1991 census data. In July 2000, NISRA commissioned work to update and review them. The Department of Social Policy and Social Work at Oxford University recently published its new *'Northern Ireland Measures of Deprivation'.*[56]

4.28 Its final report, published on 5th July 2001, reproduces the report on the new measures, but also contains the deprivation scores and ranks for the Electoral Wards, Enumeration Districts and Local Government Districts. It reveals

> *that the most concentrated levels of deprivation are found in urban areas, particularly in Belfast and Derry Council Districts, and in the south and west of the region, although parts of the north east and a number of provincial towns are also experiencing high levels of deprivation.* [57]

---

[55] Making It Work p22
[56] Measures of Deprivation in Northern Ireland, April 2001, Department of Social Policy and Social Work, University of Oxford
[57] NISRA press release, Review of Deprivation Measures in Northern Ireland, 05.07.2001, at http://www.nisra.gov.uk/news/archive/0507012.asp

5 NEW TSN - OPERATION

SOME EXAMPLES OF NEW TSN IN ACTION

5.1 As has been stated above New TSN was comprised of three elements and examples of actions under each element are set out below.   With the exception of the third element, PSI, examples are drawn from Making it Work, the second New TSN annual report.

<u>Element One</u>: tackling unemployment and employability

5.2 DFHETE is establishing a Taskforce on Employability and Long Term Unemployment.[58] It will focus on the factors that make people employable – not just knowledge and skills, but also matters such as childcare and ability to travel to work. The Taskforce aims to promote greater interdepartmental co-operation and co-ordination, and seek to ensure that each Department contributes fully to improving people's employability.

<u>Element Two</u>: tackling inequalities in other areas such as health, education and housing

5.3 The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety has published for consultation its multi-sectoral public health strategy, Investing for Health. It will in particular target health inequalities in areas of social need.[59]

<u>Element three</u>: PSI

5.4 PSI was not part of TSN and its inclusion as a specific element of New TSN can be seen as in some ways mirroring the social exlcusion initiative in England and Wales. Vision into Practice stated that:

> PSI is unique to Northern Ireland and was designed to tackle the particular problems which arise here. In developing it, however, account was taken of the Prime Minister's new approach to tackling social exclusion in England and the establishment of the Social Exclusion Unit within the Cabinet Office.

5.5 The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU)[60] was established by the Prime Minister in December 1997 to help improve government action to reduce social exclusion by producing *'joined up solutions to joined up problems'.*   In its own words, the SEU, therefore, *'does not cover issues which are dealt with by one Government department only, or duplicate work being done elsewhere, but rather aims to devote time to participating in wider interdepartmental work that has a close bearing on social exclusion'.*

SOCIAL EXCLUSION

---

[58] Making it Work, para 3.3.8
[59] Making it Work, para 3.4.1
[60] http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu/index.htm
[61] http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu/index/june_2000_leaflet.htm#leaflet_What is the Social Exclusion Unit?

5.6 As an analytical concept, the term 'social exclusion' originated in the 1970s in France, where it was used to refer to various categories of people who were labelled 'social problems' and who were not protected by social insurance.[62] Only relatively recently, however, with the setting up of the SEU in 1997, did use of the concept of social exclusion came to the fore in the UK.

5.7 It should however be noted that the literature on social exclusion frequently highlights the lack of an agreed definition of what social exclusion is, and the resulting difficulty in developing indicators on social exclusion and social integration. Percy-Smith[63] for example sets out some of the difficulty:

> Most indicators of poverty, disadvantage and social
> exclusion represent 'snapshots' at a particular point in
> time...[however] two of the distinctive aspects of the
> concept of social exclusion (in contrast to poverty and
> disadvantage) are that first it is taken to refer to a
> dynamic process and second it emphasizes the
> interconnectedness of the various dimensions and
> characteristics of social exclusion. This makes social
> exclusion considerably harder to measure than poverty
> or disadvantage.

5.8 Social Exclusion was defined in relation to the work of the SEU in England as:

> a shorthand term for what can happen when people or
> areas suffer from a combination of linked problems
> such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor
> housing, high crime environments, bad health and
> family breakdown.

5.9 Setting out its agenda for New TSN,[64] the government elaborated further on the nature of social exclusion stating that:

> Some individuals and families suffer from multiple
> social problems. They may for example be poorly
> skilled, unemployed, living on low income and coping
> with difficult home circumstances. They might be living
> in areas blighted by crime. Those living in rural areas
> may have difficulties in accessing the types of services
> that other people take for granted.

> Sometimes people's problems are so numerous and
> the effects are so severe that it is impossible for them
> to lead what most people in Northern Ireland would
> consider to be normal every-day lives.

---

[62] Percy-Smith, J. (2000) Policy Responses to Social Exclusion: towards inclusion? Buckingham, Open University Press
[63] Policy Responses to Social Exclusion
[64] New TSN: an agenda for targeting social need and promoting social inclusion in Northern Ireland (CCRU – DFP) March 1998

> The Government is using the term social exclusion to describe what can happen to people who are subject to the most severe problems. Social exclusion has to do with poverty and joblessness – but it is more than that. It is about being cut off from the social and economic life of our community.

PSI PRIORITIES

5.10 In June 1999, following a consultation exercise, Mr John McFall MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Northern Ireland Office informed Parliament that the first PSI Priorities would be:

a) action to alleviate the needs of Travellers;
b) the problems of teenage parenthood;
c) a strategic approach to the needs of minority ethnic people; and
d) strategies for making services more accessible to minority groups and others at risk of social exclusion – focusing firstly on how information can be presented and distributed in ways appropriate to their needs.

5.11 The issues selected as the first PSI priorities were similar to those tackled by the SEU in that the focus was on problems that needed to be addressed rather than on housholds which could be identified as poor. This reflected the view that, whilst social need equated with poverty, social exclusion was a more multi-faceted concept.

5.12 The PSI Working Group on the Travellers, which was charged with considering the difficulties which Travellers face and to suggest ways of tackling them, published for consultation its Final Report early this year. The report contains 33 recommendations, covering issues such as Traveller accommodation, health, education, training and policing.   Some of the recommendations are inter-departmental, others are general to all government departments, and others still are focused on specific government departments or issues.

5.13 The multi-sectoral working group which was established to develop a co-ordinated strategy aimed at reducing teenage births and supporting teenage parents and their children published a draft report, Myth & Reality,[65] for consultation in November 2000. The stated aim of the report is to facilitate a reduction in the number of unplanned births to teenage parents and to minimise the adverse consequences of those births to teenage mothers and their children.

5.14 The Promoting Social Inclusion Working Group on Ethnic minorities is currently at the stage of drafting a policy document and OFMDFM has established a dedicated Race Equality Branch to drive forward action to promote good relations between all ethnic groups and to help ensure greater racial equality.

5.15 It is reported that work on the better services (Communication) priority is at an early stage. The working group in this area is analysing information gathered from departments on how they communicate with those at risk from exclusion. Work is

---

[65] http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publications/archived/2000/mythreal.pdf

also underway on draft guidance for departments and it is intended to hold a public consultation on this guidance.

5.16 In May 2001, OFMDFM launched a consultation process to seek views on the areas where the PSI initiative should focus in the future. A committee comprising representatives of all departments and a representative nominated by NICVA (to represent the voluntary and community sector) will consider all the views expressed in the consultation. The Committee will prepare a report for Ministers setting out the points raised and highlighting issues which:

- are within the remit of the devolved administration;
- fit with the Executive's policies and priorities;
- cut across departmental boundaries and can effectively be addressed through the PSI approach; and
- are not already being addressed through cross-departmental work.

COMMENT ON NEW TSN

5.17 Given the relatively short period for during which New TSN has been in operation, it has been subject to limited critical evaluation. However, some commentators have suggested that the departments' response to New TSN was largely to continue existing work. NICVA described some parts of the draft Action Plans as *'the same old policies dressed up as New TSN'*.[66] The West Belfast Economic Forum stated that *'New TSN seemed to be a continuation of existing policies'.* [67]

5.18 NICVA also criticised the proposal in DED's draft Action Plan I to use unemployment rates, rather than the Robson Measures used by the other departments, for the geographical targeting of resources. NICVA, describing the proposal as '*deplorable',*[68] argued that it would threaten the consistency of the departments' approach to TSN. The finalised Action Plan (mostly inherited by DETI on devolution)states that DETI will use the Robson Measures *'supplemented by data on unemployment'* [69] until the new measures of deprivation can be considered. This approach may result in different areas or groups being targeted by DETI to those targeted by the other departments. NICVA also argued that this approach may well represent a different definition of social exclusion or social need.[70]

5.19 NICVA also questioned how a policy could be developed without a philosophy and aims, and stated that *a severe weakness of Vision into Practice … was the lack of clarity about the underlying rationale for TSN and the absence of stated aims.*[71] Without aims, it would be difficult to explain what New TSN is intended to achieve or review its progress. NICVA also pointed out that without defining aims, it is difficult to implement a common definition of social need itself.[72]

---

[66] NICVA Response to Vision Into Practice, p 23
[67] Response to the Committee Enquiry on 'Strategy 2010', (2000) West Belfast Economic Forum, http://wbef.org/2010.htm
[68] NICVA press release, Government fails to target need, 01.03.2000
[69] Making it Work, page 94
[70] NICVA Response to Vision into Practice, Chapter 5
[71] NICVA Response to Vision Into Practice, page 24
[72] NICVA Response to Vision Into Practice, page 25

NEW TSN AND STRATEGY 2010

5.20   The Committee for Enterprise Trade and Investment has examined the close relationship between economic development and social inclusion. The Committee stated in the report of its Inquiry into Strategy 2010[73] that:

> the process of economic growth to be encouraged by
> Start 2010, unless supported by a sense of shared
> ownership, would inevitably generate social exclusion.

5.21 It used the opportunity to remind the department that New TSN and equality must be at the heart of any economic development strategy:[74] one of its two general recommendations commented that *'a truly inclusive partnership between the different groups in Northern Ireland is central to any successful growth process'*.[75]

NEW TSN AND SECTION 75 DUTIES

5.22 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires government departments and other public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between people in terms of their race, gender, religion, political opinion, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status and whether they have dependants. Every public authority is required to prepare an Equality Scheme which shows how the public authority proposes to fulfill the duty.[76]

5.23 The Equality Commission has published guidance on implementing s75.[77] It expressly refers to the relationship between s75 and New TSN and states that:

> there should be no conflict with specific policy initiatives
> to target disadvantage and social need such as the
> New Targeting Social Need (New TSN) including
> Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) initiative.

5.24 It referred to a statement by Lord Dubs in the House of Lords, made during debate on the passage of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. He said:

> the [section 75] obligation relates to equality of
> opportunity, not equal treatment, so it is hard to see an
> incompatibility between it and addressing disadvantage
> among women, Travellers, or people with disabilities.
> The Government are fully committed to tackling
> disadvantage wherever it is found through major
> policies such as Targeting Social Need, recently

---

[73] Report on Strategy 2010 Inquiry, NIA Report 2/00R (Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment), March 2001. Strategy 2010 is the report of the Northern Ireland Economic Development Strategy Steering Group, commissioned to conduct a review of economic development in Northern Ireland and develop proposals for the economy through the first decade of the Millennium.
[74] Report on Strategy 2010 Inquiry, para 21
[75] Report on Strategy 2010 Inquiry, General Recommendation 2
[76] Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 c 47
[77] Guide to the statutory duties, (2000) Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Belfast

relaunched. The statutory obligation will not constrain
or hamper such initiatives.[78]

5.26 Vision into Practice states[79] that

> there is no incompatibility between the principles of
> equality of opportunity and targeting on the basis of
> objective social need. Indeed, many of the actions
> which Departments will take in relation to New TSN will
> have resonance with their responsibilities under
> Section 75 of the Act.

5.27 The Committee on the Administration of Justice has gone further, suggesting
that TSN *'is the statutory duty in operation'*.[80]

6   NEW TSN - POST DEVOLUTION

6.1 Whilst New TSN was launched by the then Secretary of State under direct rule
arrangements, following devolution, the Executive confirmed that it would carry the
New TSN commitment forward in devolved areas of government. The Programme
for Government states that

> Our vision is set out in the New Targeting Social Need
> (New TSN) Policy by which we are committed to
> tackling community differentials, particularly in
> unemployment, with the method of measurement to be
> agreed in fulfilment of the Agreement, and to reducing
> the significant levels of deprivation, long term
> unemployment and benefit dependency which have
> blighted our society. We are committed to working
> closely with the Equality Commission on community
> differentials in unemployment, with particular reference
> to long term unemployment.[81]

6.2 The Programme for Government also indicates[82] the importance of New TSN to
the Executive Programme Funds which

> will have regard to and be fully consistent with the
> Executive's Priorities as set out in the Programme for
> Government and also its commitments to equality and
> New TSN.

6.3 The Social Inclusion/Community Regeneration Fund, for example, will be used to
support action against poverty, urban and rural community measures, community

---

[78] House of Lords, Official report, 26 October 1998
[79] At para 2.9.3
[80] Cunningham, T (2000) Putting the New in New TSN, Just News, Vol 15 No 3, CAJ, Belfast
[81] Programme for Government, para 1.3
[82] Programme for Government, para 1.14

relations and cultural diversity. The Children's Fund will provide support for children in need and young people at risk. The value of these two Funds will be £5m in 2001-2002, £25m in 2002-2003 and £45m in 2003-2004.[83]

6.4 In addition to the commitment to New TSN, the Programme for Government also contains an important commitment to subject the policy to an evaluation, which is to be completed by 2002.   As part of this exercise, the OFMDFM's Corporate plan commits its Equality and Social Need Division to issue a consultation document by October 2001.

---

[83] Making it Work, para 3.6.11