

Ann Marie Gray

Lizanne Dowds

**ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING
IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND**

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Socio economic and policy context	3
Equality legislation	4
Attitudes to age and ageing	4
What is an 'older' person?	4
Are older people respected and valued?	5
<i>Issues for research and policy</i>	<i>8</i>
PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF STATE PROVISION FOR OLDER PEOPLE	9
<i>Issues for research and policy</i>	<i>11</i>
Discrimination against older people	11
Employment	12
<i>Issues for research and policy</i>	<i>16</i>
Healthcare	17
<i>Issues for research and policy</i>	<i>21</i>
Financial Services	21
<i>Issues for research and policy</i>	<i>24</i>
Public perceptions of the problems facing older people	25
The contribution of older people, participation and representation	26
<i>Issues for research and policy</i>	<i>30</i>
References	36
Appendix 1: Technical note on surveys	38
Ireland North 2003	38
<i>Re-weighting the data</i>	<i>38</i>
Ireland North 2008	39
<i>Re-weighting the data</i>	<i>39</i>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2003 and 2008 surveys of older people were funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies and we are grateful to them for their support.

INTRODUCTION

For a number of years ageing has been high on the policy agenda in the United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland, but also internationally at the European Union (EU) and the United Nations. In 2002 the United Nation's Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was adopted. It is the first international agreement that specifically recognises the potential of older people to contribute to the development of their societies and commits governments to include ageing in all social and economic development policies, and to halve old-age poverty by 2015, in line with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Essentially, the plan recommends that governments include older people in national development and social-policy processes (such as poverty-reduction strategies and national development plans). It covers growing areas of concern for older people and their families, including poverty, violence and abuse, access to health services and social protection. It also calls for effective collaboration and partnership between governments, civil society, international agencies and the private sector with older people and their organisations to achieve the Plan's objectives. However, the Plan does not commit governments or the international community to providing additional resources for implementation. This means that resources have to be made available within individual countries and a five year review of the implementation of the plan showed limited progress.

Within the EU, much of the focus has been on ageism and has been grounded in the equality agenda and on increasing the rate of labour market participation among older people. In many countries, including the UK and Ireland, ageism has also become a focus of debate. While growing numbers of older people is a positive development reflecting social and economic progress, the portrayal of older people for much of the post war period as needy and passive has helped reinforce negative myths and stereotypes. But there has also been much talk, especially in the health and social care and pensions literature, of the resource implications of increased life expectancy. A number of authors have challenged the assumptions about the social and economic pressures created by a growing proportion of the population being older (Walker, 2006; Layte, 2005), pointing to improved health and well-being and the improved financial circumstances of many older people. And there is some evidence that social policies have shifted from looking at older people as dependant and passive recipients of services to encouraging independence and participation.

Despite some positive actions at international and national levels to tackle ageism, many commentators agree that ageism and the implications of ageist attitudes and policies continue to present significant challenges. The Attitudes to Age in Britain study 2004-2008 (Abrams et al., 2009) concluded that '*Public preconceptions about age and ageing present significant obstacles to progress toward a society that meets the expectations and needs of people of all ages*'. Attitudes to age and ageing in both the north and south of Ireland were first surveyed by the ARK in 2003 in a project funded by Atlantic Philanthropies. Analysis of this data pointed to the increasing importance of age as a field of inquiry in Ireland, the UK and internationally as noted above and this has indeed proven to be the case. The 2003 survey findings provided an important baseline of attitudes and perceptions. The repeat of the surveys in 2008 provides an opportunity to assess if, and how, attitudes have changed, taking into account policy and legislative changes and the potential impact of campaigns aimed at increasing awareness of the issues facing older people. This report is focused on the North of Ireland and provides a non-technical summary of public attitudes to older people over the period 2003-2008 in the light of the economic and social context relevant to the areas being examined.

Full technical details for the 2003 and 2008 surveys can be found in the Appendix of this report. Tables of results for each question, as well as the questionnaires, can be found on the ARK website at www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/results/olderpeople.html

SOCIO ECONOMIC AND POLICY CONTEXT

At the time of the 2001 census in Northern Ireland, 16% of the population (1,685,000) were of pensionable age. In 2002, 29% of people aged over 60 were living alone, which is a little lower than the UK-wide figure of 33%. In both the North and the South of Ireland, demographic trends are similar to other EU countries, but both jurisdictions have a younger population than many EU countries. The social context of older people's lives has of course changed significantly in the post war decades and, in both parts of Ireland, older people are now less likely to live with their children or with other relatives and are likely to live alone or in a couple household. According to the profile of Older People in Northern Ireland published by Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) in 2009, '*...in 2007-08, people aged 60 or over represented approximately 21% of Northern Ireland household members but account for approximately 57% of those living alone*' (OFMDFM, 2009a).

The participation and social inclusion of older people are explicit policy goals and legislation has been introduced to address some aspects of ageism including labour market discrimination. Attempts have also been made to encourage more positive images of ageing. While the UK government continues to be an important influence, for example in terms of finance and parity with regard to social security issues, policy developments in the North of Ireland need to be looked at in terms of the impact of devolution on policy and legislation. Trench and Jeffrey (2007) note that there are examples of where the devolved regions take a lead from the UK Government (for example, where there is a high profile policy) but there are also examples of where devolved areas take different approaches or introduce separate initiatives.

All of the regions of the United Kingdom have developed strategies for older people. The first was produced in Wales in 2003 (Welsh Assembly Government, 2003); this was a ten year strategy informed by the United Nations Principles on Older Persons (UN OHCHR, 1993). It aimed to tackle discrimination against older people, promote positive images of ageing and give older people a stronger voice. In 2005 the Westminster government published a strategy for social policy on old age 'Opportunity Age' (Department for Work and Pensions, 2005). A Northern Ireland strategy was also published in 2005 'Ageing in an Inclusive Society', which aimed to '*... ensure that age related policies and practices create an enabling environment, which offers everyone the opportunity to make informed choices so that they may pursue healthy, active and positive ageing*' (Office of the First and Deputy First Minister, 2005, p.13). In 2007 the Scottish government published a detailed strategy 'All our Futures' (Scottish Government, 2007). Both the strategies for Scotland and Wales have been informed by the UN Principles for Older Persons but there is less evidence of this in the Northern Ireland Strategy.

The strategies published for each of the regions of the UK share similar themes – a focus on economics, lifelong learning, healthy ageing, housing and tackling ageism. But, there have been differences in funding allocation and in implementation. From 2003 the Welsh Assembly Government committed £13 million for a five year period (though the strategy was for a ten year period). Most of the activity related to the strategy is in local government in Wales

and 80% of all funding allocated to rolling out the strategy was allocated to them. In Northern Ireland, responsibility for implementing the measures in the strategy was handed to the government departments who were to develop action plans. However, there has been criticism of the lack of progress. Windle and Porter (2008) in their analysis of the strategies, consider the implementation plan and structures put in place for the Welsh strategy to be considerable compared to those in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Legislative and policy progress in Northern Ireland has also been criticised by Trench and Jeffrey (2007, p. 24) who describe Northern Ireland as having '*the most disjointed and limited approach to ageing issues*' in the UK. Their criticisms included the degree to which responsibilities are spread across departments.

In 2008, the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister announced a review of the Northern Ireland strategy in light of an ongoing review of the Westminster strategy. At the time of writing, this is ongoing and may be influenced in part by developments at Westminster. In July 2009, the Westminster Government published a consultative document on a new strategy 'Building a Society for All Ages'. This sets out a vision for the future but acknowledges that achieving a society for all ages will require major cultural change.

Equality legislation

The 1998 Northern Ireland Act included an Equality Duty (Section 75) which requires public authorities to promote equality of opportunity for a number of groups not covered at that point by discrimination legislation. This includes older people. Age regulations with regard to employment were not introduced in Northern Ireland until 2006 (Employment Equality (Age) Regulations) – which in fact included regulations on a default retirement age. The retention of a default retirement age in the UK was recently challenged unsuccessfully at EU level. The Northern Ireland legislation is also limited by its narrow remit, covering employment but providing no regulation with regard to the provision of goods and services. At Westminster the Equality Bill currently before Parliament contains proposals to extend age discrimination provisions to goods and services which may subsequently impact on equality legislation in Northern Ireland.

Six months after the introduction of the Age Regulations in Northern Ireland, an Equality Commission for Northern Ireland survey (ECNI, 2008) of public awareness of and attitudes to age related issues and Age Regulations found that less than half of those surveyed knew that age discrimination was against the law. The Commission noted that while few respondents reported personal experience of age discrimination the Commission was receiving a growing number of inquiries and complaints.

ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING

What is an 'older' person?

When the first of our surveys were conducted in 2003 there was a tendency for policy makers and some researchers to define 'older' as over 50 years of age. To many this seemed rather young. Life expectancy, including healthy life expectancy has increased, there is pressure in many developed countries including the UK and Ireland to encourage later retirement for economic reasons, and there is much evidence to suggest that people in their fifties did not see

ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

themselves as older. Therefore in 2008 we decided to ask people themselves at what age they would consider someone to be 'older'. Very few people thought of anyone aged less than 60 as an older person but nearly 60% of respondents started to think of someone who was in the 65-74 age group as being older. Just under a fifth of respondents said they did not think of someone as older until they were over 75 and some refused to classify someone as an older person until they were well into their nineties.

Most of the questions that we have just asked about older people refer to people aged 50 and over, however some people have said that they don't really think of people in their fifties as 'older people'. At what age do you start to think of someone as an 'older person'?

	%		
	Aged under 65	Aged 65+	All
Under 40	<1	0	<1
40-49	1	<1	1
50-59	5	2	4
60-64	22	17	21
65-74	59	47	57
75+	13	34	<17



Are older people respected and valued?

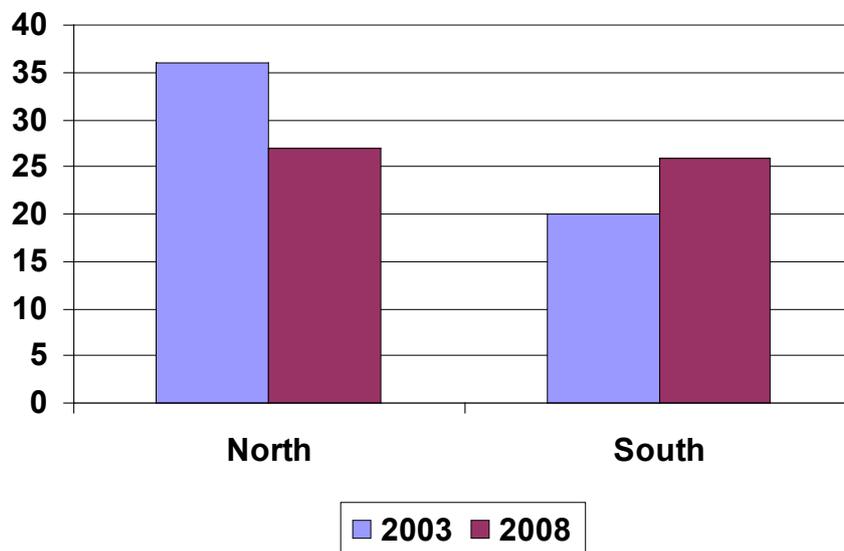
There is a distinct shift in attitudes since these questions were first asked in 2003 and things in Northern Ireland look rather more positive than they did then. Respondents, both those aged under 65 and those over 65, are now more likely to feel that they are treated with more respect as they get older. It is still the case that a fairly sizeable number of people feel that you are treated worse as you get older, but this has diminished since 2003.

ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

As you get older, do people treat you with more or less respect?

	% 2003			% 2008		
	Under 65	65+	All	Under 65	65+	All
	More respect	23	26	24	35	33
Less respect	36	37	36	27	24	27
The same	38	36	38	37	42	38
Don't know	3	1	3	<1	<1	<1

Figure 1: As you get older, do people treat you with more or less respect? (% saying 'less')



In terms of how they think *older people* are treated in comparison with the rest of the population, there is an increasing sense that older people are either treated the same as others and a decreasing sense that they are treated worse. Again while there is still a sizeable number of people who feel that older people are treated worse this has diminished since 2003 and the number of people who feel that they are treated the same has gone up accordingly.

Thinking about older people in Ireland, that is people in their 50's and over...Do you think that older people are, on the whole, treated better or worse than people in the general population in this country because of their age?

	% 2003						% 2008		
	2003			2008			2008		
	Under 65	65+	All	Under 65	65+	All	Under 65	65+	All
Better	11	13	11	13	16	14			
Worse	50	42	48	44	37	43			
The same	37	42	38	42	47	43			
Don't know	3	3	3	1	1	1			

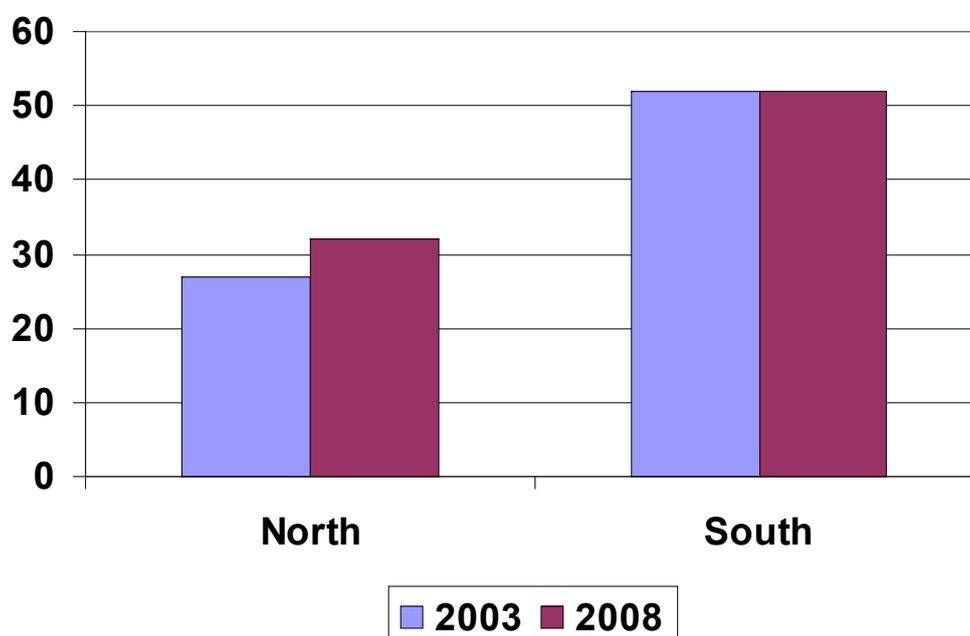
ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

There is a little more of a sense that older people are admired and respected by young people although still only about a third of people actually believe this to be the case. There is a slight tendency for the two negative views to be increasingly held – that older people are too set in their ways and that they are not willing to listen to younger people’s views. But on the whole attitudes remain fairly stable. What is most notable about these figures is not the change over time, but the overall difference in attitudes North and South. While large majorities in both jurisdictions hold generally positive attitudes towards older people, there is no reluctance in the North to express a negative attitude as well. So while people do feel that older people are younger in their ways and that society does not recognise their contribution, a majority are also prepared to say that older people are too set in their ways and sizeable numbers feel that older people are not willing to listen to younger people.

Agreement with statements related to older people

	% who agree with statement					
	2003			2008		
	Under 65	65+	All	Under 65	65+	All
These days older people are much younger in their ways	86	93	88	89	97	90
Society doesn’t recognise the contribution that many older people are still able to make	85	92	86	92	89	92
Older people are admired and respected by young people	26	34	27	29	43	32
Older people are too set in their ways and ideas	55	58	56	60	59	60
Older people are not willing to listen to young people’s views	42	38	41	46	49	46

Figure 2: Older people are admired and respected by young people (% agreeing)



So although the 'situation' for older people is being seen as more positive, people in Northern Ireland are still just as willing to voice negative views about older people – much more so than their counterparts in the South of Ireland. It is not possible to assess the reasons for the more positive attitudes in the South of Ireland from this data and qualitative research is likely to provide a better understanding of these. It may be due to different cultural perceptions of age, or to supportive family/friendship networks, a feeling in the Republic that the state values older people through financial and other support or a stronger sense of well-being in society more generally. Interestingly, comparative studies of life satisfaction and of children's well-being show that Irish people are, as a population, content by international standards and in such international comparisons Ireland has been consistently ranked higher than the UK. Of the most recent, a league table of young people's wellbeing published by the UK Child Poverty Action Group, 2009 (using 2006 data) ranked Ireland ninth with the UK 24th. The second European Quality of Life Survey placed Ireland ahead of the EU average in terms of life satisfaction (Anderson et al., 2009). And, of course, we do not know if the continuing downturn in economic circumstances after the fieldwork was conducted has had a bearing on attitudes.

Issues for research and policy

Given that the data continue to show significant differences between the north and south of Ireland in relation to views on how older people are perceived and treated, it would be useful to have more understanding of the factors influencing these differences. Qualitative research exploring the issues with across a range of age groups is likely to shed more light on this.

The overwhelming view in both the North and the South of Ireland is that the contribution of older people to society is not recognised, and the strong consensus about this across the age groups, should be of concern to policy makers. This is important in two respects; firstly, the fact that significant contributions to the labour market, to families and to communities are apparently not been recognised and, secondly, it also raises an issue of whether policies themselves continue to perpetuate negative ideas about older people? An example of the latter point is the recent criticism directed at the UK government for its portrayal of older people in its Green Paper on the future of social care - specifically, the statement ruling out the possibility of social care being paid for out of taxation on the grounds that it would place a burden on the working age population.



PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF STATE PROVISION FOR OLDER PEOPLE

For much of the post war period old age has been defined as over the state pension age. In the UK this was 65 for men and 60 for women. In 1993 the government legislated for the pension age to be equalised at 65 over a ten year period starting in 2010. But changing socio and economic circumstances since then have resulted in many countries advocating or implementing an increase in state pension age for both men and women. In 2006 in the UK, as a result of the review by the Turner Commission, one of the decisions taken by government was to raise incrementally the state pension age to 68 by 2046. Since then political parties have indicated that this may need to be accelerated.

UK government policy has been to encourage private provision with means tested support to help those already retired. Debates have also focused on the need to introduce later pension qualification ages, provide enhanced provision for those with deficient contribution records – unpaid carers are a significant component of this group – and introduce further measures and provision to increase personal savings for retirement.

The survey results highlight stark differences in opinion in public attitudes in the North and South of Ireland when it comes to state pension provision, with 87% of participants in Northern Ireland feeling that pensioners were getting a ‘poor deal’. In contrast, 60% of respondents in the South felt that the pension rate was a ‘poor deal’ and while this is still the majority it is noticeable that the sense that the pension rate is too low in the South has diminished in the five years since 2003 (dropping from 71% to 60%). Quite possibly perceptions in the South have been influenced by the context of the recession in latter times. However in the North there is such a consensus that the state pension is a poor deal that there has been no shift in this view over the last five years - despite the context of the recession. The age group most likely to consider the pension to be a reasonable deal is the over 75 age group – at 21% in North and 37% in the South.

In general, do you think that a pension of [current state pension] per week for someone with a full contribution record is a good deal, a reasonable deal or a poor deal?

	%					
	2003			2008		
	Under 65	65+	All	Under 65	65+	All
A good deal	2	1	1	1	2	1
A reasonable deal	10	10	10	10	14	10
A poor deal	84	88	85	88	84	87
(Other – write in)	1	1	1	<1	<1	<1
Don't know	4	<1	3	1	0	1

We also asked about financial provision by the state more generally. Here also, respondents in the South are more likely to consider provision to be adequate. However a clear majority, 60% of participants, thought provision was inadequate – as was the case in 2003. But this compares with almost 80% of respondents in Northern Ireland (the same figure as 2003). The over 65s in Northern Ireland are only slightly less likely to say provision is inadequate.

ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

And, taking account of other benefits provided for pensioners, do you think that the financial provision made by the state is...

	%					
	2003			2008		
	Under 65	65+	All	Under 65	65+	All
Adequate/very adequate	13	18	14	18	23	19
Inadequate/very inadequate	79	79	79	80	75	79
(Other – write in)	1	1	1	<1	0	<1
Don't know	8	3	7	2	2	2

Similarly there is little change over time in the overwhelming number of people who feel that older people should be subsidised for services such as gas and electricity. The slight decline in support evident in the South is not evident in the North where there is such a widespread view that older people receive a poor deal from the state.

All older people should be given reduced prices for things like gas, electricity, telephone and transport

	%					
	2003			2008		
	Under 65	65+	All	Under 65	65+	All
Agree	91	94	91	89	92	89
Disagree	7	5	7	11	7	10
Don't know	2	2	2	<1	1	1

Pensions and financial provision have undoubtedly been high profile and contentious areas of social policy. In both the North and South of Ireland the gross income of pensioner families has increased in real terms but overall gains mask a diversity of circumstances. There are strong differences in the incomes and assets within the older person population. Occupational pensions have increased the financial position of many older people but significant numbers depend solely on state support for their income – often a combination on basic pension and means tested benefits. Women are over represented in the latter group as they are less likely than men to have an occupational or private pension.

More pensioners in Northern Ireland than in other parts of the UK rely solely on income from the state. In 2004/05 40% of single pensioners and 20% of pensioner couples were in this position – more than twice the rate than in Britain. There is also data to suggest that this will be a problem for the future. A large number of working age people in Northern Ireland is not contributing to a non state pension. Unsurprisingly this is particularly evident among those in the lowest socio-economic groups, with 75% of the poorest fifth of working age people not contributing to a non state pension compared to 30% in the richest fifth (Kenway et al., 2006).

The New Policy Institute has monitored indicators of poverty and social exclusion in the four regions of the UK. The number of pensioners in poverty has come down since the late 1990s. An analysis of poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland in 2006 showed the poverty rate for pensioners to be 20 per cent (Kenway et al., 2006). It is not yet possible to refer to longitudinal data for Northern Ireland but it is likely that, as in other parts of the UK, the greatest fall in poverty has been among single pensioners with smaller reduction for pensioner couples.

Issues for research and policy

As research has shown, advancing age is not in itself a strong predictor of financial hardship. Poorer people have less life expectancy and those in higher socio-economic groups live longer. But, while the overall financial wellbeing of older people has improved, strong differences in the economic circumstances among the older population mean that for many older people their ability to age well is inhibited by low income. This is likely to become even more acute in the future given the widening of income inequality in the UK and Ireland more generally. Attempts to improve the finances of older people in the future are unlikely to be successful unless the causes of this inequality are acknowledged and addressed.

Future generations will have higher expectations and within the current older population there are differences in expectations between age cohorts of older people. A key challenge for social policy is to manage these expectations and assess how they can be met. Governments in the UK and Ireland have indicated the expectation that younger people need to be prepared to contribute more to their pensions and long term social care and to begin to do so earlier. But getting people to do so will not be easy; younger people now have more debt than before, are operating in increasingly precarious labour markets and have had their trust in financial institutions shaken. Do we know enough about younger people's views on, and ability to, make provision for the future? What measures do people feel are necessary to ensure that financial institutions are trustworthy and reliable and are viewed as so?

There is still insufficient acknowledgement of the way in which policies on future pension provision link to other social policies on the care of children and other dependents. This also continues to disproportionately affect women. Policies to increase the labour market participation of older people may result in fewer grandparents being able to look after grandchildren which may in turn have a negative impact on women's ability to take on paid work, especially given problems with the accessibility and affordability of childcare in Northern Ireland. The reliance on unpaid carers for the care of adults is problematic when the expectation is clearly on participation in paid work. There needs to be more research into the impact of the current recession, not just on the current population of older people but on future provision and the attitude and ability of younger people to prepare for their own old age.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST OLDER PEOPLE

One of the key aims of the surveys was to examine perceptions of discrimination against older people and measure to what extent this changed between 2003 and 2005. It is clear from the findings that perceptions of discrimination in the areas of employment, healthcare and provision of financial services have all increased over the period. Of course, greater reporting of discrimination may not necessarily mean that more discrimination is occurring. It is possible that the policy focus on 'equality' issues generally since 2003 has increased awareness and resulted in people being more sensitive to ageism. Incidents which would not have been defined as ageism in years gone by may now be interpreted as such. Certainly many of the survey respondents reported that they had been aware of media campaigns relating to older people (results in this discussed later). Nonetheless whatever is driving this finding, the changes in perceived discrimination between 2003 and 2008 are marked, both in the North and the South of Ireland.

Employment

The labour market is one of the main areas of social exclusion for older people. Participation rates for men in the 60-64 age group declined steadily from the 1960s due to a number of factors, including the growth of early retirement from the 1970s. Attitudes to older workers also meant that people retiring in their fifties often never re-entered the labour market.

The EU Lisbon strategy set a target of 50% of older workers being in the workforce. Ireland and the UK have already exceeded this in regard to male employment rates. In fact Ireland is exceptional in a European context for the late age at which people leave the workforce. In 2007 the average age of retirement was 64 years (Acheson and Harvey, 2008). In 2006 the employment rate of people aged over 65 in the Republic of Ireland was twice the EU average and labour force participation was much higher than in Northern Ireland (Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland (CARDI), 2010). In Northern Ireland labour market participation declined between 2005 and 2008. For males in the 50-64 age group the economic activity rate in 2005 was 69%; and it currently stands at 65%. For females aged 50-59 the decline was from 57% to 55%. Economic activity rates for those of pension age decreased from 10 to 8 % for men and remained stable for women at 8% in 2005 and 9% in 2008 (OFMDFM, 2009a). It should also be noted that figures for female employment rates particularly may mask the number of women who are defined as 'economically inactive' because of caring and other responsibilities.

While there has undoubtedly been a culture of early retirement governments are indicating that this is not set to continue with many, including the UK and Ireland, as outlined above, increasing the age at which people can receive the state pension. In a number of countries older workers are being encouraged to stay in employment by dual measures – the raising of the pension entitlement age but also incentives – such as supplementary increases to an individual's pension for every additional year worked (Hartlapp and Schmid, 2008).

There is evidence that some individuals want the opportunity to continue in the paid labour market. The Eurobarometer survey found that 66% of Europeans support the view that governments should make it easier for older people to continue working beyond the normal retirement age, if they so wish (Eurobarometer, 2009) but the challenges in achieving this are evidenced by another Eurobarometer finding in 2008. In that survey 42% of respondents reported age discrimination to be widespread, with respondents aged 40 and over being more likely to be of this opinion.

Some commentators have also disputed the likelihood of a larger number of older people being able to stay in or re-enter the labour market citing the potential impact of other labour market policies in respect of those on Incapacity Benefit and lone parents which will create more competition for jobs. Hill (2009) argues that labour market demand cannot be assumed, and, in such a situation, decreased labour market participation by older people may be seen as positive.

The economic recession has had an impact on the employment rates of older people in both parts of Ireland but in both places the biggest decline in employment has been among younger workers. Analysis conducted by CARDI (2010, p. 42-43) also shows that the decline in employment in the Republic of Ireland in every age group has been less marked

ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

for women than men. In Northern Ireland however, in the youngest age female economic activity declined twice as much as male activity; in the 25-49 age group men fared worse and in the pre retirement age group figures for women's economic activity are slightly better than men's. Although men's participation is higher among those pension age and above this could be linked to women's eligibility for a pension at 60 years and therefore their ineligibility to claim unemployment benefit.

The results from the survey suggest that respondents in the North are much more willing than their counterparts in the South to agree that people in their 60s should give up work to make way for younger people. Further – this view is much more likely to be held by those aged 65 or more where just over 50% would agree with this. The overall figure is only a third of the sample but nonetheless the willingness of older people to assert this view is striking.

People in their 60s should give up work to make way for younger people

	%		
	Under 65	Aged 65+	All
Agree	31	49	34
Disagree	69	51	65
Don't know	<1	<1	<1

However turning this around, the question is also whether people themselves would actually prefer to work part-time in the run-up to retirement and indeed whether they would like to extend their working life beyond retirement age. While respondents in the South are mainly interested in working part-time after retirement, respondents in the North are interested in both working part-time up to and after retirement. Possibly the context of the recession and the worry about financing retirement may increase the desire to continue working after retirement, but the view that older people should give way to younger people in the world of work may have also impacted on the sense that maybe they would like to work part-time up to retirement as well.

Some people say they would prefer to retire gradually, either working part-time up to retirement or part-time after retirement. Would you yourself be interested in either or both of these options?

	%	
	2003	2008
Yes – part-time up to retirement age	22	20
Yes – part-time after retirement age	20	21
Yes- both	28	48
No	20	11
Don't know	10	1

ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

The Equality Commission Northern Ireland in its survey looking at awareness of the age discrimination legislation asked respondents who were either currently working beyond the present retirement age (65 years), or who had said they wished to continue working past retirement, why they wanted to do so. Fifty four per cent agreed with the statement that *“they needed/ would need the money and could not afford to retire”*; 26% agreed that work would provide an *“opportunity for social interaction”* and 16% agreed that they *“enjoyed their current job and did not want to stop working”* (ECNI, 2008, p. 35).

It is of course not the case that all people wish to extend their working lives, nor would this be desirable or positive for all. Differences in views may be linked to the nature of the occupation and how physical demanding it is, to the health of the individual (taking into account significant and well established differences in healthy life expectancy between socio-economic groups) and to job satisfaction. Hartlapp and Schmid (2008) look at why, and under what conditions, older workers are attracted to continuing or re-entering employment. They identify important ‘pull’ factors which include labour demand – in terms of appropriately located jobs of the kind of work that suit older people most (that is, they point to the incompatibility of hard physical work); education – evidence shows that among highly skilled groups EU employment goals have been surpassed – but also the degree of investment by the state in further education throughout an individual’s working life; job satisfaction and the tackling of age related job discrimination.

The evidence suggests that if older workers are to be encouraged to stay in the labour market in the future a range of possibilities need to be looked at. This includes less demanding work, commitment to training/retraining and measures to address discrimination in employment. But findings from the surveys carried out in 2003 and 2008 indicate a growing perception of discrimination by employers against older people. This is the case in both the South and the North of Ireland.



ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

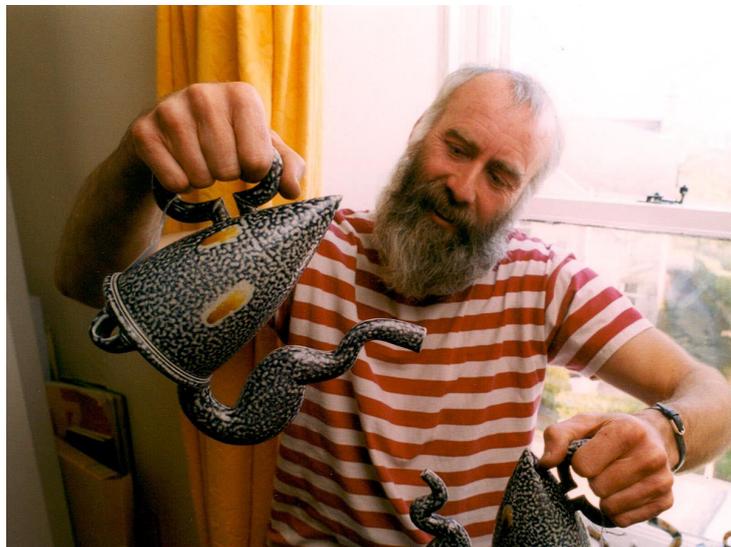
Although the number of people who felt that they themselves had been discriminated against by an employer is quite low, it had risen slightly from 6% to 9% in the years since 2003. When respondents were asked whether they had ever felt that a friend or family member had been discriminated against because of their age the numbers had doubled in both the North and the South of Ireland since 2003. The under 65s are more likely than the older age group to have perceived this and defined it as discrimination but it is nonetheless on the increase across both age groups.

Have you ever felt that you were not treated as well as you might have been by an employer because of your age?

	%					
	2003			2008		
	50-64	65+	All	50-64	65+	All
Yes	7	4	6	11	7	9
No	90	92	91	88	92	90
Don't know	2	4	3	1	1	1

Have you ever felt that a friend or family member was not treated as well as they might have been by an employer because of their age?

	%					
	2003			2008		
	Under 65	65+	All	Under 65	65+	All
Yes	10	4	9	22	9	20
No	80	88	81	77	91	79
Don't know	10	8	10	1	<1	1



ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

When respondents are asked in general terms about whether they think that there is discrimination in particular areas of employment the results show that high percentages of people perceived discrimination – contrary to the previous set of results – and there is an increase in this perception since 2003. The increasing perception of discrimination is driven largely by the changing views of the under 65s. The older group are, if anything, rather less inclined to see discrimination than they were previously but the bulk of the sample is displaying a stronger sense of discrimination than previously. So in the North of Ireland there is a slightly increased sense of personal discrimination; a significantly increased perception that family and friends have been discriminated against and the majority of people feel that older people are probably discriminated against in most areas of employment. Again the question is whether there are actually more incidents of discrimination occurring in recent years or whether it is heightened awareness of these issues that means that individuals are now beginning to classify actual instances of behaviour as ageism where they themselves or their family or friends have faced some of these issues in their working lives.

Let's talk about older people who are working. Do you think that older workers are discriminated against with regard to...

	% saying yes					
	2003			2008		
	<65	65+	All	<65	65+	All
Job recruitment	67	63	66	75	58	72
Job promotion	63	60	63	71	62	69
Job training	59	56	58	65	55	63
Status or position in their organisation	50	47	49	54	51	53

Issues for research and policy

Encouraging older people to remain in the labour market is a goal shared by UK and Irish governments and by the European Union, yet the prospects for longer working lives may be less good than is sometimes assumed. What evidence is there that labour markets will expand sufficiently to need older workers to the extent being assumed by policy-makers? The ability and desire of people to work longer will be affected by factors such as health and disability, which are linked to socio-economic provision. So, while our and other research findings suggest that financial reasons are an important factor in people wanting to be allowed to work beyond the default retirement age, those who are in the greatest financial need are likely to be those less able to continue working.

Governments have to confront the not inconsiderable challenge of tackling discriminatory attitudes and practices against older people in the workplace and the need for greater flexibility on the part of employers. It is perhaps those who are trying to re-enter the labour market who face the greatest difficulties. Research shows that the ability of older people to remain in or re-enter the labour market requires significant and planned investment in lifelong learning and training so that older people can acquire relevant knowledge and skills. This links to tackling age discrimination with regard to training opportunities, including age for apprenticeships etc.

Healthcare

The dignity and respect accorded to older people when they use health services and the choices made about their care has been subject to debate and scrutiny for some years. However there has been no significant increase in personal reporting of discrimination by health and social care staff since 2003. Respondents aged 50 or over were asked if they themselves had been treated with less dignity by health and social care staff because of their age and whether they ever felt that they were not offered medical treatment that might have helped them because of their age.

Have you ever felt that you were treated with less dignity and respect by people in the health and social care professions because of your age?

	%					
	2003			2008		
	50-64	65+	All	50-64	65+	All
Yes	11	10	11	11	13	12
No	87	88	87	88	86	88
Don't know	2	3	2	1	<1	1

And have you ever felt that you were not offered medical treatment that might have helped you because of your age?

	%			%		
	2003			2008		
	50-64	65+	All	50-64	65+	All
Yes	7	10	8	9	9	9
No	92	88	90	90	90	90
Don't know	2	2	2	1	1	1

Only small numbers felt this to be the case in 2003 and only small numbers in 2008 are prepared to see discriminatory behaviour against themselves. However when it comes to the perception of discriminatory behaviour against friends or family the picture is very different. The proportion of people perceiving instances where someone was treated with less dignity and respect because of their age has risen from about a quarter in 2003 to nearly a third in 2008. Even more marked is in the increase in the number of people who feel that someone was not offered medical treatment because of their age – rising from 18% in 2003 to 26% in 2008. In both cases however these views are driven by the opinions of the under 65s. Older people are not seeing any significant increase here.

ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

Have you ever felt that a friend or family member was treated with less dignity and respect by people in the health and social care professions because of their age?

	%					
	2003			2008		
	Under 65	65+	All	Under 65	65+	All
Yes	27	13	24	35	14	31
No	66	84	69	65	86	69
Don't know	8	3	7	1	0	1

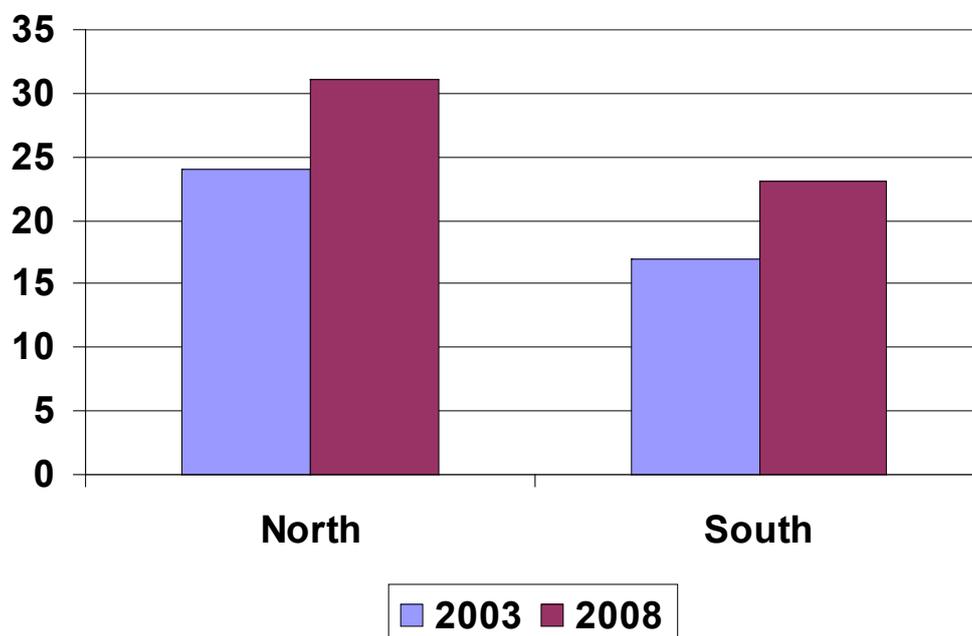
And have you ever felt that a friend or family member was not offered medical treatment that might have helped them because of their age?

	%					
	2003			2008		
	Under 65	65+	All	Under 65	65+	All
Yes	20	10	18	29	12	26
No	74	86	76	70	88	73
Don't know	7	4	6	1	<1	1

The proportions perceiving discrimination against family or friends is more marked in the North than in the South, but the same pattern of increase is apparent as shown in Figure 3.

ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

Figure 3: Have you ever felt that a friend or relative was treated with less dignity or respect by people in the health and social care professions because of their age? (% saying 'yes')



In both the North and the South it is those over 65 who are less likely to say they have observed ageism against family and friends despite the fact that one might expect the rates to be much higher here simply because they are more likely to have friends who are in that age group.

When respondents are asked in general terms about whether they think that there is discrimination in particular aspects of healthcare the results show that high percentages of people believe that there is discrimination and further that there has been an increase in this perception since 2003. Once again it is the under 65s who are driving this change and a full 62% of the under 65s feel that health and social care workers treat older people less well in terms of their attitudes to them. Again there is a contrast between these generally expressed attitudes and respondents' own experiences. Many people believed that there was age discrimination in healthcare in 2003 and this has increased by 2008. Fewer people actually report personal experience of this, but a sense that family and friends have been treated less well is on the increase. The perception of discrimination in general is much higher in the North than in the South.

Do you think that health and social care workers treat older people differently with regard to...

	% saying yes					
	2003			2008		
	<65	65+	All	<65	65+	All
...their attitudes to them?	44	36	43	62	38	57
...the treatment of their illnesses?	44	33	42	57	38	53
...when placing them on waiting lists for tests and operations	47	42	46	54	40	51

In 2007, the House of Commons and House of Lords Joint Committee on Human Rights investigated the human rights of older people in healthcare (House of Commons and House of Lords, 2007). This included looking at whether older people accessing healthcare are discriminated against and the processes through which older people and their families can voice concerns about abuse, neglect or unequal access to treatment. While the Committee noted that direct age discrimination had become less common there was evidence of its existence and of more subtle forms of discrimination relating to funding allocation etc. It identified major deficiencies in terms of how Human Rights was understood, interpreted and applied with regard to older people and among its recommendations called for greater awareness among older people and advocates. While proposals in the Equality Legislation in England passed in 2010 will make it unlawful to discriminate against someone aged 18 or over because of their age when providing services or carrying out functions it will be implemented in phases with financial and other services to be covered by 2012 but not health care. The then Labour government initiated a review of the practical action required to tackle age discrimination in health and social care. The review findings include the recommendations that no areas within health and social care should have wholesale exemption from the legislation, and that age as a criterion for assessing health provision should be replaced by more individualised evidence. A consultative document, based on the review findings, was published in November 2009 (Department of Health, 2009). Subsequent policy developments in England may have a bearing on future developments in Northern Ireland.

It should be noted that these questions had a healthcare focus. It is very likely that, had we asked specifically about attitudes to social care provision, responses would have been more negative. There has been ongoing debate in the UK and Ireland about community care services for older people, about how long term should be funded and the quality of care provided in residential settings and in people's own homes.

In Northern Ireland social care services for older people have been increasingly targeted towards those with higher level needs resulting in a reduction in the overall number of people receiving packages of care. Data also shows that the bulk of social care resources for older people go to the hospital and residential sectors (Gray and Horgan, 2009). There is evidence in both the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland that older people and their families bear the cost of care, often in an inequitable way. Debates about the funding of long term care and the choices available to older people and their carers reflect the degree of discontent often felt about existing provision. In the UK, an individual's entitlement to free social care varies across the devolved regions, with Scotland providing personal and nursing care free of charge. Currently in Northern Ireland individuals are charged for personal care. In England this funding of continuing care has attracted considerable policy focus. The government launched the 'Big Care Debate' brought forward proposals for some social care to be provided free of charge. The Coalition government elected in May 2010 scrapped a Bill, which had just been introduced by the Labour government in the last days of its administration which would have introduced some free personal care in people's own homes. It then announced the setting up of an independent Care Commission on the funding of social care which is to report with a year.

It is very likely that had we asked separately and more specifically about social care issues we would have elicited strong views and this is certainly an area where more research on general attitudes and on the views of users would be useful.

Issues for research and policy

Concerns about discrimination of older people in healthcare have received increasing attention and have elicited policy responses from government but our findings show that there is concern about how older people are treated in relation to health care. Future research could usefully include: more research with older people (including different age cohorts) about their own experience of healthcare, including the positive experiences they have had could help inform future policy and practice; assessment of the curriculum across a range of professional and vocational courses and the extent to which it covers working with older people – especially focus on attitudes, the promotion of dignity, the human rights of older people and promoting autonomy.

The surveys reported here focused predominantly on health care but there is a need to understand more about older people’s views of and perception of social care services, including those using residential and nursing care services. Consideration should also be given to the focus on personalisation of social care and how older people themselves view this and the initiatives linked to it- such as individualised budgets.

Financial Services

Perceptions in relation to employment and healthcare show exactly the same patterns with increasing perceptions of general discrimination and discrimination among family and friends (driven by the views of the under 65s) though this is not accompanied by the same increase in *personal* reporting of discrimination. In contrast, the picture for financial services is slightly different. Here there is both an increasing sense that family and friends are being discriminated against *as well as* an increasing sense of personal discrimination. However general attitudes are split. In 2003 many people were simply unsure about the situation regarding the financial sector; now in 2008 as that uncertainty has dissipated views have diverged such that more people believe that there is discrimination *and* more people believe that older people get as good a deal as anyone else. Nonetheless a majority of people believe (as was the case in 2003) that older people are discriminated against with regard to financial services.

Financial services play an important part in all our lives – credit, hire purchase, loans, mortgages, insurance and so on. Thinking first of people in their fifties and up to retirement age, which of these two statements comes closest to your own view?

	%			%		
	2003			2008		
	<65	65+	All	<65	65+	All
Older people get as good a deal from this sector as anyone else	28	30	28	37	42	38
Older people are treated less favourably by the financial sector because of their age	54	45	52	59	52	58
Don't know	19	26	20	4	6	4

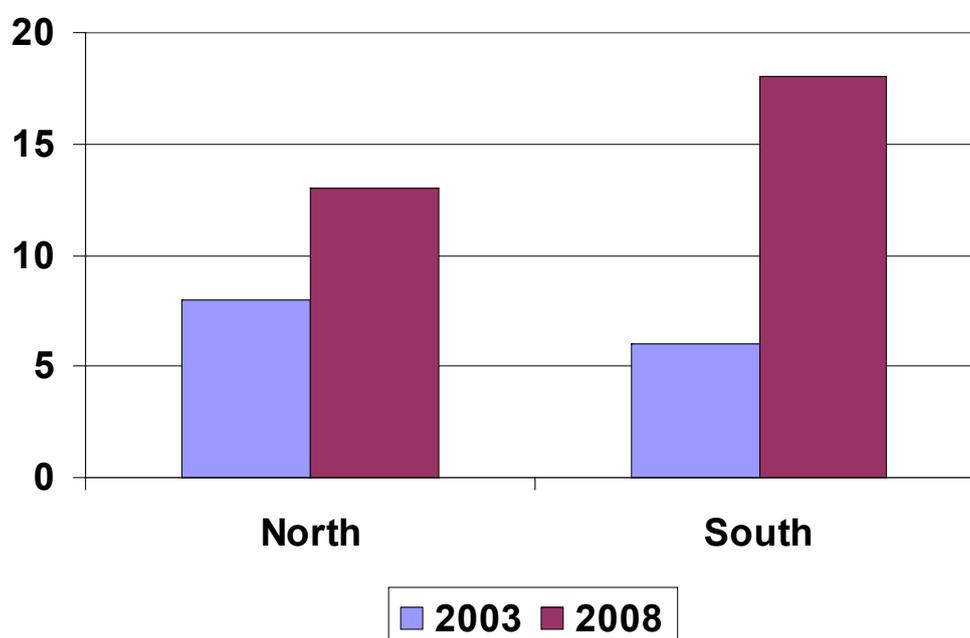
ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

Amongst the over 50s in the South Ireland the number of people saying they felt they themselves had been discriminated against by the financial sector tripled (from 6% to 18%), with the 65-74 age group being the most likely to report discrimination (21%). In Northern Ireland it jumped from 8% in 2003 to 13% in 2008 – again it is the 65-74 age group where perception of discrimination is highest (15%).

Have you ever felt that you were not treated as well as you might have been by people in the financial sector because of your age?

	%					
	2003			2008		
	Under 65	65+	All	Under 65	65+	All
Yes	6	10	8	12	14	13
No	90	83	87	85	85	85
Don't know	4	7	5	2	<1	2

Figure 4: Have you ever felt that you were not treated as well as you might have been by people in the financial sector because of your age? (asked of respondents over 50) (% saying 'yes')



There was also an increase in the number of people who felt that a friend or family member had been discriminated against – doubling in both places since 2003 (see Figure 5). While people over 65 are still *less* likely to report discrimination among friends and family than under 65s the number in this age group who perceive discrimination has certainly increased since 2003. In the South of Ireland the number of over 65s who reported discrimination in relation to friend or family jumped from 8% in 2003 to 20% in 2008. In Northern Ireland it trebled from 4% to 13%.

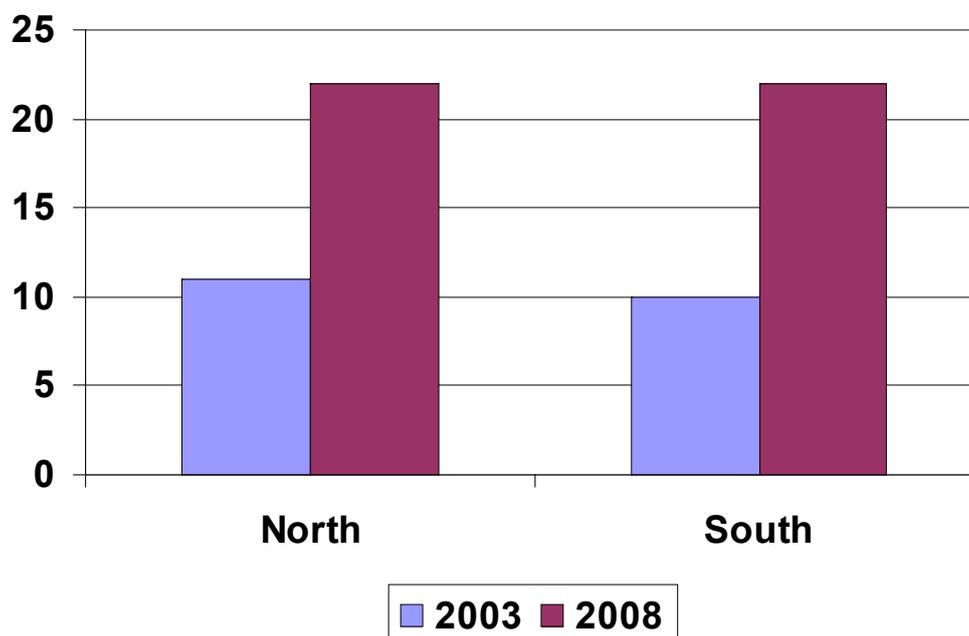
ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

It is very likely that the 'credit crunch', and the debate about the culpability of financial institutions for the recession have influenced attitudes to some extent. Individuals, or their friends or family, may have been affected by developments relating to banks such as Northern Rock, the Anglo Irish Bank or the Presbyterian Mutual Society. At the very least the extensive media coverage may have resulted in greater anxiety or concern.

Have you ever felt that a friend or family member was not treated as well as they might have been by people in the financial sector because of their age?

	% 2003			% 2008		
	Under 65	65+	All	Under 65	65+	All
	Yes	12	4	11	24	13
No	76	85	78	74	85	76
Don't know	12	11	12	2	2	2

Figure 5: Have you ever felt a friend or family member was not treated as well as they might have been by people in the financial sector because of their age? (% saying 'yes')



It is widely argued that a major weakness of the age regulations in Northern Ireland is that it does not cover goods and services. These survey findings demonstrate that, as in 2003, there is concern about how older people are treated by the financial sector. In 2008, as in 2003 the majority of respondents in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland believe that people in their 50s and up to retirement age are treated less favourably by the financial sector because of their age.

Issues for research and policy

The findings from these surveys provide additional support to calls for financial (and other) services to be covered by equality legislation and for that legislation to be effectively implemented.



PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROBLEMS FACING OLDER PEOPLE

The surveys reveal a largely positive picture of attitudes towards older people albeit that people are occasionally more willing to voice negative views in the North than in the South. There appears to be little if any change in *personal experience* of discrimination except in the case of financial services, but there is a distinctly increasing sense that discrimination exists and that family and friends have experienced this. In practical terms then, what do people feel are the real problems facing older people today? Is increasing respect for older people and a heightened sensitivity to ageism accompanied by an awareness of the practical problems that everyone will eventually face as we grow older? Respondents were asked what they thought were the main problems facing older people in Ireland today.

What do you think are the main problems facing older people in Northern Ireland today? (2008)

	%		
	Under 65	65+	All
Keeping warm in winter	62	70	64
Fear of crime	66	69	66
Making ends meet	58	55	57
Loneliness	56	54	56
Isolation	40	30	38
Boredom	23	27	24
Access to healthcare	26	21	25
Lack of respect	29	21	28
Transport	20	14	19
Elder abuse	18	13	17
Access to suitable housing	17	12	16
Getting employment	14	8	13
All of these	13	2	11

Issues to do with vulnerability and financial pressures top the list for the over 65s. Around 70% of this group list *Keeping warm in winter* and *Fear of crime* as problems facing older people. Rather fewer, though still a majority, mention *Making ends meet* and *Loneliness*. The younger group of respondents identify a broadly similar set of issues as the most commonly perceived problems, though there are some differences in perceptions here. Younger respondents underestimate the extent to which *Keeping warm in winter is an issue* for those in the older group; they also overestimate the problem of *Isolation*.

The proportion of respondents in Northern Ireland identifying *Keeping warm in winter* and *Making ends meet* as important issues is unsurprising given the dissatisfaction with the financial support provided by government and the increasing cost of fuel. The significantly fewer respondents in the South of Ireland identifying these issues perhaps reflects greater satisfaction with the benefits and additional provision older people are entitled to. What is rather striking is the very high proportion of respondents in the South of Ireland (74%) who identify isolation as an issue for older people, almost double the figure in the North. The concern about isolation is shared by those under and over 65 with 76% of under 65s and 67% of over 65s saying it was an issue for older people. Only 30% of over 65s in Northern Ireland did so. Perhaps related to the isolation issue is the higher number of respondents in the South identifying transport as an issue (31% compared to 19% in Northern Ireland).

Respondents in Northern Ireland were more likely to identify fear of crime as a problem (66%) although this was also listed by more than one half of respondents in the Republic of Ireland (58%). Also, while there is little difference in the views of those under and over 65 in Northern Ireland, in the Republic of Ireland 67% of over 65s said fear of crime was an issue compared to 56% of under 65s. Access to healthcare, getting employment and boredom were perceived as greater problems in the south of Ireland than in Northern Ireland with almost a third of people citing healthcare compared to a quarter of respondents in Northern Ireland – again in keeping with responses to other questions in the survey. Elder abuse was identified by 19% of people in the south of Ireland and 17% in the north of Ireland as a problem. While this is less than for many other issues, it nevertheless shows a significant level of concern, although in both places those over 65 were less likely to identify elder abuse as an issue.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF OLDER PEOPLE, PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

The survey results reported so far have focused mostly on the problems and the potential injustices facing older people and this inevitably leads towards an image of older people as vulnerable and needy, yet the attitudes expressed by respondents to the surveys were positive in the sense of appreciation and respect as well as in awareness of vulnerability. Mapping the continuum of ‘needy’ to ‘empowered’ and the mosaic of different images and stereotyping of older people was beyond the scope of the surveys but there are a number of areas of questioning which reveal some information about the contribution that older people are making to society and the economy.

As the next table shows, the greatest participation in volunteering work in the North of Ireland is among those aged under 65. This is in contrast with the South where volunteering is highest among the 50-75 age groups. Nonetheless still 17% of those aged 75 and over and 23% of the 50-64 group were helping in churches or religious organisations and similar proportions were visiting people.



ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

The next question in this section is about time given freely and without pay to any activity which has the aim of benefiting people (outside your immediate family), the community or a particular cause.

*Please could you tell me if you have done any of these kinds of **unpaid** work during the last 12 months? Please exclude giving money and anything that was a requirement of your job.*

	% who volunteer activity			
	Age group			
	<50	50-64	65-74	75+
Raising or handling money	23	19	10	8
Leading the group/member of a committee/trustees	12	13	5	7
Organising or helping to run an activity or event	25	20	7	12
Visiting people	22	30	20	17
Befriending or mentoring people	10	10	7	6
Coaching	11	9	1	1
Giving advice/information/counselling	12	13	6	0
Secretarial, administration or clerical work	7	9	2	4
Providing transport/driving	19	18	8	12
Representing	4	6	3	2
Promotion	3	2	1	1
Campaigning	3	3	2	0
Other practical help eg shopping, gardening, building, meals on wheels	16	13	10	8
Helping in church or religious organisation	16	22	23	17
Collecting/making things to be sold for charity	13	11	7	4
Teaching or training	8	6	3	1
Selling tickets	22	17	11	6
Working with young people	16	10	5	4
Working in a charity shop	1	3	5	2

Analysis by the Northern Ireland Volunteer Development Agency (2007) suggests that, even though the over 50 age group as a whole is the least likely group to volunteer, they are the most likely group to volunteer on a consistently regular basis. The over 65 age group is the most likely group to provide between 21-40 hours per month to formal volunteering. Volunteering and older people's active involvement in community groups has been linked with increased life satisfaction, better engagement with community life and a positive contribution to health and well being (Walshe and O'Shea, 2008; Surr et al., 2005). As Walshe and O'Shea identify, there has been a growth in the number of community groups actively involving older people and there are initiatives aimed at increasing the potential for older people to be actively involved in a volunteering capacity (Volunteer Development Agency, 2009). However, work by the Institute for Public Policy Research in Britain cites some of the barriers to older people's participation in volunteering. These included the fact that one fifth of organisations place upper age limits on volunteering opportunities.

ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

Informal care by older people and the care of grandchildren are other areas where the contribution of older people has been clearly identified. The shift from institutional care to community care since the 1980s and subsequent policy developments have increased the demand for informal carers – those who look after an adult or an ill or disabled child without payment. Nearly seven million carers provide support across the UK. About half of these are aged 45-64 years, most of them trying to combine care and employment. Analysis of the contribution of older people to the care of adults in the UK shows that over a third of informal care to people over 65 is provided by elderly people. Furthermore, projections of the number and profile of people providing care suggest that the greatest increase will be among the over 65s (Pickard, 2008).

The survey results here suggest that it is people in the under 65 age group who are most likely to be caring for someone outside the home whereas it is the two older age groups 50-75 that are slightly more likely to be caring for someone within the home. The contribution made by older people in terms of volunteering and informal care is substantial. Twenty one per cent of those in the 50-64 group were caring for someone outside the home on a regular basis.

*Some people have extra family responsibilities because they look after someone who is sick disabled or elderly. May I check, is there anyone **living with you** who is sick, disabled or elderly whom you look after or give special help to (for example, a sick, disabled or elderly relative, wife, husband, partner, child, friend)?*

*What about people **not living with you**, do you provide some regular service or help for any sick, disabled or elderly relative, friend or neighbour **not living with you**?*

	%			
	Age group			
	<50	50-64	65-74	75+
Care for someone in the home	5	14	10	9
Care for someone outside the home	17	21	9	8

Research has also shown that grandparents provide significant childcare support. Hawkes and Joshi (2007) found that one in four families received some kind of childcare support from grandparents and that almost all families received some kind of financial support from them. However, the greatest proportion of grandparent childcare is where grandparents (usually grandmothers) provide informal (unpaid) care usually to enable mothers to take up paid employment. Much of this childcare is provided by the maternal grandmother (Koslowski, 2009) and has been identified as being hugely important in enabling mothers to rejoin the labour force, especially those unable to afford formal childcare or work atypical hours not usually covered by formal childcare provision. Estimates of the value of this care, as cited by Koslowski (2009), range from £3,886 million a year, through £50 billion to £220 billion. In Northern Ireland there is even more reliance on informal childcare than elsewhere in the UK with grandparents providing much of this (Gray and Bruegal, 2003; Gray and Carragher, 2006). Data collected in the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey in 2004 showed that many grandparents combined caring for their grandchildren with caring for their own parents (Evason et al, 2005).

ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

The importance of participation to older people's quality of life has been highlighted in many studies with authors pointing to the significance of gender, age and ethnicity in enhancing or limiting the extent of social participation. Participation can be looked at in a number of ways and at a number of levels. Acheson and Harvey (2008) provide a comprehensive analysis of ageing and voluntary action in the north and south of Ireland. They show that in both jurisdictions there are large numbers of very small organisations working with older people. A significant development in Northern Ireland has been the setting up of the Age Sector Reference Group which has enabled the development of a more structured link to government and provides a community/ voluntary sector perspective on the views of older people. The Ageing Well Network in the South has brought together key government, academic, voluntary sector and service providers in a think-tank to contribute to the National Positive Ageing Strategy and address key challenges within a cross-sectoral framework.

Although historically older people have been viewed as politically passive, in more recent years in both the UK and Ireland there has been more mobilisation of older people around key policy issues. Whether this leads to greater political engagement of older people is a moot point. But, the growth of advocacy organisations and initiatives targeted at increasing the social and – to an extent – political participation of older people has certainly provided greater opportunity and higher visibility for older people. We may see older people becoming more politically active due to disillusionment and disappointment with the way in which older people's interests are represented by authorities and politicians. Looking at survey results there is a clear sense that older people are not adequately represented by politicians and overwhelming support for an independent body outside government that champions their needs and rights. If anything there is even more support for an active engaged older population with 88% agreeing that *Older people should stand up more actively for their own rights*.

Agreement of statements on older people's representation

	% who agree		
	Under 65	65+	All
On the whole older people are adequately represented by politicians in Northern Ireland	22	27	23
What older people need is an independent body outside government that champions their needs and rights	82	79	81
Older people should stand up more actively for their own rights	87	91	88

Over time the sense that authorities are not doing enough for older people is relatively unchanged among older people themselves. In fact the over 65s are the group perhaps more generally accepting of the efforts of the state. However among those aged under 65 feelings were running high in 2003 and they have become even stronger with almost 80% feeling that not enough is being done.

ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

Do you think that the authorities in Northern Ireland do all they should for older people, do too much, or do not do enough?

	%					
	2003			2008		
	Under 65	65+	All	Under 65	65+	All
Do all they should	18	30	20	17	32	20
Do too much	1	1	1	2	2	2
Do not do enough	72	65	71	79	64	76
(Don't know)	9	4	8	3	1	3

This pessimistic view of political representation is echoed in the South of Ireland but it is perhaps particularly interesting in the North where devolved government is still relatively new. It is a salient message for politicians throughout Ireland as the over 60s are the group which is most likely to vote (ARK, 2008).

The disenchantment with political representation may be one of the factors leading to such a high number of respondents to say that older people needed an independent body outside government to champion their rights. In November 2008 an Older Person's Advocate was appointed in Northern Ireland. This, together with the publication of an older person's strategy, is part of government's response to long standing concerns – and more visible action by organisations for older people - about the rights and participation of older people. Birrell (2009) however argues that the devolved Assembly in Northern Ireland took a cautious approach by adopting an older person's advocate initially rather than a Commissioner. In September 2009 the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister in Northern Ireland published a consultative document on the appointment of a Commissioner for Older People. The document advocates that the Commissioner should be required to work to the UN Principles for Older Persons; that their remit should mainly be with regard to people aged over 60 and that the responsibilities should include the right to conduct formal investigations (OFMDFM, 2009b).

Perhaps the most interesting results here are those which reflect the support for the empowerment of older people themselves beyond the discontent with perceived inadequate representation. There was widely expressed agreement that older people needed to organise themselves and stand up more actively for their own rights. Certainly there is considerable awareness of media campaigns on behalf of older people. Although only about a quarter of respondents in the North said that they were aware of 'media campaigns' on behalf of older people in the last 12 months, nonetheless just over a half knew about Age Awareness Week which clearly is reaching an audience. Younger people were generally more likely to be aware of such campaigns (only 12% of the 75s or over had heard of such campaigns) and it is those over 65 who are the least likely to have awareness of any media campaigns though even 39% of those over 75 had heard of Age Awareness Week.

Issues for research and policy

The perceptions of what authorities and politicians are doing for older people should be monitored. Since these surveys were conducted the economic situation has deteriorated and governments in the UK and Ireland have introduced public expenditure cuts and indicated further savings will have to be made. In Northern Ireland, where devolution is relatively

new, there was a particularly negative view of politicians and it will be interesting to see how this may or may not change. There would seem to be evidence that older people themselves feel they need to be more assertive and active in their lobbying and campaigning and that there are more groups advocating for older people. This process and the impact of it should be monitored and assessed.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

There are some distinct shifts in attitudes in attitudes towards ageing since these questions were first asked in 2003. Things in Northern Ireland look rather more positive. Respondents – both those aged under 65 and the over 65 age group are now more likely to feel that they are treated with more respect as they get older. It is still the case that a fairly sizeable number of people feel that you are treated worse as you get older, but this has diminished since 2003. In terms of how they think *older people* are treated in comparison with the rest of the population, there is an increasing sense that older people are either treated the same as others and a decreasing sense that they are treated worse.

In terms of general attitude towards older people attitudes have remained fairly stable on the whole. There is a little more of a sense that older people are admired and respected by young people although still only about a third of people actually believe this to be the case. There is however a slight tendency for negative views to be increasingly held – that older people are too set in their ways and that they are not willing to listen to younger people's views. What is most notable about these figures is not the change over time, but the overall difference in attitudes North and South. While large majorities in both jurisdictions hold generally positive attitudes towards older people, there is no reluctance in the North to express a negative attitude as well. So while people do feel that older people are younger in their ways and that society does not recognise their contribution, a majority are also prepared to say that older people are too set in their ways and sizeable numbers feel that older people are not willing to listen to younger people

The survey results highlight stark differences in opinion in public attitudes in the North and South of Ireland when it comes to state pension provision, with 87% of participants in Northern Ireland feeling that pensioners were getting a 'poor deal'. In contrast, 60% of respondents in the South felt that the pension rate was a 'poor deal' and while this is still the majority it is noticeable that the sense that the pension rate is too low in the South has diminished in the five years since 2003. Quite possibly perceptions in the South have been influenced by the context of the recession in latter times. However in the North there is such a consensus that the state pension is a poor deal that there has been no shift in this view over the last five years - despite the context of the recession. The age group most likely to consider the pension to be a reasonable deal is the over 75 age group – at 21% in North and 37% in the South. Similarly there is little change over time in the overwhelming number of people who feel that older people should be subsidised for services such as gas and electricity. The slight decline in support evident in the South is not evident in the North where there is such a widespread view that older people receive a poor deal from the state.

Perceptions of discrimination in the areas of employment, healthcare and provision of financial services have all increased over the period. This is interesting given the clear indications already reported that, in general, the public feels that older people are being treated better. However the general sense that things have become better may be because

people feel that there is now so much more talk of these issues. There is now a more educated public alert to the ways in which organisations and bodies might treat older people unfairly. If this is the case, greater reporting of discrimination may not necessarily mean that more discrimination is occurring. It is possible that the policy focus on 'equality' issues generally since 2003 has increased awareness and resulted in people being more sensitive to ageism. Incidents which would not have been defined as ageism in years gone by may now be interpreted as such. Certainly many of the survey respondents reported that they had been aware of media campaigns relating to older people such as Age Awareness Week. Nonetheless whatever is driving this finding, the changes in perceived discrimination between 2003 and 2008 are marked, both in the North and the South of Ireland.

Although the number of people who felt that they themselves had been discriminated against by an employer is quite low, it had risen slightly from 6% to 9% in the years since 2003. When respondents are asked in general terms about whether they think that there is discrimination in particular areas of employment the results show that high percentages of people perceived discrimination – contrary to the previous set of results – and there is an increase in this perception since 2003. The increasing perception of discrimination is driven largely by the changing views of the under 65s. The older group are, if anything, rather less inclined to see discrimination than they were previously but the bulk of the sample is displaying a stronger sense of discrimination than previously. So in the North of Ireland there is a slightly increased sense of personal discrimination; a significantly increased perception that family and friends have been discriminated against and the majority of people feel that older people are probably discriminated against in most areas of employment.

As in 2003, only small numbers of older respondents in 2008 felt that they themselves had been discriminated against in terms of health care. However when it comes to the perception of discriminatory behaviour against friends or family the picture is very different. The proportion of people perceiving instances where someone was treated with less dignity and respect because of their age has risen from about a quarter in 2003 to nearly a third in 2008. Even more marked is the increase in the number of people who feel that someone was not offered medical treatment because of their age – rising from 18% in 2003 to 26% in 2008. In both cases however these views are driven by the opinions of the under 65s. Older people are not seeing any significant increase here.

When respondents are asked in general terms about whether they think that there is discrimination in particular aspects of healthcare the results show that high percentages of people believe that there is discrimination and further that there has been an increase in this perception since 2003. Once again it is the under 65s who are driving this change and a full 62% of the under 65s feel that health and social care workers treat older people less well in terms of their attitudes to them.

Perceptions in relation to employment and healthcare show exactly the same patterns with increasing perceptions of general discrimination and discrimination among family and friends (driven by the views of the under 65s) though this is not accompanied by the same increase in *personal* reporting of discrimination. In contrast, the picture for financial services is slightly different where this has shown a rise from 8% to 13%. Here there is both an increasing sense that family and friends are being discriminated against *as well as* an increasing sense of personal discrimination. The numbers who felt that a family or friend had been discriminated against doubled between 2003 and 2008 from 11% to 22%.

ATTITUDES TO AGE AND AGEING IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

In terms of the perceived problems facing older people, issues to do with vulnerability and financial pressures top the list for the over 65s in Northern Ireland. Around 70% of this group list *Keeping warm in winter* and *Fear of crime* as problems facing older people. Rather fewer, though still a majority, mention *Making ends meet* and *Loneliness*. The younger group of respondents identify a broadly similar set of issues as the most commonly perceived problems, though there are some differences in perceptions here. Younger respondents underestimate the extent to which *Keeping warm in winter is an issue* for those in the older group; they also overestimate the problem of *Isolation*.

The proportion of respondents in Northern Ireland identifying *Keeping warm in winter* and *Making ends meet* as important issues is unsurprising given the dissatisfaction with the financial support provided by government and the increasing cost of fuel. The significantly fewer respondents in the South of Ireland identifying these issues perhaps reflects greater satisfaction with the benefits and additional provision older people are entitled to. What is rather striking is the very high proportion of respondents in the South of Ireland (74%) who identify isolation as an issue for older people, almost double the figure in the North. The concern about isolation is shared by those under and over 65 with 76% of under 65s and 67% of over 65s saying it was an issue for older people. Only 30% of over 65s in Northern Ireland did so. Perhaps related to the isolation issue is the higher number of respondents in the South identifying transport as an issue (31% compared to 19% in Northern Ireland).

The greatest participation in volunteering work in the North of Ireland is actually among those aged under 65. This is in contrast with the South where volunteering is highest among the 50-75 age groups. Nonetheless the contribution made by older people in terms of volunteering and informal care is substantial. Twenty one per cent of those in the 50-64 group were caring for someone outside the home on a regular basis. Similarly 17% of those aged 75 and over and 23% of the 50-64 group were helping in churches or religious organisations and similar proportions were visiting people

The survey results indicate a clear sense that older people are not adequately represented by politicians and overwhelming support for an independent body outside government that champions their needs and rights. If anything there is even more support for an active engaged older population with 88% agreeing that *Older people should stand up more actively for their own rights*. Over time the sense that authorities are not doing enough for older people is relatively unchanged among older people themselves. In fact the over 65s are the group perhaps more generally accepting of the efforts of the state. However among those aged under 65 feelings were running high in 2003 and they have become even stronger with almost 80% feeling that not enough is being done. The disenchantment with political representation may be one of the factors leading to such a high number of respondents to say that older people needed an independent body outside government to champion their rights.

The results of these surveys present a mixed picture. While perception of discrimination in some areas such as employment, health and financial services has increased, and this is concerning, there are also grounds for optimism. In Northern Ireland there is evidence of an improving situation with regard to the respect and value accorded older people and in terms of how they are treated in comparison to the rest of society. But, on the whole, attitudes in the South are more positive. Where more negative attitudes have been expressed there these tend to be by those over 65 and may relate to policy changes and discussions in that jurisdiction which have directly impacted on older people.

Greater reporting of discrimination may not necessarily mean that more discrimination is occurring. It is possible that

the policy focus on 'equality' issues generally since 2003 has increased awareness and resulted in people being more sensitive to ageism. The results in the last section of this report suggest that media campaigns have had an impact and it is possible that it is this increased awareness which is partly responsible for the higher level of perceived discrimination.

Of interest is the strength of the negative attitudes expressed by respondents in the Northern Ireland survey in their middle years. This was evident in 2003 and was clearly still an issue in 2008. Why are people in this age group more concerned than their counterparts in the South and does it tell us anything about that groups perception of what being older will be like? It is difficult to answer these questions from survey data but it would certainly be an area well worth exploring through qualitative work. It may be that, as Evason et al. suggested in 2004, people in this age group do feel financially squeezed and under pressure to fund children through higher education and provide for their own retirement; they may have caring responsibilities which impacts on labour market participation or they may be concerned about their financial security in the light of changes to pension schemes and poor return on investments. There is also no doubt that public expectations of this and subsequent generations with regard to what people will expect in terms of health care, social care and other aspects of life will be considerably higher than they are for today's older people.

As noted at the outset much of the debate about age and ageing is based on assumptions about the cost of ageing and the dependency of older people. However, as Hill (2009) has argued, even in money terms the flow of resources is not necessarily from the young to the old. He points to the movement of assets, such as housing, from the old to the young, the amount of care work for older being carried out by those who are less old, the care of grandchildren and other non-costed voluntary contributions to society. This is reflected in our survey results. While volunteering is not concentrated in the older age groups, nonetheless 21% of those in the 50-75 group in our 2008 survey were caring for someone outside the home on a regular basis. Similarly 17% of those aged 75 and over and 23% of the 50-64 group were helping in churches or religious organisations and similar proportions were visiting people.

A number of writers have looked at the power of the myths around ageing and the associated stereotypes, mostly related to progressive decline and the idea of older people as an economic and social burden (Thornton, 2002; Pickering, 2001). Angus and Reeve (2006) argue that many of the initiatives developed to combat ageism have, at their basis, the assumption that ageism is mainly the result of ignorance of the facts. This, they argue, means that such strategies have little impact on attitudes because they ignore the interests that are served by the underlying tacit agreements and vested interest that perpetuate ageist attitudes. This presents a challenge in terms of our need to understand more about what shapes attitudes and how negative attitudes and stereotypes can be addressed. Julia Neuberger (2008, p.1744) questions *'if the facts about ageing, and an expanding older population, have made us behave like frightened rabbits, caught in the glare of a car's headlights. We can see it but cannot react effectively'*. She goes on to challenge the limited perception of discrimination as mostly relating to aspects of healthcare and access to services arguing for a 'fierce grey power movement' and the need to challenge the fear we have of a society of growing old which 'makes us both unimaginative and unkind...'

While an individual's attitude to ageing may be in part the result of individual outlook we also know that the experience of ageing and quality of life of older people is affected by factors such as income, social class, ethnicity and the degree of influence which coming from a professional or managerial background with a higher income can bring. Walker points to

the considerable evidence that quality of life in old age '*...is the product of the interrelationship between structure and agency over the life course*' (Walker, 2006, p. 450).

Until recently age discrimination has not received the same sustained attention as race, gender and in Northern Ireland, religious discrimination. There may be increasing pressure for this to change as older people, as is suggested by some of these findings, mobilise and be more active in their campaigning and lobbying. In the context of the factors about factors impacting on quality of life outlined above, it could be argued that strategies to address ageism in both parts of Ireland do not adequately acknowledge or respond to the links between the issues they propose to tackle and the relationship to factors such as gender, class and race which are the focus of other government strategies.



REFERENCES

- Abrams, D, Eilola, T and Swift, H (2009) *Attitudes to age in Britain 2004-08*, Research Report No 599, London: Department for Work and Pensions.
- Acheson, B and Harvey, B (2008) *Social Policy, Ageing and Voluntary Action*, Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.
- Anderson, R, Mikulić, B, Vermeulen, G, Lyly-Yrjanainen, M, Zigante, V (2009) *Second European Quality of Life Survey*, Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.
- ARK (2009) *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2008* – available at http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2008/Political_Attitudes/VOTEGLE.html
- Birrell, D (2009) *Social Policy and Devolution*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland (CARDI) (2010) *Illustrating Ageing in Ireland north and south: Key Facts*, Belfast and Dublin: CARDI.
- Child Poverty Action Group (2009) *Child Wellbeing and Child Poverty*, London: Child Poverty Action Group.
- Department for Work and Pensions (2005) *Opportunity Age: Meeting the Challenges of Ageing in the 21st Century*, London Department for Work and Pensions.
- Department of Health (2009) *Age Equality in Health and Social Care: a consultation on preparing the NHS and social care sectors in England for the age requirements in the Equality Bill*, London: Department of Health.
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2008) *Awareness of the Age Regulations and Attitudes of the General Public In Northern Ireland Towards Age Related Issues*, Belfast: ECNI.
- Eurobarometer (2009) *Intergenerational Solidarity Analytical Report* - available at http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm
- Evason, E, Dowds, L and Devine, P (2004) *Ageism in Ireland*, Belfast: ARK – available at <http://www.ark.ac.uk/publications/occasional/AgeisminIreland.pdf>
- Evason, E, Lloyd, K, Dowds, L (2005) *Raising Grandparents*. ARK Research Update 39 available at <http://www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update39.pdf>
- Gray, AM and Horgan, G (2009) *Figuring it Out: Looking Behind the Social Statistics in Northern Ireland* Belfast: ARK – available at <http://www.ark.ac.uk/publications>.
- Gray, AM and Carragher, L (2006) *Possibilities: The Views of Lone Parents on Childcare in Northern Ireland*, Belfast: Gingerbread.
- Gray, A and Bruegal, I (2003) *The availability, Use of and Demand for Childcare services Among the Parents of Children aged 0-14 in Northern Ireland*, London: Southbank.
- Hawkes, D and Joshi, H (2007) *Millennium Cohort Study: Grandparents*, Briefing 4 June 2007.
- Hartlapp, M and Schmid, G (2008) "Labour Market Policy for 'Active Ageing' in Europe: Expanding the Options for Retirement Transitions", *Journal of Social Policy*, 37, 3, 409-432.
- Hill, M (2009) *Ageing Societies: Don't panic!*, Special Lecture delivered at the University of Ulster, 22 October 2009.
- House of Lords and House of Commons Joint Committee on Human Rights (2007) *The Human Rights of Older People in Healthcare Eighteenth Report of Session 2006-07 Volume I - Report and Formal Minutes*, London: The Stationery Office.
- Kenway, P, MacInnes, T, Kelly, A and Palmer, G (2006) *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion in Northern Ireland*, London: New Policy Institute – available at <http://www.npi.org.uk/reports/ni%20mpse%202006.pdf>
- Koslowski, A (2009) "Grandparents and the Care of Their Children", chapter 9 in Stillwell, J, Coast, E and Kneale, D (eds) *Fertility, Living Arrangements, Care and Mobility*, Springer: Netherlands.
- Layte, R (2005) *Reflections*, remarks made to the National Council of Ageing and Older People, north-south conference, Dublin 28 November 2005.
- Neuberger, J (2008) 'The Art of Medicine, The Fear of Old Age', *The Lancet*, 371, 1743-1744.

- Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (2005) *Ageing in an Inclusive Society*, Belfast: OFMDFM.
- Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (2009a) *A Profile of Older People in Northern Ireland*, Belfast: OFMDFM.
- Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (2009b) *Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland: A Consultation Document*, Belfast: OFMDFM.
- Pickard, L (2008) *Informal Care for Older People Provided by their Adult children: Projections of Supply and Demand to 2041 in England*, Report to the Strategy Unit (Cabinet Office and the Department of Health. PSSRU Discussion Paper 2515.
- Pickering, M (2001) *Stereotypes: The Politics of Representation*, Hampshire: Palgrave.
- Scottish Government (2007) *Strategy for an Ageing Population*, Edinburgh: Scottish Government.
- Surr, C Boyle, G Brooker, D, Godfrey, M and Townsend, J (2005) *Prevention and Service Provision: Mental Health Problems in Later Life*, Leeds: Centre for Health and Social Care, University of Leeds/Bradford: Centre for Dementia Studies.
- Thornton, JE (2002) 'Myths of Ageing or Ageist Stereotypes?', *Educational Gerontology*, 28, 301-312.
- Trench, A and Jeffrey, C (2007) *Older People and Public Policy: the impact of devolution*, London: Age Concern.
- UN OHCHR (1993) *United Nations International Plan of Action on Ageing*, New York: United Nations.
- Volunteer Development Agency (NI) (2007) *It's All About Time: Volunteering in Northern Ireland*, Belfast: Volunteer Development Agency.
- Volunteer Development Agency (NI) (2009) *Northern Ireland Public Policy for Older People and Volunteering*, Belfast: Volunteer Development Agency.
- Walker, A (2006) 'Extending Quality Life: Policy Prescriptions from the Growing Older Programme', *Journal of Social Policy*, 35, 3, 437-454.
- Walshe, K and O'Shea, E (2008) 'Responding to rural social care needs: Older people empowering themselves, others and their community', *Health and Place*, 14, 4, 795-805.
- Welsh Assembly Government (2003) *The Strategy for Older People in Wales 2003-2008*, Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government.
- Windle, G and Porter, A (2008) 'Policy for Older People in Wales', in T Maly, P Kennett and K Rummery, *Social Policy Review 20*, Bristol: Policy Press.

APPENDIX 1: TECHNICAL NOTE ON SURVEYS

Ireland North 2003

The 2003 survey was carried out by Research and Evaluation Services on behalf of ARK and was run as a module within the 2003 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey - for more information see www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2003/Attitudes_to_Older_People/index.html

The Postal Address File (PAF) was used as the sampling frame for the survey and a simple random sample of addresses was obtained after stratification into three geographic regions (Belfast, East of the Bann and West of the Bann). This was done to ensure the adequate representation of areas of lower population density and is standard practice in Northern Ireland social surveys. At selected addresses, a Kish grid procedure was utilised to randomly select one individual to be the subject of the survey. All interviews were conducted during the period October 2003 to February 2004. Interviewing was carried out by social survey interviewers employed by Research and Evaluation Services (RES). All fieldworkers attended one of three briefing sessions conducted jointly by RES and members of the NILT project team. All interviews were conducted in the respondents' homes. Interviewers made up to a maximum of five calls before the person identified in the sample was deemed to be 'non-obtainable'. The interview was carried out face to face using a laptop and computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI).

Table A1: Response rates for the 2008 survey

Response rates	Number	% of contacts
Completed and usable	1800	62
Refusal	499	17
Other	22	<1
Non-contact	621	21
Ineligible	43	-
	2985	100

Re-weighting the data

The data were reweighted to allow for the different probabilities of any individual being selected for interview due to household size.

Ireland North 2008

The 2008 survey was carried out by the Central Survey Unit (CSU) within the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and was run as a module within the 2008 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILT).

More information is available at www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2008/Attitudes_to_Older_People/index.html.

The sample for the 2008 survey consisted of a systematic random sample of addresses selected from the Land and Property Services Agency list of private addresses. This is the most up-to-date listing of private households and is made available to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency for research purposes. People living in institutions (though not in private households in such institutions) are excluded. A total of 2,350 addresses were selected for interview. The Land and Property Services Agency provides a good sampling frame of addresses, but contains no information about the number of people living at an address. Further selection stages were therefore required to convert the listing of addresses to a listing of individuals from which one person (the 'selected respondent') is chosen to complete the questionnaire. The interviewers listed all members of the household eligible for inclusion in the sample: that is, all persons aged 18 or over living at the address. From this listing of eligible adults, the interviewer's computer randomly selected one adult. This person, the selected respondent, was then asked to complete the interview.

All interviews were conducted during the period October 2008 to February 2009. All interviews were conducted in the respondents' homes. Interviewers made up to a maximum of five calls before the person identified in the sample was deemed to be 'non-obtainable'. The interview was carried out face to face using a laptop and computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI).

Table A2: Response rates for the 2008 survey

Response rates	Number	% of contacts
Completed and usable	1215	60
Refusal	649	32
Non-contact	150	7
Ineligible	307	-
	2321	100

Re-weighting the data

The data were reweighted to allow for the different probabilities of any individual being selected for interview due to household size.

E · S · R · C
ECONOMIC
& SOCIAL
RESEARCH
COUNCIL

 University of
ULSTER

 Queen's University
Belfast