
PSNI
SECTION 75
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT
PROTECTION OF CHILDREN
AND
VULNERABLE ADULTS



Published March 2007

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 Background	3
2. AIMS OF POLICY DEFINED.....	6
3 CONSIDERATION OF AVAILABLE DATA AND RESEARCH	8
3.1 Data and Research available on Children and Young People.....	8
3.2 Data and Research available on Vulnerable Adults	26
4 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS.....	27
4.1 Persons of Different Religious Belief	28
4.2 Persons of Different Political Opinion.....	29
4.3 Persons of Different Race	29
4.4 Persons of Different Age	31
4.5 Persons of Different Marital Status	32
4.6 Persons of Different Sexual Orientation	33
4.7 Men and Women Generally	34
4.8 Persons with a Disability and Persons Without	34
4.9 Persons with Dependents and Persons Without	35
5 CONSIDERATION OF MEASURES, WHICH MIGHT MITIGATE ANY ADVERSE IMPACT: AND ALTERNATIVE POLICIES, WHICH MIGHT BETTER ACHIEVE THE PROMOTION OF EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY.....	36
6 CONSULTATION	38
6.1 Written Responses.....	39
6.2 Responses from Focus Groups/Meetings	51
7 DECISIONS.....	54
7.1 Lack of valid and reliable data/information.	54
7.2 Under reporting of Abuse.....	54
7.2 The Child Protection Policy	57
7.3 Vulnerable Adults	58
7.4 Monitoring	59

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past, the gathering of Section 75 data by the Police Service of Northern Ireland at point of contact was considered too sensitive, believing it was impossible to do so without leading to complaints of discrimination and claims of breaches of Human Rights, (which is ironic given that Section 75 exists to prevent this). This is particularly so where the 'service' delivered by the police is often viewed as being a negative one, e.g. arresting or prosecuting an offender or carrying out a search etc.

This EQIA is based on the available data in relation to Section 75 categories in the area of Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults. Qualitative data/information is included from the consultation process, which has informed the EQIA. More importantly, as a result of carrying out the EQIA process, the PSNI acknowledge the lack of specific data in this area. We have undertaken to address the difficult issues around equality monitoring in respect of Section 75 categories and have undertaken to establish a process to provide reliable data/information for the future.

1.1 Background

In 2005 PSNI carried out an extensive examination or 'screening' of policy areas in compliance with the requirements of Section 75 Northern Ireland Act 1998. This screening process selected several policy areas, which they felt needed to be Equality Impact Assessed. One of the policies areas identified was the area of Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults. The rationale for recommending an EQIA was based on a belief that children in general and some Section 75 groups specifically, e.g. Race and Disability are not reporting child abuse. The screening also identified a joining of PSNI and its partners in respect of its approach to dealing with the investigation of abuse and training of staff in respect of Children and Vulnerable Adults. These processes were set out in shared protocols, which are equality screened.

The EQIA is directed towards the area of Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults. It should be noted that most of this policy area is based on a partnership with other agencies and bodies involved in the protection and welfare of both children and vulnerable adults. PSNI is committed to the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland for 2006-2016 established through the auspices of the First and Deputy First Minister. While PSNI has been designated with specific areas to lead on, e.g. Road Safety, other areas i.e. abuse and bullying are either lead by another agency (DHPSS in regards to abuse) or shared with other agencies and organizations. It should also be noted that most of the data and information relating to these groups is not owned by any one agency or body.

Due to this there is a sharing of most of the protocols and procedures used in this policy area and they are equality screened in that spirit of partnership. To be accurate or sufficiently reliable any analysis of data in relation to these areas also needs to be addressed in the same spirit of partnership and co-operation. While recognizing that, this EQIA attempts to identify potential adverse differential impacts in relation to the areas that are owned by the PSNI.

All aspects of investigation and training for police and their partnership agencies e.g. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) Boards, Trusts, National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) etc. are set out in what they call The Joint Protocol for Child Abuse. It is continually monitored and evaluated by all the agencies involved. It is also included in the PSNI Child protection Policy.

While the Joint Protocol provides guidance etc in relation to joint matters the PSNI Child Protection Policy is a comprehensive policy created under the guidance of a Child Protection Advisory group. This group, established solely for

the purpose of creating the policy, consisted of several partner agencies and interested organisations, the following being core members:

National Society for the Protection of Children (NSPCC)

Northern Ireland Office (NIO) - Youth Justice

Social Services Inspectorate - Child Protection Standards

Department for Health and Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS)

Children's Law Centre

Eastern Health and Social Services (EHSS) [Representative of Assistant Directors, Social Services]

In addition the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commissioner (NIHRC) and Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) were provided with copies of the PSNI Child protection Policy and submitted comment to PSNI. Those comments were addressed prior to publication and implementation of the policy in 2005.

The policy not only incorporates the investigation of abuse (as covered in the Joint Protocol for Child Abuse) but also sets PSNI core standards in respect of its dealings with Children and Young People. All other policies etc. that refer to Children and Young People will be audited to the Child Protection policy. The policy was implemented in August 2005.

The Protection of Vulnerable Adults is dealt with under the Joint Protocol for Vulnerable Adults and PSNI shares with partnership agencies in this protocol.

2. AIMS OF POLICY DEFINED

There are three clear Policies or Protocols that cover this area:

PSNI Child Protection Policy

Joint Protocol for Child Abuse

Joint Protocol for Vulnerable Adults

The basic aim of the three policies/protocols is the protection (from abuse) of Children and Vulnerable Adults. It is also directed towards benefiting Children and Vulnerable Adults who have suffered abuse through effective, efficient and client centred investigations of alleged or suspected crimes

The three policies are governed by an ethos of joint partnership, which is reflected in joint investigation and training between PSNI and its main partners, e.g. Health and Social Services Boards/Trusts and NSPCC. Through forums and various other levels of co-operation the joint protocols are monitored and evaluated.

The aims of the Child protection Policy are as follows:

- (a) This Policy aims to provide the Police Service of Northern Ireland with clear standards against which all police and police support staff's interactions with children can be measured.
- (b) Police interactions with children can be broken into two broad categories:
 - (i) Direct/indirect interaction with children as members of the community;
 - (ii) Direct interaction with children in the Justice context as either:
 - (aa) Victims of;
 - (bb) Perpetrators of; or
 - (cc) Witnesses to crime

(c) A review process, as per the Police Service Policy Directive, will be put in place to ensure that Police Service staff carry out the important responsibilities placed upon them and that all other police policy meets these standards and principles. This Policy also seeks to enhance and complement those standards already expected of Police Service staff identified in the Police Service Code of Ethics.

(d) Protecting life and preventing crime are primary tasks of the police. Children are citizens who have the right to the protection offered by the criminal law. Police have a duty and responsibility to investigate criminal offences committed against children and such investigations should be carried out sensitively, thoroughly and professionally.

(e) It is also incumbent upon Chief Officers to ensure that the investigation of child abuse is seen as being as important as the investigation of any other form of serious crime. In recognition of these facts, the Police Service of Northern Ireland has placed investigation of child abuse as a responsibility of Serious Crime Branch, Child Abuse and Rape Enquiry (CARE) Units, Crime Operations Department. Investigations of child abuse will be conducted in accordance with the 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children' document.

(f) It is important, nevertheless, that Child Protection is not seen solely as the role of Serious Crime Branch Officers, but that all police officers and support staff understand that it is a fundamental part of their duties. Police Service staff may, in all aspects of police duty, come across situations where child protection must be considered. When attending incidents of violence, especially those involving domestic violence or bullying, Police Service staff should be aware of the effect of such violence on children and the duty they have towards such children.

3 CONSIDERATION OF AVAILABLE DATA AND RESEARCH

For the purpose of clarity this report will consider the data and research available in respect of the two areas of Children and Vulnerable Adults separately. There is very little specific data in respect of Children and Young People who have been referred for investigation in terms of the various Section 75 categories. The data that is available is generic to the population and provides a pen picture of Section 75 categories from which those who may be abused or come in contact with police.

3.1 Data and Research available on Children and Young People

3.1.1 Child Abuse

There is a general perception throughout the world on the under reporting of abuse by children in all its forms. The summary of World Report on Violence and Health (2002)¹ the World Health Organisation (WHO) referred to the lack of reliable data and potential under reporting:

“Reliable data on non-fatal child abuse are equally scarce, but studies from various countries suggest that children below the age of 15 years are frequently victims of abuse or neglect that requires medical care and intervention by social services.” (P.16)

In the main report they indicated that there were various factors that influenced the type and form of abuse inflicted on children and young people, e.g. parents being single, poor, unemployed, the size of family, lack of income to meet the child’s needs, personality and behavioural traits to name but a few. The report also concluded that the amount of abuse (per head of population) was underestimated throughout the world, developed countries being no different than underdeveloped countries.

¹ World Report on Violence and Health Summary, (2002) World Health Organization, Geneva

3.1.2 Child abuse in Northern Ireland

Table 1 provides a breakdown of recorded serious offences against people under the age of 18 years in terms of male and female for 2004-05². While the more obvious offences specifically infanticide or specific sexual offences can be related directly to child abuse these figures have to be read with caution.

Table 1

	Female	Male
Class 1: Offences against the person	1964	3404
Murder / Manslaughter / Infanticide	1	3
Attempted murder / Threat or conspiracy to murder	54	61
Wounding with intent / GBH with intent / Wounding / GBH	20	130
AOABH / Aggravated assault / Common assault	1775	3096
Intimidation	17	27
Harassment	53	30
Other offences against the person	44	57
Class 2: Sexual offences	778	150
Rape	144	9
Attempted rape	13	0
Unlawful carnal knowledge of a girl under 14 yrs	13	0
Unlawful carnal knowledge of a girl 14 yrs & under 17 yrs	52	0
Indecent assault on a female	355	0
Indecent assault on a male	0	99
Indecency between males	3	4
Indecent exposure	167	21
Indecent conduct towards a child	10	5
Other sexual offences	21	12

The NSPCC in Northern Ireland have collated figures based on categories as recorded in the Child Protection Register³. Table 2 reflects those for the years

² *Statistical Report 2004-05* Police Service for Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

³ Bunting L (2004) *Key child protection statistics in Northern Ireland*, NSPCC Northern Ireland Policy and Research Unit

2001-2005. The NSPCC data does not provide analysis in terms of Section 75 categories. It is these offences that Child Abuse is generally based on.

Table 2

Number of children on the Child Protection Register at 31st March by category of abuse⁴

Category of abuse	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Neglect, physical and sexual abuse	13	11	9	11	15
Neglect and physical abuse	87	104	119	122	153
Neglect and sexual abuse	28	29	23	30	49
Physical and sexual abuse	35	32	28	31	30
Neglect (only)	526	625	651	509	554
Physical abuse (only)	340	359	376	330	316
Sexual abuse (only)	189	159	178	164	234
Emotional abuse (only)	196	212	224	220	242
All categories of abuse	1,414	1,531	1,608	1,417	1,593

Northern Ireland statistics relating to Child Abuse and Investigations⁵ shows that:

-

- o At 31 March 2005, there were 1593 children on the child protection register, a rate of 31 children per 10,000-population aged under 18, compared with 24 in England⁶, 33 in Wales⁷ and 20 in Scotland⁸.

⁴Source: Statistics of Education: Referrals, Assessments and Children and Young People on Child Protection Registers: Year Ending 31 March 2004. Department for Education and Skills (England) 2005.

http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/OnlineResources/Statistics/ChildProtectionRegisterStatistics/NorthernIreland.asp_ifega26431.html

⁵ Children Order Statistical Bulletin 2005

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/children_order_statistical_bulletin_2005.pdf

⁷ Source: Local Authority Child Protection Registers for Financial Year 2003-04 or at 31 March 2004. National Assembly for Wales 2004.

⁸ Source: Children's Social Work Statistics 2003-04. Scottish Executive 2005.

- Of the 1593 children on the register, 836 (52.4%) were boys and 757 (47.6%) were girls.
- Nine percent of children on the register were under 1 year old, with 32.9% under 5 years old.
- Almost 5% of children on the register were aged 16 & over 1

It also indicates that there has been a decrease in the number of child abuse investigations carried out by police in the last 5 years. Health and Social Service staff now carries out the majority of investigations of child abuse. During 2004/05, 2000 child protection investigations were completed, 72 more than in 2003/04.

While the figures reflect a general decrease since 2000 in the number of investigated cases of child abuse there is a general feeling by those who work in Child Protection that there is under reporting of child abuse. There is also a perception that there is a possibility of a higher level of under-reporting from some groups (e.g. minority ethnic and disability) in Northern Ireland. There is no specific statistical data at present available to support that perception.

The difficulties in under reporting by young people are reflected in a 2002 UK survey⁹ of 10 – 15 year olds. It found that only half those who had been victims of crime reported it to the police and 45% did not even tell their parents. In addition there are several reports, which highlight the difficulties that exist with interaction between police officers and young people.

Those specific reports that deal with police and youth interaction in Northern Ireland provide both positive and negative perceptions. However, in the main they report higher rates of negative perceptions than positive.

⁹ BBC News (2002) Fifth of children 'are crime victims'. Monday, 16 September, 2002.

In a 2003 study¹⁰ of young people's perspective of police accountability, young people provided what the report described as "predominately negative" responses with 24% reporting dissatisfaction with the police when asked to measure police behavior and their own experiences of that behavior. The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) commissioned research "Children's Rights in Northern Ireland" (2004) indicated that negative perceptions of police were common across the research focus groups.

On the other hand in the Children's Law Centre "Shout Out Soon" report (2004) there were several comments reflecting a desire to see more police dealing with concerns to their social surroundings, i.e.

"Some children and young people stated that the reason they did not feel safe was that there was no police (PSNI) on the streets. Children and young people suggested the PSNI needed to work with them, in their communities, in order to reduce the incidence of teenage drinking, joyriding and vandalism"; "Some children and young people suggested that if the police were more visible, they could prevent much of the substance abuse which often happens in public areas and which can make the surrounding area in which the live, feel unsafe".

Examples of comments made by children and young people were:

"We need more Police on the streets" (13 year old)

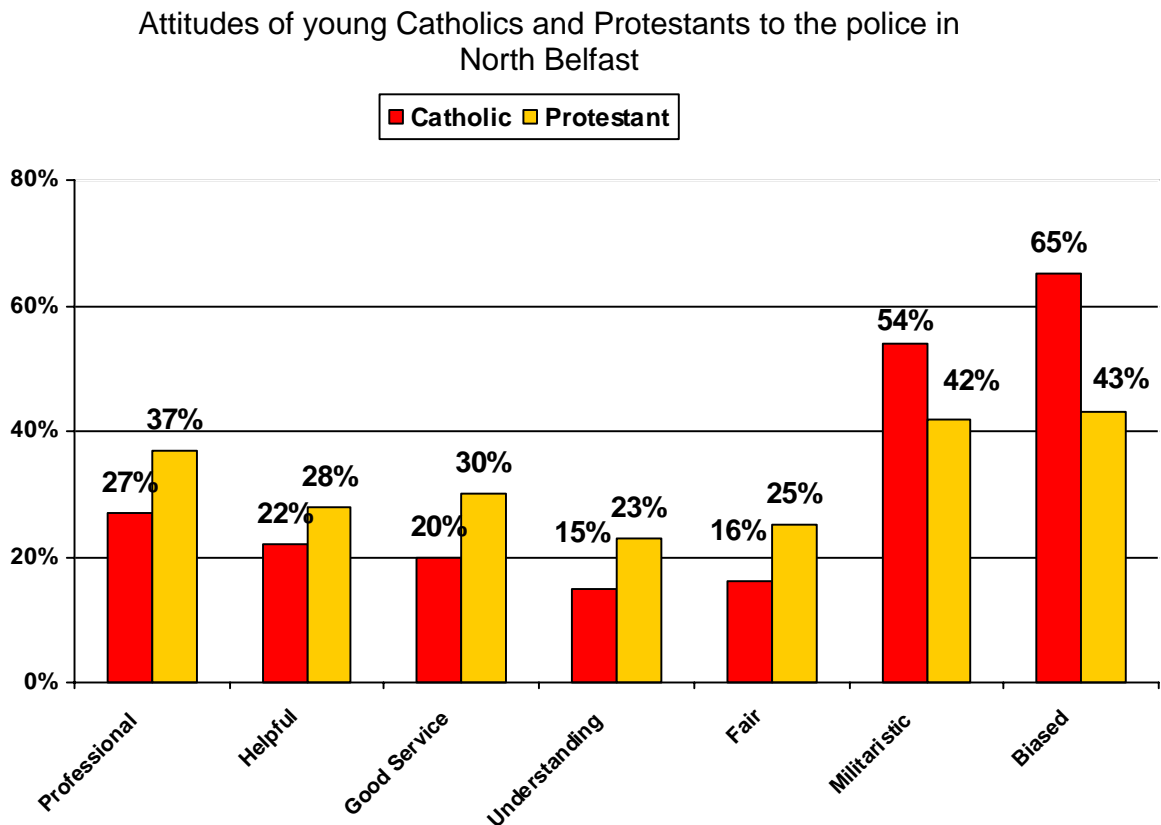
"Police need to become more involved with young people and safety on the streets" (10 year old)

"There needs to be more police on the streets to catch underage drinkers and stricter rules to make it harder for young people to get alcohol" (17 year old)

¹⁰ Hamilton, J. Radford, K and Jarman, N. (2003) *Policing, Accountability and Young People*, Institute for Conflict Research.

“There should be a harsher punishment (by police) towards people who abuse others” (18 year old on discrimination and hate crimes)

A survey of youth in North Belfast by the Policing Board¹¹ in respect of attitudes to police reflected a 6% - 22% variance across a range of perceptions of police between Protestant and Catholic youth (Chart reproduced below).



This survey not only highlights a religious variance but also reflected a variance from a geographical perspective. When perceptions of police were compared with other youth who lived outside North Belfast there were significant differences between young people who lived within and outside North Belfast in their experiences of the police, with young people outside North Belfast generally

¹¹ Byrne J, Conway M and Ostermeyer M, (2005) *Young People's Attitudes and Experiences of Policing, Violence and Community Safety in North Belfast*, Institute for Conflict Research http://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/word_docs/PDFs/YOUTH%20SURVEY.pdf

having more positive experiences. This survey suggests socio-cultural influences on young people's perceptions of police.

In a survey of pupils¹² more than a third (38%) of pupils have spoken to, or been spoken to by, a police officer in Northern Ireland in the 12 months prior to the survey, mainly through attending a talk in school relating to drugs or road safety etc. Just over half (51%) think the police in Northern Ireland treat young people very or quite fairly and 46% are very or quite satisfied with the way the police do their job. Almost one in ten (9%) of all pupils say they would be interested in joining the police in Northern Ireland when they finish their education.

While general data/research is available to indicate potential under reporting of Child Abuse this EQIA has to address its requirements in regards to the categories listed under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The following data/research was used to examine the background of children and young people in Northern Ireland and provide information from which an assessment of impact could be made.

3.1.3 Men and Women Generally

The statistics reflecting recorded crime at Table 1 indicate that females report more sexual offences than males. As can be seen certain offences are targeted in respect of assaults on females.

3.1.4 Persons of different Age

The Child Protection policy is directed towards all children and young people under the age of 18 years. In terms of Section 75 the category of age is provided for given that this policy is age specific. The Northern Ireland Census 2001 indicated a total of 451,514 under the age of 18 residents in Northern Ireland.

¹² Young Persons Behaviour and attitudes Bulletin Oct 2003 – November 2003 published June 2004

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency provided an estimated population 442,563 people less than 18 years for 2003. This was made up of 227,072 males and 215,491 females. This estimated reduction in the young population is based on a 29% to 24% fall between 1951 and 2001 for those less than 16 years of age.

Obviously it is recognized that other age groups have the potential to be impacted on as a result of these policy/protocols being implemented. Those however will be actual or potential perpetrators and the result of applying safety and security measures in relation to children and young people. The procedures and guidance in respect of these people are captured within the protocols.

3.1.5 Persons of different Religious Belief

Table 3 overleaf, replicated from a survey response of 819 16 year olds¹³, provides an indication of religious identity for young people in Northern Ireland in 2005.

Table 3

	%
Church of Ireland (Anglican)	14
Catholic	50
Presbyterian	21
Methodist	4
Baptist	1
Free Presbyterian	2
Brethren	1
Other	1
Christian - no denomination	1
Protestant - no denomination	1
Elam Pentecostal	1

¹³ Young Life and Times Survey 2005 <http://www.ark.ac.uk/y/t/2005/Background/RELIGION.html>

Other Protestant denomination	2
Non Christian	1
Not answered	1

Table 4

Sex and Religion ²	Has Dependent Children								
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
All	44	43	43	43	41	40	40	39	38
Catholics	52	52	49	48	49	47	46	43	41
Protestants	39	37	38	39	35	35	36	36	36
Base=100%	5,795	5,374	5,704	5,298	5,272	5,119	5,009	5,108	4,778
Males	43	43	42	41	39	39	39	37	37
Catholics	50	52	49	46	46	45	44	40	39
Protestants	38	37	36	38	34	35	35	34	35
Base=100%	2,732	2,503	2,686	2,468	2,470	2,406	2,328	2,379	2,260
Females	45	44	44	44	43	41	41	41	39
Catholics	54	52	50	50	51	48	48	46	43
Protestants	39	38	39	40	36	35	36	37	36
Base=100%	3,063	2,871	3,018	2,830	2,802	2,713	2,681	2,729	2,518

The Continuous Household Survey provides percentages for households with dependent children (16 and under + 16-18 if in full-time education) based on religion in terms of Protestant/Catholic. They are as shown at Table 4.

This shows a consistent reduction in Catholic juvenile population towards an equal proportion of juvenile population in respect of the traditional religious divide.

3.1.6 Persons of different Political Opinion

Estimating the political opinion of the youth population is difficult. Only 21% of young people between 12 and 18 stated that they had “quite a lot” or a “great deal” of interest in contemporary politics. Males are more likely to have a definite opinion than females.¹⁴ Table 5 provides the outcome of the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2005¹⁵ in relation to political identity for all the population.

Table 5	Catholic%	Protestant%	No religion%
Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)	0	38	8
Social Democratic & Labour Party (SDLP)	50	2	9
Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)	0	32	12
Alliance Party	5	7	18
Sinn Fein	22	0	5
Progressive Unionist Party (PUP)	0	0	1
Women's Coalition	1	2	1
Other Party (specify)	1	1	6
(None)	9	9	26
Other Answer (specify)	4	2	4
(Don't know)	8	7	11

¹⁴ M Smyth and M Scott: The Youthquest 2000 Survey: A Report on Young People's Views and Experiences in Northern Ireland INCORE 2000

¹⁵Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2005
http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2005/Political_Atitudes/index.html

Table 6¹⁶ below provides an analysis of political opinion for the age group 18 – 24 years. This provides an insight into the evolving political opinion of the 18 years and below.

Table 6

	%
	18-24
Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)	9
Social Democratic & Labour Party (SDLP)	16
Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)	16
Alliance Party	4
Sinn Fein	9
Progressive Unionist Party (PUP)	1
Women's Coalition	2
Other Party (specify)	0
(None)	28
Other Answer (specify)	2
(Don't know)	14

3.1.7 Persons of different Race

In the Children’s Law Centre 2004 report Shout Out Soon reported that from their sample of 1045 children and young people, “Ten percent (99) children and young people from the age of 5 upwards raised issues around racial and homophobic discrimination.”

¹⁶Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2005, http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2005/Political_Atitudes/NIPARTY.html

It can be a reasonable assumption that the racial background for children and young people is reflective of the general population. Table 7¹⁷ provides the census figures for 2001 in terms of ethnicity.

Table 7

Ethnic Group	Population
White	1,670,988
Irish Traveller	1,710
Mixed	3,319
Indian	1,567
Pakistani	666
Bangladeshi	252
Other Asian	194
Black Caribbean	255
Black African	494
Other Black	387
Chinese	4,145
Other Ethnic Group	1,290

The range of nationalities resident in Northern Ireland has greatly increased since this census, some quite dramatically.

Table 8 provides a breakdown of school attendance for 2000/01 in terms of racial identity.

¹⁷ 2001 Northern Ireland Census, Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency

Table 8

	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
Irish Travellers	410	153
Chinese	420	352
Indian	146	117
Pakistani	109	33
Bangladeshi	41	4
Black Caribbean	22	11
Black African	64	34
Other ethnic pupils	221	251
Mixed ethnic pupils	433	140
Total	1,866	1,095
Total No of Pupils	172,384	155,553
% ethnic pupils	1.1	0.7

Notwithstanding the fact that victim satisfaction surveys carried out on behalf of the Policing Board show levels of satisfaction of 75% in 05-06 (for victims of Hate Crime), some reports into race and policing have indicated negativity and problems at the service delivery level of policies. Examination of these reports provides indication of potential reasons for under reporting by ethnic minority groups.

The Next Stephen Laurence report¹⁸ provides an indication of problems in terms of ethnic minorities reporting incidents to police. It referred to the under reporting of racist incidents stating:

“Under-reporting is and probably will for the foreseeable future remain, a problem” (p.22)

¹⁸ McVeigh R (2006) *The Next Stephen Laurence? Racist Violence and Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland*, Research Report for Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities.

The report also highlighted reluctance in reporting due to alleged inactivity of police in responding and dealing with racist violence. In another research report¹⁹ respondents believed that young people from ethnic minorities were not engaging with police. This research also reported that half of the respondents who were victims of crime indicated that they felt satisfied or very satisfied with the service they had received. Only 9% of respondents indicated they had problems with the police.

During the consultations with ethnic groups in the screening consultation of PSNI policies some ethnic groups identified cultural problems with engaging with police. Some groups reflected on the perception of policing from their identified family/cultural origins, which was often negative and influenced not only their own view but also that of their children. The influence of extended family members among some groups was reported as high and this impacted on children's perspectives. Some youths involved in those focus groups indicated a lack of contact with police as being a reason why they would not talk to them unless it was felt necessary. This reflects the comments made in the research report referred to above, which commented on lack of engagement between young members of the minority ethnic population. The branding and image of police was also highlighted as an issue for ethnic minority groups during focus groups established by PSNI to examine reasons for low recruitment from these groups

Such influences may have a bearing on underreporting from these groups in terms of child abuse.

The general feeling among ethnic minority groups is in the main positive. This was reflected in focus groups and meetings with ethnic minority groups during the 2005 screening of policies. Only a small number of respondents to surveys in

¹⁹ Hamilton, J. Radford, K and Jarman, N. (2003) *Policing, Accountability and the Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in Northern Ireland*, Institute for Conflict Research.

respect of racial violence²⁰ indicated a feeling of racism by individual officers. It can be reasonably assumed that these perceptions are reflected in the younger ethnic minority population.

3.1.8 Persons of different Marital Status

The registrar for Deaths, Births and Marriages in Northern Ireland records marriages for 49 bachelors and 131 spinsters between 16 – 19 years for 2004. It can be assumed that a small number of young people are married.

3.1.9 Persons of different Sexual Orientation

The Children's Law Centre reference at the Youth and Race section above to the 10% of 5 year olds upwards identifying issues around both race and homophobia provides an indicator of concern from this age category. When examining the sexual orientation of young people there is no definitive figure of how many perceive themselves as members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) community. YouthNet in their report Shout (2003)²¹ provided an estimate of young people in Northern Ireland who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (LGBT).

“In a survey of young people in Northern Ireland 10.9% of men and 3.6% of women reported sex with same sex partners on at least one occasion (Schubotz et al, 2002). Based on the 2001 Census population data of 5 – 25 year olds taking the 2 - 10% possibility, this means that between 12,190 and 60,953 young people in Northern Ireland may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual.” (P.6)

²⁰ McVeigh R (2006) *The Next Stephen Lawrence? Racist Violence and Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland*, Research Report for Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities. Belfast and Radford, K , Betts, J and Ostermyer, M (2006) *Policing, Accountability and Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in Northern Ireland*, Institute for Conflict Research, Belfast

²¹ Carolan, F & Redmond, S. (2003) *The needs of young people in Northern Ireland who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (LGBT)*, Belfast: Youthnet.

A report relating to police and the LGBT community by the Police Ombudsman²² highlighted both positive and negative perceptions towards police by members of this community. Though the sample surveyed were generally adult, 30% were 18 years and under. Whilst the majority of questions related to their treatment as victims of crime or abuse this data does provide a pen picture of perceptions of police held by members of the LGBT community across all ages.

“56% of these respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the service they received from the PSNI. • 32% of respondents experienced problems with the police in the last year, of these 42% found the service from the PSNI unsatisfactory and 40% said a police officer had been impolite or rude.

- 25% of respondents who had experienced problems with the police felt these were due to their sexual orientation.” (P.6)

3.1.10 Persons with a Disability and persons without

The Northern Ireland Education and Library Boards Youth Services²³ estimate that 30,000 young people have a disability from a total population of 541,272. Disability Action advises that people with disabilities are a vulnerable, as well as a marginalised group, and on a day-to-day basis can experience prejudice and harassment. A report about sexual abuse of adults²⁴ with learning difficulties reference was made to research that indicated the incidence of abuse as being as much as four times higher than among the non-disabled population. The report also highlighted the fact that few cases are reported, few reach court and even fewer result in conviction. Mencap have during consultation expressed the view that this is likely to be replicated with children and young people with learning disabilities. Problems with reporting of crime by people with disabilities

²² Radford, K, Betts J and Ostermeyer, M (2006) Policing, Accountability and the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Community in Northern Ireland, Institute for Conflict Research.

²³ Developing the Citizens of Tomorrow (2004) Northern Ireland Education and Library Boards' Youth Services

²⁴ Behind Closed Doors, (2001) Voice/Respond/Mencap

were also highlighted by Mencap in a study of the Criminal Justice System.²⁵

The lack of understanding of a crime, reporting to a 'figure of authority' and take no further action when highlighted as causing problems. The possibility that the 'figure of authority' may well be the perpetrator is also a possibility. Mencap stated:

"A majority of people with learning disabilities who were interviewed said they would report crimes directly to the police. However a significant number expected others to report the crime. This is where problems can arise. If the victim only has one person to report such matters to, it is easy for this system to break down. It would also break down if a crime is re-categorised as something else." (P.3)

A research project examining four Social Services Departments in England and Wales [1996-1999] found that more children and young people with learning disabilities were referred because of sexual abuse. In contrast a comprehensive study in America²⁶ found that disabled children were 1.7 times more likely to be abused than those without a disability. The UK study was based on known abuse.

3.1.11 Persons with Dependents and persons without

Gauging the number of young people with dependents is difficult. In terms of young people with dependents Derek McCambley, development officer of the Northern Ireland Multiple Sclerosis Society stated,

²⁵ Barriers to Justice (1997) A Mencap study into how the Criminal Justice System treats people with learning disabilities, Mencap

²⁶ Crosse, S. B., Kaye, E. & Ratnofsky, A.C. (1993) A Report on the Maltreatment of Children with Disabilities, Washington DC: National Centre on Child Abuse and Neglect; Administration on Children, Youth and Families; Administration for Children and Families; US Department of Health and Social Services.

“There’s probably about a quarter of a million people who are carers in Northern Ireland but you couldn’t say with any degree of certainty how many young carers were part of that number”.²⁷

The Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey indicates that from a 14% identification of all surveyed as carers 9% came from the 16-29 age group.²⁸ In a UK survey²⁹ of 6,178 young carers 56% were female, 44% were male and the average age was 12. Eighty-four percent were white and the largest ethnic minority group was African-Caribbean. In this EQIA a carer group consultee felt that 5 – 10% of carers in Northern Ireland were children or young people.

3.2 Data and Research available on Vulnerable Adults

Investigations and training in respect of Vulnerable Adults are set out in a Joint Protocol for Vulnerable Adults. PSNI along with other concerned statutory and voluntary agencies share in monitoring and evaluating this protocol. This takes place under the auspices of the Vulnerable Adult Forum, which has screened and consulted on this protocol. To date none of those have identified any adverse or potential negative adverse differential impacts for any Section 75 groups.

The data and information relative to complaints of abuse etc. by vulnerable adults is spread across the agencies and bodies concerned with such matters. PSNI believes that any analysis of data/information has to be carried out in corroboration with its partner agencies.

²⁷ Young carers have an integral role in society (2000)

²⁸ Northern Ireland Continuous Survey 2005, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
http://www.csu.nisra.gov.uk/archive/Surveys/CHS/Results/12_Carers/Prevalence_of_carers_by_sex_and_age.xls

²⁹ Dearden, C & Becker, S (2004) Young Carers in the UK, Carers UK.

4 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

The assessments discussed below reflect the overall consultative approach and in the words of the Equality Commission's Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment apply 'a question of common sense' to assessment of adverse impacts. PSNI has focused on identification of potential adverse differential impacts in terms of the policies and protocols.

As stated in the introduction this EQIA has not been able to apply valid and reliable data/information relative to Section 75 categories in respect of the Children and Young People affected by the policy or protocols. This has been due to paucity of relevant data. Data/information has not been accessible from partner agencies or recorded by PSNI. This lack of valid and reliable data/information will be addressed in this EQIA and the processes that will be utilized to resolve the issue explained in Section 7.

The Child Protection Policy and the Joint Protocols are directed towards a positive impact on Section 75 groups and through its effective application promote good relations and equality of opportunity. The creation of the Child Protection Policy by means of a Child Protection Advisory Group and the partnership arrangements with other bodies and agencies involved in investigation and training in relation to abuse of both children and vulnerable adults emphasises that commitment.

The screenings of the Joint Protocols carried out under the auspices of the partnership forums have reflected a positive perspective.

There is nothing indicating an adverse differential impact as a result of the policy or protocols. The PSNI does recognize the potential for impacts but nothing appears to exist in terms of the policy having potential adverse differential impacts. The original concern in relation to the Child Protection policy relates to

the possibility that some children are not accessing the services and procedures which the policy refer to. The consultation has provided feedback in relation to the service delivery of the standards set by the policy.

In terms of impacts on Section 75 groups this EQIA has examined the potential for each group, consultation being the key element of that examination. This consultation came not only from the process employed by this EQIA but that employed during the formation of the Child Protection Policy and the consultative processes used through the screening processes utilized for the Joint Protocols. The Child Protection Advisory Group in its agreed terms of reference employed its members as conduits for consultation. This highlights the consultative nature of its formation and by doing so intended to resolve potential adverse impacts in the formation process.

4.1 Persons of Different Religious Belief

The PSNI Child Protection Policy is directed towards application to people of all religious beliefs. The screening of the joint protocols and consultation under this EQIA has not identified adverse or potential adverse differential impacts in relation to this group. There is evidence that there are negative perceptions among catholic males towards police from some surveys. However, during the consultation the ratio in terms of religion for young people attending focus groups and meetings was 6:5 Protestant to Catholic. When asked if they thought there was a difference made in their treatment as a result of their religion there were no positive responses. No reference was made to impacts or potential impacts in regards to religion in the written responses to the EQIA.

The policy was established to set core standards in relation to the protection of all children and young people and the advisory group assisted in ensuring this was reflected in the finished policy document. PSNI does not believe there are adverse differential impacts on the basis of religion in either the Child Protection Policy or the Joint Protocols. The concerns identified in relation to perceptions

from catholic youth will be referred to in the decision and monitoring sections of this report.

4.2 Persons of Different Political Opinion

It is difficult to gauge and assess impacts in relation to political opinion in regards to children and young people. There is no database available with which to do so and to try and extrapolate from other data/information may not be sufficiently reliable or valid. Difficulties in acquiring such information have been evidenced in equality monitoring strategies, e.g. monitoring of this area by Office of Police Ombudsman provided only a 3% return.³⁰ In the consultation in this EQIA there was a nil return from political groups consulted.

Nothing in the consultation has indicated that political opinion has any bearing on the application of this policy. The policy and protocols are directed towards equality of standards and a positive impact on all groups. PSNI does not believe that an adverse differential impact exists in relation to anyone from this category.

4.3 Persons of Different Race

The rationale for instigating an EQIA was based on concerns relating to a general belief that there was under reporting of abuse from children of minority ethnic groups. Those concerns have been reiterated in the consultation process.

The Child Protection Policy was formulated from a consultative process directed towards and applied across all groups. The comments made in the WHO report suggest that child abuse is consistent across the world including those in developed countries.

³⁰ Bulletin February 2006 Equality Monitoring Report, Policy and Practice Directorate, Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland,
<http://www.policeombudsman.org/Publicationsuploads/2442M%20Equality%20Monitory.pdf>

Consultation during the screening of policies in 2005 provided information in respect of some ethnic groups who indicated that contact with police officers and young people were limited. During this consultation the Indian community highlighted the family and cultural influences in regards to young people from their community. It was inferred that these influences directed children and young people away from contact with police even as a career. In 2005 focus group consultation with ethnic minority groups in relation to ethnic groups seeking employment as police officers addressed the area of perceptions of police as a service provider. It was reported that a lack of trust in the service provided by the PSNI had resulted in significant under reporting of crimes by people from ethnic minority groups in Northern Ireland.

The findings of the Next Stephen Lawrence Report [3.1.7 above] indicated that there was reluctance from minority ethnic groups to report hate crime to police. It also suggested that while there was no indication of individual racism in the contact with police there was a feeling that service delivery in regards to dealing with incidents was poor. The possibility that such perceptions could be imparted to younger members of these groups thereby affecting their confidence in reporting to police cannot be overlooked.

The minority groups responding to this consultation did not indicate there was the same problem in their communities due to the benefits coming from extended family support and their culture.

The image and branding of police in relation to some minority groups was also referred in this EQIA consultation and during some focus group consultations in policy screening in 2005. Some ethnic groups did not hold policing as a profession in high regard. This was also found in the consultation in regards to recruitment of ethnic minority groups to the PSNI. This it was felt had an impact on how police were perceived.

A Youth worker within the Chinese community felt that there were problems with outreach in respect of some members of their community. She felt that they were not necessarily reaching all young people within the community and when working with local police on outreach programmes this impacted on the success of the programme.

The perceptions of people from ethnic minority groups in relation to service delivery of these standards are noted and PSNI is concerned with addressing these issues. All these will be dealt with in the discussion and decisions made by PSNI in relation to those concerns. In terms of the actual Child Protection Policy and the Joint Protocols PSNI does not believe they have an adverse or potential adverse differential impact in terms of race. There is however potential for adverse impact when the policy is being delivered because of the perceptions of the group in relation to the police. The reasons for this could be related to socio-cultural factors in addition to the actual service being delivered by individual officers.

4.4 Persons of Different Age

The Child Protection policy relates directly to children and young people under the age of 18 so it therefore targets those of that age group. It is also directed towards a positive outcome in terms of protection of children and young people. The use of the Child Protection Advisory Group in formulating the policy reinforced that commitment. Despite the reference to the safeguards set out in the policy the use of children and young people in a covert intelligence role has been raised as an area for concern. While those are noted PSNI feels the safeguards written into the policy with the premise that the safety and security of the child or young person comes first are adequate. Adults can be used as Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS) with the added safeguards and PSNI does not believe that the policy has an adverse or potential adverse differential impact on this group.

The Vulnerable Adult Joint Protocols refer to a range of ages but nothing has been observed or highlighted by consultation through the joint forums to indicate an adverse or potentially adverse differential impact as a result of the policy or these protocols.

4.5 Persons of Different Marital Status

While there is a possibility that married people may be included within those covered by the Child Protection policy nothing within that policy is specifically directed towards those within this group. There is a generic application of rights and responsibilities in regards to people as members of the 18 and below group.

The reporting of the presence of children and young people in a domestic violence situation under the PSNI Youth Diversion Scheme does have the potential to impact on persons of married status. Adults involved in the domestic violence situation face potential impact by reason of their connection with the child or young person. The rationale for referral is, however, based on the protection of the child/young person. Social services are notified of all referrals.

The potential for officers to identify indicators of abuse was raised during consultation in this EQIA. At present PSNI along with various agencies within the Homefirst Health Trust area (Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne) have developed a partnership approach to:

- Encouraging earlier and increased reporting of domestic incidents;
- Assessing the risk presented to victims;
- Managing the risk and safety planning for the victim and any children;
- Reducing repeat victimization;
- Sharing information.

This was a 6 month pilot which commenced in 1st April 2006 and ends on 30th September 2006. Its emphasis is on early intervention, offender focused police action and subsequent safety planning for victims. This is at present being

evaluated. This approach provides a common risk assessment format Understanding Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI) for all agencies. The Department of Health will be applying this approach to all vulnerable children and officers will become more aware of identification of risk factors and indicators of abuse as this is imparted to the whole service. The early identification of vulnerable children is therefore important to all agencies and PSNI

Persons of marital status or otherwise are included within those covered by the Joint Protocols for both Children and Vulnerable Adults. Again nothing has been identified from this EQIA or the consultations completed for screening of these protocols that indicate an adverse or potential adverse differential impact as a result of the policy or protocols. Again there is always the potential for adverse impact in terms of delivery of this policy but the application of commonality across all agencies in identifying indicators of risk will improve the early identification of vulnerable children and young people.

4.6 Persons of Different Sexual Orientation

The data/research referred to earlier in this report referred to the estimates of the number of young people who consider themselves as members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community in Northern Ireland.³¹

It follows that young people from the LGBT community have the potential to be adversely impacted in this area. The Child Protection policy in its set of principles states:

“Actions taken by agencies must be considered and well informed so that they are sensitive to and take account of the child’s gender, age, stage of development, physical or mental disability, religion, culture, language, race and, in relation to adolescents, sexual orientation;”

³¹ Shout (2003) Research into the needs of young people in Northern Ireland who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (LGBT), YouthNet as commissioned by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland.

Since the Child Protection Policy's inception no evidence or indicators have been identified which reflect an adverse or potential adverse differential impact on members of this group. No evidence or indicators have been identified through the screening process to show that an adverse or potential adverse differential impact exists within the Joint Protocols. For these reasons PSNI does not believe that an adverse or potential adverse differential impact exists as a result of the policy or protocols.

4.7 Men and Women Generally

The application of the Child protection policy is directed towards people of both genders in a spirit of equality and through effective application hopes to engender better relations between groups and the police in general.

The data/research indicates that females are more likely to be the victims of the type of offences related to sexual crime. Many are specifically related to females. There is nothing however to indicate that this is the result of the Child Protection Policy or Joint Protocols.

Nothing from this EQIA provides evidence or indicators, which signify adverse or potentially adverse differential impacts.

4.8 Persons with a Disability and Persons Without

The Child Protection Policy has been formulated to provide for equality provision across all groups including those with disability and those without. Some comment was made in relation to the possibility that some children and young people with disabilities may not fully understand the processes for reporting abuse or recognize they are being abused. Research [3.1.10] also suggests that there is significant underreporting from this group of children and young people.

PSNI believes the Child Protection Policy and the joint Protocols provide standards and guidance for officers in relation to their interactions with children and young people and vulnerable adults from all groups. Concerns have been raised as to whether those are being met but that relates to other organizational areas, e.g. training.

PSNI does not believe that the Child Protection Policy or the Joint Protocols have an adverse differential impact on members of this category. While the policy may not adversely impact on this group the potential for adverse impact may occur for this group during delivery of services. The reasons for underreporting from this group need examined and any potential causes as a result of service delivery by PSNI will need addressed.

4.9 Persons with Dependents and Persons Without

The Child Protection Policy was created to provide for equality across all groups including those with and those without dependents. There was nothing during the initial policy creation to indicate that an adverse or potential adverse differential impact existed with this group. However, the consultation process from this EQIA has identified issues around those children and young people who are care providers for dependents. The identification relates not only to recognition of them as a specific sub-group but in regards to them as being potentially abused as a result of their position as responsible carers.

PSNI does not believe the Child Protection Policy or the Joint Protocols have an adverse differential impact on members of this category. While the policy is directed towards a positive impact the potential for adverse impact does exist as a result of factors i.e. lack of recognition of members of the group, access to services, communication barriers.

5 CONSIDERATION OF MEASURES, WHICH MIGHT MITIGATE ANY ADVERSE IMPACT: AND ALTERNATIVE POLICIES, WHICH MIGHT BETTER ACHIEVE THE PROMOTION OF EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY.

The Child Protection policy sets out the standards required for interaction with children and young people by police. It includes the procedures and protocols established in partnership with associate agencies and organizations for investigation of Child Abuse. As previously highlighted it was formulated in conjunction with a Child Protection Advisory Group staffed by concerned organizations and agencies and other children rights groups. They all provided comment and advice prior to its publication and other organizations, e.g. Human Rights Commissioner, NI Commissioner for Children and Young People were also provided with an opportunity to comment.

Having been informed by that process the policy is therefore considered to be reasonably comprehensive and reflective of the rights and needs of children and young people. The rationale for implementing an EQIA was to establish if there was anything that the policy could do to address a belief that there was under reporting of abuse by children and young people. No adverse impact was identified when the data/research available relating to the target population was examined so no measures or alternative policy were considered.

PSNI recognize the potential for adverse impacts. The possible under reporting or the concerns in relation to people with learning difficulties were highlighted but nothing from analysis of data/information relating to the policy/protocols available indicated evidence of those impacts as a result of the actual policy. These would appear to relate to service delivery rather than policy and the concerns are noted and will be addressed in this EQIA.

The consultation paper relating to this EQIA has highlighted the concerns and has sought the views and perceptions of interested parties relating to them and

the identification of potential evidence or indicators. Those identified are listed above.

6 CONSULTATION

A consultation process was employed which attempted to reach and engage not only those the policy impacts on, but those who had an interest in and direct involvement with the specific groups the policy is directed towards.

A twelve-week period of consultation was set-aside for this EQIA, which ran from the 7th July 2006 to 29th September 2006. A public notice of the EQIA, its accessibility, timescale and contact details was published in the Belfast Telegraph, The Newsletter and the Irish News. That notice also included the offer of a meeting for any one who wished it. Five hundred letters providing full details of the EQIA, access to supporting documents, (specific formats provided when requested) timescale and relevant contact details were sent to organizations, agencies and individuals. In addition, a total of 6 focus groups were established, three with children and young people and three with a sample of agencies, community workers, parents and victims to attend (in this document the latter focus groups are referred to as mixed focus groups). In many areas difficulty was encountered in obtaining permission of parents for young people to attend focus groups. In all focus groups the permission and voluntary co-operation of each young person was sought.

A general mix of young people attended the focus groups. The ratio in terms of religion for young people attending focus groups and meetings was 6:5 Protestant to Catholic. They came from a range of social backgrounds and included young people with learning disabilities. Twenty children and young people focus groups attended focus groups 6 in two of them and 8 from a residential home in another.

A total of 26 meetings were held which included 4 meetings with young people and 1 with a mother and son. The majority of the meetings were with individual members of staff from agencies or representatives of relevant agencies as listed

below. Three of the meetings were with two or three members of staff. The total number of people who attended meetings is as follows: -

Adults - 27

Children and Young People - 4

Organisations/agencies etc. represented on mixed focus groups and meetings were as follows:

Youth Justice Agency	Chinese Community
Probation Service	Local Schools – Principals and
Social Services	Deputy Principals
NIACRO	Teachers
Local Health Boards	Community Workers
Education and Welfare Officers	Youth Workers
Indian Community	Residential Homes
Disability Action	Parents

6.1 Written Responses

In total 8 written responses were received in respect of this EQIA. Two of them, Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, offered no comment while the other 6 commented as follows:

Respondent	Responses and PSNI Response
6.1.1 British Irish Rights Watch	<p>Response</p> <p>For the most part the policy falls outside the remit of their organization. They do, however, want to raise their serious concerns about the use of children as covert intelligence sources or informers as outlined in the Child Protection Policy.</p>
	<p>PSNI Response</p> <p>The provision of guidelines in respect of the use of children and young people for covert intelligence is taken directly from the Association of Chief Police Officers guidelines. The need for the highest approval and the welfare and protection of the child or young persons within those guidelines emphasizes the importance placed on the decision making process. PSNI are committed to ensuring those ideals are maintained and the use of children or young people in such situations will only take place after long and careful consideration takes place in accordance with the ACPO guidelines. The International Standards in relation to children and young people and the Human Rights of the child or young person will remain paramount to the consideration of the implementation of this type of police action.</p>

Respondent	Responses and PSNI Response
6.1.2 North West Institute for Further and Higher Education	<p>Response</p> <p>Felt that the policy adequately deals with the child protection issues, which are relevant to Children and Young People in Northern Ireland.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The policies/protocols possibly have a different impact on disability and minority ethnic groups from a reporting perspective. 2. They do not believe they have an adverse impact on any group belonging to any of the Section 75 categories.
	<p>PSNI Response</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PSNI share the Institutes thoughts that the policy/protocols possibly have a different impact on disability and minority ethnic groups from a reporting perspective. This appears to reflect the initial concerns raised by the original screening and the consultative process employed for policy screening of policies in 2005. 2. PSNI note the views of the Institute in relation to lack of adverse impact.

Respondent	Responses and PSNI Response
6.1.3 Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland	<p>Response</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Ombudsman's office receives a very small number of complaints relating to child protection or vulnerable adult issues. They feel that on this level it would seem that the PSNI policy is proving to be effective. 2. They are not in a position to comment on underreporting of child abuse but the general alarm at levels of domestic violence in Northern Ireland make it imperative to have strong policies and monitoring in these areas.
	<p>PSNI Response</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The comments relating to the small number of complaints provide an indicator of the effectiveness of the policy/protocols. 2. PSNI agree with the comment that there needs to be strong policies and monitoring of such areas of policing. It is for that very reason the Child Protection Policy was formulated using a collaborative approach through the Child Protection Advisory Group. The policy provides a comprehensive policy establishing the baseline for police officers in their interactions with Children and Young People.

Respondent	Responses and PSNI Response
6.1.4 Children's Law Centre	<p>Response</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is unequivocal that direct consultation with children and young people is central to ensuring compliance with section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and also that any failure to consult directly with those directly affected by the policy, in this case children and young people will amount to a breach of the PSNI's statutory obligations under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. 2. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 has been in operation for six years now, yet the complete absence of data in the consultation document, statistical or otherwise would tend to indicate that none of this data is being collated. 3. Concerned that there appears to be absolutely no disaggregated data which exists in relation to most of the nine groups categorized under Section 75 and are challenged as to how a proper EQIA can be carried out in the absence of such data.
	<p>PSNI Response</p> <p>The concerns of the Children's Law Centre are noted by the PSNI. Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults in terms of investigation and training is dealt with under Joint Protocols with partner agencies and any assessment of that area should be carried out in the spirit of partnership and collaboration. The Protocols were included in the consultation paper to allow respondents the opportunity to air their views even though PSNI does not have sole ownership of the protocols.</p> <p>In relation to the other observations on the EQIA the following comments are made:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The consultation process employed in the EQIA directly engaged with a representation of children and young people and across a wide range of individuals and organizations that work closely with them.

Respondent	Responses and PSNI Response
6.1.4 Children's Law Centre (Continued)	<p>2&3 PSNI accepts that valid and reliable data in regards to Section 75 categories in the area of Child Abuse and other areas in respect of Children and Young People has not been collected and collated.</p> <p>PSNI are attempting to address this issue by establishing an effective, efficient, valid and reliable means of achieving a Section 75 analysis of all of its various databases and information systems. It is also examining a process by which Section 75 data/information will be collected at an early point of police/public contact. These are explained in Section 7 of this report.</p>

Respondent	Responses and PSNI Response
61.5.Triangle Housing Association	<p>Response</p> <p>Triangle believes the Child Protection Policy adequately deals with the child protection issues, which are relevant to Children and Young People in Northern Ireland.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The groups that young people can disclose abuse to can be on the periphery of child protection and they would benefit from PSNI contact; awareness training and support to ensure children and young people are encouraged and supported to disclose abuse and that disclosures are handled properly. 2. Feel there is under reporting of child abuse within Learning Disability e.g. dependency, physical disability, limited verbal communication, potential stresses associated with care and support etc. This can only be addressed through a multi-disciplinary approach. 3. The policies define abuse but do not address Discriminatory Abuse which impacts on vulnerable people with a learning disability. It may be covered in Section 2.3 of the policy 'The violation of an individual's human and citizenship rights'. 4. There is no Vulnerable Adults policy however; the PSI may deem the Vulnerable Adults Protocol sufficient. 5. Unsure that there is quantifiable evidence or research to support the fact that policies and protocols improve good relations between different groups.

Respondent	Responses and PSNI Response
6.1.5 Triangle Housing Association (Continued)	<p>Response (continued)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Section 5.1 of the Vulnerable Adults Protocol exhorts practitioners to look at Capacity and Consent. While the Mental Capacity Act 2005 does not apply to NI its principles are likely to influence medical law and practice. People with a learning disability should always be able to make their own decisions unless there is proof that they cannot make a decision themselves. There is however recognition of the tensions between empowerment and control/protection. 7. Questions whether the PSNI should publish a User-Friendly/accessible Vulnerable Adults Protocol and Child Protection Policy.
	<p>PSNI Response</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PSNI agrees that work with periphery groups is important and recognized. PSNI have participated in conferences/workshops on Child Protection that have been organized by the NI Volunteer Development Agency. The participants come from a wide range of voluntary groups including many church based organizations across NI. PSNI in conjunction with the NSPCC are organizing a Child Protection conference, the target audience being sporting organizations and local groups and individuals, e.g. coaches. 2. The compounding factors, relating to children with learning disabilities interacting with police over matters of child abuse, are covered under the auspices of the 'Protocol for Joint Investigation by Social Workers and Police Workers in the Cases of Child Abuse – NI'. Practical measures relating to learning disabilities and the engagement of other persons and methods can also be accessed in the document Achieving Best Evidence.

Respondent	Responses and PSNI Response
6.1.5 Triangle Housing Association (Continued)	<p>PSNI Response (Continued)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. PSNI believes that Discriminatory Abuse is covered in Section 2.3 of the Joint Protocol. 4. PSNI believe that the Joint Protocol for Vulnerable Adults covers the protection and investigation of complaints of abuse. In addition to the Joint Protocol for Vulnerable Adults the PSNI Policy Dealing with Victims and Witnesses also covers vulnerable victims and provides direction in this respect. The PSNI are also represented on the Vulnerable or Intimidated Witnesses Steering Group, which is chaired by the NIO Criminal Justice Policy Division. This provides for an inter-agency forum (both public and private sector representatives) to examine best practice initiatives and create debate on revision of existing policy etc within the various representative bodies. Additionally there is the Regional Adult Protection Forum, which the PSNI are represented upon. In September 2006 a new document was published and is to be distributed throughout NI. This was endorsed at Ministerial level and is named 'Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults'. This document provides for the promotion of adult protection including policy and procedures to be adopted. Within this document full referral is made to the Joint Protocol procedures currently adopted by the PSNI and Social Services. This document is available on the internet at each of the four Health Boards web sites i.e. www.ehssb.n-i.nhs.uk

Respondent	Responses and PSNI Response
6.1.5 Triangle Housing Association (Continued)	<p>PSNI Response (Continued)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. PSNI accept the comment in relation to being able to reliably and accurately assess improvement in good relations. It does, however, believe that the Child Protection Policy by setting standards for police officers will have a beneficial effect on relationships between police and some groups in society. This will have a knock on effect on relationships between groups in general. 6. PSNI recognizes the need for all levels of disability to be heard especially in relation to decisions relating to them. The area of capacity is complicated and the recently published and released 'Bamford Report' into Mental Health and Learning Disabilities has alluded to this subject. Certain recommendations were also made in this regard and new legislation is under review via NIO in this respect. PSNI feels that the concerns raised will be dealt with via that review and through the auspices of the Vulnerable Adult Forum. 7. The provision of user-friendly policy documents for a range of groups is available at present if requested. The commitment to provide such material is within the PSNI Equality Scheme.

Respondent	Responses and PSNI Response
6.1.6 MENCAP	<p>Response</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a growing concern about the likely underreporting of abuse taking place against a number of groups, including disabled people. There is widespread acceptance that there is likely to be very serious under-reporting amongst people with a learning disability of all ages of abuse. 2. The reasons why adults with a learning disability are vulnerable to abuse are just as relevant for children with a learning disability - e.g. continuing dependency on others, - including for some a need for intimate care, - a lack of awareness of rights, lack of information about appropriate sexual boundaries/relationships, communication difficulties, difficulties in understanding, difficulties for some in giving consent and the fact that some people with a learning disability may also want to comply with other people's wishes leaving them open to manipulation. 3. The abuse is further compounded by the fact that children and adults with a learning disability do not get equal access to the justice systems that operate to investigate, and take forward incidents of abuse. 4. While there are reports which highlight how few adult cases are reported, few reach court and even fewer result in conviction there is no known equivalent in respect of children.

Respondent	Responses and PSNI Response
6.1.6 MENCAP	<p>PSNI Response</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PSNI note the comment and confirmation that there is widespread concern of under reporting of abuse particularly as it refers to disabled people. 2. Presentation of the reasons for such underreporting is also appreciated and this informs the EQIA process especially the decision making process. PSNI is committed to ensuring that it contributes to ensuring those who are abused are provided with safe and secure access to relevant services and agencies whenever they are abused. 3. The comments in relation to those abused from the disability category gaining equality of access to the justice system are particularly noted. PSNI believes it must not only ensure its own accessibility is improved but also works in partnership with other agencies to ensure there is continuity of approach in this area. 4. The lack of information in relation to children from the disability category is noted and PSNI feels it should highlight this anomaly in partnership with other agencies. Through cooperation and the provision of valid and reliable data/information a realistic picture of what is happening can be established.

6.2 Responses from Focus Groups/Meetings

Responses from focus groups and meetings were similar to those identified in the written responses in regards to the Child Protection Policy and Joint Protocols.

6.2.1 Under Reporting of Abuse

The lack of data/information to substantiate an under reporting and the belief that there was under reporting was a common theme in responses.

There was also a perception that there were factors that influenced reporting of abuse. Children and young people felt it would be difficult for most young people to admit to abuse, quoting “embarrassing”; “fear”; “won’t be believed” as reasons. In terms of reporting to police they felt the image of the authoritative figure in uniform as being ‘off putting’, “The sight of the uniform frightens me no matter what they do”. Those who had experiences of Youth Diversion Officers felt they could approach them but this was due to trust and relationships, “I would go to Wendy (Youth Diversion Officer) if I had any problems”; “The youth diversion guys are in plain clothes and that makes them easier to talk to”.

The focus groups and meetings involving agency and organization staff generally felt there was little to indicate the depth of under reporting and reflected a belief that it existed. The minority groups responding did not feel there was the same problem in their communities due to the benefits coming from extended family support and their culture. The image and branding of police in relation to some minority groups was also referred to. Coming from the cultural influences of their racial group, policing as a profession was not held in high regard. This it was felt had an impact on how police were perceived. A Youth worker within the Chinese community felt that there were problems with outreach in respect of some members of their community. She felt that they were not necessarily reaching all

young people within the community and when working with local police on outreach programmes this impacted on the success of the programme.

The teachers, vice-principals involved in the focus groups and meetings feel there is now more access available to children within the school environment. An increase in pastoral care, the provision of qualified counselors combined with educational awareness they feel is having an impact in encouraging children in coming forward to report abuse. One teacher involved in teaching young people in a youth justice situation felt there were difficulties for young people dealing with sexual orientation awareness.

Some suggestions were provided in relation to encouraging children or young people to report abuse. The use of outreach programmes were suggested, which would raise awareness of services, sensitivity and support that is available to those reporting abuse. Teachers and some of the young people suggested using police officers involved in schools as a way of educating children and young people. A member of the clergy suggested a better liaison between counselors (where available) in schools and Youth Diversion Officers as a way of ensuring a listening ear for children and young people who may have concerns or fears about talking to police. All the members of the clergy referred to the work being carried out through schools in relation to providing access to help and advice for children and young people.

A meeting with a representative 'carer' organization indicated that there were issues around young 'carers'. There was no recognition of the responsibilities and potential harm these young people may suffer in terms of neglect, physical and mental abuse. Some of the expectations placed on these young people could be classed as abuse. This was raised as a concern, which it was felt more research and consultation were needed through a multidisciplinary approach.

6.2.2 Child Protection Policy

Those attending the mixed focus groups and meetings had generally nothing negative to say about the Child protection Policy

In the focus groups and meetings with young people when asked what children and young people expected from a police service in Northern Ireland, protection and safety was highlighted as the main expectations. While there were some general comments about “perverts” and “Pedos” some young people referred to personal examples of what they meant by safety and protection, i.e.

“When I walk home some nights there are a lot of drunks about and they scare me” (17 year old female)

6.2.3 Use of Child or Young Person in Covert Intelligence

When asked about the use of Children or young people in a covert intelligence situation the initial responses from young people were generally positive with the terms “perverts, yes” used. Asked to consider this further, concerns around safety were voiced with cultural/historical reference made to the use of such tactics, e.g. “wouldn’t want to be seen as a tout” and “your family wouldn’t be safe” Agency staff, community workers etc respondents from focus groups and meetings voiced immediate concern about this approach but on reflection did feel there might be extenuating circumstances where it might be needed, e.g. “pedophilia”. A member of the clergy stated, “I don’t think we can ever underestimate the problem with pedophiles”. The protection and safety of the child or young person was voiced as paramount. Reference was made to the experience of being involved in such a situation having serious circumstances for the participant. These related to psychological harm and the potential for physical harm should a paramilitary group, criminal organization or a criminal be connected with this use of the child or young person.

7 DECISIONS

The time and effort taken by respondents in providing feedback to this consultation is appreciated by the PSNI. In responding PSNI wishes to signify its commitment to taking on board those comments made and their use in deliberation of decisions in regards to this EQIA.

7.1 Lack of valid and reliable data/information.

PSNI recognises the lack of data in respect of Section 75 categories with regards to this policy area. Steps are being taken to rectify this problem by establishing an effective, efficient, valid and reliable means of achieving a Section 75 analysis of all of its various databases and information systems.

Action 1 – Equality & Diversity Unit will by July 2007 scope out the work required to introduce the collection of Section 75 data/information at the point of contact between police and public in regards to all requests for a police service.

Action 2 – The Police Service of Northern Ireland will establish a process to provide reliable data/information on the sect 75 groups by Jan 2008. (Any introduction of Equality Monitoring into PSNI must be mindful that this information may be of use to other Public Bodies within the Criminal Justice System and hence compatible with for example Causeway as well as National Police Records).

7.2 Under reporting of Abuse

The aim of the Child Protection Policy is to provide standards for police officers in both investigation of complaints of abuse and interaction with children and young people. Under reporting does appear to an area for concern but there is nothing to indicate that the PSNI policy has an impact on this. Reasons for under-reporting from any group may apply across a range of policy areas and needs to

be identified and addressed as part of an overall engagement strategy. In relation to Child Protection and in line with the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland for 2006-2016, PSNI see this as being best done as part of a multi-disciplinary approach.

PSNI are concerned about the potential impact the factors, which prohibit reporting, may have on groups and are keen to engage with any group or organization in regards to this concern. From the consultation there is general agreement among respondents that the Child Protection Policy addresses the issues around Child Protection. The suggestions of outreach and awareness raising strategies to counter potential under reporting are appreciated but PSNI feels this should be approached from a multi-disciplinary perspective. As highlighted in the response to Triangle Housing Association, PSNI have participated in joint conferences and workshops and are in the process of organizing a conference with the NSPCC targeting sporting organizations, local groups and individuals, e.g. coaches. In regards to the general under reporting of child abuse and possible vulnerable adult abuse, PSNI is committed to working in partnership to resolve this phenomenon.

Action 3 – Community Safety Branch by June 2007 will raise the concerns about under reporting with partner agencies and seek collaboration in examining the issues, rationales and potential outreach programmes to counter this phenomenon.

The emphasis on the perceived under reporting was on ethnic minority groups and those with disabilities. The comments from Mencap have highlighted the perceived significant under reporting from those with learning disabilities. PSNI have already explored issues around communication and access for some disability groups in cooperation with specific agencies. PSNI in conjunction with Mencap published and distributed a booklet for people with learning disabilities to educate and raise awareness of how they can communicate with and access

services of the police. Community Safety Branch would like to build on this and enhance communications to and for this group.

Action 4 – Community Safety Branch will liaise with Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities to consider the need to organise a conference on Child Abuse by July 2007.

Action 5 - Community Safety will liaise with MENCAP and other organizations representing people with disabilities to consider if there is a need to organise a conference in respect of Child Abuse and the problems encountered by this group in reporting by March 2007.

Action 6 – Community Safety will highlight this issue at both Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Forums such as the VVIW Steering Group by March 2007.

Community Safety Branch is grateful for the comments relating to the concerns regarding the position of young carers. This is something that should be examined but needs to be done so through partnership with relevant agencies and organizations, statutory and voluntary. The carer organization referred to the need for a multi-disciplinary approach. The need to engage with relevant organizations and young carers is important to advancing this issue.

Action 7 – Community Safety will by March 2007 liaise and consult with relevant organizations and individuals concerned with young carers with a view to examining the issues and concerns. This data/information will be raised at both Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Forums by July 2007 with a view to initiating action in regards to any issues.

Training for police officers in awareness of child abuse and its many forms, responding to reports or suspicion of abuse, investigation and availability of advice and support is being provided. This includes identification of signs and

symptoms of possible abuse. The introduction of the UNOCINI risk assessment process will provide a common approach to the multi-agency approach to Child abuse.

7.2 The Child Protection Policy

The Child Protection Policy is established to provide the baseline or core standards for interaction and involvement between policy and young people up to the age of 18 years. Community Safety Branch welcomes the general comments on the effectiveness of the policy.

The use of children and young people in covert intelligence has been referred to in the responses. Community Safety Branch notes the concerns raised by respondents in regard to this area. Community Safety Branch does however believe that this form of investigation may be appropriate and that the ACPO Guidelines provide appropriate direction for those approving and engaging in such forms of policing methodology.

The police service in Northern Ireland has a history of pursuing interaction and engagement with children and young people. The Community Safety Branch, as it is now known, have either independently or in partnership with other agencies and organizations (statutory and voluntary) established, organized and/or participated in schools liaison programmes, conferences, seminars and cross community projects etc. The Community Safety Branch URZONE website is targeted towards children and young people to provide advice and direct access to the service. It includes a facility for participants to air their views and concerns and get answers to queries.

Action 8 – Community Safety Branch will by February 2007 establish Independent Advisory Groups (IAGS) in respect of children and young people. These IAGs will provide a platform to regularly measure the perceptions and views of Children and Young People in relation to policing related issues.

Action 9 - Community Safety Branch will annually review relevant data/information available in respect of the perceptions of children and young people in regards to police and the service provided. This view will inform communication strategies and training.

7.3 Vulnerable Adults

As stated in the response to Triangle Housing Association PSNI believes that the present Joint Protocol for Vulnerable Adults adequately covers the protection and investigation of complaints of abuse from Vulnerable Adults. In addition to the Joint Protocol for Vulnerable Adults the PSNI Policy Dealing with Victims and Witnesses also mentions vulnerable victims and provides direction in this respect. The PSNI are also represented on the Vulnerable or Intimidated Witnesses Steering Group, which is chaired by the NIO Criminal Justice Policy Division. This provides for an inter-agency forum (both public and private sector representatives) to examine best practice initiatives and create debate on revision of existing policy etc within the various representative bodies. Additionally there is the Regional Adult Protection Forum, which the PSNI are represented upon. In September 2006 a new document was published and is to be distributed throughout NI. This was endorsed at Ministerial level and is named 'Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults'. This document provides for the promotion of adult protection including policy and procedures to be adopted. Within this document full referral is made to the Joint Protocol procedures currently adopted by the PSNI and Social Services.

Though the investigation of abuse is covered by the Joint Protocol PSNI note the concerns raised in relation to the potential for under reporting among people with disabilities of all ages. Disability Action and Mencap referred this to during consultation of this EQIA.

Action 10 – Community Safety Branch will by May 2007 liaise with MENCAP and Disability Action in regards to the perceived phenomenon and raise the outcome of those meetings with the Vulnerable Adult Forum

7.4 Monitoring

While no adverse differential impacts have been identified as a result of the EQIA process a number of actions have been decided on that will enhance the policy and equality of opportunity and good relations. These will be monitored and assessed after twelve months. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be employed in this process.

The commitment to introduce Section 75 equality monitoring of policing services as they are delivered to the community has been made a direct result of this EQIA. The Policing Plan 2007 - 2010 has been amended to include the introduction of equality monitoring at point of contact during 2007 –2008, progress on the implementation of this will be monitored by the Policing Board.