# leading from behind

## an agenda for change in east belfast

March 2001

# Contents

contents

# Acknowledgements

**Thank you very much indeed to the many people who contributed to this local neighbourhood research project, in various ways, including:**

**The Research sub group of East Belfast Community Workers Forum** including neighbourhood key workers (see below), and East Belfast Community Development Agency (EBCDA) & Capacity Building Programme staff. We also acknowledge the contribution of former members Jean Halliday, (deceased, The Bridge), Tommy O'Reilly (Belfast City Council), Nicola Skinner (formerly with EBCDA) and Sara Tibbs (formerly with Community Drugs Awareness Project).

**Staff at East Belfast Community Development Agency** including Maggie Andrews (Director) and Christine Acheson (Community Participation Worker).

**Capacity Building Programme consortium members & staff** including E-J Havlin (Programme Manager), Sandra Boyd (Research Admin Worker) and Rose Sidey (Finance Worker).

**Belfast European Partnership Board** for Capacity Building Programme funding to help make this research project possible.

**Local business persons** for providing household draw prizes: Ian Atkinson (East End Electrical), Drew Moore (Aspects) and Ronnie Rutherford (Strand Cinema).

**Local advice agencies:** East Belfast Citizens Advice Bureau & East Belfast Independent Advice Centre for providing information flyers for distribution during household interviews in order to encourage benefits take up.

**Research experts & technical advisors:**
**Julie Harrison,** Julie Harrison Consulting, for drawing random household sample, report writing support & editing; **Mike Morrissey,** Urban Institute, for contextual analysis and report writing training & support; **Brian Tipping** and colleagues, Research Services Ireland, for interviewer training and data input & analysis.

**Input to questionnaire content:** Greater East Belfast Partnership and other local agencies & individuals.

**Neighbourhood Briefing Meetings:** Sara Tibbs, Michael Briggs & Christine Acheson.

**Maeve Walls,** Voluntary Activity Unit, for support and advice on policy implications.

A special thank you to the neighbourhood participants listed overleaf and to the **828 local residents across 14 neighbourhoods** in East Belfast who gave information and opinions on a wide range of issues through the local household interviews.

Finally, thank you in advance to community groups, decision makers and service providers who will read and study the reports and act on the research findings for the benefit of those who live throughout East Belfast.

## Neighbourhood participants:

| Street list volunteers | Key workers | Local interviewers | Report writers |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1. Newtownards Road** | | | |
| Callum Laverty | Patsy Laverty (Dee Street Area Regeneration Trust) | Raymond Laverty Patsy Laverty Michael Magee Jackie Upton | Patsy Laverty |
| **2. Ardcarn** | | | |
| Kate Williamson | Kate Williamson | Kate Williamson Brenda Gillespie | Colin Campbell (Tullycarnet Community Forum) |
| **3. Summerhill** | | | |
| Roy Mealey | Marie Brown (Summerhill Community Association) | Marie Brown Jim Watterson | Jim Watterson Mark Allen |
| **4. Albertbridge** | | | |
| Sandra Boyd | Michael Briggs (Albertbridge Area Community Development Project) | Michael Briggs Jim Ferguson (Joanne Glover) (Caroline Stephenson) (Kathleen Woods) | Michael Briggs |
| **5. Bloomfield** | | | |
| Paula Kane | Billy Shannon (Bloomfield Community Association) | Molly Baine Sandra Boyd Sally Mannis Joanne Megaw Kathleen Murdoch | Billy Shannon |
| **6. Knocknagoney, Garnerville & Orchard** | | | |
| Georgina McConnell | Jan Costello (Knocknagoney Community Centre) | Sharon Carson Linzey Grierson Vivienne Purdy | Jan Costello & Joe Watson (Belfast City Council) |
| **7. Wandsworth** | | | |
| Wandsworth Youth Forum | Michael Crooks (Wandsworth Community Association) | Beth Hill Marie Hill Peter Hill Allison Smith | Michael Crooks |
| **8. Short Strand** | | | |
| Roisin Conlon | Roisin Conlon (Short Strand Partnership) | Roisin Conlon Paul Coulter Jacqueline O'Donnell Margaret Martin Toni Martin | Roisin Conlon & Jacqueline O'Donnell |

*acknowledgements*

| Street list volunteers | Key workers | Local interviewers | Report writers |
|---|---|---|---|
| **9. Lower Ravenhill** | | | |
| Billy Boyd | Helen Smith (Bridge Community Trust) | Billy Boyd<br>Eleanor Greenlee<br>Sharon Kenney<br>Sandra King<br>Brenda McIlmail<br>David Townsley | Helen Smith |
| **10. Walkway** | | | |
| Betty Irvine | Rachael Davison (Walkway Community Association) | Joanne Glover<br>Caroline Stephenson<br>Kathleen Woods | Rachael Davison & Caroline Stephenson |
| **11. Willowfield** | | | |
| Agnes Rowan | Natasha Sheppey (CFC Community Development) | Bobby Cosgrove<br>William Fletcher<br>Margaret Livingstone<br>Dorothy Newberry<br>William McIntyre<br>John Wright | Natasha Sheppey |
| **12. Inverary / Sydenham** | | | |
| Billy McCullough | Laura Hamill (Inverary Community Centre) | Darren Brotherston<br>June Brown<br>Louise Brown<br>Leanne Greer<br>Elizabeth Rodgers<br>William Rodgers<br>Michael Woods | Laura Hamill |
| **13. Clarawood** | | | |
| June Holmes | June Holmes | Elizabeth Gillespie<br>June Holmes<br>Gloria Ross | June Holmes & Gloria Ross |
| **14. Ashmount** | | | |
| Maggie Andrews | None | (Molly Baine)<br>(Sally Mannis)<br>(Allison Smith) | None |

# Foreword

When a small group of community workers in East Belfast began discussing the need for more locally based information, to support their work, they could not have imagined where that discussion would lead, and the many people who would ultimately be involved in providing this information.

The external perception of East Belfast as a place of affluence was being challenged daily. The many faces of disadvantage were only too apparent in their everyday experience. This report succeeds in outlining the real picture for the communities involved in the research – the 'pockets' of disadvantage that co-exist beside areas of considerable wealth.

The report highlights a number of priorities for future action around the themes of, Places, Choices, Well-being and Community. It also makes recommendations about who needs to be involved in making commitments to change our collective experience and build new alliances. I would urge people to reflect on the contents and consider how they, or their organisations, can contribute to this process. It would also be nice to think that policy makers and service providers could come back to these communities and ask 'how can we help?'.

In commending the report to you I would particularly like to acknowledge the support from the Belfast European Partnership Board, who funded the research, and all those others we have acknowledged for their particular contribution.

Finally, on behalf of the Directors of East Belfast Community Development Agency and the members of the Capacity Building Consortium, I would express our continued commitment to building strong and confident communities in East Belfast. We all look forward to developing new relationships to ensure the priorities that have been identified are at the forefront of our agenda for change.

**Michael Briggs, Chair, EBCDA & Capacity Building Consortium**

*foreword*

# 1 Process

There has been a considerable lack of comprehensive, up-to-date information about local communities in East Belfast, particularly in the context of weak community infrastructure. The common perception of affluence has had a negative impact on groups seeking to create opportunities for people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The area overall has had limited tradition of community development and without information on need, community organisations have found it difficult to attract resources and lobby for better services and facilities within their neighbourhoods.

## 1.1 Capacity Building Programmes

East Belfast Community Development Agency delivered a Capacity Building Programme for groups in East Belfast between 1997 and 1999. One of its key successes was the establishment of East Belfast Community Workers Forum, providing opportunities for workers to share ideas and collaborate on mutual concerns.

In 1998, East Belfast Community Workers Forum formed a sub group to look at local research needs and issues. It was felt that a co-ordinated, area wide and community led survey would provide a clear picture of neighbourhood needs and allow local people to be involved throughout the process, with others across East Belfast. It was also hoped that research reports could become community development tools for use by local groups to set clear action plans for the way ahead.

In 1999, this community research project was included within a bid for major funding from the Belfast European Partnership Board. East Belfast Community Development Agency headed the Consortium making the bid, using their earlier experience of capacity building to demonstrate the need for more strategic approaches to building local communities. The research formed the cornerstone of an integrated local capacity building package that also included community leadership training, funding for group development and IT support for community groups.

Despite having to deliver with significantly fewer resources than requested and within a much shorter timescale, the research element began formally in May 2000.

## 1.2 Stages at neighbourhood level

The Research Sub Group of East Belfast Community Workers Forum has continued to take responsibility locally for the research process, with technical support from the Urban Institute and Research Services Ireland. A process of local consultation led to fourteen neighbourhood boundaries being defined that made more sense to local activists than the standard electoral wards. The random household sample was drawn next, on the basis of street lists compiled by local volunteers in April 2000.

At the same time, key workers were identified within most of the target neighbourhoods and invited to join the group and be involved in managing the process from the outset. The group compiled the main questionnaire, consulting with around 20 relevant groups and agencies (including staff and structures within Greater East Belfast Partnership) who would be interested in the outcome.

Commitment and cohesion grew, and smaller working groups then produced publicity materials, drafted guidelines for recruiting local interviewers and created an action plan which brought everyone face to face with the reality of implementing such an innovative and demanding project.

In the absence of sufficient resources to appoint a full time Research Co-ordinator within the Capacity Building

Programme, the Community Participation Worker took on this role and a Research Admin Worker was appointed in June 2000.

Key workers gradually began preparing the way, compiling specific neighbourhood questionnaires, recruiting local interviewers and facilitating a commonly agreed research process at neighbourhood level, including holding regular team meetings for support. Neighbourhood briefing meetings were held and household letters distributed in advance. Local interviewers were trained by Research Services Ireland, in stages, between May and November 2000.

In the biggest neighbourhood, 259 houses were visited by a team of 6, and in the smallest, 24 homes were contacted by 2 interviewers. The 55 local interviewers were each paid an often hard earned £10 per completed questionnaire and £5 for each incomplete questionnaire. The availability of childcare expenses enabled many local women to take part. Payments were also offered on a flexible basis to encourage maximum participation by local unemployed people. In most cases, interviewers worked within their own neighbourhoods but, where this was not possible, people helped other neighbourhoods out.

## 1.3  Feedback and evaluation

Deadlines were set and feedback meetings held for the first six areas in September 2000 and for the remainder in December 2000. Evaluation was undertaken throughout the process and key workers' comments included:

- *'the research project was good at bringing communities in East Belfast together, with tangible results'*
- *'the monthly research group meetings were good for review and evaluation, also support and learning from each other'*
- *'empowering the local community and actually working at grassroots level was a good feeling'.*
  Local interviewers commented:

- *'it was good to meet people in the area I did not know before'*
- *'I enjoyed finding new and useful information, being out meeting people and the money was good'*
- *'the research needed a lot of tact when asking some of the questions. The training helped with this'*
- *'it gives people who would not normally get involved, a chance to put their views across'*
- *'it was interesting meeting people from all walks of life and to see how they pictured life in East Belfast'.*

## 1.4  Response rates and analysis

Response rates varied from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, from 27% (in Ashmount where there was no key worker) to 89% (in Short Strand). A total of 1595 houses were contacted (of which 1422 were eligible) and 828 completed questionnaires were finally collected and analysed, representing a 58% response rate overall. Low response rates in some areas pose interesting issues overall, with some questions within household interviews also receiving more answers than others.

Data input and analysis by Research Services Ireland was completed by Christmas 2000 and an East Belfast report presented to the group at the end of January 2001, by which time plans were being made to print and launch the documents and make best use of the findings.

*process*

## 1.5 Report writing and follow up

Three training days were held to enable key workers to understand statistics and write their own neighbourhood reports within the capacity building ethos of the project and to ensure local ownership of the results and follow up. During evaluation, most participants stated that they would recommend the same process again but a few felt they did not have enough experience. Comments included:

- *'I feel I can now understand and make better use of data…to successfully apply for funding for projects as well as targeting services'*
- I am most concerned *'that the reports are either not used or that too much weight is given to them'*
- I enjoyed *'finding out about the problems and issues for the area so I can now help deal with them'…I hope 'to do a business plan for my project'*

Work was also undertaken to draw out the main lessons for policy makers and some findings have already been used, for example in an Healthy Living Centre application to the New Opportunities Fund and in local representation to the 11+ Review Group. Findings have also been quoted in Community Participation Project workshops such as drugs awareness and church & community relationships.

Members of the Research Sub Group have committed themselves to undertaking training on understanding the NI Assembly and lobbying skills in order to best target the research findings among relevant politicians after the launch. A follow up action planning day has also been arranged for all neighbourhoods, to ensure maximum use of research findings locally.

It has been a long and eventful journey since the vision for this project emerged and was developed and resourced through the East Belfast Capacity Building Programme. Much has been learnt and around 70 people – local residents, community workers, research experts and others - have been involved in various capacities. It is to their credit that the Research Group has managed to work together as a team at the main core of the project, with its members already under pressure in their roles as local development workers, some in a voluntary capacity.

This area wide report (supplemented by thirteen neighbourhood reports) is therefore offered as a valuable, community led information source for decision-makers. It will also be a useful resource document and catalyst for future community development activity which enhances the quality of life for people living throughout East Belfast.

**Christine Acheson, Community Participation Worker, East Belfast Community Development Agency**

# 2 Policy Framework

## 2.1  Local problems. Local solutions.

The neighbourhood research in this document is the result of a practical initiative which enabled communities to identify the issues that they want to address and develop a strategy for doing so.

The research process exemplifies Government's recent re-articulation of the principles of community development and capacity building on which the whole Programme was based.

*"Only if we can help the confidence of a community to express its needs can we build a firm foundation for tackling the divisions in our society [1]"*

The venture is also a practical example of the participative approach that has been expressed in the Programme for Government; it embodies the idea of sustainable communities that can operate with success, even in a climate of reduced funding. By training and facilitating local people to undertake the work themselves, skills have been built within neighbourhoods and the community itself can be seen to be driving change.

## 2.2  Setting the agenda

This report provides an agenda for change. Its production is timely given the emphasis in the new Programme for Government on the renewal of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and commitments to tackle poverty and disadvantage.

*"Our aim is to breathe new life into our towns, cities and rural communities, objectively identifying and targeting those areas which have become most deprived, developing and delivering a co-ordinated response to the needs of those areas.."*

Through the New Targeting Social Need policy, pledges have been made in relation to the proper co-ordination of programmes and services. Specific commitments have also been made in relation to sustaining and enhancing local communities through meaningful engagement with the community and voluntary sector and existing area partnerships; the neighbourhood research and the process that will follow are examples of these working principles in practice.

*"Our voluntary and community sectors have a particular strength and vibrancy, making a significant contribution to social and economic regeneration.... Strong neighbourhood communities that incorporate well-organised communities of interest are central to economic, social and cultural development".*

## 2.3  'Leading from behind'

The arguments about a historic lack of community infrastructure in the East of the city are well rehearsed. They now need to be modified as progress is made.

The proficiency of local people and community organisations to set their own agenda and engage in the process of building partnerships for action has been greatly enhanced since the first phase of EBCDA's capacity building work in 1997. Our collective challenge is to build on the progress that has been made so that the rhetoric of sustainable communities becomes reality.

1  Programme for Government, Feb 2001

A number of key initiatives offer the potential to act on the agenda that has been set. The Belfast Regeneration Office and Greater East Belfast Partnership strategies are in keeping with the tone and potential of the Programme for Government and offer practical routes for implementing the principles that it sets out.

The European Union's Community Support Framework for Northern Ireland is also important, including within it the long awaited 'Peace 2' Programme which is expected to concentrate on addressing areas of weak infrastructure and promoting Pathways to Inclusion. All of these initiatives sit within the equality framework established in 1998 and the statutory duty on Government Departments, local authorities and non-departmental public bodies to equality proof their programmes and policies.

Given the context, the timing of this report could not be better. Groups in East Belfast now have the supporting information to focus their work more clearly and to make their applications for support more compelling. This research, combined with the other Capacity Building Initiatives that have taken place over the last three years should also facilitate the emergence of larger scale strategic community initiatives which are key to the provision of a durable foundation for change.

**Maggie Andrews, Director, East Belfast Community Development Agency**

# 3 Context

## 3.1 Background

Compared to the rest of Northern Ireland, the Belfast Travel to Work area has relatively high employment, and low unemployment levels. The concentration of manufacturing and services in this area represents more than half of all employment in Northern Ireland. However, Travel to Work statistics conceal certain negative trends within the city itself. First, the population has been steadily declining, as the most mobile move beyond the city boundaries to the suburbs - the fall in population between 1981 and 1991 was around 11 per cent. A complementary trend has seen a flight of jobs to outside the city boundaries. The dependency rate (the population of school age and retirement age as a percentage of the whole population) for Northern Ireland in 1991 was 38.6 per cent. The rate in Belfast was 40 per cent. Belfast thus has a lower proportion of its population available for work. Finally, in common with many other manufacturing cities, Belfast has suffered steady de-industrialisation.

Within this picture of de-industrialisation and occupational decline, East Belfast has traditionally been regarded as among the most favoured sectors of the city. While the industry that signalled the industrial strength of the area, shipbuilding, has been in steady decline since the Second World War, it outlasted shipbuilders in many other British cities and has received long-term public subsidy to sustain it. Indeed, those living in other parts of the city may feel that shipbuilding has been historically over-subsidised. Unemployment, particularly male unemployment remains low in East Belfast relative to North and West. On standard indicators of deprivation, like the Robson index, East Belfast wards do not score as highly as those on the other side of the river. Nevertheless, the people of East Belfast experience severe problems and are worthy of the support necessary to address these problems.

## 3.2  Community infrastructure in East Belfast

The East Belfast area is a complex mosaic of communities that do not fit neatly into administrative boundaries, like parliamentary constituencies or wards. For example, Lower Ravenhill falls within the Woodstock electoral ward of inner East Belfast but is located within the South Belfast parliamentary constituency and Ardcarn which is situated close to Tullycarnet estate in the Castlereagh Borough Council area, actually falls within the Belfast City Council boundary.

Many such communities do not have a historical tradition of developed community organisation and are less able to take advantage of community-based programmes. Both statutory and non-statutory funders are reliant on an application process. Where there is substantial community organisation, the process of generating applications is relatively easy. Smaller community groups, frequently relying on volunteers, do not have this capacity. Yet these are precisely the groups in greatest need of development support.

The purpose of this report is to give such communities a voice in being able to describe their own communities and identify / prioritise their problems. Thus, the project has been one of community development and investing in community capacity. In fourteen actual communities, volunteers designed questionnaires, visited homes to get residents to complete them and wrote local reports. The alternative was simply to buy an off-the-shelf survey from a research organisation. However, East Belfast Community Development Agency realised that, while this might have generated a glossy product, it would not have given these communities the opportunity to speak for themselves.

context

The purpose of this section of the report is to provide a context for the expression of that local statement. It cannot describe the communities that participated in the survey since it provides information at the level of standard administrative boundaries. It cannot depict the actual areas inhabited by specific communities. At the same time, it does provide an introduction to the area.

## 3.3  Ageing population

The next table provides detail on population change in the four Belfast parliamentary constituencies. While the population of the region increased by just over five per cent between 1991 and 1999, the populations of the four Belfast sectors declined. However, the fall in the population of East Belfast was greater than in any of the other three sectors.

### Table 1  MID-YEAR POPULATION ESTIMATES, Belfast and Northern Ireland

|  | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Ireland | 1606600 | 1624600 | 1638300 | 1647900 | 1654900 | 1669100 | 1680300 | 1688600 | 1691800 |
| Belfast East | 83900 | 83200 | 83400 | 82300 | 82000 | 82000 | 81700 | 81100 | 80000 |
| Belfast North | 94200 | 96000 | 95700 | 94900 | 94200 | 93500 | 93300 | 93600 | 92700 |
| Belfast South | 92000 | 91300 | 91700 | 91800 | 92200 | 92300 | 92400 | 92300 | 91800 |
| Belfast West | 93400 | 93300 | 93200 | 92200 | 91400 | 92100 | 91800 | 91500 | 90700 |

The East Belfast constituency has the smallest population within Belfast. Moreover, while the population of Belfast fell by just under three per cent, the population of East Belfast fell by five per cent. By 1999, East Belfast comprised 22 per cent of the Belfast population.

However, it is not just a matter of population decline, the structure of that population has also been changing. Greater detail on this profile of population decline can be seen in the next table.

**Table 2  Population Change by Age in East Belfast 1991-99**

| MALES | 1991 | 1999 |
|---|---|---|
| 0-4 | 2800 | 2200 |
| 5-9 | 2700 | 2400 |
| 10-14 | 2600 | 2700 |
| 15-19 | 2700 | 2500 |
| 20-24 | 3000 | 1900 |
| 25-29 | 3100 | 2100 |
| 30-34 | 3000 | 2700 |
| 35-39 | 2600 | 2900 |
| 40-44 | 2300 | 2600 |
| 45-49 | 2300 | 2300 |
| 50-54 | 2100 | 2300 |
| 55-59 | 2000 | 2000 |
| 60-64 | 2200 | 2000 |
| 65-69 | 2200 | 1800 |
| 70-74 | 1700 | 1700 |
| 75+ | 2200 | 2700 |
| All Ages | 39300 | 36900 |

**Table 2  Population Change by Age in East Belfast 1991-99**

| FEMALES | 1991 | 1999 |
|---|---|---|
| 0-4 | 2800 | 2400 |
| 5-9 | 2500 | 2700 |
| 10-14 | 2400 | 2600 |
| 15-19 | 2500 | 2300 |
| 20-24 | 3100 | 2000 |
| 25-29 | 3300 | 2300 |
| 30-34 | 3100 | 3200 |
| 35-39 | 2600 | 3100 |
| 40-44 | 2400 | 2800 |
| 45-49 | 2500 | 2400 |
| 50-54 | 2300 | 2400 |
| 55-59 | 2400 | 2300 |
| 60-64 | 2800 | 2300 |
| 65-69 | 2800 | 2400 |
| 70-74 | 2400 | 2400 |
| 75+ | 4600 | 5400 |
| All Ages | 44500 | 43000 |

context

Table 2 indicates that the situation is one not just of overall population decline, but of demographic re-composition. The decline in the male population was greater than the female population in both absolute and relative terms – 3,600 compared 1,500. There were almost a 1,000 fewer males aged 0-9 in 1999 and 200 fewer females. Conversely, the 75+ population grew by 500 males and 800 females. The trend in East Belfast is thus that the dependent population is becoming increasingly old rather than young. In 1999 almost 28 per cent of men and 29 percent of women were of retirement age.

The structure of the population has implications for the delivery of services. For example, in 1998, 4,236 individuals in South and East Belfast Trust were receiving home help service. Over 3,000 of these were 75 years or older. A significant proportion of these lived in East Belfast. Almost three-quarters of those receiving meals on wheels in Belfast were in the South and East Belfast Trust.

## 3.4 Inequality within East Belfast

### 3.4.1 Unemployment

The table below gives the number of unemployed claimants in East Belfast wards in April 2000. There were just less than 2,000 unemployed in the East Belfast wards, although their distribution throughout the sector was remarkably uneven. The number unemployed in Ballymacarrett was three times that of Ballyhackamore. Just six wards accounted for the bulk of the unemployed. In contrast, just over 10 per cent of the unemployed were in the five wards with the least numbers. Less than a fifth of the claimant unemployed in East Belfast were women and almost 30 per cent were classified as long-term unemployed.

**Table 3 Unemployment in the East Belfast Wards**

| CLAIMANTS April 2000 | MALE | FEMALE | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ballyhackamore | 67 | 25 | 92 |
| Ballymacarrett | 232 | 43 | 275 |
| Belmont | 69 | 16 | 85 |
| Bloomfield | 105 | 37 | 142 |
| Cherryvalley | 33 | 15 | 48 |
| Island | 145 | 30 | 175 |
| Knock | 50 | 25 | 75 |
| Orangefield | 40 | 17 | 57 |
| Stormont | 30 | 14 | 44 |
| Sydenham | 118 | 29 | 147 |
| The Mount | 204 | 41 | 245 |
| Woodstock | 176 | 37 | 213 |

While the problem of claimant unemployment in East Belfast is relatively low in terms of the overall context of the city, the inequalities in the experience of unemployment are apparent – less than 50 unemployed in Cherryvalley, almost five times that number in The Mount. Arguably, while East Belfast may not appear to have the extremes of unemployment seen elsewhere it the city, it has greater experience of inequality.

## 3.4.2 Deprivation

There are a number of ways in which poverty can be measured. One approach is to count the number whose income is below a designated 'poverty line' although it still has to be decided whether individuals or households should be the basic unit of analysis. There are many different approaches to deciding how to draw such a line (physical subsistence levels, the threshold that denies participation in normal social life or a level considered appropriate by the community in general to name just three). Moreover, some would argue that the real measure of poverty is the total volume of the income gap of those living below the threshold (the aggregate difference between the income of each poor household and the agreed line). Others would claim that expenditure is a better measure than income. Potentially, the debate is endless.

In terms of small areas, deprivation tends to be identified by a broader set of indicators, particularly since there is neither income nor expenditure data for general populations. The most recent area deprivation indicator was prepared by Brian Robson and his colleagues at Manchester and was mainly derived from 1991 Census information. Clearly, the situation in East Belfast has changed since then, but until the new deprivation indicators being prepared at Oxford for the 2001 Census, the Robson material remains the best available.

The next table gives the Robson scores for the East Belfast wards and their deprivation rank within Northern Ireland.

### Table 4  EAST BELFAST Deprivation Scores (Robson)

|                | Scores | Northern Ireland Rank |
|----------------|--------|-----------------------|
| Ballyhackamore | -13.83 | 482                   |
| Ballymacarrett | 16.07  | 14                    |
| Belmont        | -14.89 | 490                   |
| Bloomfield     | 2.49   | 220                   |
| Cherryvalley   | -19.98 | 535                   |
| Island         | 16.6   | 9                     |
| Knock          | -17.16 | 512                   |
| Orangefield    | -15.3  | 496                   |
| Stormont       | -23.91 | 563                   |
| Sydenham       | -0.51  | 288                   |
| The Mount      | 17.01  | 8                     |
| Woodstock      | 12.11  | 37                    |

On the Robson Index, a score of 0 indicates that the ward is exactly at the Northern Ireland average level. Plus scores indicate deprivation, minus scores relative affluence. The rankings are also important. Since there are 565

context

wards in Northern Ireland, ranks above 500 suggest that a ward falls into the most affluent fifth of all wards. Indeed, there are two wards with ranks above 500 and three more with ranks close to 500. On this basis over a third of the wards in East Belfast would appear to be among the most affluent in the region. On the other hand, there are three wards that are among the most deprived three percent of Northern Ireland's wards.

### 3.4.3 Benefits dependency

The deprivation data complements the unemployment picture – East Belfast is characterised by extreme patterns of inequality. This is more than matched by the data on benefits dependency. In February 1999, the percentage of the economically active population receiving Job Seeker's Allowance in Ballymacarret was ten times that of Stormont. The number of lone parents receiving child benefit in The Mount was four times greater than in Stormont. Almost one in three of the population of Ballymacarret was dependent on Income Support compared to less than one in fourteen in Knock. At the same time, almost two fifths of East Belfast's wards had rates of Income Support greater than the Northern Ireland average.

This brief contextual review paints a picture of East Belfast as an area with an ageing, declining population and with an acute socio-economic divide. The affluent wards tend to conceal concentrations of unemployment and deprivation in less affluent wards where need remains great. Without a highly developed community infrastructure, much of this need remains unarticulated. The purpose of the survey was to fill some of the gaps and generate a debate about how the needs of East Belfast can be met.

**Mike Morrissey, The Urban Institute**

# 4 Main Findings

## 4.1  Household Size and Age Distribution

The response to the survey totalled 828 cases of which 826 responded to the item on household size. The total number of individuals covered by the response was 2039, which included 946 (46.4%) males and 1093 (53.6%) females. The average household size for the response was, therefore, 2.5 individuals of which 1.2 was male and 1.3 was female.

The distribution of household size is given in Table 1. The maximum household size recorded was 7 and over 60% of households had 2 or less members.

**Table 1. Distribution of Household Size**

| Household size | Frequency | % |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 246 | 29.8 |
| 2 | 264 | 32 |
| 3 | 123 | 14.9 |
| 4 | 118 | 14.3 |
| 5 | 41 | 5 |
| 6 | 19 | 2.3 |
| 7 | 15 | 1.8 |
| Total | 826 | 100 |

The age distribution of the individuals making up the response is given in Table 2. Of the response 37.2% were less than 25 years of age and 11.8% were over 65 years.

**Table 2 Age distribution of Individuals in the Responding Households**

| Age Group | % of Response | Cumulative % |
|---|---|---|
| 0 to 4 years | 7.7 | 7.7 |
| 5 to 10 years | 10.0 | 17.7 |
| 11 to 15 years | 7.0 | 24.7 |
| 16 to 24 years | 12.5 | 37.2 |
| 25 to 34 years | 16.9 | 54.1 |
| 35 to 59 years | 28.1 | 82.2 |
| 60 to 65 years | 6.0 | 88.2 |
| 66 to 74 years | 7.0 | 95.2 |
| 75 years or more | 4.8 | 100 |

*main findings*

## 4.2 Marital Status and Employment Status

Those that reported they were "married or with partner" were 873 in number representing 42.8% of the total individuals covered. Those who were "single" were 639, 31.3% of the total.

One hundred and four respondents, 9 men and 95 women, reported that they were "single parents". This represents 5.1% of the total individuals covered by the survey. Fifty one, 20 men and 31 women, reported that they were "carers of elderly / disabled people". This is 2.5% of the total.

Table three summarises the results from the items on employment status. It should be noted that due to a mistake the item on "unemployed one year or less" was omitted from the final printing of the questionnaire and was added later. The response to this item was much lower that that to the other items in this battery and it must be assumed that the figure given is an under estimate.

**Table 3 Employment Status**

| | Male (%) n=946 | Female (%) n=1093 | Total (%) n=2039 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Full-time employed | 304 (31.1) | 217 (19.9) | 521 (25.6) |
| Part-time employed | 24 (2.5) | 100 (9.1) | 124 (6.1) |
| Unemployed more than one year | 85 (9.0) | 115 (10.5) | 200 (9.8) |
| Early retired | 78 (8.2) | 96 (8.8) | 174 (8.5) |
| On Gov. training scheme | 8 (0.8) | 8 (0.7) | 16 (0.8) |
| In full-time education | 80 (8.5) | 77 (7.0) | 157 (7.7) |
| In part-time training / education | 8 (0.8) | 13 (1.2) | 21 (1.0) |
| Unemployed one year or less | 28 (3.0) | 46 (4.2) | 74 (3.6) |

## 4.3  Main Income

The item on income, always a delicate area of investigation, restricted itself to asking for the main source of income in the household. This resulted in a response of 775 distributed as follows,

381 (49.2%)      had their main source from work

206 (26.6%)      had their main source from social security benefit

181 (23.4%)      had their main source from pensions

7 (0.9%)          had "other" main sources.

## 4.4  Housing

Respondents were asked a number of questions on the physical structure of the building that contained their household. The response totalled 824 and the following summarises the results.

607 (73.7%)      reported their house was "terraced"

25 (3.0%)        "detached"

104 (12.6%)      "semi-detached"

57 (6.9%)        "flat"

20 (2.4%)        "bungalow"

11 (1.3%)        "other"


Respondents were also asked about the nature of their tenure. Again 824 responded with the following results,

369 (44.8%)      reported that their house was "owner occupied"

448 (54.4%)      "rented"

7 (0.8%)         "other"


Those who rented their accommodation were asked who their landlords were. The response was 456 (obviously including those who reported rented accommodation with an overlap of 8 cases). There may have been some confusion between a housing association and the Housing Executive. The response showed,

184 (40.4%)      reported "rented from local or public authority"

189 (41.4%)      "rented from housing association or charitable trust"

58 (12.7%)       "rented unfurnished from private person or company"

25 (5.5%)        "rented furnished from private person or company"


Respondents were asked if they considered that their houses were in good repair. The response was 826 to this item of which 708 (85.7%)    felt that it was, and 118 (14.3%) felt it was not.

main findings

Respondents were also asked how many bedrooms they had in their accommodation.

1 (0.1%)          reported that they had no bedrooms

21 (2.5%)          1 bedroom

344 (41.6%)          2 bedrooms

402 (48.7%)          3 bedrooms

50 (6.1%)          4 bedrooms

7 (0.8%)          5 bedrooms

1 (0.1%)          8 bedrooms

Respondents were also asked if anyone in their household was on a housing waiting list and 93 (11.3%) responded "yes". The response to this item was 825.

## 4.5   Health

Respondents were asked if anyone in their households was "…being treated by a doctor or hospital" and 386 replied "yes". The response to this item was 825 and those who replied in the affirmative represented 46.8%.

Respondents were also asked if anyone in their households was "…receiving benefits related to illness. The response to this item was 825 of which 250 (30.3%) replied "yes".

Items were included asking respondents how well they felt that the "women and girls" and "men and boys" in the household were informed about their health. Table 4 summarises the results.

**Table 4 Respondents Perceptions on How Well "Men and Boys" and "Women and Girls" were Informed about their Health**

|  | Women & Girls (%) | Men & Boys (%) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Very well | 279 (34.7) | 184 (23.5) |
| Quite well | 365 (45.4) | 334 (42.6) |
| Not very well | 71 (8.8) | 81 (10.3) |
| Not applicable | 89 (11.1) | 185 (23.6) |
| **Total response** | **804** | **784** |

Respondents were also asked if they considered that "drug abuse" and "alcohol abuse" was "much of a problem" locally. Those that responded to the item on drug abuse amounted to 784 of which 248 (31.6%) felt it was a problem. For alcohol abuse the number that responded was 802 of which 384 (47.9%) felt it was a problem.

A final item asked respondents how many people in their households were taking medication for "… nervous illness, depression, stress". Seven hundred and eighty six (786) responded of which 153 (19.5%) reported that at least one person in their household was taking such medication.

## 4.6  Transport

Respondents were asked which forms of transport the members of their household "used regularly".
Recorded non-response to these items was high and it is assumed that this is due to a tendency not to reply if
the mode of transport in question was not used. Calculations of per cent figures are, therefore based on the
total sample number (828).

437 (57.1%)        used a car regularly

344 (41.5)          used taxis regularly

454 (54.8)          used public transport regularly.

Twenty-eight (28) responded to the "other" category in this item and specified walking, cycling and motor-cycling.


Respondents were asked how many cars the household had. The non-response to this item was very low at six
cases. Per cent calculations are bases on the 822 respondents.

392 (47.7%)        reported they had no car

365 (44.4%)        had one car

65 (7.9%)           had more than one car.


The final item in this section asked if the household had "adequate parking space" and 817 responded.

424 (51.9%)        reported they had adequate parking space

212 (25.9%)        reported they had not

181 (22.2%)        reported the question was "not applicable".

*main findings*

## 4.7 Qualifications and Employment

A list of qualifications was offered to respondents and they were asked how many people in their households held these qualifications or their equivalents. The following outlines the number of households that had at least one person with the listed qualifications. Because of a large level of non response recorded in this item per cent calculations are based on the whole sample (828).

| | |
|---|---|
| 85 (10.3%) | had adult education qualifications |
| 149 (18.0%) | had computer/IT qualifications |
| 299 (36.1%) | had GCSE/GCE |
| 105 (12.7%) | had CSE |
| 129 (15.6%) | had A level |
| 97 (11.7%) | had NVQ 1 – 2 |
| 57 (6.9%) | had NVQ 3 – 4 |
| 112 (13.5%) | had City and Guilds |
| 9 (1.0%) | had OND |
| 27 (3.3%) | had HND |
| 60 (7.2%) | had degrees |
| 24 (2.9%) | had post graduate qualifications |
| 125 (15.1%) | had RSA qualifications |
| 64 (7.7%) | reported "other" |

There were 171 (20.7%) households who reported that there were no qualifications held by its members.

Respondents were asked whether anyone in their household had undertaken education or training courses from leaving school and 824 responded.
From this response 359 (46.3%) reported affirmatively. An item was also included asking whether anyone in the household would like to take on a training/education course at present. The response to this item was 815 with positive responses from 259 (31.8%).

Local community workers constructed a list of factors that they considered might prevent unemployed people from "getting satisfactory jobs". This list was presented to respondents who were asked to express agreement or disagreement. The following summarises the results. Per cent calculations are based on the whole sample, n=828.

| | |
|---|---|
| Lack of suitable childcare | 526 (67.9%) agreed. |
| No transport to where the jobs are | 321 (38.8%) agreed. |
| Low pay / not worth coming off benefits | 683 (82.5%) agreed |
| Not well enough qualified | 549 (66.3%) agreed. |
| Not enough confidence / experience | 541 (65.3%) agreed. |
| No career opportunities available | 387 (46.7%) agreed. |

Thirty-one respondents gave "other" reasons.

The community workers also identified a number of areas of work of interest to them and asked respondents if anyone in their household had training or experience in any of these areas. Table 5 summarises the results. Again the calculation of percentages is based on the whole sample, n=828.

**Table 5. Households with Persons with Experience or Training in Certain Areas of Work**

|  | Experience (%) | Training (%) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Hospitality services | 176 (21.3) | 119 (14.4) |
| Customer services | 290 (35.0) | 200 (24.2) |
| Computers | 264 (31.9) | 233 (28.1) |
| Call centres | 34 (4.1) | 30 (3.6) |
| Construction | 189 (22.8) | 133 (16.1) |

## 4.8  Neighbourhood, Problems and Improvements

Generally respondents felt that they had a good quality of life in the area in which they lived. Eight-hundred-and-twenty-two (822) responded to the item designed to explore this feature describing the quality of life in their area as follows.

90 (10.9%)        Very good

362 (44.0%)       Good

324 (39.4%)       OK

36 (4.4%)         Poor

10 (1.2%)         Very poor.

Another item further exploring this feature elicited a response of 819 and indicated that,

228 (27.8%)      felt the quality of life was "getting worse"

461 (56.3%)      that it was "staying the same"

130 (15.9%)      that it was "getting better".

In 121 households (14.7% of a response of 824) it was reported that they "…had plans to move out of this immediate area".

Local community workers devised a list of "priority problems" and respondents were asked to rank the three they considered most serious. Table 6 summarises the results. The problems are placed in descending order of their first choice scores. Environment, crime and substance abuse, in that order, were clearly the problems of most concern to the respondents.

*main findings*

### Table 6 Ranks of "Priority Problems"

|  | 1st choice | 2nd choice | 3rd choice |
|---|---|---|---|
| Environment (e.g. traffic, dog fouling, noise) | 441 | 127 | 117 |
| Crime (e.g. paramilitary violence, vandalism) | 150 | 291 | 107 |
| Substance abuse (drugs, alcohol, glue) | 87 | 138 | 151 |
| Bad housing | 53 | 94 | 96 |
| Poverty | 43 | 56 | 139 |
| Domestic violence | 9 | 30 | 52 |
| "Other" | 8 | 6 | 17 |
| Child abuse | 7 | 14 | 14 |

A similar exercise was carried out on "priority improvements". A panel of local community workers listed a number of improvement which they thought to be relevant to the area and respondents were asked to rank them in order of importance up to the third most important. Table 7 ranks the "priority improvements" in descending order of their first choice scores. The provision of play areas for children, youth facilities and action on vandalism and graffiti, are clearly the three most important improvements recorded by respondents.

### Table 7 Ranks of "Priority improvements"

|  | 1st Choice | 2nd Choice | 3rd Choice |
|---|---|---|---|
| Provide play areas for children | 284 | 84 | 46 |
| Provide youth facilities | 146 | 178 | 77 |
| Action on vandalism / graffiti | 82 | 115 | 122 |
| Clear derelict sites | 72 | 56 | 52 |
| More jobs | 51 | 54 | 95 |
| Better housing | 32 | 54 | 55 |
| Better community safety | 32 | 36 | 83 |
| Better public transport | 25 | 38 | 28 |
| Better health care | 23 | 34 | 37 |
| Better shopping facilities | 21 | 47 | 34 |
| Better child care facilities | 15 | 29 | 35 |
| More contact with neighbours | 8 | 29 | 48 |
| Better leisure facilities | 8 | 27 | 46 |
| "Other" | 7 | 3 | 8 |
| Better schools | 4 | 7 | 15 |

## 4.9  Education

Respondents were asked if their households had had generally positive experiences of nursery / primary education. Seven-hundred-and-fifty-nine (759) responded to this item of which 495 (65.2%) answered "yes". A similar question on secondary education gained 748 responses and 477 (63.8%) of these responded affirmatively.

Respondents were also asked to gauge the value placed on education by members of the household. Seven-hundred-and-ninety-eight (798) responded to this item with the following results,

582 (72.9%)     responded "very valuable"

133 (16.7%)     responded "quite valuable"

83 (10.4%)      responded "not very valuable".


An item was included on how well the responded considered the members of the household understood the educational system. Seven-hundred-and-ninety-five (795) responded to the item as follows,

222 (27.9%)     responded "very well"

351 (44.2%)     responded "quite well"

222 (27.9%)     responded "not very well".


Respondents were asked how relationships between the schools and the community were and 723 responded as follows,

347 (48.0%)     "Good"

318 (44.0%)     "Average"

58 (8%)         "Poor".


Finally, an item was included on integrated education asking "Are there enough places in integrated schools that are suitable for children from East Belfast?". The response was 813 and was distributed as follows,

52 (6.4%)       "Yes"

256 (31.5%)     "No"

408 (50.2%)     "Don't know"

97 (11.9%)      "Not interested"

## 4.10 Activities and Arts

Table 8 summarises the frequencies with which members of the households reported that they attended a number of activities identified by local community workers.

**Table 8 Reported Attendance by Household Members at Activities**

|  | Never (%) | Some-times (%) | Often (%) | Total Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Church based activities | 460 (56.6%) | 184 (22.6%) | 169 (20.8%) | 813 |
| A youth club / group | 576 (71.2%) | 131 (16.2%) | 102 (12.6%) | 809 |
| An advice centre/ service | 605 (75.7%) | 168 (21.1%) | 26 (3.3%) | 799 |
| A community centre / group | 573 (71.8%) | 158 (19.8%) | 67 (8.4%) | 798 |
| A leisure centre | 409 (50.6%) | 284 (35.1%) | 116 (14.3%) | 809 |
| A sporting activity | 436 (54.1%) | 224 (27.8%) | 146 (18.1%) | 806 |
| Arts activity | 676 (84.2%) | 87 (10.8%) | 40 (5.0%) | 803 |

Respondents were asked if their household would be interested in "…getting involved in community arts activities" and 816 responded of which 136 (16.7%) replied "yes". They were also asked if their household would "…use a central arts facility in East Belfast if one was available. Eight-hundred-and-thirteen responded of which 188 (23.1%) replied "yes".

A final item sought opinion on "…a community arts summer festival in East Belfast". The response to this item was 815 of which 533 (65.4%) indicated that they were in favour of such an event.

## 4.11 Services and Facilities

The panel of local community workers constructed a list of services they considered relevant to the study and asked respondents to record the level of satisfaction they felt in regard to each. Table 9 summarises the responses.

Over 50% expressed satisfaction with Public Transport, Health Centre / Clinic and Primary / Nursery Schools. Highest levels of dissatisfaction were expressed with Playground Facilities (36.5%) and Out-of-hours Medical Service (47.6%). Services that were most frequently unavailable were Recycling Facilities (31.1%) and Visitor or Tourist Attractions (47.6%).

**Table 9 Levels of Satisfaction with Services in East Belfast**

|  | Satisfied (%) | Neutral (%) | Not Satisfied (%) | None Available (%) | Total Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public transport | 413 (50.3) | 241 (29.4) | 164 (20.4) | 3 (0.0) | 821 |
| Police service | 306 (37.5) | 285 (34.9) | 206 (25.2) | 19 (2.3) | 816 |
| Milk delivery | 372 (46.4) | 336) (41.9 | 30 (3.7) | 64 (8.0) | 802 |
| Recycling facilities | 177 (21.9) | 231 (28.6) | 148 (18.3) | 251 (31.1) | 807 |
| Housing repairs | 288 (36.3) | 267 (33.7) | 204 (25.7) | 34 (4.3) | 793 |
| Playground facilities | 150 (18.5) | 249 (30.7) | 296 (36.5) | 115 (14.2) | 810 |
| Childcare facilities | 131 (16.3) | 385 (48.0) | 181 (22.6) | 105 (13.1) | 802 |
| Pre-school facilities | 226 (28.2) | 394 (49.1) | 135 (16.8) | 47 (5.9) | 802 |
| Help with job hunting | 138 (17.1) | 395 (48.8) | 174 (21.6) | 99 (12.3) | 806 |
| Community facilities | 231 (28.6) | 342 (42.3) | 148 (18.3) | 88 (10.9) | 809 |
| Health centre/clinic | 489 (60.3) | 180 (22.2) | 107 (13.2) | 35 (4.3) | 811 |
| Out-of-hours medical service | 216 (26.9) | 209 (26.1 | 303 (37.8) | 74 (9.2) | 802 |
| Public park | 346 (42.7) | 186 (22.9) | 195 (24.0) | 84 (10.4) | 811 |
| Primary/nursery school | 411 (51.4) | 341 (42.6) | 31 (3.9) | 17 (2.1) | 800 |
| Secondary school | 318 (39.8) | 385 (48.1) | 55 (6.9) | 42 (5.3) | 800 |
| Youth services | 146 (18.5) | 376 (47.6) | 182 (23.0) | 86 (10.9) | 790 |
| Counselling/support services | 102 (12.8) | 404 (50.8) | 152 (19.1) | 138 (17.3) | 796 |
| Visitor or tourist attractions | 63 (7.9) | 215 (26.8) | 142 (17.7) | 382 (47.6) | 802 |

*main findings*

A similar exercise was carried out to gauge the convenience of a list of facilities in the perception of respondents. Table 10 offers a summary of the results. The Post Office, Shopping Facilities, Hairdresser, Primary / Nursery school and the Chemist were those most frequently considered "very convenient" having over 60% of the response in this category. The Housing Office and Out-of-Hours medical Service had over 50% in the "not convenient" category.

**Table 10 The perception of Respondents on the Convenience of Services in East Belfast**

|  | Very convenient (%) | Quite convenient (%) | Not convenient (%) | Total response (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Doctor / health centre | 427 (52.3) | 313 (38.3) | 77 (9.4) | 817 |
| Out of hours medical service | 106 (13.2) | 223 (27.8) | 473 (59.0) | 802 |
| Dentist | 384 (47.3) | 322 (39.7) | 106 (13.1) | 812 |
| Adequate shopping facilities | 494 (60.5) | 229 (28.0) | 94 (11.5) | 817 |
| Bank | 420 (51.5) | 249 (30.5) | 147 (18.0) | 816 |
| Post office | 578 (70.7) | 190 (23.2) | 50 (6.1) | 818 |
| Hairdresser | 543 (67.0) | 199 (24.5) | 69 (8.5) | 811 |
| Public telephone | 406 (50.8) | 213 (26.7) | 180 (22.5) | 799 |
| Housing office | 122 (15.7) | 257 (33.2) | 396 (51.1) | 775 |
| Social Security office | 148 (18.4) | 336 (41.8) | 320 (39.8) | 804 |
| Social Services | 147 (18.4) | 328 (41.1) | 323 (40.5) | 798 |
| Advice centre/service | 270 (34.0) | 307 (38.7) | 216 (27.2) | 793 |
| Sports facilities | 252 (31.4) | 385 (47.9) | 166 (20.7) | 803 |
| Pub / Social club | 465 (57.6) | 225 (27.9) | 117 (14.5) | 807 |
| Library | 385 (47.2) | 331 (40.6) | 99 (12.1) | 815 |
| Play area | 281 (35.1) | 244 (34.5) | 276 (30.5) | 801 |
| Public park | 328 (40.8) | 275 (34.2) | 200 (24.9) | 803 |
| Primary / Nursery school | 510 (64.2) | 249 (31.3) | 36 (4.5) | 795 |
| Secondary school | 253 (32.1) | 375 (47.5) | 161 (20.4) | 789 |
| Chemist | 545 (66.8) | 206 (25.2) | 65 (8.0) | 816 |
| Community centre | 416 (51.7) | 236 (29.3) | 153 (19.0) | 805 |
| College or training centre | 181 (22.7) | 289 (36.3) | 326 (41.0) | 796 |

## 4.12 Community Development

Two items were included to test the awareness of and interest in local community work. When asked if they were "…aware of any local groups working on behalf of this community", 810 responded of which 329 (40.6%) replied that they were aware of such a group. When further asked if anyone in their household was "…involved with others in helping to improve your local community", 819 responded of which 101 (12.3%) replied "yes".

An item was included to attempt to establish "…reasons why you think people do not join community groups". A list of suggested reasons was compiled by a panel of local community workers. Respondents were asked to rank them in order of importance as far as their third choice. Table 11 ranks these in order of their first choice scores.

**Table 11 Scores of Reasons Why People Do Not Join Community Groups**

|  | 1st Choice | 2nd choice | 3rd Choice |
|---|---|---|---|
| Too busy doing other things | 339 | 99 | 93 |
| Not aware of what groups are doing | 117 | 158 | 166 |
| Have never thought about it | 77 | 177 | 148 |
| Lack of confidence or experience | 69 | 106 | 156 |
| Cannot see the point or benefit | 69 | 96 | 70 |
| Things will not improve anyway | 32 | 89 | 61 |
| Up to everyone to look after themselves | 27 | 62 | 56 |
| Other | 11 | 2 | 12 |

## 4.13 Follow-up

The final item in the questionnaire sought information on the respondents opinions on what "…should be done with the findings". The panel of local community workers devised a list of possible follow-up activities and respondents were asked to rank them in order of their preferences up to the third choice. Table 12 gives the scores for each activity in order of their first preference scores.

*main findings*

## Table 12 Order of Preference for Follow-up Activities

|  | 1st Choice | 2nd Choice | 3rd Choice |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Public meeting to discuss findings locally | 300 | 66 | 99 |
| Present issues to politicians | 109 | 140 | 98 |
| Highlight issues in the media | 98 | 134 | 79 |
| Present issues to statutory agencies / funders | 95 | 128 | 99 |
| Interested people get together to work on action plan | 68 | 100 | 91 |
| Get existing community groups together | 56 | 73 | 149 |
| Set up local issue based meetings | 42 | 93 | 79 |
| Form new community groups | 21 | 48 | 64 |
| None of these | 7 | 5 | 2 |
| Other | 5 | 2 | 0 |

Brian Tipping, Research Services Ireland

# 5 'Leading from Behind' – the Agenda for Change

High levels of community participation and capacity building have been demonstrated throughout this research project. Local people in self-defined neighbourhoods have been given a voice to express their opinions, concerns and needs on a wide range of subjects that are important to them.

Local area reports highlight concerns at a neighbourhood level and contain specific recommendations for action. Some issues can be addressed with relative ease in the short term, others call for medium and long-term actions and several demand a significant change in approach.

Collectively, they set an agenda for change that reflects the concerns expressed by people throughout East Belfast.

## 5.1  Priorities

A number of core issues have been identified. These are presented in four sections, focussed around places, choices, well-being and community.

### 5.1.1. Places

- Graffiti and vandalism need to be addressed. Noise pollution, traffic and fouling of local neighbourhoods by dogs are also problematic;
- Tackling crime, including paramilitary violence and vandalism is a priority.
- Safe and convenient play areas for young children are lacking;
- Consideration should be given to the provision of recycling facilities;
- Housing repair services need to be improved;
- Consideration needs to be given to Housing Offices and their perceived inconvenience.

### 5.1.2. Choices

- Lack of work remains a key issue, particularly in Inner East Belfast, and limits the life choices that can be made;
- More than half of the households surveyed rely on pensions or benefits as their main income source.
- Low pay is seen as the biggest barrier to employment;
- There is a perceived lack of suitable childcare;
- As three in four people have never used an advice centre there are issues around access to and awareness of advice services;
- Training opportunities are needed and would be welcomed by one third of respondents;
- Relationships between schools and communities are poor in some cases;
- More integrated school places suitable for East Belfast children are desired;
- Transport options need to be properly reviewed given the location of essential services and the use of public transport and taxis by more than half of households.

*the agenda for change*

### 5.1.3. Well-being

- Alcohol and substance abuse are among the top three problems articulated by communities across East Belfast;

- Out of hours medical services at Forster Green are inconvenient for almost two in three people and deemed unsatisfactory by one person in three;

- Relevant, user friendly, health information is needed at a neighbourhood level, especially among young men and boys;

- More support and counselling services for stress and depression are required;

- Services, facilities and activities need to be assessed with greater consideration of the needs of older people and their carers.

### 5.1.4. Community

- Community activity is not a part of most people's lives. One person in eight is involved with a local community group and less than half of respondents were aware of groups in their area;

- There is an under utilisation of community and youth facilities;

- There is a perceived lack of visitor attractions in East Belfast and some interest in developing greater arts activity in communities, perhaps through a summer community festival and a central arts venue.

## 5.2. A 'joined up' response

The research reports were always intended to act as community development tools and must now form the basis of action based on the options prioritised by local people. The community has demonstrated huge talent and willingness to engage in the process; it is now imperative that we build a meaningful contract for change around the agenda that has been set.

In EBCDA, our focus is on '*the provision of support for community based organisations by providing capacity building programmes that are based on partnership, equal opportunities and sustainable outcomes'.* This mission statement sits in the context of six core values, all of which are key to the 'joined up' response which is now required:

- Community development is fundamental to successful regeneration in East Belfast;

- The needs of locally based community organisations should inform and direct our work;

- All communities should have equal access to a wide range of development opportunities;

- An inter-agency approach promoting community participation and consultation in developing policy and practice is required;

- Comprehensive capacity building programmes are needed for communities in East Belfast;

- Recognition and focus on the particular needs of those living in areas of recognised disadvantage is required.

In reference to a new urban regeneration strategy for Northern Ireland, the Minister for Social Development recently endorsed these values when indicating that four key components are to be built into Government's favoured route to regeneration:

*"These are to target social need, to place regeneration at the centre of the work of mainstream agencies and programmes, to empower communities to shape and drive regeneration in their own areas and to learn from the mistakes of the past by committing to a longer timescale to allow projects to mature ".*

In order to deliver, there has to be a strategic, structured follow up to the research process through local public meetings, dissemination of findings and dialogue with politicians & statutory bodies. The establishment of a contract for change will be a critical next step, requiring substantive input from a range of organisations in the community and voluntary sector and from service providers and policy makers.

Collaboration between community and voluntary organisations and genuine partnership approaches to a range of service issues is needed. There is also a critical requirement to keep matters on the policy agenda and lobby for sustained action, while continuing to build on capacity in local communities to address the issues that concern people most.

In the current policy climate – as outlined in Section 2 of this report – Government support has been promised for social inclusion, capacity building, community participation in urban regeneration and areas of weak community infrastructure. From the analysis in Section 3, which set the general context in which this work took place, it is evident that East Belfast has been overlooked in the past because of particular perceptions and methods of defining deprivation, as well as a lack of robust information about local communities. It is therefore imperative that we listen and act, together, in response to the findings that have been presented and in particular to the priorities for change.

**Maggie Andrews, Director, East Belfast Community Development Agency**

the agenda for change

# Appendix 1 Main Questionnaire

## EAST BELFAST CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

## HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

**Reference Number** _____

**Interviewer Code** _____

**Area Code** _____

1 Newtownards Road
2 Ardcarn
3 Summerhill
4 Albertbridge and The Mount
5 Bloomfield
6 Knocknagoney, Garnerville and Merton Park
7 Wandsworth
8 Short Strand
9 Lower Ravenhill
10 Walkway
11 Willowfield and Lower Castlereagh
12 Inverary / Sydenham
13 Clarawood
14 Ashmount

| Visit | Date | Time |
|-------|------|------|
| 1st visit | | |
| 2nd visit | | |
| 3rd visit | | |
| 4th visit | | |
| 5th visit | | |

## HOUSEHOLDS

Enter the appropriate number in the space provided (don't forget to include yourself) or ring the number opposite the appropriate response.

|  | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. How many people live in your household? |  |  |  |

## AGE GROUPS

**2. How many people including children living in your household are aged…?**

|  | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| a) 0 – 4 |  |  |  |
| b) 5 – 10 (primary school age) |  |  |  |
| c) 11 – 15 (secondary school age) |  |  |  |
| d) 16 - 24 |  |  |  |
| e) 25 – 34 |  |  |  |
| f) 35 - 59 |  |  |  |
| g) 60 - 65 |  |  |  |
| h) 66 - 74 |  |  |  |
| i) 75+ |  |  |  |

**3. How many in the household are…?**

| Give number for any which apply | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| a) Married or with partner |  |  |  |
| b) Single |  |  |  |
| c) Single parents |  |  |  |
| d) Carers of elderly / disabled people |  |  |  |
| e) Full-time employed (more than 16 hours per week) |  |  |  |
| f) Part-time employed |  |  |  |
| g) Unemployed more than one year |  |  |  |
| h) Early retired |  |  |  |
| i) On a Gov. Training Scheme |  |  |  |
| j) In full-time education |  |  |  |
| k) In part-time training /education |  |  |  |

appendix 1

## HOUSING

### 4. (a)  Is your home..?    Please circle

| | |
|---|---|
| Terraced | 1 |
| Detached | 2 |
| Semi detached | 3 |
| Flat | 4 |
| Bungalow | 5 |
| Other – please specify _____ | 6 |

### (b)  Is your home…

| | |
|---|---|
| Owner occupied | 1 |
| Rented | 2 |
| Other - please specify _____ | 3 |

### (c)  If rented:

| | |
|---|---|
| Rented from local or public authority | 1 |
| Rented from housing association or charitable trust | 2 |
| Rented unfurnished from private person or company | 3 |
| Rented furnished from private person or company | 4 |

### (d)  Is your home in good repair?

|  | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | 1 |
| | No | 2 |

### (e)  How many bedrooms do you have?    _____

### (f)  Is anyone in your household on a housing waiting list?

|  | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | 1 |
| | No | 2 |

## HEALTH

**5 a)  Does anyone in your household have a medical condition being treated by a doctor or hospital?**

Yes      1
No       2

**b)  Does anyone in your household receive benefits related to illness?**

Yes      1
No       2

**c)  How well do the women and girls in your household feel informed about their health?**

Very well        1
Quite well       2
Not very well    3
Not applicable   4

**d)  How well do the men and boys in your household feel informed about their health?**

Very well        1
Quite well       2
Not very well    3
Not applicable   4

**e)  Is drug abuse much of a problem locally?**

Yes      1
No       2

**f)  Is alcohol abuse much of a problem locally?**

Yes      1
No       2

**g)  How many members of your house hold take medication for nervous illness, depression, stress?**          _____

*appendix 1*

## TRANSPORT

**6. a) What form(s) of transport do members of your household use regularly?**

**(circle the appropriate number)**

|  |  | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| a) | Car | 1 | 2 |
| b) | Taxi | 1 | 2 |
| c) | Public transport | 1 | 2 |
| d) | Other (Specify) | 1 | 2 |

**b)        How many cars are there in the household? (if none write "0")  _____**

**c)        Does your household have adequate parking space?**

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Not applicable | 3 |

## QUALIFICATIONS

**7. (a)        How many in your household have the following qualifications or equivalent?**

|  | Total |
|---|---|
| a) Adult education qualification | |
| b) Computer / IT qualification | |
| c) GCSE / GCE | |
| d) CSE | |
| e) A Levels | |
| f) NVQ 1-2 | |
| g) NVQ 3-4 | |
| h) City and Guilds | |
| i) OND | |
| j) HND | |
| k) Degree | |
| l) Post graduate qualification | |
| m) RSA | |
| n) Other | |
| o) None | |
| p) Don't know | |

**7 (b) Has anyone in your household done any education / training since leaving school?**

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

**7 (c ) Would anyone in your household like to do any training / education?**

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

If "Yes" Please specify                    _____

## EMPLOYMENT

**8 Do you think that any of the following prevents unemployed people from getting satisfactory jobs? Please circle any answers you agree with or prioritise?**

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Lack of suitable childcare | 1 | 2 |
| No transport to where the jobs are | 1 | 2 |
| Low pay / not worth coming off benefits | 1 | 2 |
| Not well enough qualified | 1 | 2 |
| Not enough confidence / experience | 1 | 2 |
| No career opportunities available | 1 | 2 |
| Other – please specify _____ | 1 | 2 |

**9        Does anyone in your household have experience or training in the following areas of work? Please circle any which apply.**

| | Experience | | Training | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| a) Hospitality services | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| b) Customer services | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| c) Computers | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| d) Call centres | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| e) Construction | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |

appendix 1

## NEIGHBOURHOOD

**10 (a) Do you feel generally that people's quality of life in this area is...**

| | |
|---|---|
| Very good | 1 |
| Good | 2 |
| Just OK | 3 |
| Poor | 4 |
| Very poor | 5 |

**b) Do you feel that the quality of life in this area is...?**

| | |
|---|---|
| Getting worse | 1 |
| Staying the same | 2 |
| Getting better | 3 |

**11 Do you have plans to move out of this immediate area?**

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Don't know/ not sure | 3 |

## PRIORITY PROBLEMS

**12  Indicate which three of the following you think are the cause of serious problems in your area. Rank them 1, 2 and 3 in order of seriousness, 1 = most serious.**

a) Environment (e.g. traffic, dog fouling, noise)  _____
b) Crime (e.g. paramilitary violence, vandalism)  _____
c) Child abuse  _____
d) Domestic violence  _____
e) Substance Abuse (drugs, alcohol, glue)  _____
f) Bad housing  _____
g) Poverty  _____
h) Other – please specify  _____

_____

## PRIORITY IMPROVEMENTS

**13 From the list below indicate the three most important things that must be done to make your area a better place to live. Mark them 1, 2 and 3 in order of importance.**

a) Provide play areas for children  \_\_\_\_\_

b) Provide youth facilities  \_\_\_\_\_

c) Clear derelict sites  \_\_\_\_\_

d) Action on vandalism / graffiti  \_\_\_\_\_

e) Better public transport  \_\_\_\_\_

f) Better shopping facilities  \_\_\_\_\_

g) Better leisure facilities  \_\_\_\_\_

h) Better child care facilities  \_\_\_\_\_

i) Better health care  \_\_\_\_\_

j) Better housing  \_\_\_\_\_

k) Better schools  \_\_\_\_\_

l) More contact with neighbours  \_\_\_\_\_

m) More jobs  \_\_\_\_\_

n) Better community safety  \_\_\_\_\_

o) Other (specify)  \_\_\_\_\_

## EDUCATION

**14 (a) Has your household generally had positive experiences of nursery / primary education?**

Yes      1
No       2
Varied   3

**(b) Has your household generally had positive experiences of secondary education?**

Yes      1
No       2
Varied   3

**(c) How valuable do members of your household feel education is for their future?**

Very      1
Quite     2
Not very  3

**(d) How well do members of your household feel they understand the education system?**

Very      1
Quite     2
Not very  3

appendix 1

**(e) How is the relationship between your community and local schools?**

| | |
|---|---|
| Good | 1 |
| Average | 2 |
| Poor | 3 |

**(f) Are there enough places in integrated schools that are suitable for children from East Belfast?**

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Don't Know | 3 |
| Not interested | 4 |

## ACTIVITIES

**15 Do any members of your household take part in the following activities?**

| | Never | Sometimes | Often |
|---|---|---|---|
| a) Church based activities | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| b) A youth club / group | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| c) An advice centre / service | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| d) A community centre / group | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| e) A leisure centre | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| f) A sporting activity | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| g) Arts activity | 1 | 2 | 3 |

## ARTS

**16 (a)   Would anyone in your household be interested in getting involved in community arts activities?**

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Maybe | 3 |

**(b)   Would your household use a central arts facility in East Belfast if one was available?**

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Maybe | 3 |

**(c)   Would you like to see a community arts summer festival in East Belfast?**

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Maybe | 3 |

## SERVICES

**17      How satisfied are you with the following services?**

|  | Satisfied | Neutral | Not satisfied | None available |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Public transport | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b) Police services | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c) Milk delivery | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d) Recycling facilities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e) Housing repairs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f) Playground facilities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| g) Childcare facilities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| h) Pre school facilities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| i) Help with job hunting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| j) Community facilities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| k) Health centre / clinic | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| l) Out of hours medical service | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| m) Public park | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| n) Primary / Nursery School | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| o) Secondary School | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| p) Youth services | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| q) Counselling / support services | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| r) Visitor or tourist attractions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| s) Other - please specify below | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

_____

## FACILITIES

**18. How convenient are the following facilities to your household? (by convenient we mean walking or easy travelling distance)**

|  | Very | Quite convenient | Not |
|---|---|---|---|
| a) Doctor / health centre | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| b) Out of hours medical service | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| c) Dentist | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| d) Adequate shopping facilities | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| e) Bank | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| f) Post office | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| g) Hairdresser | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| h) Public telephone | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| i) Housing office | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| j) Social Security Office | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| k) Social Services | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| l) Advice centre / service | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| m) Sports facilities | 1 | 2 | 3 |

appendix 1

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| n) Pub/Social club | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| o) Library | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| p) Play area | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| q) Public park | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| r) Primary / Nursery School | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| s) Secondary School | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| t) Chemist | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| u) Community Centre | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| v) College or training centre | 1 | 2 | 3 |

## INCOME

**19. Which of the following is your <u>main</u> source on income in your household?**

| | |
|---|---|
| Earnings from work | 1 |
| Retirement pension | 2 |
| Social security benefit(s) | 3 |
| Other (specify below) | 4 |

_____

Would you like a leaflet telling you about your nearest advice centre where you could have your benefits checked?

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**20 (a)     Are you aware of any local groups working on behalf of this community?**

Yes     1
No      2

If "yes" please specify _____

**(b)      Is anyone in your household involved with others in helping to improve your local community?**

Yes     1
No      2

**(c)      From the list below rate the three most important reasons why you think people do not join community groups? Mark them "1","2" and "3" in order of importance.**

| | |
|---|---|
| too busy doing other things | _____ |
| cannot see the point or benefit | _____ |
| up to everyone to look after themselves | _____ |
| things will not improve anyway | _____ |
| have never thought about it | _____ |
| not aware of what groups are doing | _____ |
| lack of confidence or experience | _____ |
| other – please specify _____ | _____ |

## FOLLOW UP

**1. What are the three most important things that should be done with the findings of this survey? Mark them "1", "2" qnd"3" in order of importance.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Public meeting to discuss findings locally | _____ |
| Highlight issues in the media | _____ |
| Present issues to politicians | _____ |
| Present issues to statutory agencies / funders | _____ |
| Set up local issue based meetings | _____ |
| Interested people get together to work on action plan | _____ |
| Form new community groups | _____ |
| Get existing community groups together | _____ |
| None of these | _____ |
| Other – please specify _____ | _____ |

## THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN OUR SURVEY

appendix 1

# Appendix 2 Response Rates

| Area | Total sample | Inelegible | No reply | Not interested | Complete | Response Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Newtownards Road | 182 | 13 | 17 | 22 | 127 | 77% |
| 2. Ardcarn | 31 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 24 | 80% |
| 3. Summerhill | 36 | 0 | 10 | 3 | 23 | 64% |
| 4. Albertbridge | 154 | 25 | 34 | 31 | 64 | 50% |
| 5. Bloomfield | 201 | 13 | 57 | 31 | 100 | 53% |
| 6. Knocknagoney | 58 | 8 | 8 | 18 | 24 | 41% |
| **Areas 1-6 sub total** | **662** | **60** | **132** | **105** | **365** | **61%** |
| 7. Wandsworth | 44 | 0 | 8 | 7 | 29 | 66% |
| 8. Short Strand | 100 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 88 | 89% |
| 9. Lower Ravenhill | 259 | 49 | 54 | 50 | 106 | 50% |
| 10. Walkway | 69 | 2 | 5 | 10 | 52 | 78% |
| 11. Willowfield | 147 | 18 | 24 | 23 | 82 | 63% |
| 12. Sydenham/Inverary | 228 | 30 | 50 | 65 | 83 | 41% |
| 13. Clarawood | 62 | 11 | 6 | 25 | 20 | 39% |
| 14. Ashmount | 24 | 2 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 27% |
| **Areas 7-14 sub total** | **933** | **113** | **161** | **193** | **466** | **57%** |
| **Overall Total** | **1595** | **173** | **293** | **298** | **828** | **58%** |

**Please note:**

1. **Street lists** from which the random sample was prepared are available to ascertain neighbourhood boundaries – contact Christine Acheson at East Belfast Community Development Agency, 269 Albertbridge Road, Belfast BT5 4PY, tel. 9045 1512, fax 9073 8039, e-mail **info@ebcda.org**

2. **Standard error** details are available as information for statisticians – contact Dr Brian Tipping, Research Services Ireland, 45-49 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2FG, tel. 9096 1111, fax 9033 3522, e-mail brian.tipping@burc.org

**East Belfast Community Development Agency**
**269 Albertbridge Road**
**Belfast BT5 4PY**

**Tel. 9045 1512**

**Fax. 9073 8039**

**E-mail info@ebcda.org**

**www.ebcda.org**

leading from behind  an agenda for change in east belfast   march 2001

**East Belfast Community Development Agency**
**269 Albertbridge Road, Belfast BT5 4PY**

**Tel. 9045 1512   Fax. 9073 8039**

**E-mail info@ebcda.org**
**www.ebcda.org**