



Reducing Inequalities and Improving Wellbeing:

**Options to help transform our public
policymaking and service delivery**

Discussion Paper

October 2022



**SOCIAL
CHANGE
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Introduction

We all want people living in Northern Ireland to have a decent life, now and in the future. For most of us that means having enough to eat, a good home and job, opportunities to learn and develop, good health, a voice in decisions that affect us, and enough money to allow us to make choices. We want to be part of communities that are cohesive, supportive, safe and culturally rich, and to live in attractive and sustainable environments. Our public services and policies should help us to achieve these goals, enabling everyone to access opportunities, providing essential services and helping us when we need it.

Unfortunately, many people here do not have what they need to live a good life. The Covid-19 pandemic and cost of living crisis have highlighted and exacerbated the inequalities that exist in Northern Ireland society. People already struggling to get by are being pushed further into poverty¹ and there remain considerable gaps in life outcomes for those living in the most deprived and least deprived parts of Northern Ireland, for example, a healthy life expectancy gap of 11.8 years for men and 14.9 years for women and an employment gap of 21.5 per cent².

The public policies and services that should be helping to tackle these inequalities have struggled to realise sustained improvements in people's lives. For instance, despite significant investment (£138m in 2019/20) in interventions designed to help raise attainment in numeracy and literacy and narrow the gap in educational outcomes, a 2021 enquiry by the NI Audit Office³ found that the educational attainment gap between pupils in receipt of Free School Meals and those not in receipt of Free School Meals had not changed significantly in the last 15 years.

The challenges faced and the need to change how we try to address them are well identified across a variety of plans (e.g. Draft Programme for Government Outcomes Framework, New Decade New Approach, Covid Recovery Plan). This discussion paper examines what role legislation might play in accelerating these changes. It explores how in other places, legislation has been used to support more effective action on the kinds of stubborn societal inequalities and poor outcomes that persist in NI despite years of targeted initiatives; and to make a cultural shift within public services towards more collaborative, sustainable and citizen-involved ways of working.

¹JRF (2022) 'Going Without: deepening poverty in the UK', 'Not heating, eating or meeting bills - managing a cost of living crisis on a low income'

²Department of Health 'Life Expectancy in Northern Ireland 2018-20'; Labour Force Survey 2019

³NIAO (May 2021) 'Closing the Gap – Social Deprivation and links to Educational Attainment'. Note - an Expert Panel on Persistent Educational Underachievement also issued its [report and action plan](#) in May 2021

Public sector organisations are already subject to a range of relevant legal duties in Northern Ireland, notably, the legal duty that has been in place for more than two decades to promote equality of opportunity and good relations (Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998), the requirement under Community Planning (Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014) for local councils to lead a process to improve the long-term social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the residents of their districts, and the duty on Departments and local councils to act in a way that helps achieve sustainable development (Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006). However, it seems that these important duties have not been able to effect fully the changes they originally sought⁴. Furthermore, the recent suspensions of Northern Ireland's political institutions have slowed attempts to move towards a more outcomes-based approach. This paper explores the potential to introduce new legal duties with a view to building upon what we already have and unlocking the potential of whole system working to realise improved outcomes.

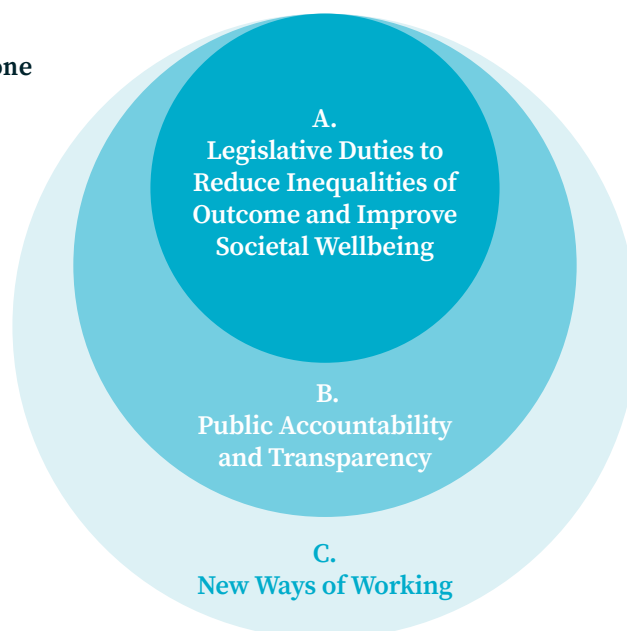
Informed by insights from SCI's past work⁵ and innovative developments in other geographies, it aims to stimulate discussion with government, policymakers, service providers, and wider civic society partners. We offer suggestions around possible actions that could be taken to help 'hardwire' fairness, sustainability, accountability and reporting into public policy and service delivery.

Our analysis of other places points to three important factors in the development and delivery of a sustainable, outcome-based approach to reducing inequalities and enhancing societal wellbeing (see Figure 1). These are: legislating to address inequality and improve societal wellbeing, improving and strengthening accountability and reporting, and introducing duties to mandate new ways of working. It seems that it is the combination of these three things that is important - intent plus effective delivery plus strong accountability.

It will take time to see the impact of these approaches on social outcomes, but there is emerging evidence of culture change and adoption of new ways of working. We have included several illustrative examples of policy making and implementation that is more integrated and focused on long-term outcomes.

More details on the legislation referenced throughout the report is provided in Annex A.

**Figure 1 –
What Needs to be Done**



⁴For example: Equality Commission NI's [Acting on Evidence](#) report and Carnegie UK Trust's [Embedding a Wellbeing Framework in Northern Ireland](#) report detail some of the challenges

⁵For example: [Shifting Gear](#) report on accelerating public service transformation in Northern Ireland by SCI and Deloitte; [PfG Outcomes Framework consultation response](#); [Building a Fairer Future](#); ['Back To Normal or Back to Better?'](#)



A. Legislative Duties to Reduce Inequalities of Outcome and Improve Societal Wellbeing

In an outcome-based approach, the commitment to reducing inequalities of outcome and improving societal wellbeing must be put into legislation rather than residing solely in a government plan. This is what happens in other places and it transcends the interests of the government of the day and provides continued direction in the event of any political hiatus.

Significantly, making a clear and overarching legislative commitment to tackling disadvantage and improving societal wellbeing:

- confers duty across all government departments, agencies, public bodies;
- underpins the design and delivery of outcome-based government legislation, programme for government, service provision and resource allocation; and
- provides a guiding light to reducing inequalities of outcome and improving wellbeing for current and future government administrations.

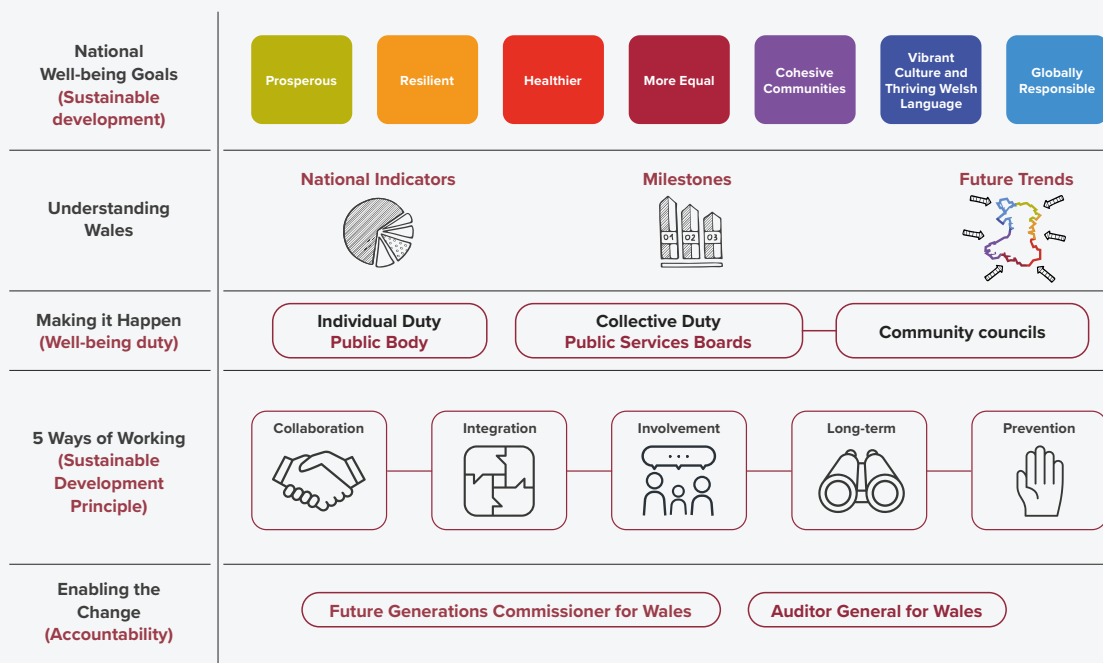
Examples to be looked at from other places include the following:

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is an act passed by the Senedd (then the National Assembly for Wales) to make provision requiring public bodies to pursue economic, social, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of Wales in a way that accords with the principle of sustainable development. That means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Act established seven statutory wellbeing goals for Wales – aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals⁶ - and five specified ways of working based on the sustainable development principle. Public bodies and Welsh Ministers are required to set and publish wellbeing objectives and to take all reasonable steps to meet them, while applying the five ways of working. The Act also makes provision for the establishment of collaborative Public Services Boards and a new Commissioner for Future Generations to advise and assist public bodies to make progress. (Figure 2)

Figure 2 – Well-being of Future Generations Wales Act

Well-being of Future Generations Act Architecture



⁶See diagram on page 14: <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Wales--SDGs--VNR--Supplementary-Report-for-Wales--Version-10.1-Final-w-cover-ENG.pdf>

Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill is a private members bill currently under consideration by the House of Commons (having been proposed and passed by the House of Lords). Based on the Welsh Act, it would apply across the UK, excluding devolved functions in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Scotland has recently announced it is to introduce a similar statutory requirement and a future generations commissioner, and similar approaches are being considered in Ireland.

There are also lessons to learn from approaches that have been adopted in Finland, Scotland, and Ireland, for example:

The **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015** put Scotland's evolving outcomes approach on a statutory footing, requiring Scottish ministers to, 'consult on, develop and publish a new set of National Outcomes for Scotland and to regularly report on progress'. The National Outcomes must look to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage. Related responsibilities and roles are assigned to local authorities, community planning partnerships and public bodies. The outcomes framework must be developed in consultation with the public and civic society and be reviewed at least every five years. The resulting 2018 National Performance Framework details the overall vision and values for Scotland, 11 long-term outcomes (aligned to UN Sustainable Development Goals) and an indicator framework for measuring progress.

The Act also places a duty on local authorities and key public bodies to act with a view to reducing inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage within community planning. Each partnership is required to have regard to those bodies representing people experiencing inequalities.

More recently, the **Fairer Scotland Duty, Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010** (applied April 2018) placed a legal responsibility on particular public bodies in Scotland to pay due regard to how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions, and to publish written assessment demonstrating what they have done to achieve this. This duty now also applies in Wales.

Reducing inequalities is an integral part of the Finnish constitution, legislation and programme for government. Central government and each municipality is required in legislation to reduce inequalities and promote social inclusion, including:

- social policy measures that influence poverty, education, employment, housing
- supporting a healthy lifestyle
- equal and needs-based access to, and use of, social welfare and healthcare services.

In Ireland, the first report on a developing Wellbeing Framework – **Understanding Life in Ireland**⁷ – was launched in 2021, setting out an initial outcome framework and indicator set to be developed and embedded into policy making and budgeting over time. The framework aims to move towards a more holistic view of wellbeing, beyond solely economic measures, with a focus on quality of life, living standards

⁷[A Wellbeing Framework for Ireland](#)



and environmental sustainability now and into the future. Equality and inclusion are underpinning elements of the framework, running across all dimensions, with the aim of identifying 'if certain groups within society are being systematically left behind'. The framework is a cross-government initiative and not yet on a statutory footing, but importantly it sits outside of and provides a guiding vision for the Programme for Government.

Where a universal requirement has been placed on government and public bodies to improve wellbeing and reduce inequalities, this is typically underpinned by key duties:

- **Sustainability** – taking a longer term, strategic perspective on impact of current decisions on policy development, service design and delivery of the needs of future generations;
- **Collaboration** – working collectively across the public sector, civil society and other stakeholders to improve outcomes, applying a whole systems approach to deliver person-centred, integrated and innovative public policy and services; and
- **Involvement and Participation** – ensuring meaningful, timely, inclusive, empowered and supported participation by the public in design, delivery and oversight of public policy and services. Making best and reasonable endeavours to reach people across the diversity of communities, geography, needs, capacity, and lived experiences.

The following duties could be adopted or extended to support delivery on a commitment to improving wellbeing and reducing inequalities of outcome in Northern Ireland:

The Children's Services Co-operation Act (NI) 2015 confers a duty on children's authorities and the NI Executive to collaborate to improve children and young people's wellbeing, and collective responsibility for development and implementation of outcomes in the Child and Young Person's Strategy. A similar duty to collaborate could be introduced across all public bodies, not limited to specified sectors.

The New Zealand Public Services Act 2020 (NZ Act 2020) recognises the imperative for a legislative model to be designed to build "collaborative and cohesive public services that tackle the complex issues which span agency boundaries, and provide wraparound services based on New Zealanders' needs, rather than agency convenience". The duty of collaboration is embedded in the purpose of the Act, as well as in the responsibility assigned to the Public Service Commissioner to ensure that public service agencies work as a system to deliver better services to, and achieve better outcomes for, the public. This principle could be applied in Northern Ireland.

The Health and Social Services (Reform) Northern Ireland Act 2009, requires all those responsible for health and social care services to involve service users, carers and the public actively and effectively. A broader duty to involve citizens could be introduced across public services.

Figure 3 provides some examples of collaborative working models.

Figure 3: New Ways of Working Together

Short Term Experience Placements (STEP)

Scheme providing placement and shadowing opportunities to Welsh Government officials in other departments, public sector agencies and private and voluntary sector organisations. Aims to build officials' networks and expose them to different ways of working.

Co-Location of Staff

Strategic leaders in Community Planning Partnership in Glasgow collaborated on a very successful youth intervention initiative. A Fire and Rescue officer had been co-located centrally within the community planning team for some time to activate Fire and Rescue's partnership working. This officer led the initiative - Operation Modulus - bringing in all related agencies from the Community Planning Partnership. The initiative was implemented without additional funding, by partners working in a different and planned way together to achieve better outcomes.

Co-Location of Services

The Building Connections Programme was a series of collaborative projects designed to improve social and economic outcomes for people living in poverty in Glasgow. Advice and support service workers from the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors were co-located in general practices and jobcentres. The co-located service model was found to improve accessibility for people needing multiple services and encourage referrals by staff to services provided by the other agencies involved. The programme officer working across the projects to evaluate and support them played an important 'boundary spanning' role, encouraging connections and collaboration.



B. Public Accountability and Transparency

Another key factor to driving transformative change relates to accountability and transparency – the requirement for open and trusted arrangements for overseeing, advising and reporting on the performance of public services. Such arrangements allow the public to see how well public services are upholding key values and realising better outcomes for society.

“What gets measured gets managed” is a familiar and relevant adage when it comes to oversight and accountability for the collaborative delivery of public policy and services that meet the needs and expectations of people, particularly those who are experiencing inequality and disadvantage.

There are several comprehensive examples of legislative provision for accountability and reporting on delivery of outcomes across government, its agencies and public bodies that could be considered in the NI context.

Alongside the establishment of Commissioner roles, there are also examples of extending the reach and reporting of the Auditor General, Fiscal Councils and Inspectorates.

Examples to be looked at from other places include the following:

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Act establishes the role of the independent Future Generations Commissioner as the assigned guardian of sustainable development and wellbeing outcomes. Appointed by Welsh Ministers, the Commissioner gives advice to public bodies, monitors, assesses and reports on progress, and provides recommendations for future priorities to Welsh Ministers. This includes a public progress report in the year preceding an election to the Senedd. Public bodies must produce a wellbeing statement setting out their objectives and application of the Sustainable Development Principle. The Commissioner has specific responsibility for producing the Future Generation and Future Trend reports. In addition, the Act requires the Auditor General to operate within the Sustainable Development Principle in their examinations and reporting on public bodies.

In New Zealand, the **Public Service Commissioner** is appointed by Government as the Head of Service providing leadership of the public service, and oversight of the performance and integrity of the system. The Commissioner has a clear statutory role to enable integrated, whole system working to deliver better services and public outcomes, and to promote integrity, accountability and transparency throughout all agencies. Functions include appointing, leading and performance managing the public service leadership team.

We also note the establishment of a permanent, independent **Fiscal Council for Northern Ireland**⁸ which is tasked with bringing transparency and scrutiny to the effective use of the NI Executive's finances in driving better outcomes.

⁸<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/news/murphy-establishes-fiscal-council-and-commission>



C. New Ways of Working and Allocating Resources

Collaboration happens, but it can often be piecemeal in nature rather than as part of an intentional, systemic and natural way of working. Better collaboration is essential if we are to develop coherent, integrated, whole-system thinking around policies and strategies, and the planning and delivery of people-centred services and outcomes.

Legislation has been implemented in other places to both support and require collaboration across the public service system, and to provide new structures that aim to tackle some of the practical barriers that can mitigate against joint, outcome-based working. Such mechanisms could be considered to enhance ongoing collaborative working, and to address the persistent or “wicked” issues in NI such as mental health, early years, community interfaces, domestic violence and an ageing population.

Examples to be looked at from other places include the following:

The New Zealand Public Services Act 2020 (NZ Act 2020)

The New Zealand Public Services Act 2020 (NZ Act 2020) provides for new joint working models that support government and public bodies to collaborate on cross-cutting policy and service delivery needs, and the creation of new entities to tackle “wicked” issues (see Figure 4 below).

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places equal value on ‘what’ the government and public bodies should do (the 7 Wellbeing Goals) and ‘how’ they should do things (the 5 Ways of Working). In assessing against this ‘double test’ (see Figure 5 below) the Future Generations Commissioner has focused on corporate functions as catalysts for change - corporate planning, financial planning, workforce planning, procurement, assets, risk management and performance management.

Figure 4: New Legislative Models for Joined-Up Working in New Zealand

Interdepartmental Ventures

Allows creation of new entities to deliver services or carry out regulatory functions of 2 or more departments. Led by board of departmental chief executives, jointly responsible to a nominated minister. Interdepartmental ventures can hold assets, employ staff and enter contracts. Applied to complex, priority issues where there is a need to align services to improve outcomes e.g. family violence and sexual violence.

Joint Operational Agreements

Provide a formal structure for collaborative service delivery between public service agencies. Two or more chief executives or boards of public service agencies may enter into a joint operational agreement for their agencies to work together to achieve stated goals, following permission from the Public Services Commissioner.

Interdepartmental Executive Boards

Align and coordinate strategic policy, planning and budgeting activities for 2 or more departments with responsibilities for the subject matter area. Jointly responsible to the appropriate Minister for the operation of the Board.

Figure 5: Applying the ‘Double Test’ - Transport in Wales

The Long-Term Vision

- What?** A 20-year vision of how transport can deliver against the 7 Wellbeing priorities for Wales - improving health, tackling poverty and creating opportunities.
- How?** Developed via extensive engagement with transport users, service providers and key partners. Goals are integrated across policy areas, long-term and preventative. Implementation plan based on collaborative intra-government and cross sector working.

Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidelines (WelTAG)

- What?** A framework for thinking about proposed changes to transport system, updated to embed the Future Generations Act into transport appraisal and evaluation process.
- How?** WelTAG requires the application of the sustainable development principle and 5 ways of working at each stage e.g. involving service users in defining the problem, putting long-term needs at centre, investing time on more innovative solutions with potential to maximise impact across 7 wellbeing goals.

South Wales Rail & Metro Contract

- What?** Award of a £5bn contract for public transport services in South Wales.
- How?** Bids assessed in terms of potential impact on wellbeing goals and application of sustainable development principle through their ways of working. For example, successful bidder is working with social enterprises to create employment opportunities for people with disabilities, ensuring electricity comes from zero-carbon energy and supporting local artists for cultural works and displays.

However, working together better is not enough, there is a need also to review how resources are more effectively targeted. Other places have found outcome-based budgeting is an important enabling mechanism to embed wellbeing at the heart of public policy, planning and service delivery. It represents a significant gear-change in ways of working that focus on meaningful collaborative working to address complex problems. At a fundamental level, budgets are aligned, utilised and accounted for on the basis of broader needs and evidence-based measures that recognise the interplay between social, environmental, economic and cultural factors. Research in other places is demonstrating the importance of outcome-based budgeting as a means of addressing inequality and transforming public services.

New Zealand introduced its first **Wellbeing Budget in 2019** - a new approach designed to break down silos and ensure a clear focus on outcomes that meet the needs of present and future generations. As well as support for core public services, the Wellbeing Budget provides for cross-government initiatives within 5 priority wellbeing areas (mental health, child wellbeing, supporting Maori and Pasifika aspirations, productive nation, transforming economy). Each year the budget reports on national wellbeing – not just fiscal trends - using a living standards framework and additional measures specific to child poverty. Legislation has been passed to support the ongoing evolution of the wellbeing budget approach. The Child Poverty Reduction Act 2018 required the government to introduce child poverty reduction targets and amended the Public Finance Act 1989 to require reporting on progress towards those targets in the Budget.

Ireland has been piloting **Equality Budgeting** since 2017 to ‘advance equality, reduce poverty and strengthen economic and social rights’. Initially focused on gender equality, the initiative has expanded into poverty, socio-economic inequality, and disability. Departments (on a voluntary basis) identify programme areas with potential to address the equality themes identified and set targets to report against in the next year’s performance review. An OECD review⁹ found the initiative was building good foundations and improving transparency and data collection. It recommended further mainstreaming, for example by: defining a national set of equality goals and indicators to work towards and measure progress against; building system capacity (human resources, data collection, financial tracking); putting equality budgeting into official budget guidance; and in the medium-term considering putting it into statute to insulate it from political and economic change.

The budget approach in NI could be framed around population wellbeing and provide for special investment in some priority areas to improve outcomes and tackle inequalities.

Next Steps

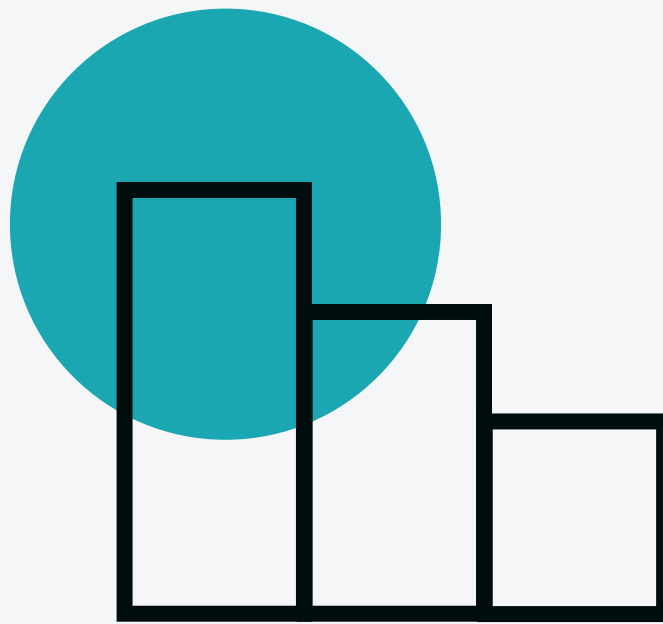
This paper aims to encourage discussion on steps that might be taken to make real the commitment to working differently and getting better outcomes from our public services.

We have outlined some examples of practice elsewhere and existing local legislation that could be built upon to further embed a commitment to wellbeing and addressing inequality, and to transform our public services so they better meet the needs of the population.

SCI is keen to engage with government, policymakers, service providers, and wider civic society partners on the suggestions in this paper and how they might build upon other efforts to improve outcomes in Northern Ireland.

Please contact Padraic Quirk to discuss: p.quirk@socialchangeinitiative.com

⁹[OECD Scan: Equality Budgeting in Ireland](#)



Annex A: Summary Legislative Table

Key Recommendations	Good practice examples	Legislative context and policy links (to consider for adoption, adaption and/or extension of powers in NI context)
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A. Legislative duties to reduce inequalities and improve societal wellbeing

Duty to uphold public service values across government, its agencies and public bodies	Wales	<p>Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Part 2</p> <p>2. Purpose of Act:</p> <p><i>“An Act of the National Assembly for Wales to make provision requiring public bodies to do things in pursuit of the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales in a way that accords with the sustainable development principle”</i> (see below)</p>
	New Zealand	<p>NZ Public Services Act. Subpart 2: 10</p> <p>Public service defined</p> <p><i>In this Act, the public service—</i></p> <p><i>(a) means public service agencies, which are— (i) departments: (ii) departmental agencies: (iii) interdepartmental executive boards: (iv) interdepartmental ventures; and</i></p> <p><i>(b) includes Crown agents for the purposes of this subpart and subpart 4 of this Part.</i></p> <p>Duty to uphold public service values. Subpart 2: 12 (1) – (7)</p> <p><i>“specific to public service chief executives and agencies, interdepartmental executive boards, interdepartmental ventures boards, boards of Crown agents”.</i></p>
	New Zealand	<p>Part 1. Subpart 2: 11</p> <p>Purpose, public service principles, and spirit of service to community</p> <p><i>“The public service supports constitutional and democratic government, enables both the current Government and successive governments to develop and implement their policies, delivers high quality and efficient public services, supports the Government to pursue the long-term public interest, facilitates active citizenship, and acts in accordance with the law”.</i></p> <p>Part 1: Subpart 3</p> <p>Purposes of this Act</p> <p><i>The purposes of this Act are ...</i></p> <p><i>(b) to set out the shared purpose, principles, and values of the public service and the people working in it:</i></p> <p><i>(c) to establish organisational forms and ways of working, including across public service agencies, to achieve better outcomes for the public</i></p> <p>Part 1. Subpart 2: 13</p> <p>Spirit of service to community</p> <p><i>(1) The fundamental characteristic of the public service is acting with a spirit of service to the community.</i></p>

Key Recommendations	Good practice examples	Legislative context and policy links (to consider for adoption, adaption and/or extension of powers in NI context)
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A. Legislative duties to reduce inequalities and improve societal wellbeing

Duty to set national wellbeing outcomes and act to reduce inequalities	Scotland	<p>Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, Part 1 National Outcomes</p> <p>1. National Outcomes</p> <p>(1) The Scottish Ministers must determine outcomes for Scotland (referred to in this Part as “the national outcomes”) that result from, or are contributed to by, the carrying out, by the persons mentioned in subsection (2), of the functions mentioned in subsection (3).</p> <p>(4) In determining the national outcomes, the Scottish Ministers must have regard to the reduction of inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p>Part 2 Community Planning</p> <p>5. Socio-economic inequalities</p> <p>In carrying out functions conferred by this Part, a community planning partnership must act with a view to reducing inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage unless the partnership considers that it would be inappropriate to do so.</p> <p>Fairer Scotland Duty, Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010 (applied April 2018)</p> <p><u>Interim Guidance for Public Bodies</u></p> <p>Places a legal responsibility on particular public bodies in Scotland to pay due regard to how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions, and to publish a written assessment, showing how they’ve done this. Set at a strategic level – relating to key, high-level decisions that affect how the public body fulfils its intended purpose, over a significant period of time. Seen as complementary to existing Public Sector Equality Duty, obligations under Human Rights Act, and aims and responsibilities of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017.</p>
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Key Recommendations	Good practice examples	Legislative context and policy links (to consider for adoption, adaption and/or extension of powers in NI context)
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A. Legislative duties to reduce inequalities and improve societal wellbeing

Duty to uphold sustainable development and wellbeing	Wales	<p>Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Part 2, 5</p> <p>Sustainable development</p> <p>In this Act, “sustainable development” means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle (see section 5), aimed at achieving the well-being goals (see section 4).</p> <p>3. Well-being duty on public bodies</p> <p>(1) <i>Each public body must carry out sustainable development.</i></p> <p>(2) <i>The action a public body takes in carrying out sustainable development must include—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) <i>setting and publishing objectives (“well-being objectives”) that are designed to maximise its contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals, and</i> (b) <i>taking all reasonable steps (in exercising its functions) to meet those objectives.</i> <p>5. Sustainable development principle</p> <p>(1) <i>In this Act, any reference to a public body doing something “in accordance with the sustainable development principle” means that the body must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</i></p> <p>(2) <i>In order to act in that manner, a public body must take account of the following things—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) <i>the importance of balancing short term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to meet long term needs, especially where things done to meet short term needs may have detrimental long term effect;</i> (b) <i>the need to take an integrated approach, by considering how—</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) <i>the body’s well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals;</i> (ii) <i>the body’s well-being objectives impact upon each other or upon other public bodies’ objectives, in particular where steps taken by the body may contribute to meeting one objective but may be detrimental to meeting another;</i> (c) <i>the importance of involving other persons with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and of ensuring those persons reflect the diversity of the population of—</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) <i>Wales (where the body exercises functions in relation to the whole of Wales), or</i> (ii) <i>the part of Wales in relation to which the body exercises functions;</i> (d) <i>how acting in collaboration with any other person (or how different parts of the body acting together) could assist the body to meet its well-being objectives, or assist another body to meet its objectives;</i> (e) <i>how deploying resources to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may contribute to meeting the body’s well-being objectives, or another body’s objectives.</i>
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Key Recommendations	Good practice examples	Legislative context and policy links (to consider for adoption, adaption and/or extension of powers in NI context)
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A. Legislative duties to reduce inequalities and improve societal wellbeing

Duty to uphold sustainable development and wellbeing	Northern Ireland	<p>Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006</p> <p>25. Sustainable development</p> <p>(1) <i>A public authority must, in exercising its functions, act in the way it considers best calculated to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in Northern Ireland, except to the extent that it considers that any such action is not reasonably practicable in all the circumstances of the case.</i></p> <p>(2) <i>For this purpose—</i></p> <p>(a) <i>a public authority must have regard to any strategy or guidance relating to sustainable development issued by the [F1Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs] , and</i></p> <p>(b) <i>a public authority other than a Northern Ireland department must have regard to any guidance relating to sustainable development issued by a Northern Ireland department other than the [F1Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs] .</i></p> <p>(3) <i>In this section “public authority” means—</i></p> <p>(a) <i>a Northern Ireland department,</i></p> <p>(b) <i>a district council in Northern Ireland, and</i></p> <p>(c) <i>any other person designated for the purposes of this section by order made by the [F2Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs].</i></p>
Duty to cooperate to improve wellbeing and reduce inequalities of outcome	Northern Ireland	<p>Children’s Services Co-operation Act (NI) 2015</p> <p>Co-operation to improve well-being</p> <p>2. (1) <i>Every children’s authority must, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of its children functions, co-operate with other children’s authorities and with other children’s service providers in the exercise of those functions.</i></p> <p>(2) <i>The Executive must make arrangements to promote co-operation of the kind mentioned in subsection (1).</i></p> <p>(3) <i>Every children’s authority must co-operate with the Executive in the making of the arrangements mentioned in subsection (2).</i></p> <p>(4) <i>“Children functions” are any functions which may contribute to the well-being of children and young persons.</i></p>
	New Zealand	<p>New Zealand Public Services Act 2020. Part 1: Subpart 3</p> <p>Purposes of this Act</p> <p><i>The purposes of this Act are ...</i></p> <p>(b) <i>to set out the shared purpose, principles, and values of the public service and the people working in it:</i></p> <p>(c) <i>to establish organisational forms and ways of working, including across public service agencies, to achieve better outcomes for the public</i></p>
Duty to involve and consult	Northern Ireland	<p>Health and Social Services (Reform) Northern Ireland Act 2009.</p> <p>Personal and Public Involvement (PPI)</p> <p>Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) Department of Health (health-ni.gov.uk)</p> <p>Guidance for HSC Organisations on Arrangements for Implementing effective personal and public involvement in the HSC (health-ni.gov.uk)</p>

B. Accountability and reporting

Independent accountability and oversight	Wales	<p>Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Part 3</p> <p>THE FUTURE GENERATIONS COMMISSIONER FOR WALES</p> <p>The Commissioner</p> <p>17 Future Generations Commissioner for Wales</p> <p>(1) There is to be a Future Generations Commissioner for Wales (referred to in this Act as the “Commissioner”).</p> <p>(2) The Commissioner is to be an individual appointed by the Welsh Ministers.</p> <p>(3) Before making the appointment under subsection (2), the Welsh Ministers must consult with the National Assembly through its responsible committee.</p> <p>(4) Schedule 2 makes further provision about the Commissioner.</p> <p>18 Commissioner’s general duty</p> <p>The general duty of the Commissioner is—</p> <p>(a) to promote the sustainable development principle, in particular to—</p> <p>(i) act as a guardian of the ability of future generations to meet their needs, and</p> <p>(ii) encourage public bodies to take greater account of the long-term impact of the things that they do, and</p> <p>(b) for that purpose to monitor and assess the extent to which well-being objectives set by public bodies are being met.</p> <p>Role of the Auditor General for Wales</p> <p>15 The sustainable development principle: Auditor General’s examinations</p> <p>(1) The Auditor General for Wales may carry out examinations of public bodies for the purposes of assessing the extent to which a body has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when—</p> <p>(a) setting well-being objectives, and (b) taking steps to meet those objectives.</p> <p>(2) The Auditor General must carry out such an examination of each public body at least once during the period mentioned in subsection (6).</p> <p>(3) Before the end of the period mentioned in subsection (6), the Auditor General must report on the results of the examinations carried out under subsection (1) during that period to the National Assembly.</p> <p>(4) The Auditor General must lay any report prepared under subsection (3) before the National Assembly.</p> <p>(5) In carrying out an examination under subsection (1), the Auditor General must—</p> <p>(a) take into account any advice or assistance given to the public body, or any review of and recommendations made to the body, by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales (see Part 3), and</p> <p>(b) consult the Commissioner.</p> <p>(6) The period referred to in Subsections (2) and (3)—</p> <p>(a) begins on the date falling one year before the date on which an ordinary general election is to be held under section 3 of the Government of Wales Act 2006, and</p> <p>(b) ends on the date falling one day and one year before the date on which the next such election is to be held.</p>
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Key Recommendations	Good practice examples	Legislative context and policy links (to consider for adoption, adaption and/or extension of powers in NI context)
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B. Accountability and reporting

Independent accountability and oversight	New Zealand	<p>New Zealand Public Services Act 2020. Part 3. 42 - 50</p> <p>Part 3 People working in public service</p> <p>42 Public Service Commissioner</p> <p><i>(1) A Public Service Commissioner must be appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.</i></p> <p><i>(2) Before making a recommendation, the Prime Minister must consult with the leader of each political party represented in the House of Representatives</i></p>
Outcome-Based Reporting	Wales	<p>Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Part 2</p> <p>Well-being objectives and statements – Public Bodies and Ministers</p> <p>Annual Reporting</p> <p>Each year public bodies must publish an annual report showing the progress they have made in meeting their objectives.</p> <p>Responding to the Future Generations Commissioner.</p> <p>Where the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales has made recommendations to a public body, they must publish their response. If the public body does not follow a recommendation they must say why, and what alternative action they will take.</p> <p>23: Future Generations report</p> <p>(1) The Commissioner must prepare and publish, before the end of each reporting period, a report containing the Commissioner's assessment of the improvements public bodies should make in order to set and meet well-being objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle.</p> <p>(2) The Commissioner's report must include, in particular, an assessment of how public bodies should – (a) better safeguard the ability of future generations to meet their needs, and (b) take greater account of the long-term impact of the things that they do.</p> <p>(3) In this section and section 24, the “reporting period” is the period— (a) beginning with the day after that on which a future trends report under section 11 is published, and (b) ending on the day before the date falling one year before the date on which the poll is to be held at the next general election under section 3 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 (c.32).</p>

Key Recommendations	Good practice examples	Legislative context and policy links (to consider for adoption, adaption and/or extension of powers in NI context)
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B. Accountability and reporting

Outcome-Based Reporting	Wales	<p>Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Part 2</p> <p>11. Future Trends Report</p> <p>It is important that we understand the challenges that we will be facing, and have a clear picture of where we are heading. To do this, within the twelve months after an Assembly election, Ministers must publish a ‘Future Trends Report’ in context of sustainable development/global re:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> predictions of likely future trends in social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales; Any related analytical data and information that the Welsh Ministers consider appropriate. <p>12: Annual reports by the Welsh Ministers</p> <p>(1) The Welsh Ministers must—</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> publish, in respect of each financial year, a report of the progress they have made towards meeting their well-being objectives, and lay a copy of the report before the National Assembly.
	Scotland	<p>Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, Part 1 National Outcomes</p> <p>2. Review of National Outcomes</p> <p>(3) The Scottish Ministers must begin further reviews of the national outcomes before the expiry of each 5-year period.</p> <p>3. Reports</p> <p>(1) The Scottish Ministers must prepare and publish reports about the extent to which the national outcomes have been achieved.</p> <p>(2) The Scottish Ministers must include in reports published under subsection (1) information about any change in the extent to which the national outcomes have been achieved since the publication of the previous report under that subsection.</p>

Key Recommendations	Good practice examples	Legislative context and policy links (to consider for adoption, adaption and/or extension of powers in NI context)
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C. New ways of working and resourcing

Collaborative delivery models	New Zealand	<p>New Zealand Public Services Act 2020. Part 2.</p> <p>Interdepartmental executive boards</p> <p>25 Purposes</p> <p><i>The purposes of interdepartmental executive boards are—</i></p> <p>(a) <i>to align and co-ordinate strategic policy, planning, and budgeting activities for 2 or more departments with responsibilities in a subject matter area:</i></p> <p>(b) <i>to support those departments to undertake priority work in the subject matter area:</i></p> <p>(c) <i>to support cross-department initiatives in the subject matter area.</i></p> <p>Interdepartmental ventures</p> <p>32 Purposes</p> <p><i>The purposes of interdepartmental ventures are—</i></p> <p>(a) <i>to deliver services or carry out regulatory functions that relate to the responsibilities of 2 or more departments:</i></p> <p>(b) <i>to assist to develop and implement operational policy relating to those services or regulatory functions.</i></p> <p>Subpart 2—Joint operational agreements</p> <p>38 Purpose and effect of joint operational agreements</p> <p>(1) <i>The purpose of joint operational agreements is to provide a formal structure for co-operative and collaborative working arrangements between public service agencies.</i></p> <p>(2) <i>Sections 39 to 41 do not limit the ability of agencies to enter into informal working arrangements.</i></p>
Outcome-based budgeting	New Zealand	<p>New Zealand Wellbeing Budget</p> <p>Purpose:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Break down agency silos and cross-government working to assess, develop, implement policies to improve wellbeing 2. Focus on outcomes that meet the needs of present generations at the same time as thinking about the long-term impacts for future generations 3. Track broader measures of success including financial health, natural resources, people, communities. <p>Five priority areas where evidence indicates can make real differences to the lives of New Zealanders:</p> <p><i>Taking Mental Health Seriously:</i> all New Zealanders, special focus on under 24-year-olds</p> <p><i>Improving Child Wellbeing:</i> Reducing child poverty, improving wellbeing incl family violence</p> <p><i>Supporting Māori and Pasifika Aspirations:</i> Lifting Māori/Pacific incomes, skills, opportunities</p> <p><i>Building a Productive Nation:</i> Thriving nation in digital age - innovation, social, economic opps.</p> <p><i>Transforming the Economy:</i> Productive businesses, regions to transition to a sustainable and low-emissions economy.</p>

Key Recommendations	Good practice examples	Legislative context and policy links (to consider for adoption, adaption and/or extension of powers in NI context)
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C. New ways of working and resourcing

	New Zealand	<p>New Zealand Wellbeing Budget – Example of Statutory Amendments to Accommodate</p> <p>The Child Poverty Reduction Act 2018 supports government’s wellbeing agenda. Child poverty measures and targets have been set and the Act amended the New Zealand Public Finance Act 1989 to require progress against the targets in the Budget. (see Child Poverty Report).</p>
OTHER AREAS OF INTEREST: Public values conversation	Australia	<p>APS Review : Independent Review of the Australian Public Service</p> <p><i>A national conversation to inform the development of the Australia Public Services Act, 2019. Led by an independent panel of 6 members; over 5,000 contributions from the public, community and voluntary sectors, business, academia; series of open dialogues, workshops, surveys, events and website entries around “good ideas”; resulted in the publication of the 2019 Theody Report “Our Public Service, Our Future”</i></p>



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