

**Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY):
Contract for Survey on Attitudes to Child Poverty
Technical Report for Poverty - January 2017**



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Background and Research Requirements (as specified in the Research brief)

Background

The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People is seeking to commission a survey of adults aged 18+, to determine their awareness of, and attitudes to, physical punishment and child poverty in Northern Ireland. This will inform our public engagement on these issues.

Outline of requirements

The survey should adopt a robust sampling methodology to ensure that it is representative of adults across Northern Ireland, and that at least 1000 interviews are obtained. We are interested in identifying differences in attitudes between sub-groups of the population, the most important being parents of children (rather than parents of adults), so the tender should outline the sample size of the sub-group required to allow for robust comparisons.

Methodology

Rationale

It was understood this research project should measure and examine the views of the general public, taking cognisance of the views of relevant subgroups that may impact on the views overall, such as parents of children in particular. We concurred with the requirements as outlined, that it was imperative that this research was conducted amongst a large robust sample of the adult population across Northern Ireland. A large representative sample of the adult population would not only provide for the examination of attitudes overall but will also allow for the identification of those fitting within the relevant sub groups and indeed meaningful and comparative analysis based on these sub groups.

As a result, we strongly suggested that a face to face methodology was utilised to ensure a representative sample is achieved, both from a demographic and geographic perspective. This methodology has proven extremely successful in the conduction of a number of large scale population surveys carried out by Millward Brown Ulster. Furthermore, in order to yield both time and cost efficiencies, we recommended placing the NICCY question set onto the Millward Brown Ulster Omnibus survey. This large robust representative quantitative survey is ideal research vehicle for measuring and tracking knowledge, attitudes and behaviour and in order to achieve a Northern Ireland wide survey offering full geographical representation, as well as yielding a robust and representative sample of parents of children, spread across Northern Ireland.

The Millward Brown Ulster Omnibus Survey

The Millward Brown Ulster Omnibus Survey is a twice monthly face-to-face survey conducted amongst a representative sample of the Northern Ireland population. Each survey consists of a freshly drawn sample of 1000 adults aged 16+. The sample is quota controlled to represent the Northern Ireland population in terms of sex, age and social class. 60 sampling points (spread over around 110 electoral wards) are drawn using a stratified random sampling method to ensure that the sample is representative in terms of region.

This sample is very large and hence allows for analysis by a range of sex, age, social class and regional groupings. All questions included on the Omnibus Survey are confidential to each individual participating client as is the resulting data. While the cost of recruiting a representative sample and collecting a full range of demographic details such as working and marital status, household size, presence and age of children in the household, religion, disability, sexual orientation and tenure is shared by all the participating clients.

Data collection for the research (via the Millward Brown Omnibus Survey) was by means of a CAPI Methodology using Hand Held devices (HAPI).

Sampling

The Millward Brown Omnibus Survey, after the initial random selection of sampling points, is based on a quota sampling methodology. The sampling points are drawn from the Millward Brown Ulster Sampling Frame which is based on electoral wards in Northern Ireland, utilising a 2-stage stratification procedure, involving firstly a regional segmentation into 13 areas comprising geographic groupings of Local Government Districts, and secondly, an urban / rural classification based on electoral density. Electoral wards are then clustered into points of approximately equal electoral population taking into account the following requirements:

- Wards within each point are contiguous
- Points are exclusively urban or rural
- Wards within a point are broadly homogenous in population structure

Taking into account the most recent boundary changes, the Millward Brown Ulster Northern Ireland Sampling Frame now comprises over 300 sampling points. In drawing points from this Sampling Frame, random procedures are adopted, points being selected with probability proportional to population within each of the 13 areas, depending on specific requirements. . This sampling procedure is followed for most face to face surveys amongst the general public up to this point. The sampling procedure then continues according to the type required for each project, frequently quota based sampling which is utilized for the Omnibus Survey.

Strict quotas on gender, age and social class are put in place and must be adhered to, thus minimizing bias and ensuring the sample is representative. Part of interviewing training comprises guidance and instruction on respondent selection and recruitment in order to ensure that the resulting samples are as robust, inclusive and transparent as possible.

Sampling for the Millward Brown Omnibus Survey has always been very strict in nature. Each interviewer is issued with an interlocking sample that they must adhere to. This interlocking quota ensures that age and social class are represented within both males and females. Although not subject to the rigours of statistical confidence testing, quota sampling is used extensively in market research, including social research, and with interviewers trained in order to eliminate as much bias as possible it is a viable and cost effective method.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire used is provided in the appendices of this technical report.

Millward Brown Ulster assisted with the development of the questionnaires, finalising the questionnaire script in conjunction and with the approval of the team. Throughout all our discussions and planning, we used our expertise to ensure that all questions are structured in a way that is free from any form of bias or ambiguity, as well as bearing in mind the need to fulfil the aims and objectives of the research.

On agreement on the final questionnaire, the scripted version was prepared for our HAPI system.

Ethical Issues

Before undertaking any type of research, important ethical guidelines and considerations must be acknowledged. Further consideration is appropriate when researching 'sensitive' topics, which include subjects that might cause stigmatization or fear, private or stressful subjects, or issues linked to political threat or social conflict.

When any type of sensitive issue is being discussed, participants may become uncomfortable, upset or distressed; the NSPCC noted "*those that reported high levels of physical discipline use coupled with frustration and feelings of being out of control*" may feel this way. Advice taken directly from the Market Research Society; "where a sensitive subject has been discussed, members may provide information on relevant help lines operated by a client". In order to facilitate this, interviewers were asked to signpost parents to the ParentingNI website and their free phone helpline number in case they needed any information, support or guidance.

We are members of the **Market Research Society (MRS)** and all our research is conducted fully in accordance with **the MRS Code of Conduct**. Hence all surveys are

carried out to standards equivalent to the Government Social Research Unit's *Ethical Assurance for Social Research in Government* which is understood to have been written in consultation with MRS and thus aligned with the MRS Code of Conduct. Full details of our Quality Standards can be found towards the back of this document.

In conducting surveys there is an evident need to ensure that proper ethical standards are in place and adhered to. The Government Social Research Office within the Cabinet Office has stated that, "there is a need to ensure that researchers attend to all ethical issues and principles relating to the potential risks of the research to all involved. All with responsibility for commissioning social research on behalf of Government, must be aware of and uphold basic ethical responsibilities throughout the life of any research project conducted or commissioned for government"¹

In pursuit of this objective, the GSR service has defined five key ethical principles, as follows:

- Principle 1: sound application and conduct of social research methods and appropriate dissemination and utilisation of the findings
- Principle 2: participation based on valid informed consent
- Principle 3: enabling participation
- Principle 4: avoidance of personal or social harm
- Principle 5: non-disclosure of identity and personal information

We have a sound knowledge of these principles and their practical implications which we factor into the design of any research.

In addition, we understand and apply the principles and requirements inherent in the Data Protection Act (1998). Since the introduction of the Act the anonymity and privacy of the data collected on individuals is no longer simply a matter of ethics; it can also have legal implications.

- ✓ Millward Brown Ulster's operations are fully compliant with the Data Protection Act, the principles of which are enshrined within the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.
- ✓ Millward Brown Ulster's Data Protection registration number: Z6804396

Fieldwork & Timing

Fieldwork would be conducted by members of the Millward Brown Ulster Interviewer Panel between 24th November and 14th December 2016.

¹ GSR Professional Guidance: Ethical Assurance for Social Research in Government; Government Social Research Unit; Cabinet Office, September 2005.

Sample Size Achieved

For the purposes of this research, additional interviews were conducted to ensure that an overall sample of at least 1000 aged 18+ was achieved. A total sample size of 1001 was achieved. The target sample size of 1000 was chosen in order to allow for all basic analysis that would be required. In deciding on the sample size, consideration was given to the breakdown of the overall sample into sub-groups, ensuring that any sub sample that may be required for analysis is of a sufficient size. The degree of statistical validity of the data or accuracy of the results required was also considered. The overall sample of **1001** was considered large enough to provide a sufficient overview of the views and awareness of the population overall and yield a **representative sample of 280 parents of children aged 18 and under**. On the basis of using a pure random sample, the margin of error on a sample of 1001 (for a statistic of 50%) would be +/- 3.1%, which means that there is a 95% chance that the responses of the target population as a whole would fall somewhere between 3.1% more or 3.1% less than the responses of the sample (or based on 50% - between 46.9 and 53.1).

Breakdown of 18+ Sample (weighted to ensure representativeness)

TOTAL SAMPLE		1001 (weighted to 1000)	
SEX		AGE	
MALE	48%	18-24	12%
FEMALE	52%	25-34	17%
		35-49	25%
SOCIAL CLASS		50-64	25%
ABC1	45%	65+	21%
C2	26%		
DE	30%		

Weighting

Where appropriate corrective weighting was conducted to ensure the data was representative of the 18+ population.

Deliverables

Computer tables were provided in excel with cross analysis based on

- Gender
- Age
- Social Class
- Marital Status
- Household Status
- Region
- Working status
- Denomination
- Disability

- Parental Status
- Age groups of children
- Political Party Affiliation
- MDM 2010 deciles
- Additional cross analysis by key questions as appropriate

Summary of Topline Findings

- The majority of respondents (82%) thought there was at least some child poverty in Northern Ireland, with almost half (45%) thinking there is a lot
- When told that according to government statistics more than one in four children in Northern Ireland are living in poverty, almost half (46%) of respondents said this was more than they had thought
- More than two thirds (69%) felt that in general, the main reason for child poverty in Northern Ireland today was due to *circumstances beyond the control of parents cause families to be poor*. As opposed to nearly one in five (19%) who thought in general this was down to *parents are not doing enough to help their families out of poverty*
- Half of respondents (51%), thought that *debt/poor money management skills* was one of the key causes of child poverty in Northern Ireland
- This was followed by *too many jobs being part time or low wage* (47%) and *parent's drug/alcohol abuse* (46%)
- These three key causes were in turn, as expected, the top three cited as the main cause when asked to choose one, chosen by 16%, 15% and 13% respectively
- A clear majority (83%) thought it was very important that action is taken to reduce child poverty in Northern Ireland, with a similar high proportion (81%) thinking the responsibility for reducing child poverty lies with the *NI government*. More than two fifths (44%) felt that *people in poverty themselves/parents of children in poverty*, are responsible for reducing child poverty
- Support was generally high for a range of actions to directly help children in poverty. Support was strongest for *create more decently paid jobs* (95%), followed very closely by support for *address poor educational outcomes for children in poverty* (94%); *provide training or information for parents on money management skills* (93%); *provide support services for families affected by bereaved, family breakdown, disability, illness or alcohol or substance abuse* (93%) and *expand affordable or free childcare provision* (91%)
- When asked to choose the one they would tend to support the most, almost one in four (23%) chose *increase the minimum wage* or similarly *create more decently paid jobs*
- Nearly two thirds (63%) thought that compared to ten years ago, it was now harder for a person to start out poor and through hard work get out of poverty; more than one in three (36%) thought it was much harder today
- Just under one in three (32%) were not personally nor did not know any who was struggling to make ends meet. Parents of children aged under 18 are more likely to

be struggling themselves or know others who are than those with no children in these age group

- A similar proportion (32%) were not worried about getting poorer or becoming poor in the future, while more than one in four (26%) worry a great deal and two in five (39%) worry a little. Parents of children under 18 were also more likely to worry about the future. Those personally struggling now are much more likely to be worrying a great deal about the future (59%)

Quality Control



Quality Standards and Professional Accreditations

Millward Brown employs strict Quality Control procedures to ensure the validity of all our research. We have consistently championed the case for the highest possible standards of market and social research, and in particular are highly conscious of the significance of measuring and evaluating public opinion.

We are founder members of, and fully accredited to, the **Interviewer Quality Control Scheme (IQCS)**, the definitive UK-wide standard for interviewing and also to **MRQSA (Market Research Quality Standards Authority)**, which sets standards in all other spheres including data-processing, analysis, scheduling, and maintenance of internal records. In fact Millward Brown was the only founder member in Northern Ireland of the Interviewer Quality Control Scheme (IQCS), established by the Market Research Society and leading UK research agencies.

We are periodically audited by an independent agency (SGS) to ensure that all our procedures are executed in a professional way at all times. These standards require high levels of verification and checking of all our coding, data entry and analysis.

All survey research is subject to a minimum of 10% "back-checking" amongst respondents to validate details of their interview; supervisory inspection of all questionnaires; and a double-entry validation procedure during data-entry. The quality standards relate to interviewer recruitment, training, back checking and supervision (supervision includes a twice yearly inspection and appraisal process for each interviewer).

Millward Brown was amongst the first 20 research agencies in the UK to acquire MRQSA accreditation in 2001. All our procedures and people are audited locally in Belfast and as such we are not reliant on accreditation gained for operations out of London, Warwick or further afield. In November 2006 we were audited to a new higher standard ISO20252 and were one of the first research companies in the UK to have achieved these standards.

Following our most recent audit in December 2016, we have been certified to **ISO 9001 2008** and again to **ISO 20252 2012** (MRQSA) which has been designed by MRQSA specifically for the Market Research sector.

Appendices – Questionnaire

40148435 Child poverty

ASK ALL 18+ ONLY

We are now going to ask you some questions about child poverty in Northern Ireland. When we talk about poverty, this means that families are living on low incomes, and are struggling to provide what would be considered basic necessities for their children.

Q1. Which of the following comes closest to your view of the amount of child poverty that exists in Northern Ireland? Do you think there is a lot, some or not very much at all?

ASK ALL 18+

SINGLE CODE

PROBE TO PRECODES

- 1: A lot
- 2: Some
- 3: Not very much at all
- 4: Don't know

Q2. According to government statistics, more than one in four children in Northern Ireland are living in poverty (26%). This is equivalent to 122,000 children. Is this more, less or about the same as you had thought?

ASK ALL 18+

SINGLE CODE

PROBE TO PRECODES

- 1: More
- 2: Around about the same
- 3: Less
- 4: Don't know

Q3. Which of the following two statements best describes what you think in general is the main reason for child poverty in Northern Ireland today?

ASK ALL 18+

SINGLE CODE

SHOWSCREEN

- 1: Parents are not doing enough to help their families out of poverty
- 2: Circumstances beyond the control of parents cause families to be poor
- 3: Don't know

Q4. We want to look now at more specific causes of child poverty. From the following list, please tell me which, if any, you think are key causes of child poverty in NI? Please choose a maximum of five.

ASK ALL 18+

MULTI CODE ALLOWED

SHOW CARD

PROBE FULLY FOR ANY OTHERS UP TO MAX OF 5

- 1: Parent's drug/alcohol abuse
- 2: Debt/Poor money management skills
- 3: Too many jobs being part time or low wage
- 4: Too many single parent families
- 5: There aren't enough jobs
- 6: Social security benefits are not high enough to meet basic needs
- 7: Too many immigrants (please specify... in what way?)
- 8: Poor people lacking motivation or aspiration
- 9: Family breakdown or loss of a family member
- 10: People too comfortable on benefits,
- 11: Poor educational attainment for people in poverty
- 12: Costs of childcare
- 13: Because of inequalities in society
- 14: Long term illness or disability in family
- 15: Other (Please specify)
- 16: Don't know

Q5. Which one would you say is the main cause?

ASK IF MORE THAN ONE MENTIONED AT Q4

SINGLE CODE

SHOWSCREEN OF THOSE SELECTED AT Q4

- 1: Parent's drug/alcohol abuse
- 2: Debt/Poor money management skills
- 3: Too many jobs being part time or low wage
- 4: Too many single parent families
- 5: There aren't enough jobs
- 6: Social security benefits are not high enough to meet basic needs
- 7: Too many immigrants (as specified in Q4 code 7)
- 8: Poor people lacking motivation or aspiration
- 9: Family breakdown or loss of a family member
- 10: People too comfortable on benefits,
- 11: Poor educational attainment for people in poverty
- 12: Costs of childcare
- 13: Because of inequalities in society
- 14: Long term illness or disability in family
- 15: Other (Please specify)
- 16: Don't know

Q6 How important or unimportant do you think it is that action is taken to reduce child poverty in Northern Ireland?

ASK ALL 18+

SINGLE CODE

SHOWSCREEN

- 1: Very important
- 2: Quite important
- 3: Not very important
- 4: Not at all important
- 5: Don't know

Q7 Who do you think should be responsible for reducing child poverty in Northern Ireland?

ASK ALL 18+
MULTICODE ALLOWED
SHOWSCREEN

- 1: Central government in London
- 2: The NI government
- 3: People in poverty themselves/parents of children in poverty
- 4: Friends/relatives of people in poverty
- 5: Charities and churches
- 6: No one
- 7: Don't know

Q8 Here is a list of some things the NI Government could do to directly help children in poverty. Tell me whether you support or oppose each:

ASK ALL 18+

READ OUT / ROTATE ORDER

SINGLE CODE FOR EACH

- A. Increase the minimum wage
- B. Benefits shouldn't be taken away from families without considering the basic needs of children
- C. Expand affordable or free childcare provision
- D. Reduce the hidden costs of education eg cost of school uniforms
- E. Encourage more food banks
- F. Address poor educational outcomes for children in poverty
- G. Tackle fuel poverty
- H. Spend more on social housing
- I. Create more, decently paid jobs
- J. Provide support services for families affected by bereavement, family breakdown, disability, illness or alcohol or substance abuse
- K. Provide training or information for parents on money management skills
- L. Take action on zero hours contracts
- M. Increase tax credits or cash assistance for families on low incomes

SINGLE CODE

- 1: Support
- 2: Oppose
- 3: Don't know

Q8b Is there anything else you think the NI Government could do?

ASK ALL 18+

VERBATIM RESPONSE

PLEASE LEAVE BUTTON FOR NO NOTHING ELSE & DON'T KNOW

Q8c Which of these would you tend to support the most?

ASK IF MORE THAN ONE MENTIONED AT Q8A

SINGLE CODE

SHOWSCREEN OF THOSE SELECTED AT Q8A

- Increase the minimum wage
- Benefits shouldn't be taken away from families without considering the basic needs of children
- Expand affordable or free childcare provision

Reduce the hidden costs of education eg cost of school uniforms
 Encourage more food banks
 Address poor educational outcomes for children in poverty
 Tackle fuel poverty
 Spend more on social housing
 Create more, decently paid jobs
 Provide support services for families affected by bereavement, family breakdown, disability, illness or alcohol or substance abuse
 Provide training or information for parents on money management skills
 Take action on zero hours contracts
 Increase tax credits or cash assistance for families on low incomes
 Other
 Don't know

Q9. Compared with 10 years ago, do you think it is easier or harder today for a person to start out poor, and through hard work get out of poverty?

ASK ALL 18+

SINGLE CODE

SHOWSCREEN

- 1: Much easier today
- 2: A little easier
- 3: The same
- 4: A little harder
- 5: Much harder today
- 6: Don't know

Q10. Do you personally know people who are struggling to make ends meet, or maybe you yourself are in this situation?

ASK ALL 18+

CODE ALL THAT APPLY - MULTI CODE ALLOWED

SHOWSCREEN

- 1: I know people who are struggling to make ends meet
- 2: I am personally struggling to make ends meet
- 3: Neither myself nor anyone I know
- 4: Don't know

Q11. Does the possibility of getting poorer or becoming poor in the future worry you a great deal, worry you a little, or not worry you at all?

ASK ALL 18+

SINGLE CODE

PROBE TO PRECODES

- 1: A great deal
- 2: A little
- 3: Not at all
- 4: Don't know

Parental questions covered in Physical Punishment section and in the classification

Political party Affiliation (also included in classification section)

Appendices – Sampling Points

Nov B 2016 Omnibus

Region Title: NORTHERN IRELAND

Number of points selected = 60

Area: BELFAST CITY 01

1	ARDOYNE	BELFAST
2	BELLEVUE	BELFAST
3	BLACKSTAFF	BELFAST
4	BURNTHILL/GLENGORMLEY	NEWTOWNABBEY
5	WINDSOR	BELFAST
6	CHERRYVALLEY	BELFAST
7	CRUMLIN	BELFAST
8	ISLAND	BELFAST
9	FALLS PARK	BELFAST
10	JORDANSTOWN/ROSTULLA	NEWTOWNABBEY
11	CARRYDUFF EAST/WEST	CASTLEREAGH
12	LADYBROOK	BELFAST
13	HIGHFIELD	BELFAST
14	RAVENHILL	BELFAST
15	CAIRNSHILL	CASTLEREAGH

Area: GREATER BELFAST NORTH 21 (RURAL POINTS 22)

16	GREENISLAND/GORTALEE/KNOCKAGH	C'FERGUS
17	MASSERENE/BALLOO	ANTRIM
18	BALLYROBERT	N'ABBEY (R)

Area: GREATER BELFAST SOUTH 11 (RURAL POINTS 12)

19	BALLYMACASH	LISBURN
20	COLIN GLEN	LISBURN
21	DUFFERIN/SPRINGHILL	NORTH DOWN
22	GROOMSPORT/BALLYMACONNELL	NORTH DOWN
23	OLD WARREN/LAGAN VALLEY	LISBURN
24	CENTRAL/BALLYRAINEY	ARDS
25	MOIRA	LISBURN (R)
26	MAGHABERRY	LISBURN (R)

Area: NORTHERN URBAN 31

27	RANDALSTOWN	ANTRIM
28	CULLYBACKEY/GALGORM	BALLYMENA
29	BLACKCAVE/GARDENMORE/TOWN PARKS	LARNE

Area: NORTHERN RURAL 32

30	BALLYHOE&CORKEY/CLOUGHMILLS/DUNLOY/KNOCKAHOLET	BALLYMONEY
31	CRAIGYWARREN/DUNMINNING/GLENRAVEL	BALLYMENA
32	CARNCASTLE/CARNLOUGH	LARNE

Area: SOUTHERN URBAN 41

33	BANBRIDGE WEST/THE CUT	BANBRIDGE
34	CHURCH/COURT	CRAIGAVON
35	CASTLEWELLAN	DOWN

36	TAGHNEVAN	CRAIGAVON
37	CLONALLAN/SEAVIEW	NEWRY&MOURNE
38	DRUMALANE/ST.MARYS	NEWRY&MOURNE

Area: SOUTHERN RURAL 42

39	BALLYMARTIN/KILLYLEA/MILFORD	ARMAGH
40	DUNMORE/SEAFORDE	DOWN
41	AGHAGALLON	CRAIGAVON
42	LISNACREE	NEWRY&MOURNE
43	CAMLOUGH/NEWTOWNHAMILTON/TULLYHAPPY	NEWRY&MOURNE
44	KIRCUBBIN/PORTAVOGIE	ARDS

Area: NORTH WEST URBAN 51

45	BALLYSALLY/UNIVERSITY	COLERAINE
46	CHURCHLAND/THE CUTS	COLERAINE
47	BEECHWOOD/CREGGAN CENTRAL	DERRY
48	CULMORE	DERRY
49	ROSEMOUNT/FOYLE SPRINGS	DERRY

Area: NORTH WEST RURAL 52

50	EGLINTON/ENAGH	DERRY
51	GREYSTEEL	LIMAVADY
52	SWATRAGH/UPPERLANDS/VALLEY	MAGHERAFELT

Area: WESTERN URBAN 61

53	DRUMGLASS/KILLYMEAL/MULLAGHMORE	DUNGANNON
54	CASTLE COOLE	FERMANAGH
55	KILLYCLOGHER	OMAGH

Area: WESTERN RURAL 62

56	AUGHNACLOY/BALLYGAWLEY/CASTLECAULFIELD	DUNGANNON
57	BERAGH/NEWTOWNSAVILLE/SIXMILECROSS	OMAGH
58	DUNNAMORE/OAKLANDS/POMEROY	COOKSTOWN
59	BELCOO & GARRISON/DERRYGONNELLY	FERMANAGH
60	CLARE/GLENDERG	STRABANE
