

**Draft Equality Impact Assessment on the Regeneration of Crumlin Road  
Gaol and Girdwood Barracks**

**EMPLOYMENT**

***Submission by [your organisation]***

- Please outline the work of their group

Established in 1991 as the Ashton Community Trust in the New Lodge area of North Belfast, the Ashton Community Trust is a non-denominational community regeneration project formed by local residents to tackle poverty and deprivation in a district of high unemployment at the heart of some of the most confrontational areas in Northern Ireland. The Trust's mission is to 'promote positive change and improve the quality of life of the North Belfast community' in an area where 55% of the population are economically inactive and where 59% of young people leave school without formal qualifications. It aims to achieve this by focusing on employment, education and training.

The overarching aim of the Ashton Community Trust is to act as a proactive agent and provide a catalyst for change and is a recognised fulcrum for social and economic regeneration.

For the past 17 years ACT has been delivering a variety of employability programmes to the unemployed and has expanded its services within the past 10 years delivering across North Belfast and Newtownabbey through outreach provision to over 22 centres to include Jobs and Benefit offices.

The employability services have engaged with over 8000 clients who have undertaken training and received support to address their barriers so as to improve their chances of employment. This intervention has resulted in securing employment for over 1800 clients.

Over the past 17 years the Ashton Community Trust has developed a cogent strategy for working with employers and has built its credibility with employers by working in the context of presenting a strong business case for employers to both work with us and create the climate to employ long term unemployed people. We have in place an innovative approach to working with employers which is acknowledged as a model of best practice in acting as a catalyst for both demand and supply.

It is a board member of the Belfast City Council's BEST project which provides a strategic, Belfast wide focus on employability and was part of the CBOP employability forum set up by DSD in the development of Victoria Square.

**Example list of programmes we deliver include:**

**North Belfast Works Programme funded by ESF/ DEL is designed to move long-term unemployed residents of North Belfast into sustained work by offering them specially created temporary jobs for nine months with a wage. During that 9-month period they will also receive training, personal development and job search support. The aim is to give those who are most removed from the labour market a bridge back to the world of work by enabling them to develop skills and experience that will enable them to compete in the job market. The project aims to place 54 people in sustainable employment over a 2-year period.**

**Progress to Employment programme funded by ESF/ DEL will engage those most disenfranchised in the labour market by providing them with access to quality accredited training and resources that will improve their skills and improve their chances of a more sustainable future in employment. It will focus on training to match participants' skills with employers' requirements. It provides unemployed groups with access to quality training such as LGV and ADR petroleum Training, Telescopic and forklift Training, Childcare Training etc.**

**The LEMIS Programme, Contracted through the Department for Employment and learning, targets economically inactive individuals. It offers job club facilities, skills training, educational courses, personal development training, job placement and job taster opportunities, advice on benefits and support and guidance to dealing with barriers relating to personal circumstances. Many of the services are provided on an outreach basis at local venues.**

**The Women's Training programme funded by ESF/ DEL and targets long-term unemployed women, women in low-paid work in receipt of benefits and women returnees, with particular emphasis on female lone parents and those with little or no qualifications. The project encourages and supports women to return to education and training. For many this may be their first experience since formalised schooling.**

**LAEP Programme funded through Belfast Metropolitan College and DEL targeting those throughout Belfast to encourage and support them to address any essential skills needs.**

**Employment Liaison service LEAP programme, To develop contacts and lasting relationships with Belfast employers, to canvass for jobs for people in North Belfast, develop pre-employment courses with employers, provide job match support and contribute to the development of an employability strategy for North Belfast.**

- **Include interest in the Girdwood site and any involvement in process to date**

**Ashton Community Trust Employability Services would like to be involved in the development of Girdwood site through the provision of training and employment opportunities. We have knowledge of the area to be developed and have a vast amount of experience in working with both the unemployed and employers. We also have many programmes relevant to the “welfare to work” theme and will be able to offer many of these programmes to compliment and add value to any agreed Masterplan and our services can be used as a recruitment link for potential employers at the Girdwod site.**

Our understanding that the purpose of an EQIA is to see how equality of opportunity can be best promoted.

To address the employment differentials in North Belfast, a comprehensive analysis is needed. We find that the draft EQIA does not give a proper understanding of employment inequality in North Belfast. It also does not analyse the inequalities between s75 groups.

The following information is contained in the Draft EQIA:

- Job Seekers Allowance claimants by gender
- Employee jobs, percentage full time jobs – male/female, percentage part time jobs – male/female
- Those claiming benefits

The only s75 group mentioned is gender. Inequalities which relate to disability, dependent status, marital status, religion, political opinion, race and sexual orientation are completely unexamined.

Focus groups held by the community groups and the PPR Project considered the barriers to employment that must be addressed. These are not included in the draft EQIA.

Proposals to target unemployment must include outreach work, training programmes, apprenticeships, jobs etc. and all this requires disadvantaged s75 groups to be identified and targeted. Additionally, any intentions to include the promotion of equality through contracts and tendering should begin with identifying groups experiencing inequality. This is not done, and cannot be done, on the information presented in the Draft EQIA. Yet this is the precise time when this should be happening.

More information than what is provided in the Draft EQIA is available in terms of employment inequality (**please fill in examples of the kind of information your group holds**).

This Draft EQIA fails to state how the employment inequalities in our community will be addressed. This must be done before the regeneration moves to the next stages.

**A profile of unemployed client groups in North Belfast area carried out in 2007 by LEAP partnership**

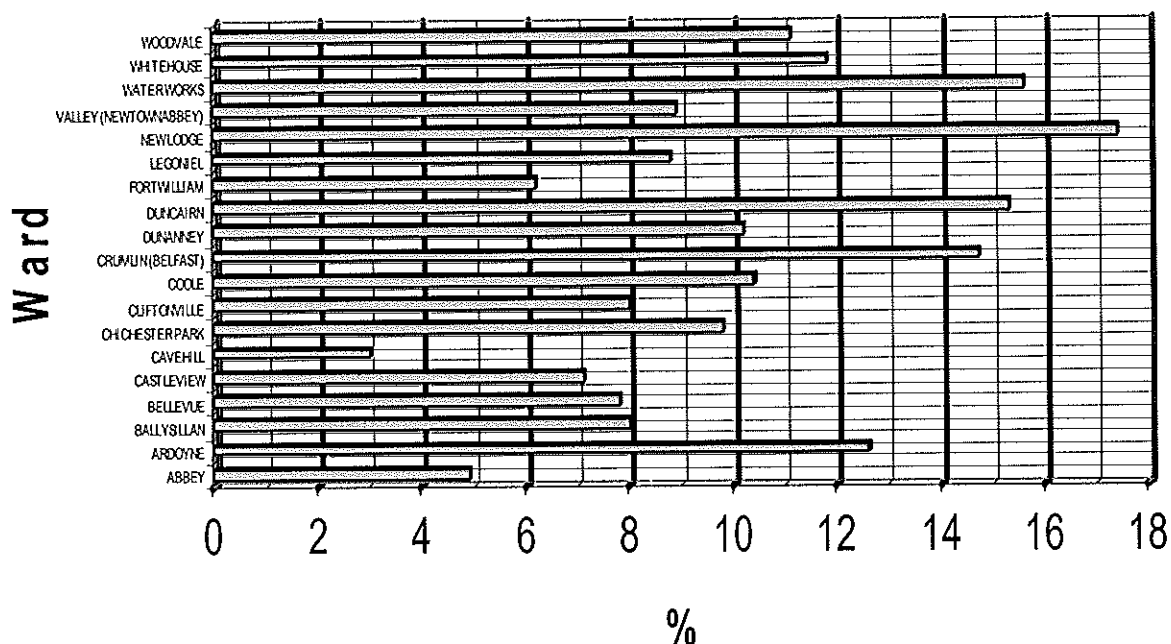
1. The percentage of the working age population on IB in North Belfast = **17.7% (8,449 people claiming IB)**
2. Percentage of working age population on IB = 10.7%
3. The percentage of the working age population on IB in Belfast = 13.5%

**North Belfast areas above Belfast and NI averages in their percentage of working age IB claimants**

**.Belfast average 13.5%**

- New Lodge 17.4%
- Waterworks 15.6%
- Duncairn 15.3%
- Crumlin 14.7%
- NI average 10.78%
  
- Ardoyne 12.6%
- Whitehouse 11.8%
- Woodvale 11.1%

**Percentage of IB claimants of working age population by North Belfast ward**

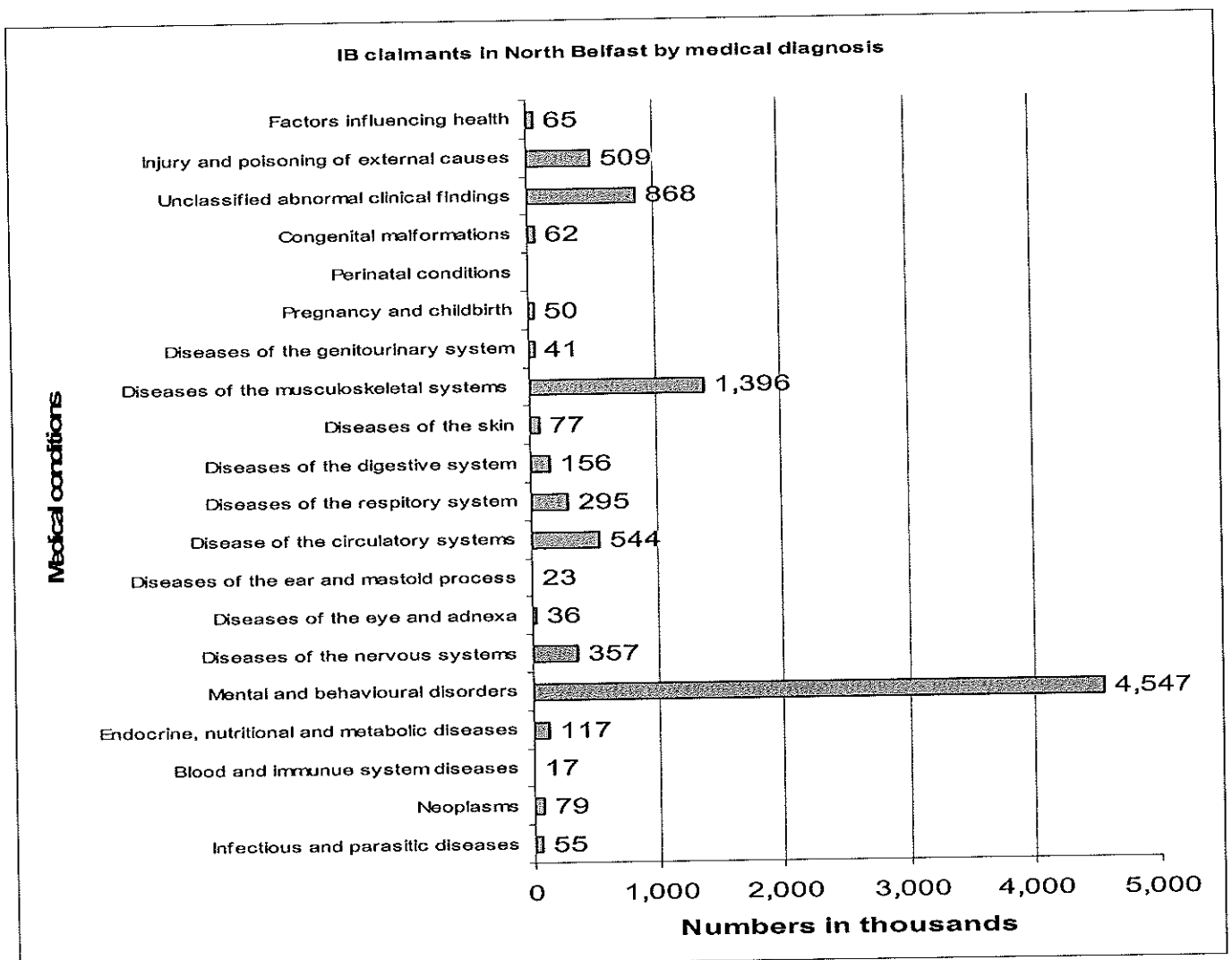


### Other area comparisons...

- The working age population of North Down is 47,800
- Number of IB claimants is 3,022 (6.32% of the working age population)
- The working age population of North Belfast is 47,867
- Number of IB claimants is 8,449 (17.7% of the working age population)

### What conditions are people claiming on IB?

- Out of 8,449 IB claimants in North Belfast, 4,547 are categorised as having 'mental and behavioural disorders'
- This category constitutes over half (54%) of IB claims in North Belfast
- In Northern Ireland, 45,970 (40.6%) of IB claims fall into this category
- North Belfast claimants alone constitute almost 10% of the overall NI claim for this category



## North Belfast wards Claimants with mental health issues

The largest numbers of North Belfast IB claimants for mental health conditions are concentrated in the following wards:

### Number (% of mental health claimants)

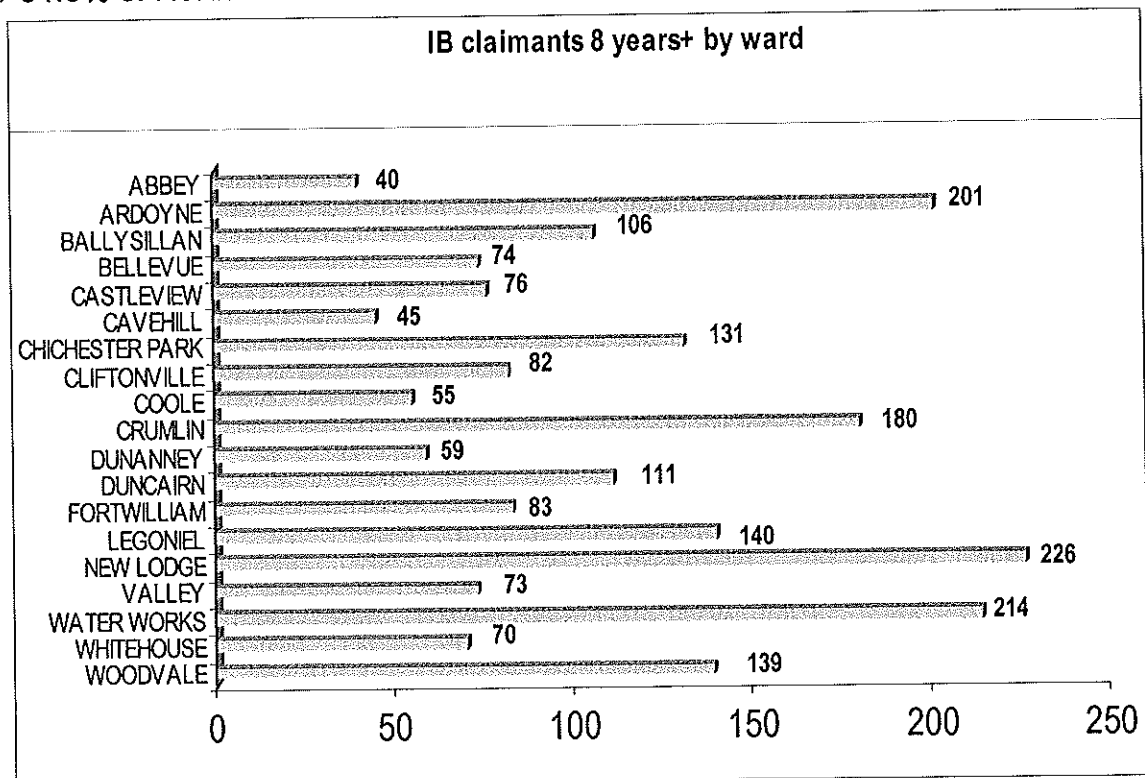
- Water Works: 592 (13%)
- New Lodge: 527 (12%)
- Ardoyne: 431 (9%)
- Duncairn: 324 (7%)
- Crumlin: 319 (7%)
- Chichester Park: 299 (6.6%)

### Length of IB claims in North Belfast

➤ 25% of all North Belfast IB claimants have been claiming 8 years or longer (2,105)

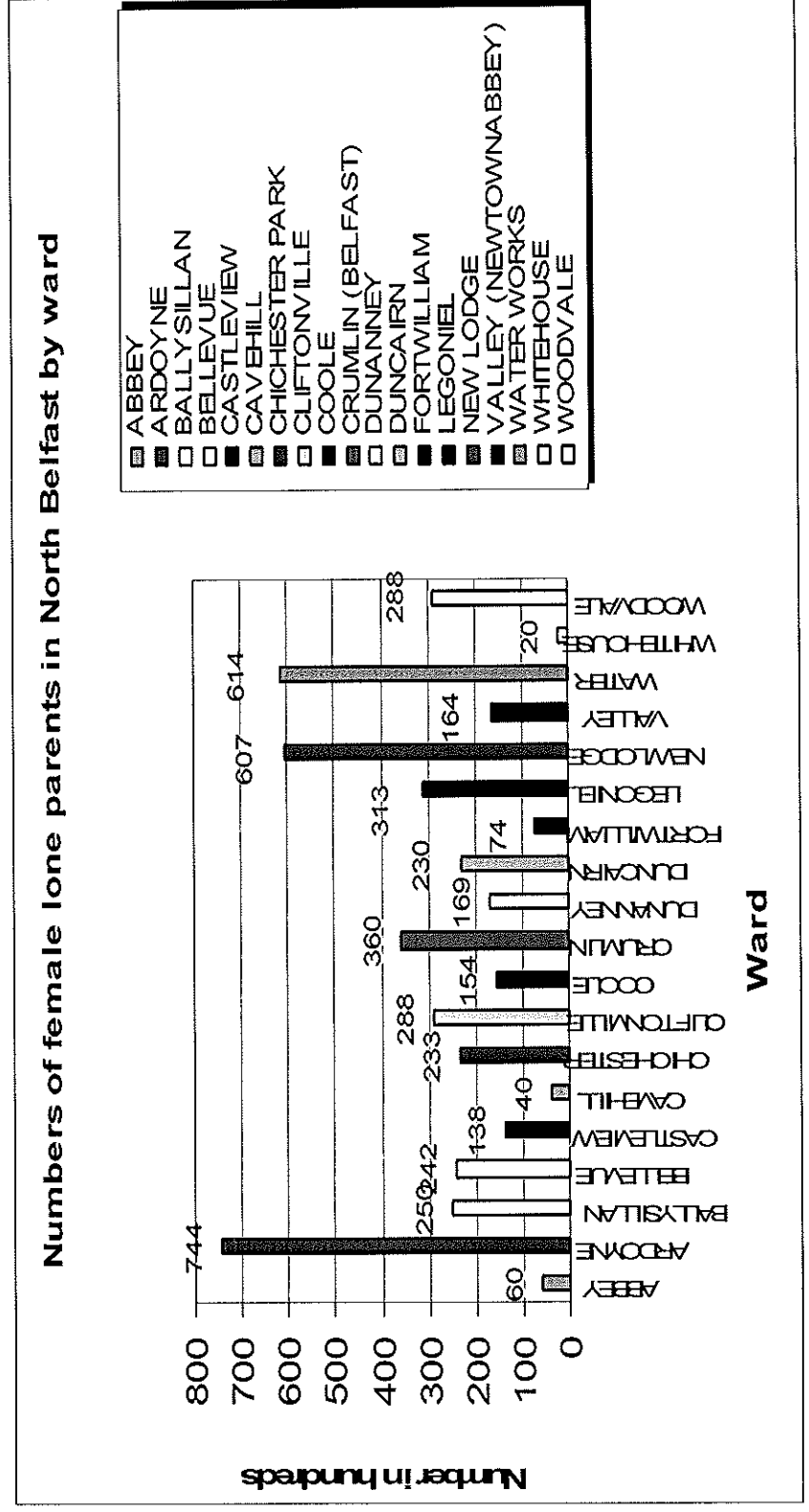
➤ 53.7 % of NI IB claimants have been claiming 4 years or more.

➤ 54.5% of North Belfast IB claimants have been claiming 4 years or more.

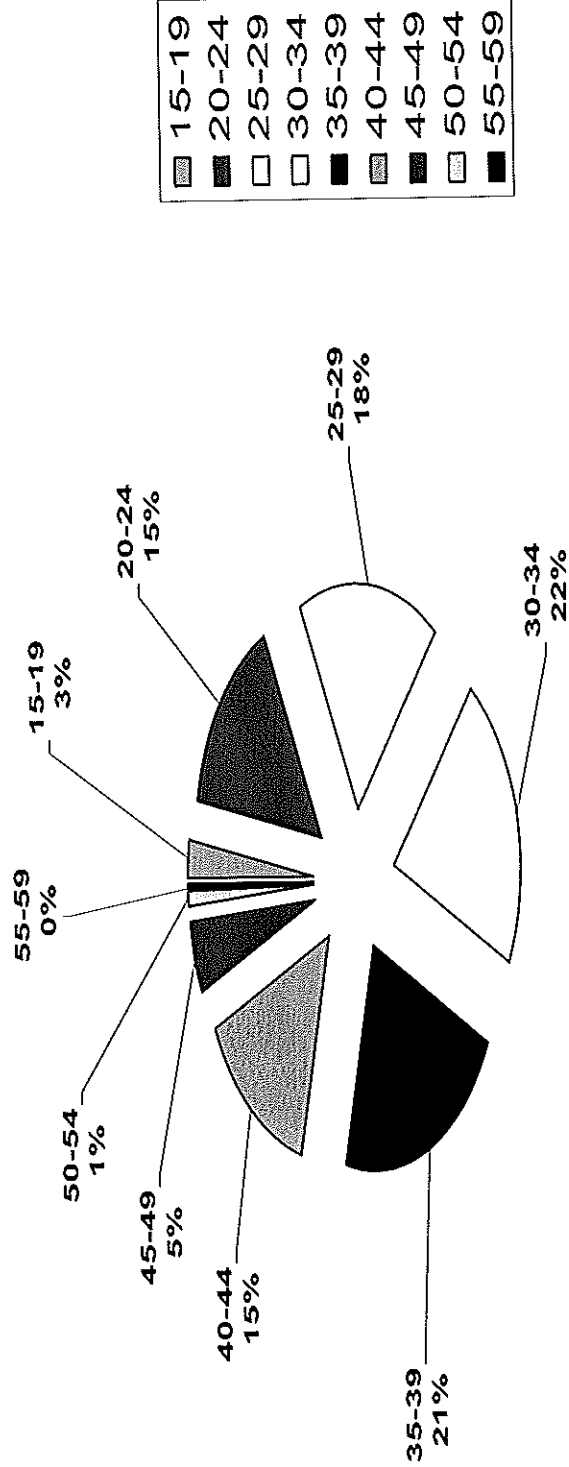


### Lone Parent Income Support Claimants in North Belfast

- There are 5,186 lone parent IS claimants in North Belfast (5,047 female, 136 male)
- North Belfast parliamentary constituency area incorporates 19%, nearly a fifth of all lone parent claimants in Northern Ireland which totals 27,380
- 717 IS lone parent claimants in North Belfast are claiming 10 years +
- Ardoyne ward has the highest lone parent claimant rate in the North Belfast parliamentary constituency area (744)



### Age breakdown of female lone parent claimants in North Belfast parliamentary constituency area



## JSA Claimants in North Belfast

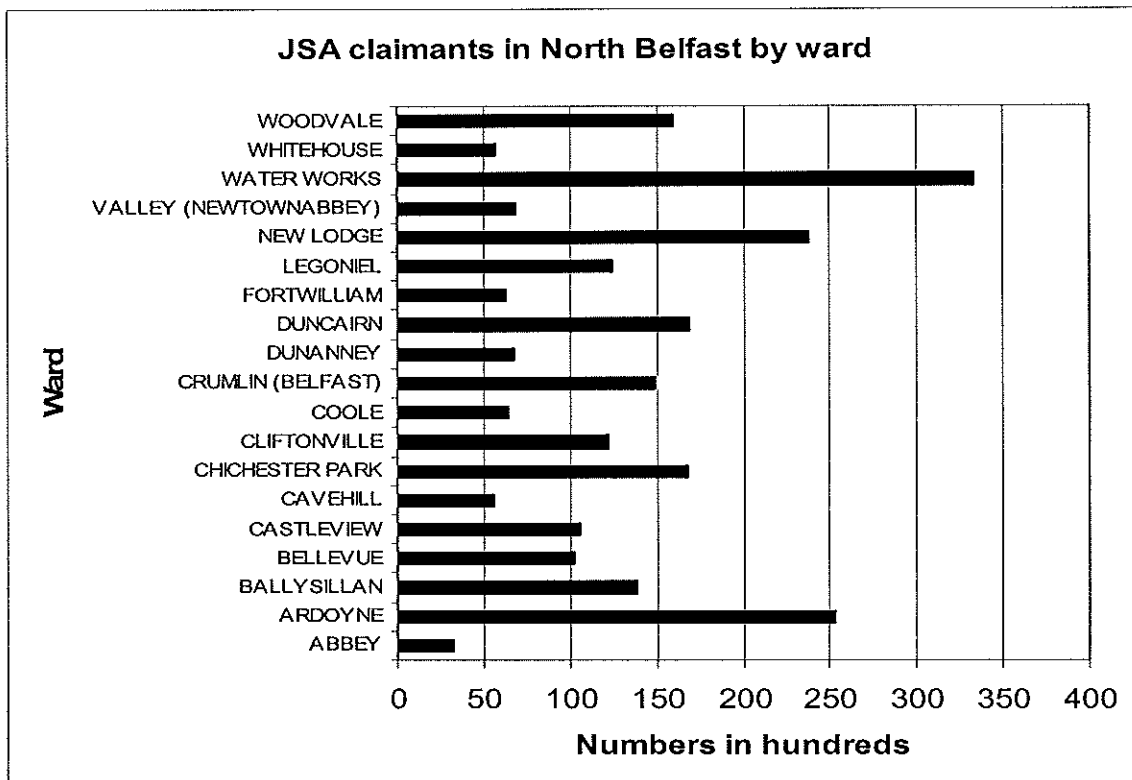
1. NI JSA claimant totals  
27,600

▪Belfast JSA claimant totals  
6,515  
JSA = 3.9% of working age population in Belfast

▪North Belfast JSA claimants  
2,483  
JSA = 5.2% of working age population in North Belfast

2. North Belfast JSA claimant number in comparison to other Belfast city areas:

▪West Belfast: 3151  
▪South Belfast: 1535  
▪East Belfast: 1078



The EQIA document fails to mention how it is to address the many barriers s75 groups face or provide any detail on how employment opportunities will be created for s75 groups living in the North Belfast area. It also fails to give a comprehensive breakdown of all types of economic inactivity.

In order to address these issues a forum comprising of statutory agencies, employers, colleges and community groups involved in employability and training should be formed to discuss a way forward on these issues. Similar to that of the CBOP forum that was set up by DSD in the development of Victoria Square in Belfast.

### **Barriers**

Many clients we engage have a diverse range of barriers to employment. Some of whom faced multiple barriers. This includes lack of job related skills, lack of qualifications, lack of experience, lack of personal skills, poor levels of self confidence, fears of interviews and a wide range of other barriers arising from personal circumstances such as health conditions and disabilities. Through evaluations with our client groups we are able to get a better understanding of many of the other hidden barriers such as:

- Travelling / Geography-
- Work Environment
- Money vs. Work (Money is a de motivator). The amount they are paid does not relate to work done.
- Religion
- Background- Generational Unemployment
- Lack of Qualifications
- Hours of Work- They are constricted by personal circumstances- Children, caring responsibilities etc
- Fear of responsibility
- Bureaucracy (recruitment process)- Not receiving reply or it takes too long etc
- Job satisfaction
- Lack of Experience
- Application Forms
- Benefits Trap
- Lone Parent
- Lack transport

From our experience in delivering programmes to those who face multiple barriers to employment ACT understands the importance for participants to have access to a wide variety of support in order to address many of the barriers that exclude them from taking up employment. Through experience and qualified staff we are rapidly able to identify and overcome many of those barriers to include: Health barriers, Social Barriers and Personal Barriers such as essential skills, substance abuse, debt counselling, ex offending, severe learning difficulties, health, disabilities, confidence, self esteem, lack of skills

and other specific needs etc. We have established close links with a wide range of supporting agencies to support us in addressing these need