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All Our Futures: Attitudes to Age and Ageing in Northern Ireland

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- NILT last monitored attitudes to age and ageing in 2003
- In 2008 we looked at extent to which attitudes have changed
- Some new questions

This presentation focuses on:

- Changes in attitudes 2003-2008 with regard to how older people are treated and respected generally
- Perceptions of how older people are treated with regard to health, employment and financial services
- Attitudes to how older people are represented

Who is an 'older person'?

4% of respondents said people in their 50s

20% of respondents said people aged 60-64

57% of respondents said people aged 65-75

As you get older, do you find that people treat you with more respect or less respect?

% saying 'less respect'	2003	2008
Respondents aged under 65	36	27
Respondents aged 65 or more	37	24
All	36	27

Do you think that older people are, on the whole, treated better or worse because of their age?

% saying worse	2003	2008
Respondents aged under 65	50	44
Respondents aged 65 or more	42	36
All	48	43

- So – general feeling that things have gone rather better for older people
- Most marked in 65+ age group
- What about perceptions of how older people are *treated* by institutions and professions?

Perceptions of unfair treatment of family and friends

	%					
	2003			2008		
All respondents who felt that a friend or family member was:	<65	65+	All	<65	65+	All
Treated with less dignity and respect by people in the health and social care professions because of their age	27	13	24	35	14	31
Not offered medical treatment that might have helped because of their age	20	10	18	29	12	26
Not treated as well as they might have been people by people in the financial sector because of their age	12	4	11	24	13	22
Not treated as well as they might have been by an employer because of their age	10	4	9	22	9	20

- Disparity between results for people aged under 65 and those over 65
- Proportion of older people reporting problems remains quite small – especially in comparison to younger age groups
- Among respondents themselves aged 50+
 - few reports of unfairness and discrimination

How health and social care workers treat older people

	%					
	2003			2008		
	<65	65+	All	<65	65+	All
Their attitudes to them	44	36	42	62	38	57
The treatment of their illness	44	33	42	57	38	53
Placing them on waiting lists for operations	47	42	46	54	39	51

- It is with regard to behaviour of health and social care professions that concern among those aged 65+ is most evident – but still no consistent increase since 2003
- Perception of ageism much higher in the under 65 age group + significant increase since 2003

- % respondents saying authorities in NI don't do enough for older people

	%	
	2003	2008
Respondents aged under 65	72	79
Respondents aged over 65	65	64
All	71	76

% respondents who feel older people are
adequately represented by NI politicians

23%

% respondents who say older people need
an independent body outside government
to champion their rights

81%

Conclusions

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- Do rising perceptions of unfairness reflect a real increase in ageism or greater awareness and sensitivity to the issues?
- Differences in attitudes between those under 65 and over 65s
- The ‘angry generation’
- Challenges for government and institutions