



# ARK

## ARK Annual Report 2025 (Summary)

### About ARK

ARK is a research, policy and impact hub based jointly in Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and Ulster University (UU). Our activities focus on making social and political information on Northern Ireland accessible to all, supporting civic society, and challenging policies.

Key resources include public attitudes surveys, which record the views of people living in Northern Ireland about the issues that affect their lives:

- *Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT)*: adults aged 18 or over
- *Young Life and Times (YLT)*: young people aged 16
- *Kids' Life and Times (KLT)*: children aged 10-11 years olds

The *ARK Policy Unit* undertakes more critical appraisal of policy which is based on knowledge and evidence, while the *ARK Ageing Programme* focuses on how ageing is perceived and what it means to be old in Northern Ireland. The *Northern Ireland Elections* site includes information and results relating to elections in Northern Ireland since 1885. The ARK team also undertakes knowledge transfer and public engagement activities, such as seminars, conference presentations, workshops and policy roundtables.

This report highlights key activities of the ARK team during 2025. In that year, ARK marked its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a range of events and activities. Full details of all ARK's resources and activities are available at <https://www.ark.ac.uk>.

In 2025, we welcomed Dr Ciara Fitzpatrick to the team. We bade farewell to Dr Katrina Lloyd and Dr Goretti Horgan, both of whom had been long-standing members of ARK. Dr Erin Early took over as Director of KLT, and Dr Alexandra Chapman became Policy Director.

Launched in 2025, the ARK Associate Scheme invites an expert from an academic, policy or practitioner background to engage collaboratively with ARK. Andy Hamilton, Research Associate, Ulster University became ARK's first Associate.

### ARK contact details

School of Applied Social and Policy  
Sciences  
Ulster University  
York Street, Belfast BT15 1ED  
E-mail: [info@ark.ac.uk](mailto:info@ark.ac.uk)

School of Social Sciences, Education and  
Social Work  
Queen's University Belfast  
6 College Park, Belfast BT7 1LP  
E-mail: [info@ark.ac.uk](mailto:info@ark.ac.uk)

**Facebook** @AccessResearchKnowledge  
**YouTube** @ARKNIinfo

**LinkedIn** [www.linkedin.com/company/ark-ni](http://www.linkedin.com/company/ark-ni)  
**Bluesky** @ark-ni.bsky.social

## **Attitude surveys**

In 2025, the ARK survey teams continued to monitor public opinion in Northern Ireland via our three annual surveys. In order to provide an ongoing timeseries of attitudes to key social issues, questions in both NILT and YLT explored good relations including minority ethnic communities and refugees; identity; politics; Integrated education; community safety and perceptions of paramilitary safety; and gender-based violence. NILT also explored attitudes to, and knowledge of, languages, Artificial Intelligence, and abortion legislation. Other topics within YLT included schools, social media, mental health and wellbeing, and environment. KLT included questions on school, home and family, bullying, and wellbeing.

Data from earlier surveys were made publicly available and dissemination was enhanced through the publication of ten Research Updates, one Policy Brief and one ARK Feature, as well as journal articles, reports to funders, seminars and videos.

## **ARK Ageing Programme**

Gemma Carney continued to develop the Queen's on Ageing network, strengthening research links within QUB. Dissemination also continued via journal articles and conference presentations. Of note is Gemma Carney's keynote speech at the Public Health Agency's Age-friendly summit at the Titanic Centre, Belfast.

## **Policy Unit**

Staff associated with the Policy Unit continued to engage with policy makers, NGOs and statutory organisations at policy roundtables and seminars, and by responding to consultations and attending advisory meetings.

Publications included four Policy Briefs (self-directed support and adult social care; school choice; ethnic diversity and environmental leadership; and assisted dying in Northern Ireland). Two Research Reports were published, one focusing on safety and social media (based on KLT and YLT data) and the other on demand for Integrated education (using NILT data).

## **Gender budgeting**

Work on the gender budgeting project continued in 2025, developing online and face-to-face resources.

## **Dissemination**

ARK organised nine in-person events throughout 2025, including the launch ARK's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary program in Belfast City Hall in February.

Findings were disseminated via blogs and videos, and publications included five articles in peer reviewed journals, ten Research Updates, four Policy Briefs, one ARK Feature, and two reports. ARK staff presented papers at eight academic conferences. Eleven ARK newsletters were published, and the number of subscribers increased by 23% in 2025.

## **Funding**

In 2025, ARK obtained grant funding of £640,232.