



ARK Annual Report 2018 (Summary)

This summary annual report details our key activities in 2018

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.

Our key resources include:

- Three public attitudes surveys, which record the views of people of all ages living in Northern Ireland about the issues that affect their lives – the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILT; Young Life and Times (YLT) and Kids' Life and Times (KLT);
- The *ARK Ageing Programme*, which help us to think what it means to be old in Northern Ireland, via our events, Visiting Fellows, and research projects;
- *Conflict Archive on the Web (CAIN)*, which contains information and source material on 'the Troubles' and politics in Northern Ireland from 1968 to the present day;
- The *Northern Ireland Elections* site, which provides data about elections in Northern Ireland since 1885 and detailed breakdowns of election results;
- A wide variety of knowledge transfer and public engagement activities, such as seminars, conference presentations, workshops and policy round tables.

In 2018 funding for ARK's work totaled £458,539.

Full details of all ARK's activities are at www.ark.ac.uk

Web statistics

The ARK resources online continue to be heavily used:

- 6.5 million page views from 1 million visits and averaged 49,264 distinct visitors per month.
- The CAIN site had 665,024 visits, with 3.5 million page views. Unique visitors per month were, on average, 35,700.

Peace Monitoring Report

The fifth Peace Monitoring report was prepared by a team, led by ARK at Ulster University. This is a project led by the Community Relations Council and funded by Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. The report measured Safety, Equality, Political Progress, and Cohesion and Sharing, and is available at <https://www.ark.ac.uk/ARK/projects/peace-monitoring-report>.

Attitude surveys

In 2018 we continued to monitor public opinion in Northern Ireland through our suite of surveys. Topics included palliative care and advance care planning, racism, community relations, and transgender issues (NILT); wellbeing, citizenship, shared education, and community relations (YLT); and learning languages, wellbeing, citizenship, and attitudes to research (KLT). Data from the earlier surveys were made publicly available and dissemination enhanced through the publication of 7 research updates and briefings on the findings, as well as articles and book chapters, seminars and video podcasts.

Of note is an exciting partnership between ARK and BBC, which links social attitudes data from 1989 to 2016 on same-sex relationships with contemporary TV footage. *Queering The Family* is available at <https://canvas-story.bbcrewind.co.uk/sites/queeringthefamily/>

2018 marked 20 years since the first Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey was run, the 15th anniversary of the Young Life and Times Survey, and the 10th anniversary of Young Life and Times. To acknowledge this, during 2018 the *Marking Anniversaries* section of the website reflected on important historical events, and explored how attitudes in Northern Ireland have changed over time. Associated with this, a series of ARK Features and Research Updates were published, as well as a celebratory event on 29 November to launch the book *Recording Social Attitudes and Informing Social Policy in Northern Ireland: Key Findings from 20 Years of ARK's Life and Times Surveys*. For more information, visit <https://www.ark.ac.uk/ma2018/>

CAIN

During 2018, the collaboration between CAIN and the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) continued, adding previously secret records to the CAIN website (available at <https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/proni>). In addition, CAIN has continued its partnership with the National Archive, Ireland (NAI), funded by awards from the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, to select, digitise and make available further batches of Irish government records to complement the existing material for the years 1965-80. A further collection of some 930 items, largely covering the years 1981-85, were made available in February 2018 following a launch by Mr Niall Burgess, Secretary General of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

CAIN staff also engaged in a number of events to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the civil rights march in Derry on 5th October 1968, including events in Derry/Londonderry, Dublin, Letterkenny, PRONI, Ulster University, and Ulster Museum.

Policy Unit

Work continued on the ESRC-funded abortion project, and findings were included in the report to the UN CEDAW Committee, as well as a submission to the UK Parliament Women and Equalities Committee Inquiry on abortion legislation in Northern Ireland.

Funding has been obtained for two new projects: from Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust to explore gender budgeting (ARK, School of Accounting, UU and the NI Women's Budget Group), and from European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health for an analysis of existing data on contraceptive use in Northern Ireland 2010-2016.

The Policy Unit team continued to engage with policy makers, NGOs and statutory organisations at policy roundtables and seminars and by responding to consultations and attending advisory meetings. Three members of ARK were involved in the recent Citizens' Assembly on public aspirations for a social care system held in Belfast in autumn 2018.

Events

During 2018 ARK held a wide range of public engagement events including seminars based on public attitudes to armed forces, and to refugees and asylum seekers. The ARK Ageing Programme hosted two visitors from the Intergenerational Mentoring Network at University of Strathclyde (Alistair Wilson and Katie Hunter), who participated in a seminar and workshop.

In 2018, ARK focused on film as a method of engagement and dissemination. Our inaugural film project *Reel Life Data* asked film makers to produce a short film based on findings from the 2013 Life and Times survey data on attitudes to LGBT issues. In September, an event at Queen's launched two films produced as part of this project.

ARK also held a successful film festival focusing on sexuality and relationships in Northern Ireland. The aim of the festival was to use film to complement ARK's work, by exploring key issues, disseminating findings, and feeding into forthcoming research. As well as using innovative and creative methods, the three festival events brought a new audience to ARK.

ARK has a collaborative agreement with the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM). During 2018, a course was held on using creative research methods (15 March).

Conferences and publications

ARK staff presented papers at Learned Society international conferences including the British Society of Gerontology conference, the Political Studies Association Conference, the Social Policy Association Conference, and the World Health Organization Healthy Cities conference.

In addition to research updates, ARK Features, policy briefs, blogs and videos, ARK staff published five articles in peer reviewed journals.

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