

NOTE OF A MEETING WITH EDGAR JARDINE AND JOHN MALLON (NISRA) ON 16 JUNE @ 10 AM

PRESENT Mr Nesbitt  
Edgar Jardine }  
John Mallon } NISRA  
PS/Mr Nesbitt

cc [Handwritten notes in a bracketed list: Mr. Smith, Mr. Morrison, Mrs. Kenny, Dr. McCoy.]  
- Answer meeting minutes were measure of.

1. Mr Nesbitt welcomed Dr Jardine and Dr Mallon and advised that his contribution to this meeting would be within his contribution to 'Equality' motion in Assembly on 6 June and the discussion/ concordat agreed between Mr Haughey and he; Ministers Durkan and Haughey would receive a copy of the note of this meeting.
2. Mr Nesbitt referred to the NISRA 1998 Labour Force Survey and to the Partnership for Equality White Paper, concluding that the 'unemployment differential' has driven recent Government policy such as PAFT and NEW TSN, none of which has been successful in reducing the 'unemployment differential' (as measured by previous Westminster Governments).
3. Mr Nesbitt expressed reservation about wording employed by NISRA advising that "inequality" implies unfairness and that "much more likely" (to be unemployed) had been quoted by Conor Murphy in the Equality Debate on 6 June; Such wording could lead to misinterpretation and the implication that unemployment is as a result of discrimination.
4. In response to a question from Dr Jardine, Mr Nesbitt clarified that his objective was to obtain an agreed view and he invited the NISRA representatives to consider the points made and come back to OFMDFM with a measured response.
5. Mr Nesbitt re-iterated that the (ratio) differential measured by Government is not necessarily reduced by a reduction in unemployment. The working examples used in Mr Nesbitt's handout indicated that **absolute** measurement of differentials can be reduced, but **ratio** measurements are not. (see attached)
6. Mr Nesbitt suggested that equality of opportunity and outcome were inherently different. He re-iterated that wording must be chosen so as to avoid ambiguity. For example "twice as likely" **could** be perceived as suggesting inequality, when this is not necessarily the case. In essence, narrative must accurately reflect statistics. - The issue of 'stocks' and 'flows' with respect to employment/unemployment needs to be clearly understood.
7. Dr Mallon understood the reasoning behind Mr Nesbitt's conclusions and it was noted that public understanding of stocks and flows issues may be limited.
8. Mr Nesbitt's key concern was that wording such as "likely (hood)" allows media and political parties to quote verbatim, resulting in possible misinterpretation.

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9. Mr Nesbitt asked whether the NISRA officials felt that his inference was unfair ? Whilst Dr Jardine understood the reasoning, he had not considered the issue from Mr Nesbitt's viewpoint; the fact that the Minister had this perception meant that NISRA needed to address this issue.
10. NISRA officials agreed to consider the points raised and to come to a later meeting (to include Mr Haughey) with a measured response.

**MARK GOODFELLOW**  
**19 June 2000**

**cc:** PS/Mr Haughey  
Mr Haire