



04 May 2010

**NIPSA BRINGS EQUALITY TO THE HEART OF
GOVERNMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

Professor Richard Wilkinson, co author of *“The Spirit level – Why Equality is Better for Everyone”* will be presenting his evidence to an audience of MLAs, Government Officials, trade unionists, equality and human rights professionals on why health and social problems are worse in more unequal societies in the Long Gallery, Stormont on Wednesday, 5 May 2010 from 10.00 am to 12.00 noon.

According to Professor Wilkinson:-

“Until recently, most of the argument about the scale of income inequality in modern societies has been about fairness and unfairness. However our research has made it possible to compare the scale of income differences in different societies and see how the social fabric of society is affected by how much inequality there is. The research shows that many of the most pressing health and social problems are worse in more unequal societies - often much worse. Societies with bigger income differences between rich and poor seem to suffer more of a very wide range of health and social problems.”

Brian Campfield, NIPSA General Secretary, said:-

“This research brings to the reader the hard realities of life in unequal societies. It challenges the conventional thinking about whether allowing high income inequality is sustainable and to consider what could and should be done to create a fairer and more just society.

We think it is critical to bring this evidence to the heart of government in Northern Ireland and to challenge our politicians about what they intend to do to create a fairer society in Northern Ireland; a society which is better for everyone.

The agenda of cutting public spending and services will make inequality worse and it is essential that politicians here step up to the mark to robustly defend public services. The people in Northern Ireland are facing unprecedented cuts in public services which will inflict untold damage to our societal cohesiveness as we attempt to build a fair and inclusive society and move away from 30 years of violent conflict.

Anyone concerned with building a fairer Northern Ireland must take the research finding of the authors of this book very seriously indeed”

ENDS

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NIPSA represents over 45,000 members in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, Education & Library Boards, Health and Social Services Boards and Trusts, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, & District Councils.

General Secretary: *Brian Campfield* • Deputy General Secretary: *Alison Millar* • Media Contact: *Geraldine Alexander*

Notes to editors

1. *"The Spirit level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone"* was written by epidemiologists Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett.
2. Richard Wilkinson has played a formative role in international research and his work has been published in 10 languages. He studied economic history at the London School of Economics before training in Epidemiology and is Professor Emeritus at University of Nottingham Medical School and Honorary Professor at University College London.
3. The event is being sponsored by Dawn Purvis MLA, PJ Bradley MLA and Basil McCrea MLA.
4. NIPSA will be presenting each political party with a copy of the book.