



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

An Roinn
**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

Families Matter: *Supporting Families in Northern Ireland*

**The Department of Health, Social Services and
Public Safety's Proposals on a Regional Family
and Parenting Strategy**

Response Document

January 2007

Consultation Questions

Please respond to the consultation document by e-mail, letter or fax.

Responses should be sent to:

e-mail: familypolicyunit@dhsspsni.gov.uk

Family Policy Unit
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
Room C4.22
Castle Buildings
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3SQ

Fax: 02890 520529

Responses must be received no later than **30th March 2007**.

(Please tick a box)	
I am responding:	<input type="checkbox"/> as an individual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> on behalf of an organisation
Name:	Godfrey Young
Job Title:	General Manager
Organisation:	CARE N.I. Ltd
Address:	Armaghlughey Road Ballygawley County Tyrone BT70 2LG
Tel:	02885567755
Fax:	02885567766
Email:	gyoung@care-ni.com

Supporting Families

1. Do you agree that the aims stated are the right aims? (Please tick)

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

2. Do you agree that the vision stated is the right vision? (Please tick)

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

3. The document lists 10 principles that underpin the strategy. Do you agree with the principles stated? (Please tick)

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

4. **The document lists 7 outcomes from the Children and Young People’s strategy, ‘*Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge*’. Do you agree that these are the right outcomes for this strategy? (Please tick)**

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

5. **The focus of this strategy is primarily on preventative and early intervention to support parents at particular times of need and at particular stages in the development of their child. Do you think that this is the appropriate scope for the strategy? (Please tick)**

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

Priority Themes

6. Do you agree that Theme 1 – Parental Support is an appropriate theme? (Please tick)

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

7. Do you agree the actions suggested in Theme 1 are appropriate actions to take under this theme? (Please tick)

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

8. Do you agree that Theme 2 – Access to Information is an appropriate theme? (Please tick)

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

9. Do you agree the actions suggested in Theme 2 are appropriate actions to take under this theme? (Please tick)

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

10. Do you agree that Theme 3 – Assessment of Needs is an appropriate theme? (Please tick)

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

11. Do you agree the actions suggested in Theme 3 are appropriate actions to take under this theme? (Please tick)

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

There appears to be insufficient awareness of the common assessment framework amongst other stakeholders and the April deadline may be unrealistic. Private sector organisations delivering childrens services should be referred to in this action as part of an independent sector contributing to an integrated approach

12. Do you agree that Theme 4 – Information Sharing is an appropriate theme? (Please tick)

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

13. Do you agree the actions suggested in Theme 4 are appropriate actions to take under this theme? (Please tick)

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

14. Do you agree Theme 5 – Integration and Multi-Agency Working is an appropriate theme? (Please tick)

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

15. Do you agree the actions suggested in Theme 5 are appropriate actions to take under this theme? (Please tick)

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

Insufficient importance is given to the role of the area based Children and Young Peoples Committees and their potential to contribute to an even greater extent to inter-agency working and the planning and delivery of services. These Committees should be able to pool and direct resources to areas of greatest need

Equality Implications

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires Departments and other public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- Between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- Between men and women generally;
- Between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- Between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to the above obligation, public authorities must also in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, have regard to

the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Where there is evidence or an indication that an existing policy is having an adverse impact on equality of opportunity, or that a proposed policy may cause an adverse impact, an **Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)** may need to be carried out on the policy. The process used by a public authority to determine whether an existing policy or new policy needs an EQIA is called **screening**.

The Department is now screening the proposals set out in this consultation document and as part of the screening process, the Department invites you to consider the following questions.

The Department is inviting responses to the following questions:

- 17. Are the actions or proposals, which are set out in this document likely to have an adverse impact on any group of people in terms of the nine equality dimensions? (Please tick)**

YES

NO

If yes, please state the reasons why.

- 18. Are you aware of any indication or evidence – qualitative or quantitative – that the actions or proposals in this document may**

have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity or good relations? (Please tick)

YES

NO

If yes, please state the reasons why and how these might be mitigated.

19. Does the proposed strategy and actions afford an opportunity to promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations? (Please tick)

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

Additional Comments

20. Do you have any other comments, which you think might be relevant to the development of the strategy?

The document refers to the importance of cross sectoral working yet makes only one reference under principles (page10) to recognise the contribution of organisations outside the voluntary and community sectors important as they both are. For example there is no reference to them under the partnership outcome. There are a number of private or independent sector organisations operating in the child care field e.g. in both early years, fostering and residential care. They are already working in partnership with Trusts etc and also need to know about UNOCINI (extension of action point page 30 required) and contribute to service planning and development etc. There are a number of paragraphs and action points in the document where the term private sector should be added or an umbrella term such as independent sector providers used.

In terms of the "keeping safe" outcome listed on page 12 it is important to recognise that some children are cared for outside their local communities for periods of time e.g. in foster homes or childrens homes and that children have a right to be protected wherever they live.

In terms of the priority theme "Access to Services & Information" there is no acknowledgement of the various databases developed by the Children & Young Peoples Planning Committees in many Board areas. These have the potential to populate a regional database. A challenge will be to ensure that such a regional database is properly maintained and updated.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMENTS