

Homefirst: Community Trust

Response to a healthier future consultation questions

1. Does the vision adequately describe the health and social services that will meet our future needs and aspirations?

We believe that 'a healthier' future provides a comprehensive and challenging vision for the health and social care of the population over the next twenty years. We believe that explicit reference to care at home would strengthen and make that vision more meaningful for all of those involved in planning and delivering health and social care, as well as the public who are all potential users of health and social care services. The idea of remaining at home, or moving to a new, more suitably designed home, appropriate to individual need, must be central to the vision of future health and social services. This will drive necessary resourcing and configuration of services to people at home. It will also help to develop the culture by which people can realise their personal aspirations, through choosing to remain at home with a sense of security and peace of mind.

As with any vision, however, we will need to make sure that our structures and resources are adequate to allow us to develop a meaningful implementation plan and deliver the vision within the identified timescale.

2. A Healthier Future focuses on five major themes: Investing for Health and Wellbeing; Involving People; Responsive Integrated Services; Teams which Deliver; Improving Quality; and Making it Happen. Do you agree that it is appropriate to focus on these themes and are there any others that should be addressed by the regional strategy?

Whilst we are satisfied and welcome these as addressing comprehensively the important areas in health and social services and health and wellbeing, there should be a strong focus on tackling inequalities and social inclusion to promote access to services for vulnerable groups.

To meet the targets within the five themes in the most efficient way possible, we also need to address coordinated working across all departments and professions and look at how we can recruit and retain the appropriate staff to deliver the overall vision.

3. A Healthier Future identifies 16 future Policy Directions. Do you believe these are the right Policy Directions to achieve the vision set out in the document?

We believe that the policy directions addresses the appropriate areas with the following adjustments:

- Policy Direction 3: We recommend that resources should be allocated to make sure that HPSS staff are trained in promoting health and wellbeing as an integral part of their work.
- Policy Direction 4: We enthusiastically welcome this policy direction that makes explicit the absolute imperative of involving users and communities in the planning and monitoring of services and in promoting caring communities. The support of the social economy as well as voluntary and community endeavour in this context is also of crucial importance. We would recommend that the “potentially excluded people” listed on page 44 should include people with literacy problems and those whose first language is not English. Relevant, accurate and accessible information about our services and the organisations providing the services must be available if people are to be involved in assessment of need, planning and designing services and the management of bodies delivering services.

We would recommend that the Regional Public Involvement Steering Group should be developed in partnership with voluntary and community group representatives and health and social services councils in order to make sure that it is properly representative.

4. A Healthier Future identifies a number of key actions and outcomes. Do you believe that these are the right actions and outcomes to achieve the vision set out in the document?

Our comments detailed within this questionnaire provide our view on these actions and outcomes.

5. A Healthier Future identifies the need to reduce smoking as a key element in improving the health of people in Northern Ireland and sets out three main options.

- (a) Should restrictions on smoking in public places and in workplaces be a matter for self-regulation and should Government simply act to encourage and support smoking cessation? *or*
- (b) Should smoking generally be prohibited in most enclosed public places and workplaces, but allowed in certain settings such as pubs that do not prepare and serve food and in private clubs where the members decide to permit smoking? *or*
- (c) Should legislation to introduced to ban smoking in all enclosed public places and workplaces?

As one of our key aims is to promote the health and well being of our population we believe that legislation should be introduced to ban smoking in all enclosed public places.

6. Are the proposals for taking the strategy forward adequate?

The proposals are adequate but, as mentioned earlier, we need to make sure that appropriate resources are available to deliver the overall vision. It will also be important to make sure that responsibilities are clearly identified and progress regularly reviewed. We need to integrate the strategy into our day-to-day working if we are to achieve the outcomes identified in the vision. Without this integration, there is unlikely to be a positive outcome at the end of the implementation period.

7. Are the equality issues adequately addressed?

As the development of the Regional Strategy has involved extensive consultation and all elements of it have been or will be subject to equality screening, we feel the equality issues are adequately addressed.