

From the Chief Social Services Officer
Mr Sean Holland



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

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AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÄNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar**

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Our Ref:

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Directors of Children's Services/
Executive Director of Social Work, HSC Trusts

Dear Colleague

**REGIONAL GUIDANCE FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE AND FIELD SOCIAL WORK STAFF
ON SUPPORTING LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN WHO ARE ARRESTED/QUESTIONED
BY POLICE OR APPEAR IN COURT ON CRIMINAL MATTERS**

Please find attached a copy of the above Regional Guidance. It has been produced by Workstream 9 of the Reform Implementation Team and seeks to standardise and improve social work practice in this important area of work and ensure that children in our care who come into conflict with the law receive the help and support that they need.

The development of the Guidance has drawn upon the experience and expertise of a wide range of individuals and organisations including Trust staff, Youth Justice Agency, NI Courts and Tribunal Service, District Judges, PSNI and VOYPIC. I would like to thank all of them for the contribution they made.

The Guidance clarifies the roles and responsibility of Social Services staff in instances where a looked after child is in police custody, appears in Court or is admitted to the Juvenile Justice Centre/Young Offenders Centre. It reflects the importance colleagues who are external to Health and Social Care attach to the role of Social Services in such situations. A copy of the Guidance is also being provided to these partner organisations to ensure there is clarity of expectation from all concerned.

Having consulted widely in its production, can I now ask you to ensure that the Guidance is disseminated to **all Field and Residential Social Work Teams in your Trust, their Managers and Senior Managers**. As you know, many of the incidents referred to in the document require notification to be made to the HSCB by way of Untoward Event reporting. We anticipate that the implementation of the Guidance will be evidenced in those reports forthwith.

I am aware that the Health and Social Care Board is in the process of commissioning training to support the implementation of this Guidance, with particular emphasis on the role of the

Appropriate Adult for children who are looked after. I hope that this training will be offered to relevant staff in your Trust in the near future.

Finally, this Regional Guidance comes into operation with immediate effect. I hope that you and your staff find it of assistance in working with any looked after child who may come into contact with the Criminal Justice system.

Yours sincerely



SEAN HOLLAND
Chief Social Services Officer

cc Assistant Directors of Children's Services, HSC Trusts
Director of Social Care & Children, HSCB
Assistant Director of Social Care & Children, HSCB
Principal Social Workers, HSCB
Training Managers, HSC Trusts/HSCB
RIT Change Co-ordinators
RIT Implementation Group
Office of Social Services, DHSSPS
Child Care Policy Directorate, DHSSPS
Criminal Justice Services Division, DOJ
NI Courts & Tribunal Services
Director of Probation Board
Chief Executive Officer, Youth Justice Agency
Office of Lord Chief Justice
District Judges/Lay Magistrates
Director, VOYPIC