



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

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Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
Room C4.22
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Responses must be received no later than **30th March 2007**.

(Please tick a box)

I am responding: as an individual on behalf of an organisation

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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.

My concern re a seamless service is that Hall 4 changes have disregarded some reviews ie the 18month assessment so that children who require extra support from health professionals may be slipping through the net and not receiving the degree of care that is required or expected.
Also uncertainty re impact of RPA on services.

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

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

Yes - it encompasses the whole family approach and focuses on prevention rather than cure!

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.

Yes - any policies should involve partnership between health care professionals and parents. Services should also be based on the needs of the service users i.e the parents and their family.

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.

Yes - any strategy needs to support parents/carers at a time on need. It needs to be a proactive rather than reactive strategy in the case of children and young people.

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.

Yes - this is the crux of family life and the first call for all children should be their parents. Any support here is crucial

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.

However the issue of Hall 4 needs revisited. Some key assessments by health visitors of childhood development have now been lost. This will result in health issues going undetected for an unacceptable period of time. Surely this cannot be acceptable in such a strategy!

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.

Yes - this is an extremely important theme. Parents need some system available where they can obtain accurate contact details of services that they require.

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.

However, the regional information data base needs to be accurate and updated on a regular basis if it is to be of use to parents. This also applies to the contact details that will be held by the regional helpline.

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.

Yes - appropriate training needs to be provided to all staff on UNICIONI with regular updates. ? the possibility of making this training compulsory for all staff on induction.

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

YES

NO

If no, please state the reasons why.

Yes - this is urgently required.

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.

Yes - although a key point is that these protocols are devised in consultation with all parties who would be involved in their use to ensure that they are appropriate and manageable.

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.

Yes - this is an essential part of child care.

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.

Yes - a multiprofessional and partnership approach is urgently required to ensure child health and wellbeing. It also promotes better communication between all staff members.

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?

Please see comments attached to individual questions to expand on the reason for each answer.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMENTS