



# THE BISHOP OF CONNOR

*Rt. Rev. A.E.T. Harper*

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## **A Healthier Future**

### **Preliminary Response to Consultation Document from the Bishop of Connor (Chairman, Board of Social Responsibility (NI), Church of Ireland.**

1. I welcome the opportunity to comment on the document but regret the very short time available for comment and consultation.
2. I have had access to the Executive Summary only.
3. I note that in the section “looking ahead – a changing world” reference is made to extended longevity and the increase in age-related diseases but in the list provided no reference appears to diseases associated with mental debility in old age, dementia, Alzheimer’s etc.
4. I welcome the overall aim of Policy direction 1 of Theme 1 referring to improvements in the physical and mental health and social wellbeing of the people of Northern Ireland. However I note with disbelief the complete absence of any reference to mental health issues in the outcomes to be pursued under Policy direction 2 on P06. This is particularly regrettable when considering the total lack of provision of mental health care facilities or an overall mental health strategy for children and young people.

One also seeks recognition of the need to develop multi agency and multi disciplinary procedures in response to alcohol and substance abuse and to do so taking account of the extent to which mental health problems among young people are often associated with problems of abuse and addiction.

I request that a specific policy direction and strategy be developed to deal with all mental health issues and specific resources be devoted to developing a strategy for dealing with the mental health problems of children and young people.

18<sup>th</sup> February 2005