



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:	deirdre Brady
Job Title:	Chief Executive
Organisation:	Tiny Life
Address:	33 Ballynahinch Road Carryduff Belfast BT8 8EH
Tel:	02890815050
Fax:	02890815150
Email:	deirdrebrady@tinylife.org.uk

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.

This seems to indicate parenting classes.
Family support should highlight the need for emotional and practical support at home for families experiencing difficulties.
Families of newborn ill infants need practical/emotional support long before they need parenting classes

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.

The response to this has been positive. the main concern again is the the ability to offer families the support needed in the home at times of crisis ie premature or ill baby.Many of the families were worried about the information being available but the organisations not been funded to deliver the services needed.

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.

Not all families who require support live in areas covered by Sure Start. Although very positive reaction to the themes it was noted that the lack of family support in the home is missing as an overarching theme. Positive parenting/parenting education is important but some families are not at that stage.

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.

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.

Concern around what a childrens centre would look like.
How could regional voluntary organisations ensure the services they provide will be incorporated into these centres for the benefit of the families they serve if they are not with in a Sure start project?

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?

Families of premature and ill babies need and request the opportunity to have the practical and emotional support following the birth of their baby. From the loan of breast pumps to the presence of a home visiting volunteer to help relieve the practical and emotional burden within their family. This is the most crucial stage in the life of a child. If we are to ensure the positive development of these babies then surely we must recognise that at this stage parenting classes are not appropriate but with the early intervention of support services recognising the need of the family and this includes the mother, father and siblings then we can prevent marital tensions and breakdown. The development of a strong family unit at this stage is vital for the wellbeing of the vulnerable baby.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMENTS