

Children and Young People's Strategy 2017-2027 Consultation Document



Working together to improve the well-being of children and young people living in Northern Ireland, delivering positive, long-lasting outcomes

December 2016

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Ministerial Foreword

I am pleased to present the Children and Young People's Strategy for public consultation on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive.

The well-being of our children and young people is central to the development of a progressive, cohesive and prosperous society.

There is perhaps nothing more important than ensuring our children and young people reach their full potential to live happy fulfilling lives, able to contribute fully to society. It is vital therefore that we focus our efforts and resources to ensure that our children and young people enjoy the best start in life. This means that they are healthy; that they have opportunities to play; that they learn and achieve; that they contribute positively to society; that they feel safe and stable where they live; that they experience economic and environmental well-being; that their rights are respected; and that they are treated equally and have the opportunity to experience good relations with those of a different race, religion or culture.

We know that while the majority of our children and young people lead happy, secure lives, many still suffer from the impact of poverty, social exclusion and educational underachievement. We need to change this. This Executive Strategy sets out our priorities for the lives of children and young people - the outcomes we want to achieve and how we will work together to ensure we achieve them. It is our intention that this Strategy will direct all Executive led programmes, policies and services which impact on children's lives - everything we do must feed into the outcomes and priorities agreed here.

Children and young people can often feel their needs are not considered by those in authority - this should not be the case. Every day children and young people use public services, they are consumers, they are influencers, they are community builders, and they are active citizens. Today's children and young people are tomorrow's politicians, tomorrow's business leaders, tomorrow's policy makers, tomorrow's community representatives. Their views and needs must be listened to and respected, as their unique perspective will support the development of innovative solutions and better services.

In order to realise our aim of improving the well-being of our children and young people we must promote better co-operation by all of those who can influence the well-being of

our children and young people; and we must ensure better delivery and implementation of services, actions and programmes to guarantee that this Strategy has a lasting positive impact.

Improving the lives of our children and young people is not within the gift of a single Executive Department - children's lives are complex and the barriers to positive outcomes too challenging for one Department or one Minister. Everyone has a role. We need the assistance and support of schools; the health service; the police service; local communities; councils and businesses; the voluntary and community sector; parents and guardians; and we need the help of our children and young people. It is only by everyone working together in pursuit of a common goal that we will secure the present and future we want for our children and young people.

This consultation process is vital to ensure we get this Strategy right for all children and young people. We want to hear your views on what our priorities should be, what the challenges are, and how we can collectively overcome them.

The adoption of this Strategy is not the end, it is only the beginning. We must turn words into action, strategy into delivery. Whilst implementing this Strategy we must continue to listen to the voice of children and young people and adapt as new opportunities, issues and challenges emerge.

We are pleased to endorse this Strategy for your consideration and we commit to trying our hardest, individually and collectively, to give our children and young people the best start in life.



PETER WEIR MLA
MINISTER OF EDUCATION

Chapter 1

Introduction

- 1.1 This Strategy is designed to improve the well-being of all children and young people living in Northern Ireland. We recognise that improving the lives of our children and young people will take consistent and sustained action over a long period of time. It is also not the responsibility of a single person, Department or body; it will require everyone to work together. This Strategy, therefore, also seeks to outline how the Executive will promote co-operation amongst Departments, Agencies and other service deliverers to ensure that we make a real impact on the lives of our children and young people.
- 1.2 The Programme for Government (PfG) identifies that a key desired outcome is “giving our children and young people the best start in life” - this Strategy is a key component to achieve this. Similarly to the PfG, this Strategy sets out a direction of travel for how we want the lives of our children and young people to improve. By agreeing mechanisms to support improved working practices and outlining the key outcomes we wish to achieve we are taking the first step in making a real and lasting impact on the lives of children and young people.

Consultation - How to respond

- 1.3 We welcome your views on this Children and Young People's Strategy. The publication of this document signals the start of a public consultation period that will continue until 27th February 2017. During that time we wish to gather the views of children and young people; parents and guardians; and all those stakeholders and service deliverers who are concerned with the well-being of our children and young people.
- 1.4 A consultation questionnaire has been developed to assist you to comment on the Strategy - this can be accessed online at www.education-ni.gov.uk/consultations/children-and-young-peoples-strategy-2017-2027.

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- 1.5 Written responses to this consultation should be submitted in writing or by email to:

Address: Children and Young People's Strategy Team
Room 6.14
Rathgael House
Bangor
BT19 7PR

Email: cyps.consultation@education-ni.gov.uk

- 1.6 All responses must be received by 5 pm on 27th February 2017.
- 1.7 When responding to this consultation please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. We will also be holding a number of public consultation events across Northern Ireland. If responding on behalf of an organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.
- 1.8 During the consultation period we will meet with groups and individuals who are particularly interested in these policy proposals. Details of these consultation events are available on www.education-ni.gov.uk/children-and-young-peoples-strategy-2017-2027 or by contacting us using the details above.
- 1.9 Any queries about the Strategy or requests for alternative formats should be directed to the address or email given above. You may also contact 028 9085 8024.

Freedom of Information, data protection and confidentiality

- 1.10 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, in this case the Department of Education. This includes access to information provided in response to a consultation exercise.
- 1.11 The Department cannot automatically consider information supplied to it during consultation as confidential if that information is subsequently

requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. However, if there is a Freedom of Information request for information submitted during this present consultation, the Department will consider carefully whether it should be made public, or treated confidentially.

- 1.12 If we are asked to disclose responses under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we will take any requests for confidentiality into account. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
- 1.13 We will handle any personal data provided during the consultation in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- 1.14 For further information about confidentiality of responses, please contact the Information Commissioner's Office or visit their website at:
http://ico.org.uk/about_us/our_organisation/northern_ireland

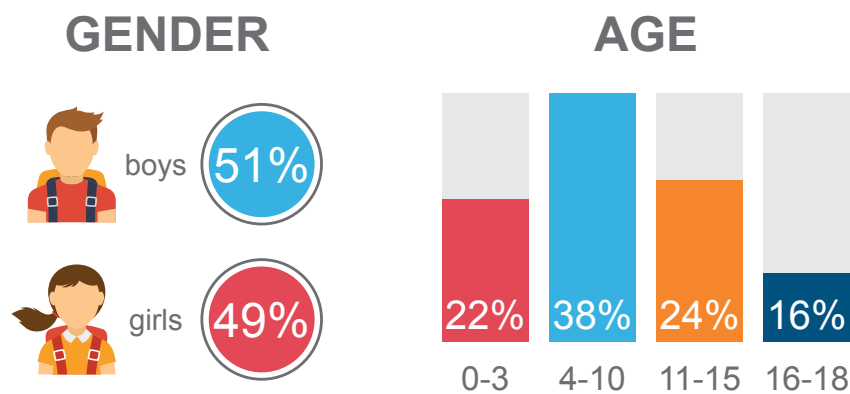
After the consultation

- 1.15 The views and comments received during this consultation process will be analysed and inform the preparation of a final version of the Children and Young People's Strategy which will be adopted formally by the Executive and laid in the Assembly.

Chapter 2 Background

- 2.1 The population of Northern Ireland is increasing and at 30 June 2015 was estimated to be over 1.850m people.

The number of children and young people (0-18 years) is estimated at over 450,000



- 2.2 Children and young people (0-18) account for 25% of the total population, which is higher than England (23%), Scotland (20%) and Wales (22%). Many of our children and young people are already achieving very positive outcomes across many aspects of well-being and enjoy life to the full. Over the past number of years we have seen major improvements in most notably:

- ❑ **Reduced infant death rates**, falling from 13.7 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 1981 to 3.5 in 2012 (the lowest infant death rate on record). In 2015 there were 124 infant deaths, a rate of 5.1 infant deaths per 1,000 live births.
- ❑ **Educational attainment**, over four-fifths (83%) of Year 12 pupils achieved 5 or more GCSEs (or equivalent) at grades A*-C in 2014/15. Over the 11 years of data there has been a considerable increase in this level of attainment, beginning at a baseline of 61% (2004/05).

- ❑ **Good relations**, 66% of our children and young people reported that they regularly socialise or play sport with people from a different religious community.
- ❑ **Road safety**, in 2015, recorded traffic collisions resulting in injury to a child (under 16) accounted for 925 casualties, of whom 5 were killed, 67 were seriously injured and 853 were slightly injured. Over the 12 years of monitoring data there has generally been a downward trend in the number of children killed or seriously injured on our roads. In 2015 there were 79 fewer children killed or seriously injured than that recorded at baseline in 2004; 72 compared to 151.

2.3 However, we know that too many of our children and young people still live with poor mental health, in poverty, experience homelessness or insecure or unsafe environments. Recent figures show:

- ❑ **Mental health** - On 28 March 2015, there were 899 young people waiting for a first mental health outpatient appointment. Of these 899 young people, 28% were waiting longer than 6 weeks for their appointment (251 young people). The number of young people waiting has tended to fluctuate over the 7 years of comparable monitoring data. The most recent figure shows an increase of 31.2% compared to the baseline in 2009 when 685 young people were waiting for a first mental health outpatient appointment.
- ❑ **Child poverty** - Absolute child poverty for 2014/15, at 23%, is 1% lower than in 2013/14 (24%) and 5% lower than in 2002/03 baseline figure of 28%. However, in 2014/15, the percentage of children in relative poverty (before housing costs) increased by 2% from the previous year to 25%. This most recent figure is also 2% higher than the 2002/03 baseline figure of 23%.
- ❑ **Safety** - In 2013, 17% of our children and young people stated that they were concerned about the potential threat of paramilitary violence.
- ❑ **Obesity** - The percentage of Primary 1 pupils considered obese has averaged at 5.1% over the 7 years monitoring data for the updated Child Health System methodology. In 2014/15, 5.2% of Primary 1 pupils were recorded as being obese, a slight increase compared to the previous year's figure of 5.0%.

- 2.4 We should also be mindful that children and young people are not statistics and that even a seemingly positive outcome for many can often mask negative outcomes for others. For example (in section 2.2 above), whilst 83% of Year 12 pupils achieved 5 or more GCSEs (or equivalent) at grades A*-C in 2014/15, which is a significant achievement, this means that 17% (nearly 1 in every 5) of our children and young people did not attain this level. Similarly, if 66% of our children and young people socialise with those from a different community background, that still means that 1 in 3 do not.
- 2.5 **This Strategy seeks to build upon the many positive outcomes children experience whilst also focusing on areas of concern where outcomes are poorer or specific groups of children and young people face barriers to positive outcomes.**

Chapter 3

The aim of the Strategy

Working together to improve the well-being of children and young people living in Northern Ireland, delivering positive, long-lasting outcomes.

Working together...

- 3.1 As a starting point in this Strategy, it is imperative that everyone who has an interest in improving the lives of our children and young people consider opportunities to work together to achieve better outcomes for children and young people. The outcomes we want to achieve for children and young people cannot be delivered by a single Department. Everyone has a role; Departments; agencies; service deliverers; the community and voluntary sector; parents and guardians; and children and young people.
- 3.2 The Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 (the CSCA) came into effect in December 2015 and is designed to improve co-operation amongst Departments and Agencies as they deliver services aimed at improving the well-being of children and young people.¹ The Act requires the Executive to make arrangements to promote co-operation and places a duty on named bodies to co-operate where appropriate.
- 3.3 It also requires the Executive to develop and adopt a Strategy which delivers on the stated outcomes for improving the lives of children and young people. The legislation specifies that children and young people must be consulted in the development of the Strategy.
- 3.4 This Strategy outlines the initial arrangements to be made by the Executive to promote co-operation across all relevant bodies. This includes adhering to key principles of co-operation; establishing effective structures; and proactively identifying opportunities to co-operate.

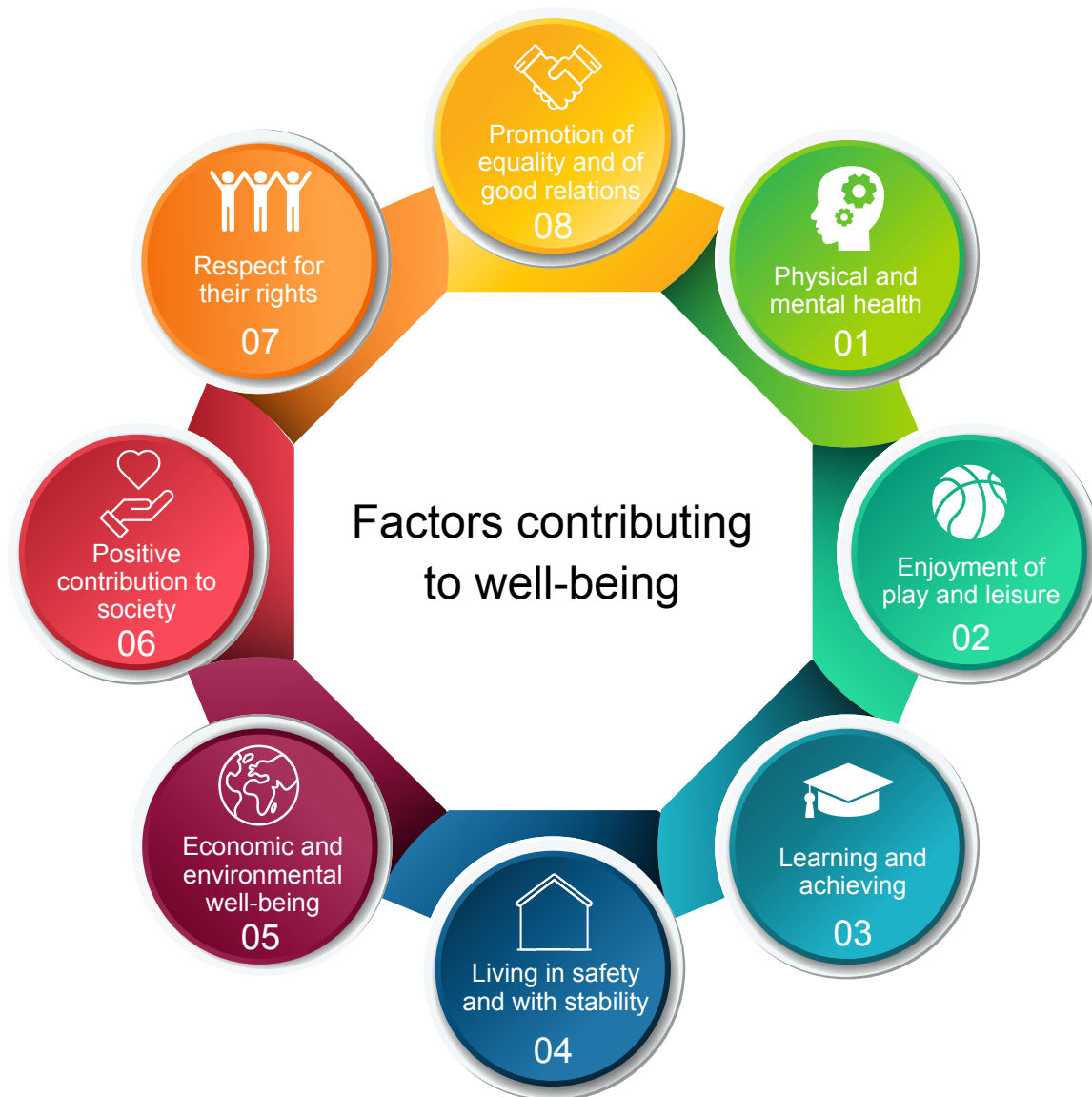
¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/niu/2015/10/contents>

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- 3.5 If all relevant bodies work together we can begin to make improvements to the well-being of all children and young people living in Northern Ireland. There are already many positive examples of where collaborative working is in place and delivering good outcomes - these examples should be built upon and the lessons learned shared to support more co-operation.

...to improve the well-being of children and young people living in Northern Ireland...

- 3.6 The CSCA defines 'well-being' using 8 general parameters. These largely reflect and expand upon the outcomes included in the previous Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People, "Our children and young people - our pledge" and are described in **Figure 3.1**.

Figure 3.1 *Eight Parameters of well-being (as defined in the Children's Services Co-operation Act (NI) 2015)*



3.7 These parameters of well-being are interconnected. A positive outcome in one area will lead to further positive outcomes just as a negative outcome in one area could lead to further negative outcomes. A child who feels safe and respected will go out and play more, feel healthier and be happier in school and ready to learn. A child who does not experience economic well-being and lives in poverty will be more likely to have poor health, will face barriers to play and can feel isolated, and this can affect their education.

3.8 For each of these parameters the Strategy considers:

- What is the outcome we want for children and young people?
- Why this outcome matters?
- What are the current issues facing children and young people within this area?
- Based on evidence where is the greatest effort required?
- How we will know if we are achieving the outcome (Proposed Indicators)?
- What needs to be done?

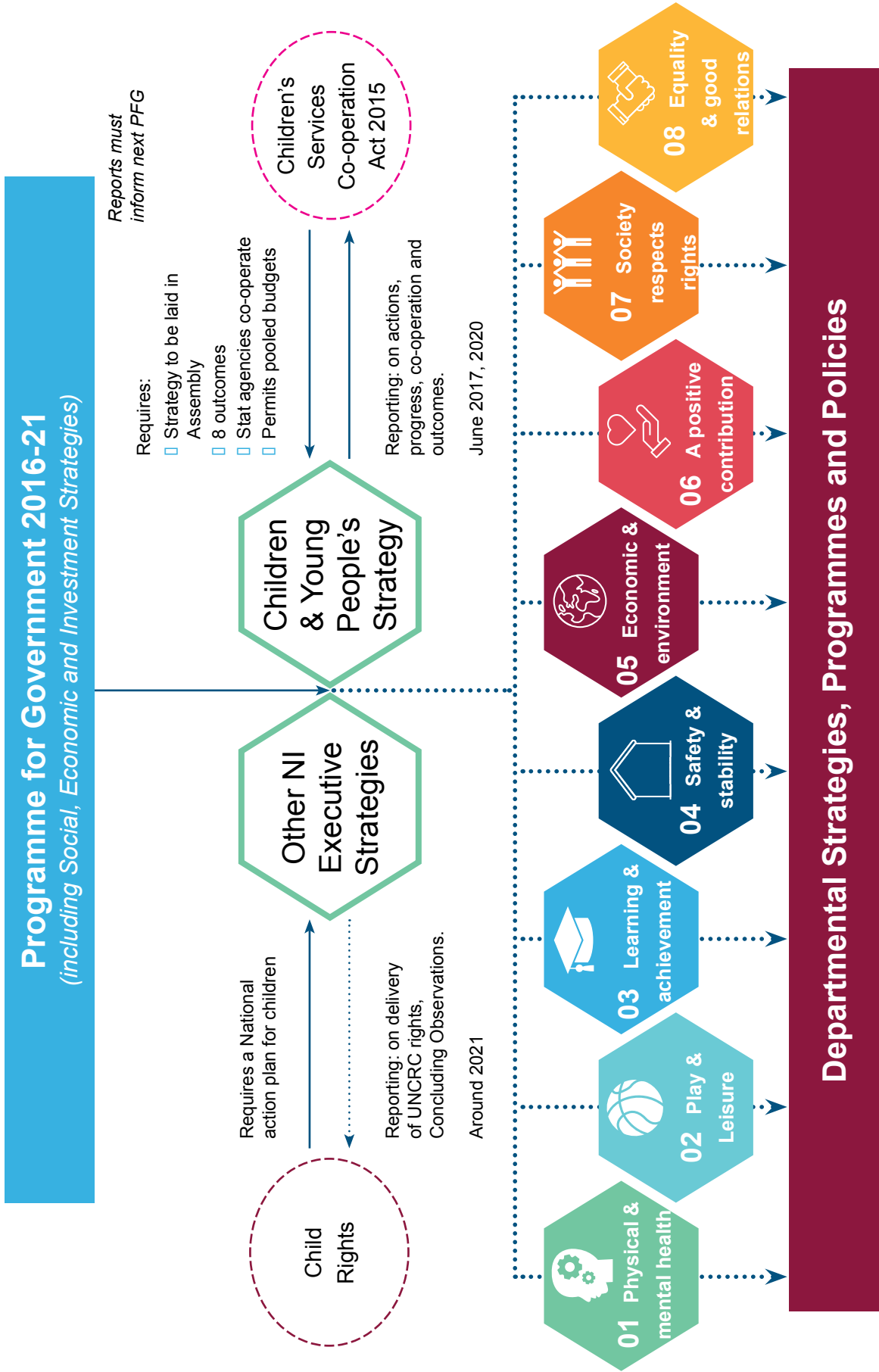
...delivering positive, long-lasting outcomes.

3.9 As with the PfG the Strategy has been developed using the Outcomes Based Accountability model. This approach is designed to provide a stronger emphasis on impact rather than focusing on the amount of money spent or the number of programmes delivered. In this Strategy, the Executive is setting itself the challenge to make a real and lasting difference to the lives of children and young people in eight key areas.

3.10 Progress on these issues will be measured at a population level through 21 key headline indicators. However, it should be noted that progress against these outcomes will not happen overnight and it may be a number of years before we start to see a significant impact.

Figure 4.1

Context in which this Strategy will be operating



Chapter 4

Development of the Strategy

An Executive Strategy for 2017-2027

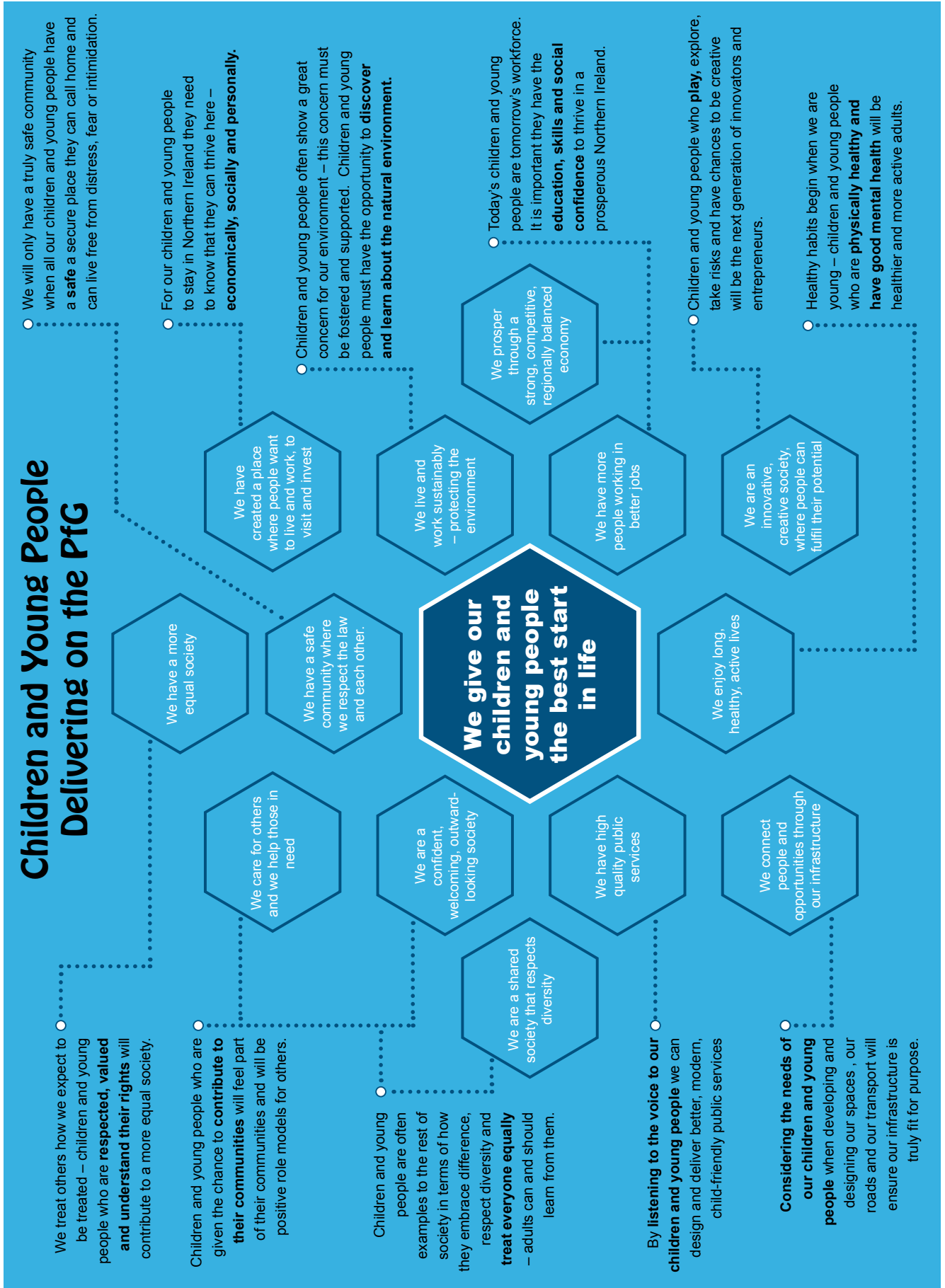
- 4.1 This document serves as the Executive's comprehensive Strategy for Children and Young People. It outlines how relevant parties will work together to improve the well-being of our children and young people, to deliver positive long lasting outcomes. The outcomes we wish to achieve cannot and will not be realised in 2 or 3 years or even within the lifetime of an Assembly. They are outcomes that will require a consistent effort over many years and therefore this Strategy will be for the period 2017-2027.
- 4.2 The Strategy is intended to be a framework which sets the high level priorities for Government in terms of co-operation, outcomes and delivery. It will be supported by a forthcoming implementation plan which will draw from PfG delivery plans and be supplemented with additional actions or information where necessary. This will be informed by the public consultation process and kept under review as part of the monitoring process.
- 4.3 As the comprehensive Strategy for our children and young people it has been developed with the following in mind:
- It must support the outcomes outlined in the PfG.
 - It must be supported by relevant PfG Delivery Plans, Executive and Departmental Strategies.
 - It should build upon the progress made as part of the previous Strategy.
 - It must meet the duties within the CSCA.
 - Advice from the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People.
 - It is for our children and young people and has been influenced by them.
 - It takes on board the views of parents, guardians and carers.
 - It is guided by key principles.

In support of the Programme for Government

- 4.4 The PfG Consultation document was published for consultation on 28 October 2016.² This Strategy is directly linked to and will be a key delivery mechanism for the PfG.
- 4.5 The PfG consists of 14 high level outcomes, which are expressed as succinct high-level statements of the societal impacts the Executive wants to make. Below the outcomes are 48 specific indicators which set out the changes the Executive wants to make, and give an indication if the changes are succeeding.
- 4.6 The approach taken in the PfG provides a blueprint for cross-cutting and collaborative working - and not just within central government. It provides a pathway for joint working with delivery partners in other sectors: in local government, in the community and voluntary sectors and with the private sector. This Children and Young People's Strategy follows a similar approach - 8 high level outcomes with specific headline indicators which will be used to monitor progress.
- 4.7 One of the 14 high-level PfG outcomes is that '*We give our children and young people the best start in life*'. This Strategy will seek to deliver upon that outcome. It will also support the wider delivery of the PfG. Happier, healthier, more skilled and more engaged children and young people will be a key contributory factor in achieving a number of the outcomes in the PfG, as detailed in Figure 4.1.

² <https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/topics/work-executive/programme-government>

Figure 4.1 – Illustration of the Children and Young People's Strategy delivering on the PFG (not definitive)



Supported by other Executive and Departmental Strategies

- 4.8 The PfG will be supported by a new Social Strategy which will set out how the Executive proposes to tackle poverty, social exclusion and patterns of deprivation, an Economic Strategy which will outline Government plans for economic growth in Northern Ireland and an updated Investment Strategy. Each of these strategies will have an impact to the well-being of children and young people.

Other Executive and Departmental Strategies

- 4.9 There are a range of other Executive Strategies³ or Departmental Strategies⁴ which impact on various aspects of the well-being of children and young people. It is important that where a strategy, policy or programme within another Department impacts on the lives of children and young people, the link with this overarching Children and Young People's Strategy is made and it is clearly demonstrated how the outcomes agreed in this Strategy are being supported elsewhere in other strategies. Fig 4.2 is an illustration of the linkages between the budget allocation, PfG, Executive strategies, including the Children and Young People's Strategy and specific issue departmental strategies.

Funding for the Strategy

- 4.10 PfG has established the budget priorities which will reflect and drive the Executive's improvement agenda. Within this context funding for this Strategy will come from within departmental budget allocations.

³ Strategies which are the responsibility of all nine Departments

⁴ Strategies, policies or programmes primarily relating to one Department

Figure 4.2 Linkages between PfG, Executive Strategies and Departmental Actions



Building upon the work of the previous Strategy

- 4.11 The ten-year Strategy for Children and Young People 2006-2016, 'Our Children and Young People - Our Pledge' set out a shared vision that all children and young people would thrive and look forward with confidence to the future.⁵
- 4.12 Progress on that Strategy was measured through a set of indicators linked to six high level outcomes and published annually by the then OFMDFM, in the form of the Children and Young People's Strategic Indicator Report. The six high level outcomes were that children and young people would be:
- healthy;
 - enjoying, learning and achieving;

⁵ https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/ofmdfm_dev/ten-year-strategy.pdf

- ❑ living in safety and with stability;
- ❑ experiencing economic and environmental well-being;
- ❑ contributing positively to community and society; and
- ❑ living in a society which respects their rights.

4.13 The purpose of children and young people's indicators was to monitor and measure the success of the Strategy over time and to provide a source of data trends on all aspects of children's lives. The Children and Young People's Strategic Indicators Report provided an annual snapshot of the quality of a child's life as well as providing information to evaluate success against the delivery of the Strategy. The most recent Strategic Indicators Report was published in October 2015.⁶

Meeting the duties of the Children's Services Co-operation Act (CSCA)

4.14 The CSCA places a number of duties on the Executive and other bodies delivering services for children and young people. Primarily, it requires the Executive to promote co-operation across relevant bodies and to adopt a Strategy to improve the well-being of our children and young people. The Strategy seeks to deliver upon those requirements by focusing on improving co-operation across key bodies to improve the lives of our children and young people across eight key parameters of well-being set out in the Act.

Advised by the Children's Commissioner

4.15 The NI Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) has a statutory function to 'safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people⁷'. Therefore NICCY has provided considerable support and guidance during the development of this Strategy. This has included providing ongoing advice; membership of the Strategy's Project Board; facilitating a review of the effectiveness of the previous Strategy; hosting workshops with NGOs/members of civic society on each of the proposed outcomes; gathering the views of the NICCY Youth Panel on issues relevant to children and young people; and providing formal written guidance to the Department.

⁶ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/children-and-young-people%E2%80%99s-strategic-indicators-%E2%80%93-update-october-2015>

⁷ The Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 s6(1)

For all children and young people

- 4.16 This Strategy is, fundamentally, for all children and young people. When we refer to children and young people in this Strategy we are using the definition within the CSCA (which is consistent with the definition in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995). Therefore, for the purposes of this Strategy the definition of a child is a person under the age of 18⁸ in line with both the Act and the Order.
- 4.17 In addition, assistance and support by a Health and Social Care Trust can continue to be provided to former Looked After Children who are over 18 and under 21. Assistance may also be provided to former Looked After Children up to the age of 24 in relation to enabling them to meet expenses connected with their employment, education or training.

Informed by children and young people

- 4.18 We have sought to ensure this Strategy reflects the views, opinions and experiences of children and young people in Northern Ireland. This will be further supported through this formal consultation.
- 4.19 To date, we have gathered views from existing reports and published research; from feedback from organisations representing children and young people; through direct engagement with focus groups of children and young people, and via an online survey circulated by the Department of Education amongst stakeholders. A key research document is the Northern Ireland young people's report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child '*Our Lives in Our Words*'.⁹
- 4.20 All this engagement has yielded valuable information which has clarified and enhanced our understanding, in particular of the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups and contributed to the further development of the definition of well-being.

⁸ For the purposes of the Act, the definition of children and young person extends to those who are under 21 years of age if she/he has a disability within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

⁹ http://www.childrenslawcentre.org.uk/images/Northern_Ireland_Young_Peoples_Report_2015_30.06.15.pdf

Informed by parents, guardians and carers

- 4.21 Many of the outcomes for our children and young people will be influenced by their parents and wider family. Parents are the first educators and play a vital role in ensuring healthy outcomes, providing opportunities to play, encouraging learning, and acting as advocates for their child's rights. But they need support to do this.
- 4.22 Parenting NI carried out engagement with a wide range of parents, guardians and carers on the development of the Strategy. The engagement consisted of 3 focus groups (29 participants) and an online survey (236 responses). Parents told us that they were most concerned with the physical and mental health of their children and ensuring they had opportunities to contribute positively to society.
- 4.23 Parents also felt that their children needed more opportunities to play and attend summer schemes (or similar) with other children and young people from different backgrounds. The need for more support for children with special educational needs and financial assistance for parents/carers of vulnerable children and young people was also raised. The engagement process also demonstrated that parents had a good understanding and knowledge of the rights held by their children under the UNCRC and they felt confident in supporting these rights.

Guided by key principles

- 4.24 The development of this Strategy and its delivery is guided by the following principles:
- participation;
 - partnership;
 - co-design;
 - evidence-informed;
 - focused on early intervention;
 - age-appropriate actions;
 - rights-based; and
 - subject to review.

Participation

- 4.25 We want to improve children and young people's well-being, their lives and opportunities for the future. In determining what outcomes we want for children and young people and what actions are required we must take into account their views. This should not be a one-off process but involve ongoing engagement with a diverse range of children and young people, including those whose voice is seldom heard, on all issues affecting their lives.

Partnership

- 4.26 For the well-being of children and young people to be improved a range of bodies must work in co-operation. This work begins with the Executive setting the outcomes that we wish to achieve. For these outcomes to become a reality we need all children's authorities to deliver improved complimentary services; parents and guardians to accept their role in establishing positive outcomes in the home; and children and young people to participate. We therefore propose to adopt a partnership approach whereby we each make different commitments to actions which will support the delivery of the eight outcomes.

Co-design

- 4.27 This Strategy has been developed in conjunction with stakeholders and informed by discussions with groups of children and young people and parents (including carers and guardians). It is important that close relationships with all stakeholders continue as the Strategy is delivered so policy can be informed through the real life experience of those working with children and young people.

Evidence informed

- 4.28 There is a wealth of data that currently exists on children and young people. This information should be used effectively to inform policy development. It is important that this information is shared and interested parties consider the connected nature of such data. The development of this Strategy has been informed using the best available evidence.

-
- 4.29 There are still areas in the lives of children and young people where the availability of better data would facilitate more informed policy decisions. Therefore, we need to consider an appropriate data development agenda that will support future decision making in relation to strategies, policies and programmes.

Focused on early intervention

- 4.30 The Strategy will place specific emphasis on prevention and early intervention (both intervening at an early age and/or at an early stage in a problem) and on children and young people who need our help most. This is in keeping with PfG commitments to give our children and young people the best start in life (PfG outcome 14) and to help those who are in need (PfG outcome 8). We should do our best to prevent our children and young people from going through periods of suffering, difficulty and hardship as this diminishes their own childhood and affects their life chances for adulthood.
- 4.31 Evidence clearly demonstrates that intervening early and focusing on preventative actions can improve outcomes for children and young people and result in savings for public expenditure. It is more difficult and more costly to intervene later when issues have become more entrenched or complex.

Age appropriate actions

- 4.32 We must be mindful that the needs of our children and young people are linked to their stage of development and age. Young children have vastly different needs to teenagers and vice versa. When preparing an implementation plan for the agreed outcomes we must think about age appropriate actions that will ensure that all children and young people, no matter their age, are given the support they need.

Rights based

- 4.33 The CSCA states that when we consider the meaning of well-being we must have regard where appropriate to relevant provisions within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- 4.34 The Articles under the UNCRC set out a vision that all children - regardless of background or circumstance - develop their full potential, free from

hunger and want, neglect and abuse. These provisions reflect our own drive and commitment to social mobility that will work for all. Both the UNCRC articles and Concluding Observations serve as a helpful and important guide to making sure that our policies whether they hold direct or indirect consequences - consider children.

Subject to review

- 4.35 We are aware that the issues facing children and young people do not remain static - new issues can and do emerge which potentially affect well-being; while current problems or concerns may be resolved and decrease in significance. This Strategy will be regularly reviewed with the support of stakeholders including children and young people.

Chapter 5

Working together

Why do we need to work together?

- 5.1 The first step in improving the well-being of children and young people is to work together better.
- 5.2 The CSCA places a duty on the Executive to make arrangements to promote co-operation across a range of public bodies¹⁰ (defined as children's authorities) and places a duty on these bodies to co-operate with each other¹¹ and with other children's service providers.¹² Children's authorities are defined in Section 9 of the Act. It means any of the following:
- a. a Northern Ireland Department;
 - b. a District Council;
 - c. a Health and Social Care Trust;
 - d. the Regional Health and Social Care Board;
 - e. the Regional Agency for Public Health and Social well-being;
 - f. the Education Authority;
 - g. the NI Housing Executive;
 - h. the Police Service for Northern Ireland; or
 - i. the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.
- 5.3 The purpose of this co-operation is to improve the well-being of children and young people. Therefore, co-operation in areas relating to the well-being of children and young people is no longer something that may be considered. It is a statutory requirement.

¹⁰ Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 s2(2)

¹¹ Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 s2(1)

¹² Other children's service provider means any person or body who provides a children's service or is engaged in activities which contribute to the well-being of children or young persons.

- 5.4 A report commissioned by NICCY entitled 'Reporting on Best Practice in Cross-Departmental Working Practices for Children and Young People' explains that children's lives and issues impacting on children and young people do not fall neatly into the remits of single government departments or thematic areas. It says they are inextricably linked, often cut across the responsibilities of a number of Departments and require different types of expertise.¹³ The outcomes identified within this Strategy are interlinked and success or failure in one outcome is more likely than not to impact on other outcomes.
- 5.5 Improved co-operation between children's authorities and other service providers (as required by the Act) will potentially ensure better use of resources, reduce duplication of effort and provision and, crucially, improve outcomes for children and young people in Northern Ireland. This section outlines the arrangements which the Executive will make to promote co-operation.

How will we promote co-operation?

- 5.6 The arrangements that will promote co-operation include:
- ❑ **The development of guidance for children's authorities.** This will be based on key principles for co-operation and outline the new requirements placed on children's authorities and how they may ensure their working practices promote co-operation.
 - ❑ **The establishment of the new structures.** These will ensure children and young people's issues are at the centre of Executive business, that all policy matters relating to children and young people are coordinated and that the agreed outcomes are closely monitored.
 - ❑ **Proactive identification of opportunities to work together and reporting.** It is important that children's authorities proactively identify gaps in services and where enhanced co-operation is required. One area that could be considered is the utilisation of pooled budgets - as

¹³ Byrne, B, Maguire, L and Lundy, L (2015) Reporting on Best Practice in Cross-Departmental Working Practices for Children and Young People, Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People.

provided for by the CSCA. When reporting on the progress of the Strategy we will also report on where co-operation has been effective and we will need to identify future areas for closer working practices.

What are the key working practices to support better co-operation?

- 5.7 The findings of *'Reporting on Best Practice in Cross-Departmental Working Practices for Children and Young People'* propose ten separate elements that would facilitate joined up working. These elements have been used to outline how co-operation could be improved and the arrangements which the Executive will endorse to promote collaborative working.

A Clear Mandate and Leadership

- 5.8 The Act provides a clear mandate to ensure that all children's authorities co-operate with other children's authorities and other children's service providers to identify and remove obstacles to collaboration and encourage working in partnership. Senior management within children's authorities are now expected to actively identify opportunities for collaboration and co-operation.

A Shared Vision and Shared Ownership

- 5.9 The Strategy sets out the shared vision and desired outcomes for children and young people during the Strategy period and the Executive, NI Departments and Agencies are jointly tasked with delivery.

Development of Systematic and Shared Training

- 5.10 The adoption of the Act has implications for the review and development of policy and the way services that aim to improve the well-being of children and young people should be delivered. Mechanisms will be put in place to publicise the requirements of the Act, and those with a leadership role will work within their organisations to create a culture where the implementation of co-operative activities is proactive and timely. The need for any shared training or formal awareness sessions will also be considered.

Development of Guidance to Accompany Legislation

- 5.11 NICCY's advice to the NI Executive on the development of the Strategy highlighted the importance of ensuring that all children's authorities are aware of the statutory duties placed on them by the Act. The Department of Education will work with other Departments to prepare such guidance on the operation of the Act.

Clear and Effective Communication Structures

- 5.12 Communication with stakeholders has been central to the development of the Strategy and continued engagement with, and feedback from, stakeholders will be crucial to measuring the success of the Strategy. We will build upon existing structures and networks to facilitate more effective co-operation. These structures will support the monitoring, reporting and delivery of the Strategy.

Clarity on the data/information required to allow effective monitoring to take place

- 5.13 A range of statistical information on outcomes for children is readily available for children's authorities and other children's service providers to access. We will seek to build upon this information throughout the implementation of the Strategy.

Clearly Defined Monitoring and Accountability Lines

- 5.14 As opportunities for co-operation are identified and taken forward, monitoring and accountability responsibilities will be further clarified. In addition, this Strategy sets out the data that will be collected and how it will be monitored. This data will be shared as appropriate across relevant bodies to ensure that there is a consistency of approach and to allow bodies to learn from best practice in other organisations. Monitoring and accountability will also be supported through new structures.

Common Means of Information Sharing

- 5.15 Information is already shared, to some extent, between children's authorities and other children's service providers in Northern Ireland, but it is recognised that gaps and delays in service provision for children and young people can

occur as a result of poor co-ordination and a failure to share information in a timely manner. We need to consider how information-sharing within and across Departments and agencies can be enhanced in the future, within the parameters of data protection legislation.

Development of Concise Reporting Template

- 5.16 A consistent and concise reporting template will be developed to support the gathering of information on each of the 8 outcomes and on delivery of obligations under the CSCA. These reports will also feed into the delivery plans for the PfG.

Outcomes based monitoring and ongoing evidence-based impact evaluation

- 5.17 This Strategy follows the Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) model (more information about OBA is provided in Chapter 7). Reporting on the Strategy and monitoring of the Strategy will follow this approach. Data will be collected regularly which will be analysed and used to inform the implementation plan. The suite of proposed indicators provides a framework against which to review progress and assess the impact of actions.

The establishment of new structures

- 5.18 It is proposed that new structures will be established to oversee the delivery of the Strategy, provide clear lines of accountability, aid co-operation, promote the sharing of information, ensure effective communication, and support ongoing engagement with interested parties. These structures are shown in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 Establishment of new structures



- 5.19 **A Ministerial Sub-Committee for Children and Young People** will be established to lead on the oversight of this Strategy - it will be ultimately responsible for its delivery and for improving the lives of children and young people. The Committee will be chaired by the Minister of Education and will be accountable to the Executive - submitting the update report on the delivery of the Strategy (as required by the CSCA).¹⁴ The Committee will also oversee and promote co-operation across Departments and their Agencies.

¹⁴ Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 s5

- 5.20 **A Children and Young People's Strategy Group** will support the co-ordination of all policy matters affecting children and young people, with a focus on monitoring the progress of the Strategy against agreed outcomes/ indicators, ensuring the appropriate linkage with PfG Delivery Plans and driving forward duties regarding co-operation. The group will also be responsible for reporting to the Ministerial Sub Committee.
- 5.21 The Strategy Group will include senior representation from all Departments and representatives from other children's authorities or relevant stakeholders. Consideration will also need to be given to how those involved in scrutiny, delivery, reporting and research can be accommodated.
- 5.22 **A Stakeholder Forum** will be arranged on an annual basis to allow representatives of civic society and front-line practitioners to advise policy makers on progress against outcomes and emerging issues relating to children and young people. These will be open events and it is expected will include representatives from the community and voluntary sectors and youth organisations - those who are working directly with children and young people.
- 5.23 **The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP)** is a single multi-agency partnership of senior representation from Statutory/ Voluntary/Community organisations, Councils and Government Departments involved in delivering services to children and families. It covers all of Northern Ireland. The purpose of the CYPSP is to develop and maintain arrangements for integrated planning and commissioning across agencies and sectors, with the aim of improving the well-being of children and families defined in terms of the population outcomes for children set out in the Strategy.
- 5.24 CYPSP has a multi-agency OBA information system in place. CYPSP will utilise information from this system to provide reports and advice to the Strategy Group on delivery of each of the population outcomes.
- 5.25 **Ongoing engagement with children and young people** is absolutely necessary so that policy makers and service deliverers understand their needs. There are a range of existing fora which engage with children and young people and provide a platform for their views to be heard. These should be inclusive and accessible for all children and young people and used to inform policy, programmes and strategies. Particular effort should also be made to engage with children and young people who may be marginalised or seldom heard.

- 5.26 In the same way **ongoing engagement with parents and guardians** will be important to keep abreast of their views on the well-being of their children. Parents and guardians have a fundamental role in improving the well-being of their children and young people, they are key to the success of this Strategy. Regular engagement will be facilitated to gather the advice of parents and guardians to inform policy, programmes and strategies.
- 5.27 **Accessing relevant research from academia** is fundamental if our policies and programmes are going to be informed by the evidence. Close links will be established with universities to ensure there is an effective transfer of information and that Departments can seek expert advice on children and young people's issues as required.

Taking opportunities to work collaboratively

- 5.28 Co-operation can also be enhanced through the sharing of resources and pooling of funds.¹⁵ There are many areas where complimentary services are provided by 2 or more Departments or Agencies. Likewise, the linkage between each of the outcomes demonstrates that there are many instances where shared actions will deliver positive results for 2 or more outcomes. Joint working which could include the sharing of resources and or pooling of budgets is therefore very important.
- 5.29 A pooled budget (or fund) is an arrangement where 2 or more partners make financial contributions to a single fund to achieve specific and mutually agreed objectives. It is a single budget, managed by a single administrator with a formal partnership or joint funding agreement that sets out aims, accountabilities and responsibilities. Issues to be considered when pooling budgets includes governance; budget-setting; committing funds; accounting and auditing; and information sharing. The Department of Finance will bring forward guidance and/or regulations on the pooling of budgets to ensure appropriate accounting processes are adhered to.

¹⁵ As allowed by Section 4 of the Act.

5.30 Already, there are examples of Departments informally sharing resources, in a process more akin to 'aligned budgets'.¹⁶ However, there may be circumstances where a single pooled budget could be more effective for delivery. In a time of pressures on budgets it is important we think creatively to maximise our resources. Opportunities for pooled budgets should be explored and, if identified, implemented.

¹⁶ Aligned budgets involve two or more partners work together to jointly consider their budgets and align their activities to deliver agreed aims and outcomes, while retaining complete accountability and responsibility for their own resources.

Chapter 6 Improving well-being

6.1 To improve well-being, the outcomes we want for our children and young people are:



- 6.2 The outcomes in Figure 6.1 above are *population outcomes* - the conditions we want to achieve for all our children and young people, stated in simple language. By achieving these 8 outcomes we will have improved the well-being of our children and young people. We will use *headline indicators* - measurements which will quantify progress against the outcomes - to tell us whether or not we have achieved these outcomes. This follows the Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) model, which is detailed further in Chapter 7.
- 6.3 For each outcome we have sought to consider the following questions:
- ❑ **Why this outcome matters?** Many of the outcomes proposed in this Strategy could be taken for granted, but they are absolutely fundamental for the well-being of our children and young people. Children and young people have a natural expectation that they have access to healthcare and education, have opportunities to play, and are respected etc.
 - ❑ **What are the issues?** Throughout the co-design process we gathered evidence on each of the outcomes and discussed practical issues with stakeholders, including children and young people. Using this evidence, we can demonstrate why each outcome is important and what the key issues are.
 - ❑ **Based on evidence, where is the greatest effort needed?** Whilst these outcomes are for all children and young people, we are mindful that across different areas there may be certain groups of particularly vulnerable or marginalised children and young people who are at greater risk of not achieving an outcome and/or there may be persistent problems that need to be addressed. For this reason, a number of areas have been identified under each outcome as requiring specific effort and focus.
 - ❑ **How do we know if we are achieving the outcome?** We detail what the **experience** would be if the outcome is achieved and the **headline indicators** which will be used to monitor progress. For each outcome there are only a small number of key indicators. This is to ensure focus. Although only a small number of headline indicators are listed, we will continue to record data and monitor other relevant areas as secondary indicators. This information will be used, as appropriate, as we consider progress against the outcomes. There are areas related to the headline indicators where we are concerned that appropriate relevant information

does not currently exist in the format that we would like. Therefore, a data development agenda (DDA) is proposed that will gather more information to be used in future indicators. This is outlined in the table at paragraph 7.15.

- **What needs to be done?** To effect real change and deliver tangible outcomes everyone has a role. The Executive has the primary responsibility to deliver on the agreed outcomes but this requires the support of others. Our children's authorities, our communities, voluntary and community organisations, local service delivery agents, parents/guardians can all play their part in working towards the achievement of better outcomes. Most importantly, all stakeholders should aim to empower children and young people to participate in creating a better future for themselves. High level commitments are therefore included to outline what the Executive *will* do and what communities, parents/guardians and children and young people *should or could do*.

Physical and mental health

POPULATION OUTCOME

Children and young people are physically and mentally healthy



Why this outcome matters?

- 6.4.1 **Every child or young person should enjoy the best possible standard of physical health and mental well-being and have access to appropriate health care and support when they need it.**¹⁷
- 6.4.2 Tackling poverty and health inequalities together with a shift towards prevention and early intervention will be central to our approach. Ensuring that parents, pregnant mothers and families are supported and informed of the benefits of looking after their own health and well-being, including child health and nutrition, will help instil positive health choices from birth and pre-conception. This will help to ensure that children develop into active and healthy adults with physical and mental well-being.
- 6.4.3 We will work to ensure that provision of health care services and programmes for children and young people with a disability is of the same quality and standard as that provided to others. Such services should be tailored to include early detection and intervention, and designed to provide timely support to maximise dignity.
- 6.4.4 We want to ensure children and young people, and in particular adolescents who are suffering from mental health problems (including those related to identity, alcohol, drugs and substance abuse) have access to appropriate and timely health care services and feel reassured to seek help and support without fear of being stigmatised, ignored or mistreated.
- 6.4.5 By giving children the opportunity to access appropriate and timely support, we will help them to grow healthier and happier. By implementing a collaborative approach involving the Executive, agencies and the relevant

¹⁷ Article 24 of the UNCRC



stakeholders we can ensure that prevention, health promotion, intervention and rehabilitation services are at the forefront of service planning and coordination and all children and young people have access to appropriate, stable and quality services.

What are the issues?

- 6.4.6 As already outlined, good health is a vital issue for children and young people. This was highlighted throughout our co-design process. General concerns have been raised about the physical health and mental and emotional well-being of our children and young people, and the provision of adequate services which are child-centred, child-focused, age appropriate and child-accessible.
- 6.4.7 Health outcomes can be affected at a very early age and even before children are born. Low birth weight can be a determinant of infant mortality or disability, and affect health outcomes into adulthood.¹⁸ The cause of low birth weight can include premature or multiple births and babies born to mothers who have used drugs, alcohol or cigarettes during pregnancy. The proportion of low birth weight babies has remained close to 7% since 2008. Northern Ireland has the lowest breastfeeding rates in the UK¹⁹ and a continuing problem with mothers smoking during pregnancy (around 15%)²⁰.
- 6.4.8 Numbers of children and young people who are either overweight or obese (assessed using Body Mass Index (BMI)) is also a cause for concern and a barrier to achieving a positive health outcome. There is a clear link in this area to the outcome relating to play - as children become less active, not taking time to enjoy play or leisure, their health is affected. In 2014/15, 5.2% of Primary 1 pupils were recorded as being obese, a slight increase compared to the previous year's figure of 5%.²¹
- 6.4.9 Rates of sexually transmitted infections amongst young people have remained fairly constant over the past few years but have declined since 2008. In 2014,

¹⁸ Defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as weight at birth of less than 2,500 grams (5.5 pounds)

¹⁹ <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/breastfeeding-rates>

²⁰ Child Health System

²¹ Child Health System

there were 23 diagnoses of sexually transmitted infection per 100,000 persons aged under 16 years and 652 cases for persons aged between 16-19 years. This compares with 36 and 756 cases respectively in 2008.²² However, concerns remain that young people continue to be particularly vulnerable to mis-information or a lack of information which can lead to risk-taking behaviour.

- 6.4.10 Levels of alcohol and drug misuse have largely plateaued over the recent years. The Young Persons' Behaviour Attitude Survey (YPBAS) 2013 found that 13% of 11-16 yrs had smoked tobacco and 38% had drunk alcohol.²³ This compares to 19% and 46% respectively in 2010.²⁴ However, it remains a concern that alcohol and drug related admissions to hospital and alcohol and drug related deaths are 3-4 times higher in areas of deprivation.
- 6.4.11 The deprivation gap in the health outcomes for those living in the most deprived communities in comparison to those living elsewhere remains an important area of concern that needs to be addressed. This deprivation gap can be seen in all aspects of physical and mental health - life expectancy, obesity levels, drug and alcohol abuse, suicide levels etc. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) and the National Children's Bureau (NCB) 2014 report, *Why children die: death in infants, children and young people in the UK*, shows how reducing poverty and inequality are crucial steps towards tackling preventable child deaths.²⁵
- 6.4.12 The NI Health and Social Care Inequalities Monitoring System shows a clear gap between the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland and the least deprived in terms of prescription rates for mood and anxiety complaints, suicide levels and self-harm? For example, between 2010-14, there were 8.4 deaths by suicide per 100,000 population for 0-19 year olds in the most deprived areas. The corresponding figure for the least deprived areas was 2.2. Similarly, between 2010/11 and 2014/15, there were 50.6 hospital admissions due to self-harm per 100,000 population for 0-19 year olds from the most deprived areas. The corresponding figure for the least deprived areas was 22.4.

²² Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre (NI)

²³ <http://www.csu.nisra.gov.uk/2013%20YPBAS%20Headline%20bulletin.pdf>

²⁴ <http://www.csu.nisra.gov.uk/YPBAS%202010%20Headline%20bulletin.pdf>

²⁵ <http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/index.php?q=child-health/standards-care/health-policy/child-mortality/child-mortality>



- 6.4.13 Mental health was an issue raised during the co-design process and was of particular concern to children and young people who felt that their mental health and that of their peers was significantly worsening. This is supported to some extent by Childline UK, which reported a 116% increase in counselling sessions for children and young people between 2010/11 and 2013/14.²⁶
- 6.4.14 Over the last decade, in the 15-19 age group, around 15 young people have taken their own lives each year. While deaths through suicide for those aged under 19 has dropped from 2008 (when there were 32 deaths) this is an increase compared with the previous decade.²⁷ This is consistent with the increase in suicide across all age groups over this period. In addition, in 2014/15, Childline UK reported that there were 37,000 visits to their webpages relating to suicide. This is a substantial increase from 2012/13 levels of 18,000.²⁸
- 6.4.15 The findings from the National Investigation into suicide in children and young people were published in May 2016. This study has highlighted specific risk factors for young people which contribute to child suicide including: family environments characterised by abuse and neglect; bullying and the impact of cyber bullying; the role of the internet and social media; education and exam stresses; family discord and relationship problems; identity, and the emergence of novel psychoactive substances and their increased use among adolescents.
- 6.4.16 During the co-design process, young people also raised the issue of self-harm. In 2014, a total of 390 children and young people in Northern Ireland were admitted to hospitals with a self-harm diagnosis, with four of the five Trust Areas registering an increase.²⁹ Under 18's account for 10% of all self-harm presentation at emergency departments, with two thirds of these female.³⁰
- 6.4.17 In addition to issues relating to mental health such as self-harm, service referrals or suicide, children and young people were concerned about the stigma attached to mental health and how this can exacerbate the problem.

²⁶ On the edge - Childline spotlight: Suicide (<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/on-the-edge-childline-suicide-report.pdf>)

²⁷ Number of deaths from suicide registered in Northern Ireland by sex and age 1970-2015, NISRA

²⁸ On the edge - Childline spotlight: Suicide (<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/on-the-edge-childline-suicide-report.pdf>)

²⁹ Department of Health

³⁰ Northern Ireland Registry of Self-Harm Annual Report 2013/14

Young people told us that there are many unreported cases of mental health problems because those who are suffering either do not know where to seek help, or are too afraid to seek help. It was suggested that the stigma attached to mental health meant that many would suffer in silence.

- 6.4.18 It is important that our health services for children and young people are timely and accessible, child friendly and age appropriate. Stakeholders and young people also reflected that children and young people were often reluctant to seek help or unaware of who to speak to in relation to health problems. A research update in 2013 indicated that 10% of 16 year olds felt that, at some point over the previous 12 months, they had needed professional medical support but had chosen not to access it.³¹
- 6.4.19 The situation is perhaps more pressing when young people have mental health problems. In March 2015, there were 899 young people waiting for their first mental health outpatient appointment, representing an increase of 31.2% compared to 2009 levels. Of the 899 young people waiting in March 2015, 251 had been waiting longer than 6 weeks (28%).³²
- 6.4.20 There was also a suggestion of the need for greater flexibility in the provision of services in general, and especially when young people are transitioning from children's services to adult services. This is one of the most vulnerable times for children and young people. Depending on the needs of the young person in question this can be a difficult time requiring particular sensitivity and support. There is a need for transitional planning for these young people, to ensure they receive the best services available which are tailored to their specific needs.

Based on evidence, where is the greatest effort needed?

- 6.4.21 **Infants:** As with all child development the foundations for positive health outcomes are established at an early age. Good health habits should be promoted from an early age with support from parents and guardians. Good health can also begin before birth. By establishing good health habits in the home from an early age and providing information to parents and guardians

³¹ Who can I talk to? Self-harm and seeking help among 16 year olds: Changes between 2008 and 2013. Mark McCann

³² Department of Health



on how they can help their children's all round development and promote positive physical and mental health, the foundations for achieving this outcome will be established. The related PfG Delivery Plan in respect of the Indicator for Child Development emphasizes the priority the Executive is giving to early intervention in this area.

- 6.4.22 **Children and young people with mental health problems:** The mental health and emotional well-being of children and young people was a key issue during the co-design process. Concerns related to the increased number of children and young people who considered themselves to be suffering from mental health problems, depression and anxiety, eating disorders, drug and alcohol related problems and levels of suicide and self-harm. Within this, we are mindful that children and young people suffering from mental health problems are at greater risk of coming into contact with the youth justice system.
- 6.4.23 **Children and young people with a disability and/or complex health needs, including life limiting conditions:** Children and young people with a disability and/or complex health needs obviously require support in terms of their health but also to ensure that their disability does not become a barrier to the realisation of other outcomes. Extra effort is required to ensure these children and young people are given the opportunity to achieve in education; have time and space to play; are listened to; and have their rights respected. The needs of the child or young person should be paramount and services tailored for each individual, with additional support and assistance provided at times of transition. The needs of the families of these children and young people should also be considered - they also need support as they manage situations that can be difficult.
- 6.4.24 **Children and young people living in areas of deprivation:** The health outcomes for our children and young people can be significantly affected by where they live and whether their family experiences poverty.³³ Children and young people born into areas of deprivation will have a lower life expectancy at birth, have higher rates of mental ill health and be more likely to suffer from drug and alcohol related problems than children and young people not living in areas of deprivation. This inequality in health outcome must continue to be tackled.

³³ NI Health and Social Care Inequalities Monitoring System - Health Inequalities in Northern Ireland: Key Facts 2015 (<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/hscims-2015-key-facts.pdf>)

How do we know if we are achieving the outcome? (Proposed Indicators)

6.4.25 Based on the issues identified and the data currently available, the proposed headline indicators for this outcome are:

- ❑ **Childhood obesity:** Percentage of Primary 1/Year 8 children who are obese - including breakdown by deprivation quintiles to examine the impact of deprivation.
- ❑ **Low birth weight:** The proportion of babies born at a low birth weight.
- ❑ **Mental health and emotional well-being:** Percentage of children and young people with GHQ12 scores ≥ 4 [signifying possible mental health problem].

What needs to be done?

The Executive will prioritise the physical and mental health of our children and young people - with a focus on early interventions. Giving our children and young people the opportunity to enjoy long, healthy and active lives.

Children's authorities and other children's service providers should consider how their own services can be tailored to improve the health of the individual child or young person.

Parents and guardians should be concerned about the physical and mental health of their children - ensuring that healthy habits, for body and mind, are promoted in the home.

Children and young people should feel confident to speak to their family and friends about any health issues they may have and seek appropriate help.



The enjoyment of play and leisure

POPULATION OUTCOME

Children and young people enjoy play and leisure



Why this outcome matters?

- 6.5.1 **All children and young people should have the time, space and opportunity to enjoy rest and leisure; engage in play and recreational activities; and participate in cultural life and the arts.³⁴**
- 6.5.2 Often play and leisure is taken for granted and its importance for a child's development and well-being is neglected.³⁵ This can lead to Government not supporting play; communities' not facilitating play; parents/guardians not encouraging play; or children and young people not pursuing play. Play can be both structured and unstructured and we need to strengthen our efforts to ensure children and young people are given opportunities and actively encouraged to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to their age or stage of development.
- 6.5.3 Providing all children, including those with a disability and those living in marginalised, vulnerable or disadvantaged situations, with safe, accessible, inclusive spaces for play and socialisation has many benefits in terms of physical and mental health, education, skills development and the increasing of social confidence as well as contributing to wider community cohesion.
- 6.5.4 We value play and leisure. It is vital that our children and young people are encouraged and supported to engage in play, leisure, rest and relaxation, are able to participate in cultural life and the arts and engage in wider recreational activities appropriate to their age or stage of development.

³⁴ Article 31 of the UNCRC

³⁵ Gray, AM and Horgan, G (2016): A child's right to play: an evidence review for OFMDFM

What are the issues?

- 6.5.5 There is an evidence base which shows that participation in play, leisure, arts and cultural activities makes a positive contribution to the mental, emotional, social and physical well-being of children and young people. The benefits are therefore potentially significant as they contribute to positive health and education outcomes, such as reducing obesity and improving academic attainment.³⁶
- 6.5.6 Surveys of children and young people locally and nationally show that whilst there is a growing demand for play and leisure opportunities there is also a growing range of societal barriers that act to restrict play and leisure. A national opinion poll delivered on behalf of the Four Nations Play organisations (PlayBoard NI, Play Scotland, Play Wales and Play England) for Playday 2013, found that over 50% of adults reported playing outside at least seven times a week when they were growing up, compared to less than a quarter of children (23%) today. In addition, 40% of children said they want to play outside more.³⁷
- 6.5.7 Over three quarters of children participating in the opinion poll indicated that in their neighbourhood, children mostly played indoors. When asked why, children identified dangers presented by traffic, parked cars and parental fears as being key impediments to their enjoying more outdoor play.
- 6.5.8 Research has highlighted the diminishing nature of childhood play experiences, identifying that whilst play is considered important by children and young people of all ages, a lack of accessible play spaces within communities often reduces opportunities for outdoor play.³⁸ Further research completed as part of the YLT Survey highlighted the need to ensure that children and young people feel welcomed where they live and feel part of the community.³⁹ The YLT Survey also highlighted the extent of negative attitudes from adults towards children at play, with 56% reporting that they had been told to move on whilst playing outdoors with friends; 85% reporting that they

³⁶ Gill, Tim (2014): The Play Return: A review of the wider impact of play initiatives

³⁷ <http://www.playday.org.uk/playday-campaigns/2013-playful-places/playday-2013-opinion-poll.aspx>

³⁸ <http://www.ark.ac.uk/orb/childsummaries/NICCY10k.htm>

³⁹ <http://www.ark.ac.uk/orb/childsummaries/OLougJ11.htm>



felt young people are judged negatively simply for being young, and; 79% indicating that they felt the media portrayed young people negatively.

- 6.5.9 During our co-design process with stakeholders there was widespread agreement about the importance of play and the fact that it is often overlooked during the policy making process. An emerging theme is that the right to play is being diminished. Some parents lack the confidence, skills or understanding to enable them to support their children's play or are not aware of the importance of play as a key component of their child's development. We want to promote play in the home, and support parents to ensure that children enjoy play and leisure opportunities. Further to this, the approach to play within our schools and communities can be inconsistent. Our children and young people are often ignored in the development of new play areas and there may be too much of a focus on structured play or programmed schedules. Increasingly access to parks, green spaces and natural environments are being eroded. This limits opportunities for children's fully playful exploration, imagination, creativity and connection to the natural world.
- 6.5.10 Another concern is the reduction in numbers of children and young people playing outside. This is becoming the exception rather than the norm due to concerns about risks, negative public perceptions and lack of safe, appropriate spaces in which children and young people of all ages, can play outdoors. We must also recognise that the use of technology has changed the nature of play dramatically. Technological play and leisure, whether through television, games consoles, or social media, is becoming the norm for children and young people of all ages. Whilst there may be benefits of such play there are of course risks in terms of e-safety, cyberbullying, increased sedentary lifestyles and loss of skills developed in active play.
- 6.5.11 It is also important to think about play and leisure opportunities in contexts that can often be overlooked. For instance, the importance of play does not diminish for children and young people who may spend long periods of time in hospitals or juvenile justice centres. Play and leisure opportunities in these settings are essential. Taking this further, it is estimated that 1,500 children in Northern Ireland have a parent in prison at any one time⁴⁰ and in 2014

⁴⁰ Barnardos UK

there were over 32,000 visits from children to local prisons⁴¹. Providing time, space and opportunity for these children to play with their parents can bring significant benefits for both the child and the adult.

6.5.12 Stakeholders advised through both research and their experiences that participation in constructive leisure time activities, particularly those sustained through the teenage years, can have a significant impact on young people's resilience and outcomes in later life. Participation in positive leisure activities can:

- i. help to improve attitudes to, and engagement in, an educational environment;
- ii. build social and communication skills;
- iii. help young people avoid taking risks such as drug experimentation or involvement in antisocial behaviour; and
- iv. improve their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Based on evidence, where is the greatest effort needed?

6.5.13 **Early years:** Whilst the impulse to play is innate for a child, it still needs to be encouraged and supported by parents/guardians and other family members from birth. Play is an essential part of early year's development. Play is how a child learns - how they begin their education, learn songs, colours, the alphabet etc. It is how children learn about risk and begin to interact, communicate and negotiate with others. It is when children are happiest. The importance of play needs to be understood by those who are expected to promote it. Parents/guardians need support to enhance their skills to enable them to facilitate play with their children and the understanding to make it an essential part of their child's life.

6.5.14 **Children and young people with a disability:** A number of evidence reviews have focused on the extent to which children with physical disabilities participate in leisure activities.⁴² All conclude that levels of participation

⁴¹ PRISM

⁴² Imms, C. (2008). Children with cerebral palsy participate: A review of the literature. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 30, 1867-1884; Shikako-Thomas, K., Majnemer, A., Law, M., & Lach, L. (2008),



depend on a range of factors relating to the child's needs, family income and resulting family ability to provide support, equipment, transport etc. Participation decreases as children get older, particularly for children with lower levels of motor function and those with additional disabilities such as learning disabilities, sensory impairments or communication problems. Children with a disability, and their families, require additional support for play and leisure activities. Their needs must be taken into account in relation to play provision.

- 6.5.15 **Children and young people in poverty:** A range of research studies have demonstrated socio economic related differences in relation to how children spend their time outside of school. In essence, children from more affluent backgrounds spend a great deal of their out-of-school time at one of a number of structured activities, many of them cultural or, arts-based activities such as music, dance or art, as well as sports. However, children from less affluent backgrounds are much less likely to participate in these activities because their families cannot afford the fees or, if they are free, because they cannot provide transport to and/or from the activities.⁴³
- 6.5.16 **Young people:** As children get older they spend less time at play.⁴⁴ The reasons for this can include the increased use of technology, pressures to achieve in education or negative perceptions of young people in public spaces. It is important that teenagers are given the freedom, time and space to enjoy self-directed play and leisure time as they wish. This includes just spending time together with their friends 'hanging out'.

Determinants of participation in leisure activities in children and youth with cerebral palsy: Systematic review. *Physical & Occupational Therapy in Paediatrics*, 28, 155-169; Bult, M.K.; Verscuren, O., Jongmans, MJ; Lindeman, E. and Ketelaar, M. (2011), What influences participation in leisure activities of children and youth with physical disabilities? A systematic review, *Research in Developmental Disabilities* 32 (2011) 1521-1529.

- 43 Sutton L (2008), The state of play: disadvantage, play and children's well-being, *Social Policy and Society*, 7, 4, pp537-549. Horgan G. 2007. The Impact of Poverty on Young Children's Experience of School. Joseph Rowntree Foundation/Save the Children: York. Ridge, T. 2011, "The Everyday Costs of Poverty in Childhood: A Review of Qualitative Research Exploring the Lives and Experiences of Low-Income Children in the UK", *Children & Society*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 73-84.
- 44 Youth Council for Northern Ireland (2004) Barometer 2004: A Portrait of Young People in Northern Ireland. Belfast: Youth Council for Northern Ireland; Leversen, I, Danielsen, A, Wold, B and Samdal, O (2012) What they want and what they get: self-reported motives, perceived competence, and relatedness in adolescent leisure activities, *Child Development Research Volume 2012*, Article ID 684157; Kilkelly, U, Kilpatrick, R, Lundy, L, Moore, L, Scraton, P, Davey, C, Dwyer, C and McAlister, S (2004) Children's Rights in Northern Ireland 2004, Belfast: Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People.

How do we know if we are achieving the outcome? (Proposed Indicator)

6.5.17 Based on the issues identified and the data currently available, the proposed headline indicator for this outcome is:

- **Enjoyment of play and leisure:** The enjoyment experienced by children and young people as they play in their homes, their communities, their schools and their local play facilities.

What needs to be done?

The Executive and NI Government Departments will promote the benefits of play and the right to play - ensuring that, in the context of the allocation of resources, the importance of play and leisure is recognised and that new play and leisure opportunities are delivered, with a focus on those who need it most.

Children's authorities and other children's service providers should facilitate play, ensuring all children and young people are welcome to play in public spaces and that local spaces are designed with the needs of children and young people in mind.

Parents and guardians should actively encourage play and ensure their children have free time to enjoy play or leisure opportunities.

Children and young people should be empowered to identify time and opportunities to enjoy self-directed play and be encouraged to explore new play and leisure activities.



Learning and achievement

POPULATION OUTCOME

Children and young people learn and achieve



Why this outcome matters?

- 6.6.1 **All children and young people should have access to an education which will develop their personality, talents and abilities to their fullest potential.**⁴⁵
- 6.6.2 We recognise that all our children and young people are unique. The preparation of our children and young people for a responsible life in society goes far beyond the formal education system, and we must actively promote the broad range of life experiences and learning which empower them to develop their personalities, talents and abilities. We must support them to lead an enriched life and reach their fullest potential.
- 6.6.3 We want our education system to be child-centred and child-friendly. For many children and young people their time in school is a very positive experience, equipping them for future training, employment or education. However, we must enhance our efforts to reduce inequality of outcomes in education and ensure equality of opportunity for those children and young people who are not fulfilling their potential.
- 6.6.4 We will strengthen our efforts to reduce the effects of social disadvantage on children and young people's achievement in school. By providing them with an opportunity to participate in school, in matters that affect them, we will help develop their understanding and confidence, and provide them with the tools to engage with and enjoy learning. By teaching respect for others we will help to address bullying and violence in schools and encourage children to be inclusive and respectful to others particularly those from the most disadvantaged or marginalised groups.

⁴⁵ Articles 28 and 29 of the UNCRC

- 6.6.5 When our young people leave formal education, we want them to be equipped for what comes next. We want them to be prepared for future training, education or employment opportunities - whatever they choose to do.

What are the issues?

- 6.6.6 The percentage of young people gaining level 2 qualifications (equivalent to five GCSEs at A*-C or above including English and Maths) has risen year on year since June 2008. In June 2015, 66% of Northern Ireland pupils attained this standard, compared to 56.3% in June 2008.⁴⁶ Over the same period, the proportion of young people leaving school with no GCSEs has dropped from 3.6% in 2008 to 0.5% in 2015.⁴⁷ In terms of level 3 qualifications, more than 52% of young people leaving school in 2014/15 attained the equivalent of 3 or more 'A' levels, compared to only 29% in 2000/01.⁴⁸
- 6.6.7 Despite continuing high levels of achievement for many young people, it is clear there are many groups of children and young people who are not fulfilling their potential. Social disadvantage has the greatest single impact upon attainment - this is assessed through free school meal entitlement (FSME). In 2015, only 41.3% of school leavers with FSME attained at or above Level 2, compared with 73.7% of those without FSME.
- 6.6.8 Other contributory factors to educational underachievement include attendance rates; whether English is the child or young person's first language; whether the child has a special educational need or a disability; if the child is looked after; the value placed on education by parents or the community in which the child or young person lives; peer groups; the home learning environment; and the performance of the school.
- 6.6.9 The education system is designed to meet the needs of every child and ensure that every child meets his or her potential, no matter what obstacles or barriers they encounter.

⁴⁶ Department of Education

⁴⁷ Department of Education

⁴⁸ Compendium of Northern Ireland Education Statistics - 2000/01 to 2012/13



- 6.6.10 The area of Special Educational Needs (SEN) was a topic of much discussion during the co-design process. Since June 2008 the proportion of post-primary school pupils with a Statement of Educational Need has increased from 2.8% to 4.2% (in June 2015).⁴⁹ A comprehensive SEN capacity building programme has been made available to schools since 2010/11 to help improve early identification and assessment of special educational needs, and out in place appropriate interventions. Over the last 10 years the attainment gap between mainstream pupils with SEN and those without SEN is narrowing. The percentage of school leavers with SEN attending mainstream schools, who achieved 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C, increased from 21.9% in 2006/07 to 53% in 2013-14; an increase of 31.1 percentage points. Improving outcomes for our children and young people with SEN remains a priority for the Executive. The Department of Education is currently developing a revised SEN Framework. The focus of the new framework will be on inclusion, early identification, assessment and intervention for children with SEN, whereby a child or young person with SEN should be able to receive support they need when they need it.
- 6.6.11 As the demographics of Northern Ireland change, so does the make-up of our schools. In 2007/08, 2.8% of primary school aged children used English as an additional language. This increased to 5.2% in 2015/16, with the figure at 6.2% in the Belfast area.⁵⁰ This places additional pressures on schools and teachers as they adapt to teaching children who do not have English as a first language.
- 6.6.12 Attendance rates are another key determinant factor in the attainment of positive educational outcomes. The number of pupils with an attendance rate of lower than 85% has reduced significantly since 2008/09. In 2014/15, 9.1% of post primary pupils had an attendance rate of less than 85%, compared to 12.6% in 2008/09. For primary school pupils the 2014/15 rate was 4% compared to 5.3% in 2008/09.⁵¹ However, there are ongoing areas of concern which require attention. For instance, the attendance rates of pupils from a Roma background in year was 69.2% compared to a rate of 94.7% for other pupils. Irish Traveller children also have a markedly higher absence rate. A

⁴⁹ Department of Education

⁵⁰ Department of Education

⁵¹ Department of Education

Strategy to Improve Pupil Attendance has been launched by the Department of Education which provides an overarching framework for the work being taken forward to improve pupil attendance.

- 6.6.13 A key contributory factor to a child or young person's attainment in education is their home environment and, specifically, whether or not learning is promoted and education valued. A home and community environment that encourages and supports achievement in school will enable the child or young person to achieve their potential. A supportive home environment is vital to positive educational outcomes.
- 6.6.14 Quality childcare and early education services can also contribute significantly to a child's cognitive and linguistic development and to the development of social skills. This can, in turn, result in improved performance at school and into adult life.
- 6.6.15 However, it is also important to note that the care and education environment is not solely about academic attainment. It is about the development of children and young people's skills, talents and abilities as well as the development of their linguistic abilities, cultural awareness and respect for diversity. It is important that our school and childcare environments support and nurture these. Children and young people who enjoy care and education will perform better. We therefore need to consider how we measure development and achievement in areas beyond exam results.
- 6.6.16 Bullying in schools remains a significant issue of concern despite increased awareness of the issue and schools taking firm action when instances of bullying are identified. The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 provides a definition of bullying⁵² and introduces a duty on the Board of Governors of each grant aided school to introduce measures to prevent bullying and record instances of bullying when it occurs.⁵³

⁵² Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 s1(1)

⁵³ Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 s2 and s3



Based on evidence, where is the greatest effort needed?

- 6.6.17 **Pupils entitled to free school meals:** It is important that our most disadvantaged learners are given particular focus, and evidence clearly demonstrates that social disadvantage has the greatest single impact on educational attainment. Further to this, inequalities in educational outcomes contribute to wider social inequalities in terms of health, play, economic well-being etc. This can continue from generation to generation.
- 6.6.18 **Children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN):** Whilst the educational attainment gap between mainstream pupils with SEN and those without has narrowed over the last 10 years, work needs to continue to ensure that all pupils with learning difficulties receive a high quality education and fulfill their potential. This is particularly important given the increase in children and young people presenting with SEN.
- 6.6.19 **Care experienced children and young people:** Around 35% of care leavers between 16 and 18 years old are not in employment, education or training - the figure is higher (40%) for 19 year old care leavers. For all children and young people, the rate of those not in employment, education or training has fluctuated between 13% and 17% since 2013.⁵⁴ This demonstrates that children and young people leaving care are at a greater risk of not transitioning to employment, education or training. This has a knock-on effect, as these young people can be more vulnerable to homelessness, poor health and poverty or becoming involved in crime. It is therefore important that care experienced children and young people are supported during their education and as they transition out of education and out of care, to ensure they experience positive outcomes.
- 6.6.20 **Newcomer, Traveller and Roma children and young people:** There is a clear and demonstrable educational attainment gap for children and young people who are newcomers to Northern Ireland, from the Traveller or Roma communities. Schools currently receive additional funding for newcomer, Traveller and Roma pupils in order to provide appropriate support to meet their needs. These pupils can face difficulties in transitioning to the school

⁵⁴ 100% Employment Opportunities for Northern Ireland Care Leavers - Robin Simmons and Ron Thompson, University of Ulster. A report for Business in the Community, in partnership with Include Youth and the Big Lottery Fund (2015).

environment, have to cope with language barriers and, traditionally, have experienced a higher rate of absence.

- 6.6.21 **Children and young people in custody:** In May 2016, responsibility for the education provision for young people detained in custody transferred to the Education Authority. These arrangements mean that the education centre in Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre is now operating as an EOTAS (Education Other Than At School) setting. This new arrangement is designed to enhance the education opportunities for young people in custody, ensuring that these young people receive education provision to the same standards, under the same legal basis, as any other young person.

How do we know if we are achieving the outcome? (Proposed Indicators)

- 6.6.22 Based on the issues identified and the data currently available, the proposed headline indicators for this outcome are:

- ❑ **Child development:** Percentage of children who are at the appropriate stage of development in their immediate pre-school year.
- ❑ **Educational attainment:** Percentage of school leavers achieving level 2 qualifications (five + GCSEs at A*-C or equivalent, including GCSE English and Maths).⁵⁵
- ❑ **Education inequality:** Gap between percentage of non-FSME school leavers and percentage of FSME school leavers achieving level 2 qualifications (five+ GCSEs at A*-C or equivalent, including GCSE English and Maths).

⁵⁵ Including equivalent level 2 qualifications eg BTEC level 2 certificates/diplomas



What needs to be done?

The Executive will support high quality childcare and early childhood education and care initiatives and provide a world class education system which develops the personality, talents and abilities of all our children and young people - with a particular focus on those who are not yet realising their full potential.

Children's authorities and other children's service providers should ensure that the education of our children and young people is valued and child-centred - meeting the needs and aspirations of all children and young people through high-quality teaching and learning.

Parents and guardians should support their child's education by supporting their learning and by promoting a healthy learning environment in the home.

Children and young people should be the key focus of our education system - everything that occurs within the school environment should be aimed at ensuring that they are given the best opportunity to achieve and are fully prepared for what comes after they leave school.

Living in safety and with stability

POPULATION OUTCOME

Children and young people live in safety and stability



Why this outcome matters?

- 6.7.1 All children and young people must be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has care of the child.⁵⁶
- 6.7.2 Safety and stability are paramount for all children and young people's well-being. They are essential parts of a child's life and their connection to family, school, training, employment, friends, community and culture. Every child and young person deserves to live free from fear of violence, intimidation or bullying.
- 6.7.3 To protect those who are most vulnerable in our society we must ensure that we provide all children regardless of background or special educational need or disability with the knowledge and skills that will support them into adulthood.
- 6.7.4 Parents or legal guardians have primary responsibility to provide a safe, secure, loving and stable environment for children. We are committed to working to support families and communities to protect children from all forms of physical or mental abuse, injury or neglect, maltreatment or exploitation.

What are the issues?

- 6.7.5 The proportion of our children and young people who report feeling safe in the area where they live has traditionally been high. Based on the 2013 YPBAS survey, 94% of children and young people reported feeling safe. This survey

⁵⁶ Article 19 of the UNCRC



was conducted with 3,902 young people, meaning 234 young people in this small sample did not feel safe where they lived.⁵⁷

- 6.7.6 During the co-design process stakeholders told us that there is a range of issues that lead to children and young people experiencing insecurity or instability. These can include being subject to bullying (including cyber-bullying); family breakdown; experiencing violence in the home; and the reality of being homeless. In addition, children and young people commented on a perceived increase in the number of young people being intimidated or threatened by paramilitary groupings and the emerging issue of child sexual exploitation or trafficking. Children and young people who feel unsafe in their homes are more likely to experience poor mental health, not achieve as expected in education, and a number of their fundamental rights will be eroded.
- 6.7.7 PSNI figures of children who are victims of domestic violence have fluctuated over the past 7 years. However the general trend shows an increase in reported incidents. In 2014/15, there were 3.6 incidences per 1,000 children and young people (aged under 17).⁵⁸ In 2015-2016 the PSNI responded to a domestic incident every 19 minutes. Domestic abuse crimes reported, account for approximately 13% of the overall crime in NI. In the same year there were 15 domestic abuse incidents per 1,000 population recorded by the police and eight domestic abuse crimes per 1,000 population.⁵⁹ Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) are short focused meetings which discuss high risk domestic violence cases and put in place appropriate actions and resources to ensure the safety of the victims and their children. Between January 2010 and July 2016, 10,165 cases were discussed at MARACs involving 13,188 children.⁶⁰ Children and young people exposed to, or who are vulnerable to, violence in the home are in particular need of support if they are to experience safety and stability.
- 6.7.8 With regard to Looked After Children there were 2,890 Looked After Children in Northern Ireland in March 2016. This was the highest number recorded

⁵⁷ <http://www.csu.nisra.gov.uk/2013%20YPBAS%20Headline%20bulletin.pdf>

⁵⁸ PSNI

⁵⁹ Trends in Domestic Abuse incidents and crimes recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2015/16 published 14/10/2016

⁶⁰ PSNI

since the introduction of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. The majority of Looked After Children had been looked after for less than 3 years, with just under a tenth looked after for ten years or longer. Of those Looked After Children 77% were in foster care placements, 13% were living with a parents, 6% were in residential care and 4% in other placements.⁶¹ A key issue for these children and young people highlighted during co-design was both the need for consistency in support and the need for flexibility when transitioning from child services to adult services. A Strategy for Looked After Children is currently being developed in conjunction with Department of Health and the Department of Education. The Strategy 'Looked After Children: Improving Children's Lives' will describe the key commitments to support children and young people in care to improve their outcomes and help them achieve their potential in line with their peers.

- 6.7.9 In the same way, children and young people who experience homelessness - either as part of a family or independently - need a greater level of intervention. In 2015/16, 5,645 families presented as homeless and 1,693 families were placed in temporary accommodation.⁶² There were also 139 single males and 160 single females between 16-17 yrs old who presented as homeless.⁶³ The main reasons for homelessness can include conflict within family or family breakdown, drug and alcohol abuse, and mental health issues. In addition, there is growing evidence of homelessness as a result of paramilitary intimidation.⁶⁴ The impact of homelessness on children and young people's health, social confidence, potential to develop skills, participation in training, for example, can be dramatic. Therefore, there is a need for early intervention in relation to youth homelessness - focusing on prevention, rather than crisis management - when young people present as homeless.
- 6.7.10 Children and young people now live in an online world where internet access and social media is the norm. OFCOM estimated in 2015 that 74% of 12-15 year olds have a social media profile. Whilst the online environment presents opportunities, it also presents risks in terms of cyberbullying;

⁶¹ Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2015/16

⁶² Northern Ireland Housing Executive

⁶³ Northern Ireland Housing Executive

⁶⁴ Paramilitaries in Northern Ireland Forcing Hundreds from their Homes Each Year, Steven McCaffery, The Detail, 25th June 2015, <http://www.thedetail.tv/articles/paramilitaries-in-northern-ireland-forcing-hundreds-from-their-homes-each-year>



potential exposure to harmful material; dangers of online grooming or harassment; and inappropriate contact, such as sexting. The Kid's Life and Times (KLT) survey in 2014 demonstrated that 13% of children said that they had been bullied by someone sending nasty texts or putting bad things about them on the internet.⁶⁵ It is important that children and young people are educated about how to stay safe online, and parents have the knowledge and confidence to monitor their children's safety.

- 6.7.11 One of the most vulnerable times for our children and young people is when they are navigating transitions, whether that be from primary to secondary school, from school to employment, or in terms of their lifestyle choices, home circumstances or their health. It is essential that all children's authorities collaborate effectively to support children through their transitions with the greatest focus on vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged groups of children. In relation to transitions, youth workers have flagged an opportunity, through collaborative working, to particularly focus and strengthen provision for 8-12 year olds. Engagement with this age range presents one of the strongest opportunities for prevention and early intervention work as young people begin to experiment, make choices and form peer groups, and before behaviour and attitudes become entrenched.
- 6.7.12 We know that family breakdown can have a significant and sometimes lasting impact on children and young people. Research has identified a number of factors that are associated with a positive adjustment to family breakdown, including competent and warm parenting, parents' good mental health, low parental conflict, co-operative parenting post-separation and social support.⁶⁶
- 6.7.13 A further issue raised during co-design discussions was the ongoing impact of the conflict on the lives of children and young people, and in particular the reality of paramilitary intimidation in certain communities. Young people perceived to have been involved in anti social behaviour or crime can live under the fear of paramilitary attack and expulsion from their own homes. This has obvious ramifications for their safety and stability, as well as their physical and mental health.

⁶⁵ <http://www.ark.ac.uk/klit/2014/Bullying/UBULLSMS.html>

⁶⁶ Impact of Family Breakdown on Children's Well-being Evidence Review, Ann Mooney, Chris Oliver and Marjory Smyth, Research Report DCSF RR-113

- 6.7.14 Addressing child sexual exploitation (CSE) remains a priority for the Executive. The 2014 Marshall Report made a series of recommendations for Departments to address. The Report also recognised the need to promote confidence on the part of children, parents, workers and the community so that all relevant partners can respond appropriately and effectively to the threat of CSE. A key issue therefore is raising awareness of the issue and identifying reporting pathways and sharing information through the development of agreed protocols. There are, of course, challenges in relation to identifying occurrences of CSE and the effective assimilation of information in Northern Ireland into a coherent data set.
- 6.7.15 In addition to this, during co-design the issue of unaccompanied minors, those outside their country of origin and separated from their parents, was raised as an important and emerging matter. The chief concern related to the difficulty in assessing the scale of the issue. In 2009/10 less than 10 separated children and young people were identified across all Health and Social Care Trusts and it was reported in 2011 that there had been 8 referrals to the national referral mechanism, 7 of which were female.⁶⁷
- 6.7.16 Finally, a core element of this outcome is the well-being of the children and young people who come into contact with the youth justice system. In 2015/16, 63% of young people involved in Youth Justice Services were aged 16 and over and the vast majority of Juvenile Justice Centre (JCC) transactions were male (87% in 2015/16). Young males are therefore a priority group of young people in this area, along with young people who live in care. In 2015/16, 36% of JCC transactions involved young people in care - either subject to a care order or in voluntary accommodation.⁶⁸
- 6.7.17 The Department of Justice has been carrying out a scoping study on children in the justice system which will be an end-to-end examination of how the youth justice system operates for the children in it. This study will inform any future changes with the intention to improve outcomes for children, families, victims and communities involved. Proposals are currently being brought forward which are aimed at keeping children out of the system altogether by providing early intervention and support, developing community alternatives, maximising

⁶⁷ Separated children and child trafficking in Northern Ireland, Barnardo's Northern Ireland (September 2011)

⁶⁸ Youth Justice Agency Annual Workload Statistics 2015/16



exit points and diversionary disposals and increased use of restorative disposals.⁶⁹

- 6.7.18 Linked to this are the children of prisoners. It is estimated that 1,500 children in Northern Ireland have a parent in prison at any one time⁷⁰ and in 2014 there were over 32,000 visits from children to local prisons.⁷¹ Interactions between children and parents in prisons can be very useful rehabilitative service for prisoners as well as an important method of support to families and children. The Northern Ireland Prison Service currently spends in excess of £2m per year on these valuable services. Figures for England and Wales shows that a child with a parent in prison may be twice as likely to experience mental health problems and is less likely to attain positive educational outcomes. They also could be 3 times more likely to become involved in offending than other children and young people - with it being estimated that 65% of males with a convicted father will go on to offend.⁷²

Based on evidence, where is the greatest effort needed?

- 6.7.19 **Youth homelessness:** A young person cannot feel safe or live with any stability if they do not have a place they can call home. Where possible, early interventions should seek to prevent a young person finding themselves without a home. However when homelessness does occur there is a need for immediate support. There is also a need for graduated transition for young people who have lived in supported accommodation - the needs of the young person should be paramount.
- 6.7.20 **Looked After Children:** Looked After Children may have experienced living conditions which are unsafe and unstable, which has led to them leaving their family home and living in care. Therefore, it is important that whilst in care they are given the safety and stability which they were previously denied. When these young people are leaving care they need to be recognised as an ongoing vulnerable group and transitioning support should be available to them depending on the needs of the individual.

⁶⁹ The Youth Justice Agency provide a Restorative approach to Youth Crime by a process called a youth conference which can be either diversionary (not dealt with in court therefore not a conviction) or court ordered. The youth conference is a restorative meeting which brings together the offender and whoever has been affected by the offence eg the victim and the community. The outcome from the meeting is a youth conference action plan which has been agreed by everyone at the meeting.

⁷⁰ Barnardos UK

⁷¹ PRISM

⁷² http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/children_of_prisoners.htm

- 6.7.21 **Internet Safety:** We want our children and young people to be able to access all the aspects of the online world in a safe and responsible manner. This is important so they can make best use of the educational, social and economic benefits on offer. Children and young people, and their parents, should be supported to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to stay safe online and on how to respond when subject to online abuse.
- 6.7.22 **Children and young people under the threat of paramilitary intimidation:** An ongoing legacy of the Troubles in Northern Ireland is the presence of paramilitaries in our communities. This was an area of attention in the Fresh Start Agreement, with the Executive committing to ending paramilitarism and tackling organised crime and challenging paramilitary attempts to control communities.⁷³ This was raised consistently during co-design as an area of concern for young people. Paramilitary intimidation will lead to feelings of instability and insecurity, causing the young person distress and leaving them isolated from family, friends and community. Given the nature of the issue, statistics on this area could be subject to under-reporting. More work is required to understand this issue and how it could be addressed.
- 6.7.23 **Children experiencing neglect or domestic violence:** Neglect or domestic violence can affect any child or young person. Domestic abuse can take many different forms including being subject to or witnessing physical violence as well as psychological, verbal or emotional abuse. The negative impact of such abuse on children and young people can be significant and long-lasting.
- 6.7.24 **Children and young people in contact with the youth justice system:** We must work to ensure that children and young people who come into contact with the youth justice system, including the children of prisoners, are not destined to have poorer life chances. We must also recognise that there are specific demographic groups of young people who are at risk of offending and therefore preventative work should be effectively targeted.
- 6.7.25 **Family breakdown:** Children and young people have a right to preserve their family relations and a right to maintain direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, if that is in their best interests.⁷⁴ We must ensure that those rights are respected and help parents to work through their difficulties in a way that does not cause additional stress and harm.

⁷³ A Fresh Start: the Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/479116/A_Fresh_Start_-_The_Stormont_Agreement_and_Implementation_Plan_-_Final_Version_20_Nov_2015_for_PDF.pdf

⁷⁴ Article 8(1) and 9(3) of the UNCRC



How do we know if we are achieving the outcome? (Proposed Indicators)

6.7.26 Based on the issues identified and the data currently available, the proposed headline indicators for this outcome are:

Youth homelessness: Number of 16/17 year olds presenting as homeless.

First time entrants into the criminal justice system: Number of first time entrants into the criminal justice system.

Victims of crime: Number of young people who are victims of crime.

Child Contact Orders: Number of repeat applications made.

What needs to be done?

The Executive will work to ensure all children and young people live in safety and there is respect for the law and protection for the vulnerable.

Children's authorities and other children's service providers should be concerned about the safety and stability of their young people - ensuring that factors that cause distress are addressed.

Parents and guardians should promote a safe and stable home environment in the knowledge that this is fundamental to their children's well-being and healthy development.

Children and young people should expect to have a safe and stable place which they can call home and in times of difficulty or distress they should know who they can turn to.

Economic and environmental well-being

POPULATION OUTCOME

Children and young people experience
a. economic and b. environmental well-being



Why this outcome matters?

a. *Economic well-being*

6.8.1 **All children and young people must have a standard of living adequate for their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Families who cannot provide this economic well-being should be supported by Government.**⁷⁵

6.8.2 Conditions directly and uniquely attributable to poverty should never determine the opportunities a child has, to reach their fullest potential. We must intensify our efforts to ensure that suitable measures are in place to assist parents and families to protect their children from poverty by providing appropriate assistance and support particularly with regard to housing, health, nutrition, clothing, and education.

6.8.3 By instigating the necessary measures to support families and parents and by ensuring that young people develop appropriate skills for future employment, we can protect children from a lifetime of poverty, poor physical and mental health, educational underachievement, unemployment, homelessness and harm.

b. *Environmental well-being*

6.8.4 **All children and young people must be provided with a clean environment.**⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Article 27 of the UNCRC

⁷⁶ Article 24 of the UNCRC



- 6.8.5 The degradation of the environment, through air pollution, climate change and loss of natural areas has a real and lasting impact on our health. Children should be encouraged to value their environment, by experiencing, understanding and respecting nature. This will lay strong foundations for good health and physical and emotional well-being into the future.

What are the issues?

a. *Economic well-being*

- 6.8.6 In 2014/15, 23% of all children in Northern Ireland were living in poverty, with 100,100 children deemed to be in absolute poverty⁷⁷ before housing costs.⁷⁸ Therefore, it is fair to assume that almost 1 in 4 of our children and young people are currently not realising the proposed Outcome. Further to this, children living in poverty are subject to poorer outcomes in terms of health, education and opportunities to play. Living in poverty can also impact on children's self-confidence, leading to isolation and a failure to actively participate in society. Research indicates that child poverty levels will continue to rise, across the UK, with more significant rises in Northern Ireland, to 2020.⁷⁹
- 6.8.7 During the co-design process, issues of food and fuel poverty were also raised as areas where many families are struggling and which have a tangible impact on the child's well-being. One source of historical (2011) figures on fuel poverty showed that up to 294,000 households (42%) could be affected.⁸⁰ This leaves families with decisions to "eat or heat", with obvious implications for children in the household.
- 6.8.8 Children and young people are often aware when their families are experiencing economic hardship. The 2013 KLT Survey asked Primary 7 children in Northern Ireland about their family's financial situation. This

⁷⁷ Absolute poverty refers to the proportion of individuals with incomes below a fixed monetary value or threshold. This threshold equates to an income below 60% of the (inflation adjusted) median income in 2010/11.

⁷⁸ Northern Ireland Poverty Bulletin 2014/15

⁷⁹ J Browne, A Hoods and R Joyce, *Children and Working-Age Poverty in Northern Ireland over the Next Decade: an Update*, Institute for Fiscal Studies.

⁸⁰ <http://www.consumercouncil.org.uk/energy/fuel-poverty/>

indicated that two thirds of children believed that their family did not have enough money for “ordinary things or for special things”⁸¹ and almost 1 in 10 were aware that their families had struggled to purchase school uniforms.⁸²

- 6.8.9 An issue raised during the co-design process was the ‘unseen costs’ of education and how this potentially impacts on the child or young person’s experience of school and learning. For families experiencing poverty it can be difficult to fund school uniforms, sporting equipment, music lessons, extra curricular activities, school trips etc. Young people referred to the stigma of poverty and knowing friends who wished to avoid school on non-uniform days because they might be ridiculed or bullied about their clothing. The unseen costs of education and pressures young people feel to be the same as their peers can have a significant impact on their enjoyment of school and, in turn, education and future life chances or opportunities.
- 6.8.10 In the period October to December 2015, there were 29,000 young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who were in need of education, employment or training. Whilst this is a significant reduction from the previous year (37,000) it still means 13.8% of young people in Northern Ireland are looking for education, employment or training - the highest rate across the UK. Young people need to be given support at this stage so they transition from education to further education, employment or training, otherwise they are at risk of economic inactivity and poverty.
- 6.8.11 Finally in terms of economic well-being, childcare is an important issue. An inability to access affordable, flexible, appropriate childcare can directly impact on poverty levels, acting as a barrier to parents gaining employment. Furthermore, the costs of childcare can place significant pressures on family budgets. In addition, childcare can have long-term benefits for children, especially children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Evidence suggests that quality childcare can help counter some of the adverse effects of disadvantage, including poor academic performance and social skills.

⁸¹ http://www.ark.ac.uk/kit/2013/Financial_wellbeing/FAMMONEY.html

⁸² http://www.ark.ac.uk/kit/2013/Financial_wellbeing/SCHCOST1.html



b. Environmental well-being

- 6.8.12 The second element of this outcome is environmental well-being. It is important that children and young people have an understanding of and respect for the different environments in which they find themselves; that they have access to the natural environment; and that they live in home environments which promote their health and well-being. Children and young people often have a greater appreciation and understanding of issues such as pollution, climate change, recycling or waste management than adults. It is important that this respect and understanding is instilled at an early age and that children have a theoretical understanding of environmental issues along with opportunities to physically explore green spaces. At a local level, clean streets, safe neighbourhoods, unpolluted air and green spaces are all areas that will enhance a child's health and happiness.
- 6.8.13 In the 2006 Young Life and Times (YLT) Survey, young people were asked to comment on how important a range of environmental issues were to them. They consistently responded 'important' or 'very important' to issues such as air pollution;⁸³ global warming/climate change;⁸⁴ water pollution;⁸⁵ litter;⁸⁶ and recycling.⁸⁷ Adults, therefore, have a lot to learn from children and young people in relation to respect for and protection of the environment. This is perhaps an area where policy makers should actively listen to children and young people given the importance of environmental protection for future generations.

Based on evidence, where is the greatest effort needed?

- 6.8.14 **Families experiencing poverty:** Of major concern are families who are experiencing poverty and the impact that this has on children and young people. Families face pressures in relation to housing, food, fuel and childcare costs and debt repayment etc. By helping families living in poverty, children and young people affected can experience a range of better outcomes.

⁸³ http://www.ark.ac.uk/yIt/2006/Environment_and_global_issues/ENVIMP1.html

⁸⁴ http://www.ark.ac.uk/yIt/2006/Environment_and_global_issues/ENVIMP2.html

⁸⁵ http://www.ark.ac.uk/yIt/2006/Environment_and_global_issues/ENVIMP5.html

⁸⁶ http://www.ark.ac.uk/yIt/2006/Environment_and_global_issues/ENVIMP6.html

⁸⁷ http://www.ark.ac.uk/yIt/2006/Environment_and_global_issues/ENVIMP7.html

- 6.8.15 **Children and young people in need of education, employment or training:** It is important that children and young people have opportunities to develop appropriate skills so they can become economically active, find gainful employment and avoid poverty. There is an obvious link to the outcome relating to educational achievement; however we must continue to support our young people beyond formal education, ensuring they have the skills for adulthood. It is clear that certain groups of young people may also require greater support to ensure that they remain engaged in education, employment or training, such as those with a disability, those who have experienced care or those involved in the youth justice system.
- 6.8.16 **Rural young people:** Children and young people living in rural areas often face additional challenges in the area of economic well-being. During the co-design process, it was highlighted that there are pockets of deprivation in rural areas and young people living there have fewer opportunities and have to travel further to access education, training or employment. Access to transport poses another challenge and cost.

How do we know if we are achieving the outcome? (Proposed Indicators)

- 6.8.17 Based on the issues identified and the data currently available, the proposed headline indicators for this outcome are:

Child poverty: Percentage of children living in absolute poverty before housing costs.

Number of young people in need of education, employment or training: Number of 16-24 year olds in need of education, employment or training.



What needs to be done?

The Executive will work to reduce poverty and to deliver a strong, competitive and sustainable economy which will benefit everyone, and develop appropriate policies to protect and promote the natural environment.

Children's authorities and other children's service providers should consider how their services could support the most vulnerable in society and work with Government to identify and tackle the causes of poverty and mitigate the impacts of poverty on children and young people.

Parents and guardians should be able to make full use of the opportunities available to them, so that their children and young people can experience economic well-being and a good family environment in the home.

Children and young people should be protected from the worst effects of poverty and be provided with the life skills to ensure they are economically active in adulthood. They should also be given the opportunity to discover and learn about the natural environment.

A positive contribution to society

POPULATION OUTCOME

Children and young people make a positive contribution to society



Why this outcome matters?

- 6.9.1 **All children and young people should be able to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them and have these views respected and given due consideration.⁸⁸**
- 6.9.2 It is important that children and young people are supported to develop socially and emotionally, to build self-confidence and develop skills which will enable them to deal effectively with significant life changes and challenges. We also need to ensure that children and young people who cannot or will not contribute to society as others may are nurtured and encouraged to participate as active citizens.
- 6.9.3 Children and adolescents can be resourceful citizens, capable of shaping a better society for all. To function well in any society, children need to feel they belong, that their contribution is valued and respected and that they can freely express their views in school, at home and within the wider community.
- 6.9.4 We need to actively encourage and support children to contribute to society and for them to be part of decision making and planning processes. By promoting meaningful participation and identifying appropriate opportunities to be an active citizen, children are more likely to feel confident to engage in society, participate in and out of school, and develop a positive attitude that will enrich communities by respecting and valuing others.

⁸⁸ Article 12 of the UNCRC



What are the issues?

- 6.9.5 Encouraging children and young people to participate in society and discuss issues which affect their lives provides them with the opportunity to take control of their future and achieve their full potential. Greater consultation with and involvement of young people in decisions which affect them, could contribute to those services becoming more effective, for example medical treatment or social care services.
- 6.9.6 Children and young people often have different perspectives and alternative thinking from adults. Taking account of their views therefore has the potential to improve the delivery of services or formulation of policies or strategies. Encouraging active participation also increases the social confidence of children and young people, giving them valuable skills that will stay with them into adulthood. NICCY regularly seeks the views and opinions of young people on a wide range of issues in order to inform her work.
- 6.9.7 Participation is commonplace in our schools through various mechanisms and structures, such as school councils. According to the 2014 School Omnibus Survey, 99% of respondents (357 out of 360 schools) indicated that they have pupil participation structures in place.⁸⁹
- 6.9.8 Participation opportunities in schools bring a range of benefits, not only for pupils, but for the schools themselves and the wider school community. It is important that a wide variety of methods and structures are provided to meet the individual needs of children and young people to ensure their views are heard, valued and taken into account.
- 6.9.9 Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) provide a new and exciting opportunity for children and young people to express their views on the delivery of local services. The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 requires Councils and their community planning partners to seek the views of the community and take these views into account in the community planning process. CPPs should consider appropriate methods of engagement to involve children and young people - using mechanisms such as youth forums.

⁸⁹ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/school-omnibus-survey-2014.pdf>

Based on evidence, where is the greatest effort needed?

- 6.9.10 **Youth Work (youth organisations and groups):** Youth work delivered through uniformed and non-uniformed organisations and a wide range of statutory and voluntary groups, is an essential aspect of non-formal education provision in Northern Ireland and offers many young people opportunities outside of school to develop their abilities and talents and to cultivate a range of personal and social skills. Youth organisations/clubs can provide young people with opportunities to discuss and debate issues of interest and to engage with people from different backgrounds or opinions. This can develop the young person's understanding and knowledge of important issues and improve their attitudes towards others. Youth organisations enable young people to actively participate and equip them with important inter-personal skills. This provision should be promoted and supported to ensure our young people become active citizens, contributing to our society and having their voice heard.
- 6.9.11 Youth work (through youth organisations and groups) seeks to enable every young person to achieve their full potential, and to particularly support young people who may have experienced challenges in their early life. It is essential that the Strategy can be flexible and accommodate vulnerable young people in the 18-25 age group (aligning with the Priorities for Youth.⁹⁰)
- 6.9.12 **“Seldom heard voices” of young people:** Whilst there are many young people who are actively involved in youth activities or other ventures which enable their voices to be heard, there are others who encounter greater challenges in this respect. Participation should be for all children and young people and mechanisms should be put in place to facilitate and actively seek out the voices of young people who are seldom heard. This includes those living in rural areas; those not involved in youth organisations/clubs or volunteering; newcomer children and young people; children and young people with a disability etc. Introducing accessible and inclusive mechanisms should enable a wider range of young people to have their voices heard.

⁹⁰ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/priorities-for-youth.pdf>



How do we know if we are achieving the outcome? (Proposed Indicators)

6.9.13 Based on the issues identified and the data currently available, the proposed headline indicators for this outcome are:

Participation: Frequency of participation in voluntary and community work.

Self-efficacy: Measure the confidence and capability of young people through self-efficacy.

What needs to be done?

The Executive will actively seek the views of children and young people and provide opportunities for them to engage, participate and contribute to society.

Children's authorities and other children's service providers should facilitate the engagement of children and young people and consider how local arrangements, services or facilities could be improved by utilising the voice of children and young people.

Parents and guardians should listen to the views of their children and encourage them to find opportunities to volunteer or participate in wider society.

Children and young people should be given the opportunity and support to participate in decision making on important matters which affect them and be confident in expressing their opinions - with the knowledge that their voice will be heard and responded to.

Living in a society which respects their rights

POPULATION OUTCOME

Children and young people live in a society
which respects their rights



Why this outcome matters?

- 6.10.1 **All children and young people should be made aware of their rights.**⁹¹
- 6.10.2 Children are not always made aware of their rights and/or cannot always protect these rights and interests. They may at times in their lives need help or protection from others. The best interests of the child should be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children and society has an obligation to safeguard children from mental and physical violence, injustice, negligence, abuse, sexual abuse, discrimination and other threats.
- 6.10.3 Children's rights should be respected. They have a right to be heard and to exercise their rights. We must encourage children to express their views on matters affecting them and for these views to be given meaning full consideration, paying particular attention to ensure those marginalised and disadvantaged children and young people are listened to.
- 6.10.4 Intolerance to children and young people and general negative public attitude towards children, especially adolescents is detrimental to any society. By striving towards a society that embraces good relations and nurtures mutual respect and understanding, children will experience a safe and stable environment, reducing conflict, crime and unacceptable anti social activities that causes harm to individuals, communities and the environment.
- 6.10.5 Educating children is key to building a mutually respectful society. By teaching knowledge and understanding of others, children will learn to participate in society and express their views while respecting the rights

⁹¹ Article 42 of the UNCRC



of other children and adults. By developing a child's understanding and tolerance to diversity we will encourage and sustain positive attitudes to others and teach children and young people to embrace differences. Growing up without fear, children and young people will have the opportunity to enhance their skills through new and different ideas which will impact positively throughout their lives, culturally, religiously and in their understanding and acceptance of differing gender-norms and identities.

What are the issues?

- 6.10.6 We must recognise that there are those within society who are at a greater risk of their rights not being respected or enforced - this is true of all children and young people who often are not viewed as 'rights-holders'. The first step to achieving this outcome is improving the knowledge and understanding of children's rights and the role of 'duty bearers' in protecting and delivering on these rights.
- 6.10.7 The YLT Survey in 2014 showed that 46% of young people had not heard of the UNCRC.⁹² Whilst this is an improvement on the 2007 figure (which showed 70% of children and young people hadn't heard of UNCRC) it still means that nearly half of children and young people are not fully aware of their rights.⁹³ If they are not aware of their rights they are unable to identify when they are not being respected.
- 6.10.8 We must also recognise that more children's rights are often neglected because children and young people are often negatively stereotyped due to their age. The 2010 YLT survey showed that 83% of young people felt that they were often judged negatively because they were young. In addition, 66% felt that they had been treated suspiciously by staff in a shop and 56% had been told to 'move on' when on the streets with their friends.⁹⁴ This negative perception of young people can impact on their ability to play or socialise with their friends and will ultimately affect their self-confidence.

⁹² www.ark.ac.uk/ylt/2014/Rights_in_Education/HEARDUNC.html

⁹³ www.ark.ac.uk/ylt/2007/Rights/HEARDUNC.html

⁹⁴ www.ark.ac.uk/ylt/2010/PERCEPTIONS_AND_RIGHTS/index.html

- 6.10.9 It is also important that parents, community leaders and policy makers understand and respect the rights of children and young people. During the co-design process, the majority of parents felt confident to support their children in exercising their rights. However it was agreed that more could be done to improve the understanding of children's rights amongst adults.
- 6.10.10 We must also be mindful that in addition to the UNCRC, children and young people have many of the same rights as the adult population - rights that adults can often take for granted, such as consumer rights. Consumer Council research shows that young people (16+) tend to be less aware of their consumer rights and less likely to complain if they encounter a problem.⁹⁵ Informed, confident young consumers who are empowered to speak up for their consumer rights will help make a positive contribution to society by driving up standards in the provision of goods, services and customer care.
- 6.10.11 Linked to the issue of rights and how our children and young people are treated within our society is how much of public expenditure is spent on them and how it is spent. It is essential that our spending on children and young people is appropriately targeted and is effective and efficient in tackling the problems they face and improving their outcomes.
- 6.10.12 In 2015, a report was prepared which sought to consider the nature, scope and level of funding for children's services in Northern Ireland. This report was a result of collaboration between the Dartington Social Research Unit (DSRU), The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY), Atlantic Philanthropies and the Delivering Social Change Programme Board. The aim was to map the total annual government expenditure on services for children and young people and assess the type of services being funded, be they preventative or early interventions. It reported that £2.28bn was being invested in children and young people in Northern Ireland (22% of total government spend). The majority of this spend was for universal services for all children regardless of need (57%).⁹⁶

⁹⁵ CCNI conducts Consumer Proficiency research every four years and the latest household survey will be published in March 2016. The previous study 'Canny Consumers - Are consumers standing up for their rights?' August 2012 is available at <http://www.consumercouncil.org.uk/publications/canny-consumers/>

⁹⁶ Kemp, F; Ohlson, C; Raja; Morpeth, L; Axford, N (2015): Fund-mapping: The investment of public resources in the wellbeing of children and young people in Northern Ireland. <http://www.niccy.org/media/1669/niccy-budget-report-final-oct-15.pdf>



Based on evidence, where is the greatest effort needed?

- 6.10.13 **Children acting as carers:** Children acting as carers could be classed as a priority group across every outcome. Given the pressures they face at home, they often can miss out on their education, their ability to play or socialise with friends, they may suffer from financial problems, feel marginalised and it may affect their physical and mental health. Fundamentally, children acting as carers are at risk of missing out on their childhood.
- 6.10.14 **Children and young people who suffer from racism:** The 2011 Census showed that Northern Ireland is becoming more multicultural with over 32,000 people giving their ethnicity as something other than 'white'.⁹⁷ In addition to people who may have come to Northern Ireland for economic or family reasons there are those, including children and young people, who have come to seek asylum or as refugees. Children and young people can find themselves subject to direct or indirect discrimination or racism. It is important that these children and young people are aware of their rights and what support they are entitled to - they require extra protection to prevent negative experiences resulting in negative outcomes.
- 6.10.15 **Those who are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual (LGB):** Children and young people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, are perceived to be, or have a parent who is, can face a range of pressures in their daily lives. During co-design, it was clear that these children and young people felt that their rights and awareness of LGB issues were largely ignored in their education, communities and wider society. Ignoring the rights of these children and young people can impact on other outcomes and lead to problems with depression, anxiety and stress.
- 6.10.16 **Those who identify as Transgender:** Children and young people who identify as transgender can also face a range of pressures in their daily lives and are at risk of not having their fundamental rights respected - especially the right to non-discrimination. These pressures may also apply to children and young people with a transgender parent. Services need to be flexible in dealing with children and young people who identify as transgender, and ensure they do not face discrimination, based on their identity. Ignoring

⁹⁷ www.nisra.gov.uk/census/2011Census.html

the issues faced by these children and young people can impact on other outcomes and lead to problems with depression, anxiety and stress.

- 6.10.17 **Children and young people who speak a different language:** Language rights were an issue raised during co-design and as the demographics change in Northern Ireland it will no doubt continue to be an important matter. The 2011 Census demonstrated that there are more than 90 different languages spoken across Northern Ireland. Where possible, services should be provided in a range of languages to cater for all children and young people. We should be mindful that children and young people who are fluent in a number of languages, have greater opportunities in an ever more global workforce.
- 6.10.18 **Children and young people who seek to practice their faith:** Children and young people who seek to live out their faith in daily life and in social contexts can face a range of pressures and are at risk of not having their fundamental rights respected. Representation in the media and in social fora can marginalise or belittle faith values with children and young people living out their faith in practical ways being at risk of being labelled as radicals or bigoted. They require protection and encouragement to air their views with confidence and to be respected for their diversity and contribution to society.
- 6.10.19 This experience also applies to those children and young people who have **no faith** and who class themselves as atheist or humanist. There are different circumstances or situations where these children are not afforded the same respect for not having a faith, and may be forced to comply with activities or practices with which they fundamentally disagree. They also require protection and encouragement to air their views with confidence and to be respected for their diversity and contribution to society.

How do we know if we are achieving the outcome? (Proposed Indicators)

- 6.10.20 Based on the issues identified and the data currently available, the proposed headline indicators for this outcome are:

Understanding of the UNCRC: Percentage of young people who have heard of the UNCRC and percentage of adults who have heard of the UNCRC.



Respect for views: Percentage of young people who feel they have a chance to give their views about the issues that affect them.

Negative stereotyping: Percentage of young people who feel the media represents young people fairly.

What needs to be done?

The Executive will respect and promote the rights of all children and young people.

Children's authorities and other children's service providers should be well-versed in child rights - ensuring their actions and services both protect and enhance the rights of the child.

Parents and guardians should act as primary advocates for the rights of their children.

Children and young people should be aware of their rights and be able to identify situations where their rights have been infringed - having the confidence to challenge those who ignore their rights.

Living in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted

POPULATION OUTCOME

Children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted



Why this outcome matters?

- 6.11.1 **All children and young people should be treated equally without discrimination, irrespective of their ethnicity, gender, language, religion, political opinion, family background, abilities or other status.**⁹⁸
- 6.11.2 We recognise the diverse needs of children and young people and are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for, and recognising the diversity of children and young people at school, home, in training, employment and within the wider community.
- 6.11.3 Everyone has a responsibility to influence and encourage good relations between all sections of our society. By challenging discrimination and promoting equality, particularly for the most vulnerable in society including disadvantaged, marginalised and minority ethnic groups, we will ensure we celebrate the diverse experience, skills and talents of all our children.
- 6.11.4 To eradicate discrimination from society we must promote and facilitate through legislation, as well as in practice, an awareness and understanding of the contribution of others. Identifying and respectfully acknowledging difference amongst our children and young people, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, and friendship will prepare children to live more positively and responsibly in a fully inclusive society.
- 6.11.5 Children in Northern Ireland have the right to live in a peaceful community without fear of attack, violence or influence; therefore we must intensify our

⁹⁸ Article 2 of the UNCRC



efforts to tackle all forms of violence against children by promoting human rights, peace and tolerance.

What are the issues?

- 6.11.6 This proposed outcome has 2 elements. Firstly, all children and young people should be treated fairly and equally, and secondly, they should be encouraged and supported to develop positive attitudes and good relations with those from backgrounds different from their own.
- 6.11.7 There are many reasons why children and young people may experience unequal treatment or discrimination. This may be due, for example, to their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities, sexuality, family background, political opinion, or age. Inequalities cannot be characterised by one-off events where a young person is treated unfairly and the impact should not be downplayed. Throughout this chapter on improving well-being, inequality is clearly a recurring theme. Often, the background of a child or young person - where they live, their ethnicity, their family situation - will have a profound impact on their health, education, economic well-being and safety. Closing the inequality gap across each of the outcomes is a key issue for consideration.
- 6.11.8 In addition to unfair treatment, discrimination and negative stereotyping, there are groups of children and young people who face persecution and a threat of violence because of their identity. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of offences recorded which were regarded as racially or homophobically motivated. In 2011/12, there were 458 offences recorded with a racist motivation. By 2014/15, this figure had doubled to 921 recorded offences, with 506 in the Belfast area alone. In terms of homophobic offences, there were 209 recorded incidents in 2014/15 compared with 133 in 2008/2009.⁹⁹
- 6.11.9 Given the history of Northern Ireland and the legacy of the conflict, ensuring continued good relations and improving the attitudes of our children and young people to others, continues to be a key outcome. Over the past number of years our society has gone through a massive transformation. Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) is the Executive's Strategy to improve

⁹⁹ Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service

community relations and support the realisation of a more united and shared society. Children and young people play a key role within this and it is important that attitudes amongst our young people and towards our young people, continue to improve and where possible, that they play an active role in building good relations.

- 6.11.10 Shared Education provides the opportunity for children and young people from different community and socio-economic backgrounds to learn together. The purpose, as set out in the Shared Education Act (NI) 2016, includes the promotion of equality of opportunity; good relations; and respect for identity, diversity and community cohesion. The Act is underpinned by the Department of Education's 'Sharing Works' policy.
- 6.11.11 There is a trans-generational aspect to improved community relations, with some young people commenting during the co-design process that they personally did not have negative attitudes towards those from different community backgrounds but were influenced by parents or grandparents who felt differently. 58% of young people reported that "my family" are the biggest influencers in regard to how they felt about those from the other main religious community.¹⁰⁰ Children and young people therefore have the ability to be change-makers, influencing their friends, families and communities through their positive attitudes and promotion of good relations.
- 6.11.12 The Department of Education's Community Relations, Equality & Diversity in Education (CRED) policy aims to contribute to improving relations between communities and across all Section 75 groups by educating children and young people to develop self-respect and respect for others, promote equality and work to eliminate discrimination.
- 6.11.13 The CRED policy underpins and supports the curricular requirements of citizenship, Personal Development & Mutual Understanding (at primary level) and Learning for Life & Work (at post-primary level) by encouraging formal and non-formal education opportunities to build relationships with those of different backgrounds and traditions within mainstream resources available to educational providers.

¹⁰⁰ www.ark.ac.uk/ylt/2012/Community_Relations/IMPACT.html



Based on evidence, where is the greatest effort needed?

6.11.14 **Children and young people most likely to experience inequality:**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 lists groups of people that require equality of opportunity. This includes children and young people. Children and young people with different religious beliefs, political opinions, racial group, sexual orientation; gender; disability etc should all be treated fairly and equally. They should not feel they are treated unfairly due to their age, and negative perceptions of young people should be tackled. Ongoing inequality gaps in health, education, play etc will be addressed within each of the relevant outcomes. The 'Sharing Works' policy encourages education providers to go beyond the legislative definition of Shared Education and meet the needs and provide for the education together of learners from all Section 75 groups.

6.11.15 **Children and young people living in interface areas:** Children and young people who experience the legacy of the conflict more keenly and who live in communities with more entrenched attitudes, need greater support to realise the outcome of improved attitudes. A significant amount of work has been delivered through T:BUC, in terms of summer camps, shared education campuses and the promotion of shared spaces. Children and young people have much to teach adults/others in society about this issue. Through their actions and by promoting positive attitudes - they have the ability to not only influence their peer group but also their parents and grand-parents.

How do we know if we are achieving the outcome? (Proposed Indicators)

6.11.16 Based on the issues identified and the data currently available, the proposed headline indicators for this outcome are:

Attitudes towards others: Percentage who are favourable towards Catholics, Protestants and Minority Ethnic Groups.

Engagement between young people of different community backgrounds: Percentage of young people who regularly socialise or play sport with people from a different religious community.

Shared spaces: Percentage of young people who think that leisure centres, parks, libraries, and shopping centres in their area are 'shared and open' to both Protestants and Catholics.

What needs to be done?

The Executive will deliver a more equal and shared society where diversity is respected.

Children's authorities and other children's service providers should challenge unfair treatment of children and young people and ensure that all children and young people are welcome to play, socialise and live without discrimination.

Parents and guardians should learn from their children and listen to their views on respecting difference and tackling discrimination.

Children and young people's positive examples should be heeded by the rest of society in respect of how to embrace difference, respect diversity and treat everyone equally.

Chapter 7

Delivering positive long lasting outcomes

An Outcomes Based Approach

- 7.1 In a similar approach to the PfG, this Strategy has been developed using the Outcome Based Accountability (OBA) model. The OBA approach has been informed by the work of Mark Friedman.¹⁰¹ OBA is designed to focus our attention on the results or outcomes we plan to achieve through the services we deliver. Through the agreement and prioritisation of high-level outcomes and by monitoring a small number of headline indicators (as outlined in previous chapter) we remain focused on the most important factors which impact on the well-being of children and young people.
- 7.2 Friedman describes OBA as “about getting from talk to action quickly. It provides a method of thinking and taking action together that is simple and common sense, that uses plain language, produces minimum paper and is actually useful to community members, managers and decision makers. It is about making a difference, not just trying hard and hoping for the best.”¹⁰²
- 7.3 This approach does not identify an indicator for all of the issues that stakeholders are concerned about, but that does not mean that those issues are unimportant. By setting the priorities and keeping focused on the high-level issues, we believe we can impact on all of those challenges and barriers to children and young people.
- 7.4 Using OBA will keep a focus on the main issues/challenges and will provide a system of consistent reporting and monitoring that will ensure we are accountable for our actions. It will also allow us to be flexible and proactive - looking at data trends, identifying concerns and taking remedial action.

¹⁰¹ Friedman M (2005) Trying Hard is not Good Enough: How to produce measurable improvements for customers and communities. Trafford Publishing.

¹⁰² Friedman M (2005) Trying Hard is not Good Enough: How to produce measurable improvements for customers and communities. Trafford Publishing. (Page 1)

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- 7.5 OBA uses a number of different terms, which will be used in our delivery, reporting and monitoring. Some of these terms are explained below.

Population Accountability

- 7.6 Population accountability refers to the condition of well-being of whole populations. In the case of this Strategy it relates to children and young people. The condition we want to achieve is improved well-being for all our children and young people. This is a broad statement, with many different elements and can only be achieved through the sustained, co-ordinated action of a wide range of organisations.

Outcomes

- 7.7 Outcomes are clear statements of the condition of well-being we want to achieve eg all children and young people live in safety and with stability. The previous chapter outlines our 8 outcomes and also seeks to provide some information on what this outcome means in practice. The use of outcomes aligns with the requirements of the CSCA which requires that the Strategy must set out the outcomes the Executive intends should be achieved.

Indicators

- 7.8 Indicators are a tool to quantify how we are doing in terms of realising the population outcome, eg number of 16/17 year olds presenting as homeless or the % of young people worried about being threatened by paramilitaries.
- 7.9 A smaller number of key headline indicators keeps our focus on delivering the most important actions. That is not to say we will ignore other pertinent information that is recorded, but for reporting purposes we will remain focused on a smaller number of indicators.

Performance Accountability

- 7.10 Performance accountability describes how well particular services or programmes perform and whether or not they are achieving the outcomes they are supposed to be achieving. Departments will need to consider which programmes or services they can deliver to support the outcomes. These

programmes and services will then have a set of performance measures which would relate to whether children or young people are any better off as a result.

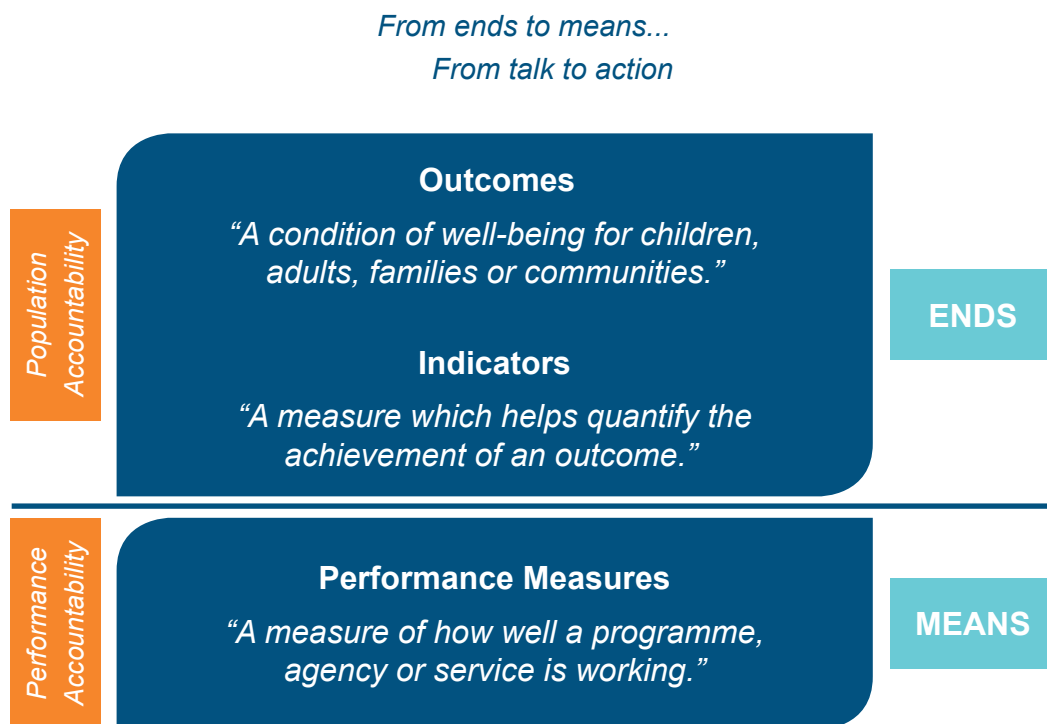
Performance Measures

7.11 Performance measures are indicators of how well an individual programme or service is performing. This is measured using 3 questions:

- How much did we do?
- How well did we do it?
- Is anyone better off?

7.12 Performance measures will be developed for each key action in a future implementation plan. This will demonstrate the impact of actions and their contribution to the population level indicators. **Figure 7.1** demonstrates how the actions set out in this strategy contribute to the high level outcomes identified.

Figure 7.1 OBA Overview



Turning the Curve

- 7.13 Once the Strategy is finalised, an implementation plan will be produced for the outcomes. Monitoring and reporting of progress towards meeting those outcomes will take the form of report cards that outline the outcome to be achieved, the indicators being used (and baseline data) and how we will make progress or 'turn the curve'. Turning the curve refers to the actions we need to take to improve the well-being of children and young people.
- 7.14 Performance measures must also be developed to measure the impact of the actions and their contribution towards the overarching outcomes. As previously stated, this Strategy is subject to review; the outcomes, indicators and actions will be reviewed regularly using the OBA's Turning the Curve methodology.

Outcomes and indicators

7.15 The draft outcomes and indicators (as outlined in previous chapter) are included in the table below.

Outcomes	Headline indicators	Intended direction of travel
Children and young people are physically and mentally healthy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % of P1/Yr8 children who are obese - including a breakdown by deprivation quintiles to examine impact of deprivation. 2. The proportion of babies born at a low birth weight. 3. Percentage of children and young people with GHQ12 scores ≥ 4 [signifying possible mental health problem] . 	<p style="text-align: center;">▼</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▼</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▼</p>
Children and young people enjoy play and leisure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enjoyment experienced by children and young people as they play in their homes, their communities, their schools and their local play facilities. 	<p style="text-align: center;">▲</p>
Children and young people learn and achieve	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percentage of children who are at the appropriate stage of development in their immediate pre-school year. 2. Percentage of school leavers achieving at level 2 or above including English and Maths. 3. Gap between percentage of school leavers and percentage of FSME school leavers achieving at level 2 or above including English and Maths. 	<p style="text-align: center;">▲</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▲</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▼</p>

Outcomes	Headline indicators	Intended direction of travel
Children and young people live in safety and stability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of 16/17 year olds presenting as homeless. 2. Number of first time entrants into the criminal justice systems. 3. Number of young people who are victims of crime. 4. Number of repeat applications made in relation to child contact orders. 	<p style="text-align: center;">▼</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▼</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▼</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▼</p>
Children and young people experience economic and environmental well-being	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % of children living in absolute poverty before housing costs. 2. Number of 16-24 year olds not in education, employment or training. 	<p style="text-align: center;">▼</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▼</p>
Children and young people make a positive contribution to society	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Frequency of participation in voluntary and community work. 2. Measurement of the confidence and capability of young people through self-efficacy. 	<p style="text-align: center;">▲</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▲</p>
Children and young people live in a society which respects their rights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % of young people who have heard of the UNCRC % of adults who have heard of the UNCRC 2. % of young people who feel they have a chance to give their views about the issues that affect them. 3. % of young people who feel the media represents young people fairly. 	<p style="text-align: center;">▲</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▲</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▲</p>

Outcomes	Headline indicators	Intended direction of travel
<p>Children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % of young people who are favourable towards Catholics, Protestants and Minority Ethnic Groups. 2. % of young people who regularly socialise or play sport with people from a different religious community. 3. % young people who think that leisure centres, parks, libraries, and shopping centres in their area are ‘shared and open’ to both Protestants and Catholics. 	<p style="text-align: center;">▲</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▲</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▲</p>

Chapter 8

Moving Forward

- 8.1 The views and comments received during this consultation process will be analysed and inform the preparation of a final version of the Children and Young People's Strategy which will be adopted formally by the Executive and laid in the Assembly.
- 8.2 This is however not the end of the process but the beginning. There are a number of steps to take forward as we begin to put the Strategy into operation.

Implementation Plan

- 8.3 Following publication of the Strategy we will be asking Departments to contribute to the development of an implementation plan for the eight population outcomes agreed in this Strategy. This implementation plan will include the report cards (as set out in Para 7.14) which will outline the baseline and context or story behind each of the population level indicators, and will be used to measure progress against each of the outcomes.
- 8.4 The implementation plan and related requirements will be subject to formal consultation.

Management Structures

- 8.5 We have already outlined in the previous Chapter 5 - Working Together, the approach and structures that will be used to oversee the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy and accountability for it. The first step is to create these structures, agreeing the membership and role of each Group within the structure and how the Groups will interlink and work together.

Data Development Agenda

- 8.6 There are areas where we are concerned that appropriate relevant information does not currently exist in the format that we would like. Therefore, a data development agenda (DDA) is proposed that will gather more information to be used in future indicators. This new data will inform the baselines and the

introduction, as appropriate, of new or revised indicators. Once evidence is obtained through this data development it will be assessed to determine if it should be utilised as an Indicator. Some areas where new data requirements have been identified for potential development are listed below:

Mental Health

- 8.7 GHQ12 scores have been used in the YLT Survey for young people aged 16 and used successfully with adolescents by researchers, but they are not recommended for use with all children (under 16). Therefore, we will investigate the use of the psychological scale from Kidscreen as an appropriate mental health prevalence indicator for u16s. This has previously been included in the Kids Life and Times Survey. We will also need to consider whether this measure is appropriate for children and young people with disabilities.

Play and Leisure

- 8.8 Play and leisure is a new outcome area and there is limited data currently available to support indicators. We have proposed to develop an indicator relating to children and young people's enjoyment of play and leisure. We will work with statisticians and stakeholders to develop an appropriate question or questions to capture the necessary data.
- 8.9 A further indicator could be developed to consider the local opportunities for children and young people to play or enjoy leisure time. Information currently exists on this area in terms of the location of local play facilities. However this does not take into account whether the play facility is accessible to all or provides a valuable play opportunity. Ideally, the information would be able to capture the proximity to "a high value and accessible play space". For this, a play value assessment would be required of play space which would consider whether the space provides quality play, whether it is accessible for all and whether it has appropriate balance between risk and challenge.

Enjoyment of School

- 8.10 In addition to indicators on child development and attainment in education, we may also wish to consider how the non-academic or pastoral element of school is being delivered - assessing the child or young person's experience in

school and their emotional health and well-being. This is a more challenging area of development to measure and will require further consideration with stakeholders.

Stability and resilience

- 8.11 Children and young people can often face experiences that have a significantly adverse affect on their well-being. This may include family breakdown, death of family member or loved one, witnessing a traumatic event, coping with life-limiting illnesses etc. These experiences can have lasting impact on the child or young person's well-being, impacting them into adulthood.
- 8.12 Whilst Government is somewhat limited in being able to prevent these adverse experiences it can provide support which would ensure that these experiences do not have a lasting impact on their well-being or their life chances. This resilience of the child or young person can be improved through provision of appropriate and timely services for children and young people and their families and through the establishment and maintenance of positive relationships.
- 8.13 If children and young people grow up in a more stable environment and are resilient in times of trauma then they will have more positive outcomes into adulthood. This issue will be considered further as part of the Safety and Stability outcome within data development to better understand how this resilience can be measured and improved.

Respect for the environment

- 8.14 The draft PfG includes population level indicators and measures on sustainability and environmental protection. These measures include improving air quality, increasing environmental sustainability and increasing household waste recycling. As these measures will impact on the entire population we do not need to repeat within this Strategy as the data will be the same.
- 8.15 However, an indicator focusing on the child or young person's views of the environment will be developed as part of the DDA. This will focus on the respect and understanding towards the environment of children and young people and will consider whether this diminishes as we get older.

Awareness of rights

- 8.16 The question relating to adult awareness of the UNCRC will be added to the NI Omnibus Survey. As part of the DDA, we may also consider how we collect data from children and young people from marginalised groups who feel that they have experienced a breach of their rights and how this was manifested.

Attitudes towards others

- 8.17 In future it would be useful to expand the indicator relating to attitudes towards others beyond the current Catholic/Protestant/Minority Ethnic Groups segments. This indicator should also consider views and opinions towards others of difference - this would extend to a range of groups under Section 75.

Shared spaces

- 8.18 Currently the indicator linked to shared spaces focuses on leisure centres, parks, libraries and shopping centres. We would wish to expand this indicator to gather the views of children and young people on shared education and shared housing.

Monitoring and Reporting

- 8.19 We will be developing OBA monitoring and reporting processes to report progress against each population outcome. Once the implementation plan has been produced for each of the outcomes report cards will be developed that outline the outcome to be achieved, the indicators being used (and baseline data) and how we will make progress or 'turn the curve'. Turning the curve refers to the actions we need to take to improve the well-being of children and young people.
- 8.20 Performance measures must also be developed to measure the impact of the actions being undertaken in the implementation plan and their contribution towards the population outcomes. As previously stated, this Strategy is subject to review; the outcomes, indicators and actions will be reviewed regularly using the OBA's Turning the Curve methodology.
- 8.21 We intend to have ongoing reporting and monitoring, utilising and sharing 'live data' as far as possible. The Children and Young People's Strategic

Partnership (CYPSP) has systems in place that produce data on a regular basis at a regional and local level.¹⁰³ This data will be monitored and will support analysis, scrutiny and review of this Strategy as well as how children's authorities are co-operating as required by the CSCA.

- 8.22 The Act requires the Strategy to be first reported on within 18 months of the date on which it is formally adopted by the Executive and then at intervals of no more than 3 years for the duration of the lifetime of the Strategy. A final report must be produced at the end of the Strategy.¹⁰⁴
- 8.23 The Act prescribes that each report must include statements on the following matters:¹⁰⁵
- what actions have been taken by the Executive and Departments for the purpose of achieving the set outcomes;
 - what progress has been made towards achieving these outcomes;
 - how relevant bodies have co-operated with each other to deliver services and improve well-being;
 - whether any relevant bodies have pooled budgets or shared resources to deliver upon the outcomes;
 - how the well-being of children and young people has improved;
 - any further areas for co-operation between relevant bodies;
 - any other ways in which the well-being of children and young people could be improved; and
 - any way in which the Strategy might be revised to contribute to improvements.
- 8.24 The report is designed to be a stocktake of progress against the eight outcomes essentially it should outline how the lives of children and young people have improved (or not) against the population outcomes during the reporting period.

¹⁰³ The CYPSP is a single multi-agency partnership of senior representation from Statutory/Voluntary/Community organisations, Councils and Government Departments involved in delivering services to children and families and covers all of Northern Ireland

¹⁰⁴ Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 s5 (5)(a)(b)(c)

¹⁰⁵ Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 s5 (3) and (4)

Equality, Human Rights and Rural Impact Screening

The Strategy, has been analysed for equality of opportunity and the need for an Equality Impact Assessment has been screened out (see Annex A). Although it is considered that there may be a minor impact on one or more of the equality of opportunities categories, this will be mitigated through screening of policies that are developed/revised in response to the Strategy.

The Strategy has been designed to create a framework for policy actions to improve the well-being of children and young people generally. It contains specific recommendations and headline actions, to achieve stated anticipated outputs.

Government Departments and their agencies, and other strategic partners, will contribute to the implementation of the Strategy through their own policy actions.

Equality Screening (and, if deemed appropriate) EQIAs will be carried out when policies are being developed/revised in response to the Strategy.

Further, it is considered that the Strategy will not have a detrimental impact on Human Rights or upon those living in rural areas. Again, the policies contributing to the implementation of the Strategy will be screened where appropriate to ensure that this is the case.

Glossary of Terms

The Act means the Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015.

BME means black, minority and ethnic.

BMI means Body Mass Index.

Children's authorities means those bodies listed under Section 9 of the Act.

CSE means child sexual exploitation.

CPP means Community Planning Partnerships.

CYPSP means the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

DAERA means the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

DfC means the Department for Communities.

DfE means the Department for the Economy.

DE means the Department of Education.

DoF means the Department of Finance.

DoH means the Department of Health.

DfI means the Department for Infrastructure.

DoJ means the Department of Justice.

DDA means Data Development Agenda.

DSC means Delivering Social Change.

DSRU means Dartington Social Research Unit.

FSME means Free School Meal Entitlement.

JCC means Juvenile Justice Centre.

KLT means the Kids' Life and Times Survey.

LAC means Looked After Child. A child or young person who is in the care of a Trust or who is provided with accommodation by a Trust.

LGB means Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual.

MARAC means Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference.

NCB means the National Children's Bureau.

NEET means children and young people not in education, employment or training.

NICCY means the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People.

NIHE means the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

OBA™ means Outcomes Based Accountability.

OFMDFM means the Department formerly known as the Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister, now known as the Executive Office.

Parents includes parents, carers and guardians.

PfG means Programme for Government.

Previous Strategy means the Children and Young People's Strategy - Our Pledge (2006-2016).

PSNI means Police Service of Northern Ireland.

RCPCH means the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

SEN means Special Educational Needs.

T:BUC means Together: Building a United Community.

TEO means the Executive Office.

UNCRC means the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

YLT means the Young Life and Times Survey.

YPBAS means Young person's behaviour and attitudes survey.

WHO means World Health Organisation.

Contributions

The following organisations contributed to the development of this Strategy:

Action Deaf Youth	Early Years - The Organisation for Young Children
Action for Children	Employers for Childcare
Angel Eyes NI	Equality Commission NI
Barnardo's (6 th Sense)	Extern
Barnardo's NI	Family Fund
Belfast City Council	Family Mediation NI
Belfast Healthy Cities	Focus: The Identity Trust
Blind Children UK	Fostering Network
Cedar Foundation	Gingerbread
Centre for Behaviour Analysis QUB	Girls Brigade NI
Centre for Effective Services	Greenway women's Centre
Child Brain Injury Trust	Guide Dogs
Children's Law Centre	Health and Social Care Board (HSCB)
Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI)	Include Youth
Children's Law Centre (CLC)	Inner East Youth Project
Code Monitoring NI	Kids Together Belfast
College of Occupational Therapists	Leonard Cheshire - Moving On
Conradh na Gaeilge	Lifestart Foundation Ltd
Consumer Council	Linking Generations NI
Contact a Family	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
Council for Homelessness NI	MACS Supporting Children and Young People
Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP)	MENCAP
Disability Action	National Deaf Children's Society
Disability Research Network at Queens University Belfast	National Children's Bureau (NCB)
Disability Sport NI	

NEET Strategy Forum	Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health Belfast
NEETS Forum	Rural Community Network
Nerve Centre	Safeguarding Board NI
Newry Sure Start	SAIL NI
Nexus NI	Save the Children
Northern Ireland Children's Enterprise	Scoutlink
Northern Ireland Policing Board	Sea Cadets
Northern Ireland Youth Forum	Sport Changes Life
Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY)	Springboard Opportunities Ltd
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)	Start 360
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)	Ulster University
Parenting NI	Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC)
Peace Players	Women's Aid
Playboard NI	Women's regional consortium
Positive Futures	Women's Support Network
Prince's Trust	Youth Council for Northern Ireland (YCNI)
Queens University Belfast	Young Enterprise NI
QUB (Disabled Children)	Youth Action NI
Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)	Youthlife
	Youthlink
	Youthnet

Annex A



**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY SCREENING
FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S STRATEGY**

Children and Young People's Strategy
Team

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Further advice on equality impact assessment may be found in the Equality Commission publication [Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment](#)

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1. POLICY SCOPING

1.1	Title of Policy
Children and Young People's Strategy	
1.2	Type of Policy Development
This is a New Policy	
1.3	Description of policy:
<p>The Children's Service Co-operation Act (the Act) received Royal Assent on 9th December 2015. The aim of the Act is to improve co-operation amongst Departments and Agencies as they deliver services aimed at improving the well-being of children and young people.</p> <p>The Act requires the Executive to develop and adopt a strategy which sets the strategic direction with a view to achieving improvements in the well-being of children and young people in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The Act also requires the Executive to make arrangements to promote co-operation and places a duty on Children's authorities (which, as defined by the Act, includes Northern Ireland Departments, Councils, Health and Social Care Trusts, the Regional Health and Social Care Board, the Regional Agency for Public Health and Social Well-being, the Education Authority, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland) and other children's service providers to co-operate where appropriate.</p> <p>The Children and Young People's Strategy is being developed both in response to statutory requirement, and because the current ten year strategy for children and young people for the period 2006-2016 – Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge (https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/ofmdfm_dev/ten-year-strategy.pdf) is coming to an end.</p> <p>The aims/desired outcomes of the Children and Young People's Strategy mirror 8 factors that have been identified as having an impact on the wellbeing of children and young people as set out in the Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Physical and mental healthb) The enjoyment of play and leisurec) Learning and achievementd) Living in safety and with stability	

e) Economic and environmental well-being

f) The making by them of a positive contribution to society

g) Living in a society which respects their rights

h) Living in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share that characteristic (in this section, 'relevant characteristic' means a characteristic mentioned in any of the Paragraphs (a) to (d) of Section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Programme for Government (PfG) Framework is the highest level strategic document of the Executive. It sets out the priorities that the Executive will pursue in the current Assembly mandate, and the most significant actions it will take to address them.

A key outcome in the draft PfG Framework for 2016-2021 (May 2016) that directly relates to the Children and Young People's Strategy is No 14 – We Give our Children and Young People the Best Start in Life.

1.4 What factors could contribute to, or detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy? (Please click on relevant boxes)

None	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legislative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Financial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Others (please specify) Click here to insert text.	

1.5 Main stakeholders affected (Please click on relevant boxes)

Pupils (Actual or Potential)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teaching Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Trade Unions or Professional Organisations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other Public Sector Organisations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Departmental Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Others (please specify) The Executive, the NI Assembly, children and young people and their parents/guardians, children's authorities (as described at section 1.3) and other children's service providers.	

1.6 Who is responsible for?

(a) Devising the policy

The Department of Education, on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive.

(b) Implementing it

The Department of Education and other NI Departments, Children's authorities and other children's service providers.

(c) Explain the relationship?

The Department of Education is responsible for setting the strategic policy direction in respect of improving the well-being of children and young people in Northern Ireland on behalf of the NI Executive.

Children's authorities (which, as defined by the Act, include Northern Ireland Departments, Councils, Health and Social Care Trusts, the Regional Health and Social Care Board, the Regional Agency for Public Health and Social Well-being, the Education Authority, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland) and other children's service providers will comply with the new duties set out in the Act, and will contribute to the implementation of the Strategy where this falls within their remit.

1.7 Other policies or objectives with a bearing on this policy

The Children and Young People's Strategy is wide ranging and, as such, a range of policy instruments will have a bearing on it:

International: European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR); UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC); Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child; UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

Wider Government: A range of other policies and objectives have a bearing on the Children and Young People's Strategy including:

Children's Services Co-operation Act (NI) 2015,
Human Rights Act 1998,
14-19 policy,
Children's Order NI (2005),
draft Programme for Government Framework 2016-2021,
Social Framework,
Investment Framework,
Economic Framework,
Early Intervention Transformation Programme,
Delivering Social Change Framework (including children and young persons early actions document),
Child Poverty Strategy,
Disability Strategy,
Racial Equality Strategy,

Department of Education: Childcare Strategy, Sharing Works: A Policy for Shared Education, the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Act (NI) 2016, Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, 14-19 Policy, Play and Leisure Policy, and the range of strategies and policies under the 'Every School A Good School' policy.

2. EVIDENCE

2.1 What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy in respect of each of the categories?	
Section 75 Category	Details of Evidence/Information
Religious Belief	<p>The Children's Services Co-operation Act stipulates that the Executive must develop and adopt a Strategy that sets out how it proposes to improve the well-being of children and young people. A key factor contributing to their well-being, according to the Act, is living in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share that characteristic. The term 'relevant characteristic' as used in the Act means a characteristic mentioned in any of the paragraphs (a) to (d) of section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act. As such, the development of the Strategy is tied directly to Section 75 categories.</p> <p>The strategy has been developed using an open and inclusive co-design process. As part of this process a wide range of stakeholders have been consulted to gauge their opinions, to identify the issues that matter to them and to suggest ways in which the Strategy could be developed to meet the needs of children and young people, and to improve their well-being.</p> <p>A key Strategic outcome is a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted. When policies are being developed/revised in light of the Strategy they will be subject to Equality screening and EQIA (if appropriate). Evidence on Section 75 data will be gathered to inform such policy development.</p>
Political Opinion	<p>The Children's Services Co-operation Act stipulates that the Executive must develop and adopt a Strategy that sets out how it proposes to improve the well-being of children and young people. A key factor contributing to their well-being, according to the Act, is living in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share that characteristic. The term 'relevant characteristic' as used in the Act means a characteristic mentioned in any of the paragraphs (a) to (d) of section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act. As such, the development of the Strategy is tied directly to Section 75 categories.</p> <p>The strategy has been developed using an open and inclusive co-design process. As part of this process a wide range of stakeholders have been consulted to gauge their opinions, to identify the issues that matter to them and to suggest ways in which the Strategy could be developed to meet the needs of children and young people, and to improve their well-being.</p>

	<p>When policies are being developed/revise in light of the Strategy they will be subject to Equality screening and EQIA (if appropriate). Evidence on Section 75 data will be gathered to inform such policy development.</p>
Racial Group	<p>The Children's Services Co-operation Act stipulates that the Executive must develop and adopt a Strategy that sets out how it proposes to improve the well-being of children and young people. A key factor contributing to their well-being, according to the Act, is living in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share that characteristic. The term 'relevant characteristic' as used in the Act means a characteristic mentioned in any of the paragraphs (a) to (d) of section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act. As such, the development of the Strategy is tied directly to Section 75 categories.</p> <p>The strategy has been developed using an open and inclusive engagement process. As part of this process a wide range of stakeholders have been consulted to gauge their opinions, to identify the issues that matter to them and to suggest ways in which the Strategy could be developed to meet the needs of children and young people, and to improve their well-being.</p> <p>A key Strategic outcome is a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted. When policies are being developed/revise in light of the Strategy they will be subject to Equality screening and EQIA (if appropriate). Evidence on Section 75 data will be gathered to inform such policy development.</p>
Age	<p>The Children's Services Co-operation Act stipulates that the Executive must develop and adopt a Strategy that sets out how it proposes to improve the well-being of children and young people. A key factor contributing to their well-being, according to the Act, is living in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share that characteristic. The term 'relevant characteristic' as used in the Act means a characteristic mentioned in any of the paragraphs (a) to (d) of section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act. As such, the development of the Strategy is tied directly to Section 75 categories.</p> <p>The strategy has been developed using an open and inclusive engagement process. As part of this process a wide range of stakeholders have been consulted to gauge their opinions, to identify the issues that matter to them and to suggest ways in which the Strategy could be developed to meet the needs of children and young people, and to improve their well-being.</p> <p>A key Strategic outcome is a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted. When policies are being developed/revise in light of the Strategy they will be subject to Equality screening and EQIA (if appropriate). Evidence on Section 75 data will be gathered to inform such policy development.</p>

<p>Marital Status</p>	<p>The Children’s Services Co-operation Act stipulates that the Executive must develop and adopt a Strategy that sets out how it proposes to improve the well-being of children and young people. A key factor contributing to their well-being, according to the Act, is living in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share that characteristic. The term ‘relevant characteristic’ as used in the Act means a characteristic mentioned in any of the paragraphs (a) to (d) of section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act. As such, the development of the Strategy is tied directly to Section 75 categories.</p> <p>The strategy has been developed using an open and inclusive co-design process. As part of this process a wide range of stakeholders have been consulted to gauge their opinions, to identify the issues that matter to them and to suggest ways in which the Strategy could be developed to meet the needs of children and young people, and to improve their well-being.</p> <p>A key Strategic outcome is a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted.</p> <p>When policies are being developed/revised in light of the Strategy they will be subject to Equality screening and EQIA (if appropriate). Evidence on Section 75 data will be gathered to inform such policy development.</p>
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>The Children’s Services Co-operation Act stipulates that the Executive must develop and adopt a Strategy that sets out how it proposes to improve the well-being of children and young people. A key factor contributing to their well-being, according to the Act, is living in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share that characteristic. The term ‘relevant characteristic’ as used in the Act means a characteristic mentioned in any of the paragraphs (a) to (d) of section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act. As such, the development of the Strategy is tied directly to Section 75 categories.</p> <p>The strategy has been developed using an open and inclusive co-design process. As part of this process a wide range of stakeholders have been consulted to gauge their opinions, to identify the issues that matter to them and to suggest ways in which the Strategy could be developed to meet the needs of children and young people, and to improve their well-being.</p> <p>A key Strategic outcome is a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted. When policies are being developed/revised in light of the Strategy they will be subject to Equality screening and EQIA (if appropriate). Evidence on Section 75 data will be gathered to inform such policy development.</p>
<p>Men And</p>	

<p>Women Generally</p>	<p>The Children's Services Co-operation Act stipulates that the Executive must develop and adopt a Strategy that sets out how it proposes to improve the well-being of children and young people. A key factor contributing to their well-being, according to the Act, is living in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share that characteristic. The term 'relevant characteristic' as used in the Act means a characteristic mentioned in any of the paragraphs (a) to (d) of section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act. As such, the development of the Strategy is tied directly to Section 75 categories.</p> <p>The strategy has been developed using an open and inclusive engagement process. As part of this process a wide range of stakeholders have been consulted to gauge their opinions, to identify the issues that matter to them and to suggest ways in which the Strategy could be developed to meet the needs of children and young people, and to improve their well-being.</p> <p>A key Strategic outcome is a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted. When policies are being developed/revised in light of the Strategy they will be subject to Equality screening and EQIA (if appropriate). Evidence on Section 75 data will be gathered to inform such policy development.</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>The Children's Services Co-operation Act stipulates that the Executive must develop and adopt a Strategy that sets out how it proposes to improve the well-being of children and young people. A key factor contributing to their well-being, according to the Act, is living in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share that characteristic. The term 'relevant characteristic' as used in the Act means a characteristic mentioned in any of the paragraphs (a) to (d) of section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act. As such, the development of the Strategy is tied directly to Section 75 categories.</p> <p>The strategy has been developed using an open and inclusive engagement process. As part of this process a wide range of stakeholders have been consulted to gauge their opinions, to identify the issues that matter to them and to suggest ways in which the Strategy could be developed to meet the needs of children and young people, and to improve their well-being.</p> <p>A key Strategic outcome is a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted. When policies are being developed/revised in light of the Strategy they will be subject to Equality screening and EQIA (if appropriate). Evidence on Section 75 data will be gathered to inform such policy development.</p>
<p>Dependants</p>	<p>The Children's Services Co-operation Act stipulates that the Executive must</p>

	<p>develop and adopt a Strategy that sets out how it proposes to improve the well-being of children and young people. A key factor contributing to their well-being, according to the Act, is living in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share that characteristic. The term ‘relevant characteristic’ as used in the Act means a characteristic mentioned in any of the paragraphs (a) to (d) of section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act. As such, the development of the Strategy is tied directly to Section 75 categories.</p> <p>The strategy has been developed using an open and inclusive engagement process. As part of this process a wide range of stakeholders have been consulted to gauge their opinions, to identify the issues that matter to them and to suggest ways in which the Strategy could be developed to meet the needs of children and young people, and to improve their well-being. A key Strategic outcome is a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted.</p> <p>A key Strategic outcome is a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted. When policies are being developed/revised in light of the Strategy they will be subject to Equality screening and EQIA (if appropriate). Evidence on Section 75 data will be gathered to inform such policy development.</p>
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2.2 Taking into account the evidence gathered at 2.1 what are the needs, experiences and priorities of each category in relation to this particular policy?	
Section 75 category	Needs/Experiences/Uptake/Priorities
Religious Belief	This is a Strategy for the benefit of all children and young people, not one defined by reference to a particular Section 75 category. The Strategy itself is not a 'policy' in the strictest sense. It is a framework for policy actions to improve the well-being of children and young people generally. It contains specific recommendations and headline actions, and anticipated outputs. These will be implemented by Government Departments and their agencies and other Strategic partners where appropriate. Detailed impact assessments will be appropriate when policy actions arising from the Strategy are being developed/revised.
Political Opinion	As above.
Racial Group	As above.
Age	As above.
Marital Status	As above.
Sexual Orientation	As above.
Men And Women Generally	As above.
Disability	As above.
Dependants	As above.

3. SCREENING QUESTIONS:

3.1 What is the likely impact of this policy on equality of opportunity for each of the Section 75 equality categories?		
Section 75 category	Level of Impact?	Details of policy impact
Religious belief	MINOR	<p>One of the key outcomes the Children and Young People's Strategy seeks to achieve is that children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted. The Strategy sets the direction of travel for policy makers, Programme developers and service providers to achieve improvements across all Section 75 equality categories where appropriate.</p> <p>It is therefore anticipated that the impact of the Strategy (realized through subsequent policies/programmes etc) will be positive. However, policies being developed/revised in light of the Strategy will be subject to screening and, if appropriate EQIA to ensure that this is the case.</p>
Political opinion	MINOR	<p>One of the key outcomes the Children and Young People's Strategy seeks to achieve is that children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted. The Strategy sets the direction of travel for policy makers, Programme developers and service providers to achieve improvements across all Section 75 equality categories where appropriate.</p> <p>It is therefore anticipated that the impact of the Strategy (realized through subsequent policies/programmes etc) will be positive. However, policies being developed/revised in light of the Strategy will be subject to screening and, if appropriate EQIA to ensure that this is the case.</p>
Racial group	MINOR	<p>One of the key outcomes the Children and Young People's Strategy seeks to achieve is that children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted. The Strategy sets the direction of travel for policy makers, Programme developers and service providers to achieve improvements across all Section 75 equality categories where appropriate.</p> <p>It is therefore anticipated that the impact of the Strategy (realized through subsequent policies/programmes etc) will</p>

		<p>be positive. However, policies being developed/ revised in light of the Strategy will be subject to screening and, if appropriate EQIA to ensure that this is the case.</p>
Age	MINOR	<p>One of the key outcomes the Children and Young People's Strategy seeks to achieve is that children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted. The Strategy sets the direction of travel for policy makers, Programme developers and service providers to achieve improvements across all Section 75 equality categories where appropriate.</p> <p>It is therefore anticipated that the impact of the Strategy (realized through subsequent policies/programmes etc) will be positive. However, policies being developed/ revised in light of the Strategy will be subject to screening and, if appropriate EQIA to ensure that this is the case.</p>
Marital status	MINOR	<p>One of the key outcomes the Children and Young People's Strategy seeks to achieve is that children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted. The Strategy sets the direction of travel for policy makers, Programme developers and service providers to achieve improvements across all Section 75 equality categories where appropriate.</p> <p>It is therefore anticipated that the impact of the Strategy (realized through subsequent policies/programmes etc) will be positive. However, policies being developed/ revised in light of the Strategy will be subject to screening and, if appropriate EQIA to ensure that this is the case.</p>
Sexual Orientation	MINOR	<p>One of the key outcomes the Children and Young People's Strategy seeks to achieve is that children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted. The Strategy sets the direction of travel for policy makers, Programme developers and service providers to achieve improvements across all Section 75 equality categories where appropriate.</p> <p>It is therefore anticipated that the impact of the Strategy (realized through subsequent policies/programmes etc) will be positive. However, policies being developed/ revised in light of the Strategy will be subject to screening and, if appropriate EQIA to ensure that this is the case.</p>

<p>Men and Women generally</p>	<p>MINOR</p>	<p>One of the key outcomes the Children and Young People’s Strategy seeks to achieve is that children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted. The Strategy sets the direction of travel for policy makers, Programme developers and service providers to achieve improvements across all Section 75 equality categories where appropriate.</p> <p>It is therefore anticipated that the impact of the Strategy (realized through subsequent policies/programmes etc) will be positive. However, policies being developed/revised in light of the Strategy will be subject to screening and, if appropriate EQIA to ensure that this is the case.</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>MINOR</p>	<p>One of the key outcomes the Children and Young People’s Strategy seeks to achieve is that children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted. The Strategy sets the direction of travel for policy makers, Programme developers and service providers to achieve improvements across all Section 75 equality categories where appropriate.</p> <p>It is therefore anticipated that the impact of the Strategy (realized through subsequent policies/programmes etc) will be positive. However, policies being developed/revised in light of the Strategy will be subject to screening and, if appropriate EQIA to ensure that this is the case.</p>
<p>Dependants</p>	<p>MINOR</p>	<p>One of the key outcomes the Children and Young People’s Strategy seeks to achieve is that children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity is promoted. The Strategy sets the direction of travel for policy makers, Programme developers and service providers to achieve improvements across all Section 75 equality categories where appropriate.</p> <p>It is therefore anticipated that the impact of the Strategy (realized through subsequent policies/programmes etc) will be positive. However, policies being developed/revised in light of the Strategy will be subject to screening and, if appropriate EQIA to ensure that this is the case.</p>

3.2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?		
Section 75 category	YES/NO	Provide Details
Religious belief	YES	The Children and Young People's Strategy recognizes that, to improve the well-being of children and young people in Northern Ireland it is necessary to take action to ensure that they are treated fairly and equally (across all Section 75 categories), and have improved attitudes towards children and young people from different community backgrounds. It sets out the strategic direction for children's Departments and their agencies, and other Strategic partners to follow when developing/revising their policies. A key aspect of this work will involve promoting equality of opportunity where appropriate.
Political opinion	YES	As above.
Racial group	YES	As above
Age	YES	As above
Marital status	YES	As above
Sexual Orientation	YES	As above
Men and Women generally	YES	As above
Disability	YES	As above
Dependants	YES	As above

3.3 To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between: people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?		
Good relations category	Impact	Details of policy impact
Religious belief	MINOR	<p>One of the key outcomes the Children and Young People's Strategy seeks to achieve is that children and young people live in a society in which good relations are promoted, as this will in turn serve to improve their well-being. The Strategy sets the direction of travel for policy makers, Programme developers and service providers to achieve improvements where appropriate.</p> <p>This being the case, it is anticipated that the impact of the Strategy (realized through subsequent policies/programmes etc) will be positive.</p>
Political opinion	MINOR	<p>One of the key outcomes the Children and Young People's Strategy seeks to achieve is that children and young people live in a society in which good relations are promoted, as this will in turn serve to improve their well-being. The Strategy sets the direction of travel for policy makers, Programme developers and service providers to achieve improvements where appropriate.</p> <p>This being the case, it is anticipated that the impact of the Strategy (realized through subsequent policies/programmes etc) will be positive.</p>
Racial group	MINOR	<p>One of the key outcomes the Children and Young People's Strategy seeks to achieve is that children and young people live in a society in which good relations are promoted, as this will in turn serve to improve their well-being. The Strategy sets the direction of travel for policy makers, Programme developers and service providers to achieve improvements where appropriate.</p> <p>This being the case, it is anticipated that the impact of the Strategy (realized through subsequent policies/programmes etc) will be positive.</p>

3.4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Good relations category	YES/NO*	Provide Details
Religious belief	YES	One of the key outcomes the Children and Young People's Strategy seeks to achieve is that children and young people live in a society in which good relations are promoted, as this will in turn serve to improve their well-being. The Strategy sets the direction of travel for policy makers, Programme developers and service providers to achieve improvements where appropriate.
Political opinion	YES	One of the key outcomes the Children and Young People's Strategy seeks to achieve is that children and young people live in a society in which good relations are promoted, as this will in turn serve to improve their well-being. The Strategy sets the direction of travel for policy makers, Programme developers and service providers to achieve improvements where appropriate.
Racial group	YES	One of the key outcomes the Children and Young People's Strategy seeks to achieve is that children and young people live in a society in which good relations are promoted, as this will in turn serve to improve their well-being. The Strategy sets the direction of travel for policy makers, Programme developers and service providers to achieve improvements where appropriate.

3.5 Additional considerations - Multiple identities

Please provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities and specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

The Children and Young People's Strategy applies to all children and young people across the Section 75 categories. As such, it encompasses those individuals with multiple identities.

4. SCREENING DECISION

Not to conduct an equality impact assessment; although there is a minor impact, on one or more of the equality of opportunities and/or good relations categories but mitigation/alternative of policies will offset the minor adverse impact(s).

Details which support the screening decision

Choose an item.

In accordance with the requirements of the Children's Services Co-operation Act 2015, the Children and Young People's Strategy has been developed in cognisance of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The Strategy is also mindful of the UK State Party Fifth Periodic Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and alternative reports to the UN, prepared by the Children's Commissioners, Non-governmental organizations, NI Human Rights Commission and children and young people themselves. The concluding observations from the most recent UN examination have also been considered in drafting the Strategy.

These various sources of information highlight the ongoing barriers to well-being and rights that our children and young people face. The Children's and Young People's Strategy sets the strategic direction with a view to improving the well-being of children and young people, and, in part, seeks to help address the barriers and inequalities children and young people face.

Two of the 8 key desired Strategic outcomes relate specifically to Human Rights and Equality:

'Living in a society which respects their rights' and

'Living in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share that characteristic'.

The Strategy sets the strategic direction for improvements in the well-being of all children and young people, and will not serve in any way to impact adversely on equality of opportunity or human rights.

As the aim of the Children and Young People's Strategy is to provide strategic direction and to steer policies to ensure that they are geared to improving the

well-being of children and young people where appropriate, new or revised policies will be individually assessed by the responsible department/public authority in relation to their Section 75 obligations.

In other words, any potential impact of individual projects, programmes, policies or services undertaken in support of the implementation of the Children and Young People's Strategy will be assessed on a case by case basis.

5. TIMETABLING AND PRIORITISING

5.1 NOT APPLICABLE AS POLICY SCREENED OUT

Criterion	Priority Rating
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	NA
Social need	NA
Effect on people's daily lives	NA
Relevance to a public authority's functions	NA
Total	NA

5.2 If the policy is affected by timetables established by other relevant Public Authorities please provide details

N/A

Note: Details of the Department's Equality Impact Assessment Timetable will be included in a Quarterly Screening Report.

6. MITIGATION

If you conclude that the likely impact is ‘**minor**’ and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, you should consider: mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Why and how will the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

The Children and Young People’s Strategy provides the strategic direction for children’s authorities and other children’s service providers, their policy-makers, programme developers and service delivery partners to deliver improvements in the well-being of children and young people in Northern Ireland. The intent of the Strategy is clearly one whose aims in relation to equality of opportunity and good relations are intended to be positive.

However, where appropriate, Equality Screening (and if deemed appropriate) EQIAs will be carried out when policies are being developed/revised in response to the Strategy.

7. MONITORING

Effective monitoring will help identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

Please detail what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the effect of the policy on any of Section 75 equality categories

The Children and Young People's Strategy seeks to deliver tangible outcomes relating to equality of opportunity and the realization of the rights of children and young people.

The Strategy will be monitored throughout its lifetime to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

As highlighted previously, the Strategy is not a policy in the strictest sense. Rather, it provides the strategic direction for policy makers. It will be for those developing/revising policy in light of the Strategy to ensure that effective monitoring processes are in place to identify any future adverse effects arising from any policies they develop/revise in light of the Strategy.

8. DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

8.1 Please state if the policy/decision in any way discourages persons with disabilities from participating in public life or fails to promote positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

The Children and Young People's Strategy will in no way discourage persons with disabilities from participating in public life or fail to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities. In fact, the Strategy seeks to achieve improvements in the well-being of children and young people in Northern Ireland and to address barriers that prevent them from reaching their full potential.

8.2 Please state if there is an opportunity to better promote positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities or encourage participation in public life by making changes to the policy/decision or introducing additional measures.

Development of the Children and Young People's Strategy has been informed through a co-design process that has seen officials from the Department actively engaging with a large number of stakeholders to gauge their concerns and opinions about issues that affect children and young people, and their suggestions as to how the Strategy could be used to effect improvements in their well-being.

8.3 Please detail what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the effect of the policy with reference to the disability duties.

The Children and Young People's Strategy is not a policy in the strictest sense of the word. The Strategy provides the strategic direction through which policies can be developed/revised to better meet the needs of children and young people. It will be for those Departments under whose remit individual policies fall to ensure that data is collected to monitor the effects of their own policies with reference to the disability duties.

9 CONSIDERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

9.1 How does the policy/decision affect anyone's Human Rights?	
The Human Rights Act (1998)	Positive Impact
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)	Positive Impact
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)	Positive Impact
The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	Positive Impact
Other,(please state here)	Choose

9.2 If you have identified a negative impact who is affected and how?
N/A

9.3 Outline any actions which could be taken to promote or raise awareness of human rights or to ensure compliance with the legislation in relation to the policy/decision.

The Children’s Services Co-operation Act (2015) brings into domestic legislation a requirement to have regard to the relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child when determining the meaning of the term ‘well-being’ as it relates to children and young people. It also states that one of the factors contributing to well-being of children and young people is living in a society which respects their rights.

Improving the rights of children is therefore a key driver behind the Children and Young People’s Strategy – in fact a key outcome anticipated through implementation of the Strategy is that ‘all children and young people are aware of their rights and feel that they are respected’.

The Children and Young People’s Strategy will, in turn, seek to encourage strategic partners to promote human rights awareness with the aim of ensuring that all children and young people are aware of their rights and feel that they are respected. Appropriate indicators and measures will be developed to ensure that this aspect of the Strategy is being appropriately implemented and can be monitored effectively.

10 CONSIDERATION OF RURAL IMPACTS

Guidance on Rural Impact Assessment can be found in:
[Thinking Rural: The Essential Guide to Rural Proofing](#)

10.1 Is there potentially a direct, or indirect, impact on rural areas?	NO
10.2 If YES please attach a DARD Rural Issues Statement Pro-forma (The Pro-forma can be found in TRIM Document DE1/14/117152)	

11 APPROVAL AND AUTHORISATION

Screened by:	Position	Date
Andrea Kelly	Staff Officer, CYPST	14/09/2016
Approved by:	Position	Date
June Wilkinson	Head of Children and Young People's Strategy Team	31/10/2016

FOR COMPLETION BY EQUALITY TEAM		
Screening Decision	Agreed	
Quality Assured by:	Richard Magowan	10/11/2016
Click here to enter comments.		
Date Directorate/Team Informed:	10/11/2016	

FOR COMPLETION BY POLICY TEAM	
TRIM Ref No.	N/A
Date screening form placed on Internet by policy team	19/12/2016
Date email sent to S75 Consultees by policy team	19/12/2016



**Children and
Young People's Strategy
2017-2027
Consultation Document**