



northern ireland commissioner
for children and young people

NICCY Business Plan 2012 – 2013

Context

The Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) was established under the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. NICCY is an executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

The Commissioner's full designated powers took effect from 1 October 2003. The current Commissioner is Patricia Lewsley-Mooney, and she was appointed on 8 January 2007 for a 4 year term. Ms Lewsley-Mooney has subsequently been re-appointed for a second term as Commissioner, to act in this role until January 2015.

Vision

NICCY's Vision is:

**"A society in Northern Ireland where all children and young people flourish,
are valued and their views are respected."**

Mission

NICCY's Mission is:

"To safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people".

STATUTORY DUTIES AND POWERS OF THE COMMISSIONER

Article 7 of the 2003 Order which outlines the duties of the Commissioner is paraphrased below:

- A. To promote an awareness and understanding of the rights and best interests of children and young persons.
- B. To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice relating to the rights and welfare of children and young persons.
- C. To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided for children and young persons by relevant authorities.
- D. To advise government and relevant authorities on matters concerning the rights or best interests of children and young persons.
- E. To communicate effectively with children and young persons and their parents and raise awareness of the function and location of the Commissioner and how they can contact her.
- F. To seek the views of children and young persons in exercising her functions.
- G. To make the services of the Commissioner available to children and young people in their local area

Articles 8-15 outline the Commissioner's general powers where she can:

- A. Undertake, commission or provide financial or other assistance for, research or educational activities concerning the rights or best interests of children and young persons or the exercise of her functions.
- B. Issue guidance on best practice in relation to any matter concerning the rights or best interests of children or young persons.
- C. Conduct investigations as she considers necessary or expedient to meet her duties listed above.
- D. Compile information, provide advice and publish any matter (including research, educational activities, investigations and advice) concerning the rights and best interests of children and young persons.
- E. Make representations or recommendations to any body or person relating to the rights and best interests of children and young persons.
- F. Assist with complaints to relevant authorities.
- G. Bring, intervene in or assist in legal proceedings.

Corporate Plan 2011-14

The Corporate Plan 2011-14 links directly to the statutory duties and powers of the Commissioner for Children and Young People as enshrined within the legislation which established the Commissioner, the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

This plan describes the general policy, legislative and economic framework within which NICCY operates and sets out the key strategic and corporate objectives to be achieved within the 3 year period. These objectives are:

Corporate Objective 1	Raise awareness of children's rights and the functions of the Commissioner amongst children, parents and other stakeholders.
Corporate Objective 2	Review and advise Government on policies, services and legislation relating to children's rights
Corporate Objective 3	Use the Commissioner's powers to challenge breaches of children and young people's rights
Corporate Objective 4	Ascertain the views of children and young people in relation to issues which affect their lives
Corporate Objective 5	Maximise NICCY's impact and corporate performance

Business Plan 2011-12

This Business Plan links directly to the Corporate Plan 2011-14. It is a more specific and focused document. As such, it identifies the key programmes of work to be implemented and the key targets to be met during the course of the year. The purpose of the Business Plan is to ensure and clearly demonstrate required progress towards the achievement of the Corporate Plan priority objectives within the appropriate timescale. Responsibility for this Business Plan rests with the Commissioner, implementation and monitoring of which rests with the Chief Executive. Progress towards the achievement of these targets and objectives will be monitored closely and reported on throughout the financial year. The Chief Executive will update and refine the Performance Management Framework to ensure appropriate recording of same.

This Business Plan will be supported by more detailed departmental plans and by individual work plans/individual development plans, which taken together assist staff to understand NICCY's overall corporate and business objectives and the role that each plays in contributing to NICCY safeguarding and promoting the rights and best interests of children and young people.

Resource Assumptions

This Business Plan has been prepared on the basis of the assumptions that it will be delivered within NICCY's approved staffing levels and resources as provided via Grant-in-Aid from OFMDFM. NICCY recognises the strategic importance of the involvement of children and young people in all aspects of its business. Children and young people's involvement and participation is embedded throughout each of the corporate and business objectives where appropriate/possible. NICCY acknowledges the requirement for this plan to be flexible to take account of changing priorities and circumstances, both from the internal and external environment. This plan will also be flexible in taking account of any decisions emanating from the current Review of Arms Length Bodies.

Business Objective Number 1:

Raise awareness of children's rights and the functions of the Commissioner amongst children, parents and other stakeholders.

Actions	Targets	Links to statutory duties
1.1 Assess stakeholder awareness in order to produce corporate stakeholder and engagement programme	Establish baseline data and plan, as appropriate, stakeholder awareness programme for 2012/13 and 2013/14 Review Commissioner's Corporate Identity	A
1.2 Deliver the corporate stakeholder and engagement programme to key stakeholders	Implement project plans for 5 key stakeholder groups:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people • Parents • Media • Politicians NGOs and others	A,E
	Celebrate best practice by government departments / public bodies/local councils by launching 2 nd Participation Awards Scheme	A, E
	Continued development of online NICCY resources (5% (i.e. approx 500) increase in web traffic)	A, E
	Monitor Government Departments which have endorsed the Participation Policy Statement of Intent on details of how they have been engaging with C&YP Expand the scope of the Participation Policy Statement of Intent to public bodies associated with NICCY's priority areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Councils • Department of Health • Department of Education • Department of Justice • OFMdFM • NDPBs and ALBs 20% or 12 public bodies signed up.	A,E

Business Objective Number 1: Raise awareness of children's rights and the functions of the Commissioner amongst children, parents and other stakeholders.		
1.3 Build capacity of key government representatives (including children's champions and key civil servants) to effectively implement the UNCRC)	Finalise guidance on developing child rights compliant policies and strategies.	A, D
	Engage with Departments to influence adoption of a child rights approach to developing policies for children	A, D
	Influence and deliver training to key civil servants in the 4 priority areas in relation to producing child rights compliant policies and strategies.	A, D
1.4 Build capacity of service delivery organisations on the effective implementation of the UNCRC.	<p>Deliver a Train the Trainers programme to stakeholders in each of the following sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education • youth work • health <p>Explore new sectors where the Train the Trainers model can be implemented.</p> <p>Data gathered for delivery of programme in year 3</p>	A, E
1.5 Further develop legal education programme to include more educational establishments	Educational lectures and seminars delivered to newly identified educational establishments, and other legal audiences to include 1 CPD event held for legal practitioners.	A, E
1.6 Develop and pilot Children's Rights Information Service (CRIS) for legal professionals.	<p>Provide legal professionals with timely information around UNCRC and recent developments in jurisprudence regarding children's rights, by email/letter /telephone/meeting when requested via the CRIS referral service.</p> <p>Carry out an evaluation on the pilot service and produce an evaluation report regarding CRIS for SMT.</p>	A,E
1.7 Continue with legal outreach programme to stakeholders	Outreach clinics held on at least 3 occasions throughout the year.	A, E

Business Objective Number 2 :

Review and advise Government on policies, services and legislation relating to children's rights and best interests.

Actions	Targets	Links to statutory duties
2.1 Monitor and advise the Executive and the Assembly on the delivery of the Programme for Government (including the Delivering Social Change Framework) and development of policies, services and legislation relating to children's rights and best interests	Education priority: Provide advice on key issues relating to education including ESA, Shared Education and SEN to key stakeholders including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Education • Statutory Bodies • Assembly Committees Political representatives	A, B, C, D
	Health priority: Provide advice on key issues relating to health including safeguarding (including work on the Safeguarding Board, separated children and CMRs), mental health and capacity and transitions to adult services for young people with learning disabilities, to key stakeholders including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Health • Statutory Bodies • Assembly Committees Political representatives	A, B, C, D
	Justice priority: Provide advice on key issues relating to youth justice including the Youth Justice Review, community safety, and the role of significant adults in preventing offending behaviour, to key stakeholders including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Justice • Statutory Bodies • Assembly Committees Political representatives	A, B, C, D
	OFMDFM priority: Provide advice on key issues relating to OFMDFM areas including child rights implementation, Child Poverty (to include impact of Welfare reform and Childcare Strategy) and Equality Legislation relating to age discrimination in Goods Facilities and Services, to key stakeholders including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OFMDFM • Statutory bodies • Assembly Committees • political representatives 	A, B, C, D

Business Objective Number 2 :

Review and advise Government on policies, services and legislation relating to children's rights and best interests.

Actions	Targets	Links to statutory duties
	Complete a report reviewing developments in relation to relevant policies, legislation and services and to Year 1 of the PFG for each of the 4 key Departments, and disseminate to Ministers, Committee, Department and other key stakeholders.	A, B, C, D
2.2 Provide analysis of government expenditure to monitor the effects of current provision and impact of cuts on children	Develop partnership project and produce two updates identifying how budget cuts are affecting children	A, B, C, D
	Commission an analysis of Public Expenditure in NI, comparing it to other parts of the UK (to be completed and disseminated in Yr 3)	A, B, C, D
2.3 Produce and disseminate research reports on critical child rights issues	Complete and disseminate all research reports commissioned in Yr 1.	A, B, C, D
	Commission/conduct new research in order to inform advice to Government on critical priority areas where the need arises.	A, B, C, D
2.4 Work with BINOCC to prepare for reporting to the UNCRC	Develop plan, in conjunction with the other UK Commissioners, to report to the UN Committee	A, B, C, D
2.5 Continue to strengthen children's rights internationally to strengthen domestic implementation	Contribute to children's rights development work with:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BINOCC • ENOC • Council of Europe • United Nations Prepare plans to intervene in UNCRPD reporting process	A,B,C,F
2.6 Develop proposals for legislation to implement children's rights in Northern Ireland	Produce and disseminate a briefing paper outlining a proposal for a Child Rights Bill	A, B, D
	Establish a Child Rights Implementation Group to build cross-sectoral engagement on child rights implementation.	A, B, D
	Scope areas that could be included in legislation to strengthen implementation of children's rights.	A, B, D

Business Objective Number 3 :

Use the Commissioner's powers to challenge breaches of children and young people's rights.

Actions	Targets	Links to statutory duties
3.1 Continue to seek to identify matters appropriate for investigation by identifying gaps in service provision or legal loopholes through legal and casework function	Continue to maintain an active casework service to provide advice, opinion, direction, analysis and resolution regarding potential breaches of children and young people's rights, which are referred to us by CY&P, parents, carers and others via our casework function and use powers of investigation as and where it is appropriate	F
	Intervene where appropriate in legal cases which concern children's rights	G
	Take strategic legal cases where appropriate, to highlight potential breaches of children's rights and challenge same.	G

Business Objective Number 4 : Ascertain the views of children and young people in relation to issues which affect their lives.		
Actions	Targets	Links to statutory duties
4.1 Ascertain the views of children and young people to inform relevant Business Plan actions.	Complete an internal review of the involvement of children and young people.	F
	Develop internal c&yp participation screening process, policy and plan for use by NICCY staff.	
4.2 Undertake a participatory project gathering children's views on at least one key issue eg "Shared Education"	Implement and monitor the plan and process.	B, C, F
	Following the internal review of how c&yp are involved in NICCY's work, produce a new participation strategy.	
	Deliver a participatory research project gathering children and young people's experiences and views of Shared Education	A, D, E
	Report produced to inform Education Minister's Advisory Group on Shared Education	A, B, C, D, E, F
	Produce project plans for second participation project to be implemented in Year 3 of Business Plan.	

**Business Objective Number 5:
Maximise NICCY's impact and corporate performance.**

Actions	Targets	Links to statutory duties
5.1 Improve the effectiveness of organisational systems, policies and procedures to support enhanced business performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an organisational Corporate Governance framework Review and revise the management statement and financial memorandum (MSFM) as per current guidance Produce a Scheme of delegation <p>Ensure that audit standards of at least satisfactory assurance are maintained across all business areas</p>	A,D
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurately monitor and evaluate the impact of NICCY's work. Performance Management Framework and systems implemented and maintained, <p>Review (internal) and Provision of appropriate staff training & skills development.</p>	B,C,D,E
	<p>Report on NICCYs annual performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce an annual report and accounts and lay before the NI assembly <p>Establish plans for Yr3 of the corporate plan</p>	A,D
	<p>Review ethical procedures in organisation to ensure compliance with current requirements and recruit a new ethics committee</p>	