

# Promoting Wellbeing in Our Children



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**Chief Executive  
Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People**



**Northern Ireland Commissioner  
for Children and Young People**



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# NICCY'S MISSION

- “To safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young persons” in Northern Ireland (Article 5)

In doing so to:

- Have regard to “any relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child”(Article 6)

Establishing legislation:

**The Commissioner for Children and Young People (NI) Order 2003**

# The Commissioner's Duties

## STATUTORY DUTIES AND POWERS OF THE COMMISSIONER

**Article 7 of the 2003 Order outlines the duties of the Commissioner as:**

- To promote an awareness and understanding of the rights and best interests of children and young persons.
- To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice relating to the rights and welfare of children and young persons.
- To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided for children and young persons by relevant authorities.
- To advise government and relevant authorities on matters concerning the rights or best interests of children and young persons.
- 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.
- To seek the views of children and young persons in exercising her functions.
- To make the services of the Commissioner available to children and young people in their local area.

# The Commissioner's Powers

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

- 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.
- Issue guidance in relation to any matter concerning the rights or best interests of children or young persons.
- Conduct investigations as she considers necessary or expedient to meet her duties listed above.
- 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.
- Make representations or recommendations to any body or person relating to the rights and best interests of children and young persons.
- Assist with complaints to relevant authorities.
- Bring, intervene in or assist in legal proceedings.

# NICCY'S CURRENT KEY PRIORITIES

- **General Measures of Implementation of the UNCRC**
- **Child Poverty**
- **Child and Adolescent Mental Health**
- **Educational Inequalities and Inclusion**
- **Legacy impact of the Conflict**
- **‘Brexit’**

## Child Poverty

- **25% in relative poverty [After Housing Costs] - 120,000+ children;**
- **Persistent levels of child poverty in NI;**
- **Correlation between highest rates of child poverty and areas most impacted upon by the conflict;**
- **Predicted rise in child poverty rates – phased introduction of Welfare Reform over 2016 / 2017, 2017/18;**
- **Child poverty rates in general comparative with Britain, most household costs are higher in NI including fuel, food, clothes;**
- **Severe Impact of Child Poverty on education and health outcomes.**

## **Educational Inequalities and Inclusion**

- **Around 4,000 children leave primary school unable to read and write to the expected standard;**
- **66% 5 GCSEs A\*-C inc English and Maths, 41.3% FSME 73.7% Non-FSME;**
- **70.5% of girls 5 GCSEs A\*- C inc English and Maths, 61.6% of boys;**
- **95.6% of grammar school leavers 5 GCSEs A\* - C inc English and Maths, 45.3% for non-grammar school leavers - difference 50% +;**
- **NI - Highest rates of young people NEET in UK - 37,000, or 17.1% ;**
- **Youth Unemployment - 18.5%; UK rate - 11.9%.**

## Legacy of the Conflict

***“...parents psychologically affected by the Troubles continue to affect the lives of children and young people today... the transmission of poor mental health and prejudices within families in combination with economic deprivation is detrimental to the development of children in their early years.”***

Towards a Better Future, March 2015, University of Ulster, CVS

***“The conflict is not so much between communities, but within communities”***

Young person



# Why wellbeing and building resilience is so important

20 – 30% of children will develop mental health problems before 18.

Between 2014/15 & 2015/16 there was a 115% increase in referrals from primary school age to family support hub due to emotional & behavioural support needs.

Between 2012/13 and 2014/15 rates of self harm recorded in A&E within the 15-19 yr old age group increased by 30%.

Rates of suicide higher in NI compared to other parts the UK:

- For 15 to 19 yr olds this is 4 x higher
- For 10 to 14 yr olds this is 10 x higher.

**CAMHS - 7.8% of Mental Health Budget in NI (UK average 10%)**

# Why wellbeing and building resilience is so important

In 2014-15 550 under 16 yr olds & 5500 of 16-19 yr olds were prescribed anti-depressants or anti-anxiety drugs. This represents a year on year increase from 2012.

CAMHS waiting time target for a 1<sup>st</sup> appointment (Tier 3) was missed 130 times in the last year. This represents an increase of 62% from 2015, and an increase of 136% from 2014.

75% of parents of children with mental health problems seek help, only 25% receive support

25% higher rates of mental ill-health than Britain but overall spend 25% less

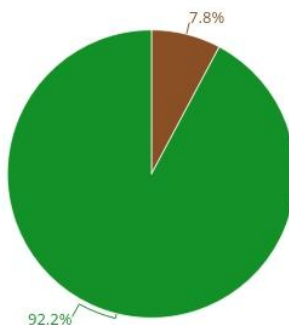
**CAMHS - 7.8% of Mental Health Budget in NI (UK average 10%)**

**25% Higher rates of  
Mental Health in NI**

Than in England because of the impact  
of the conflict (Barnford, 2006)



### Mental Health Budget



● Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (£19.6 Mil)

● Adult Mental Health Service

(UK average spend on CAMHS is 10%)

infogram



**10 Year delay between  
young people  
presenting first  
symptoms and getting  
support**

(Khan, 2016)

infogram

## #SpeakYourMind

Are you  
a young person  
aged 11 to 21?\*

Have you had  
or tried to get  
help for your  
mental health?

Help us tell  
government  
how to improve  
mental health  
services



This survey is part of our  
review of mental health services  
for children and young people.  
By sharing your experiences you  
can help us find out how to make  
services better in the future.

**...if so, we want to hear from you.**

Take part in our survey here [www.niccy.org/SpeakYourMind](http://www.niccy.org/SpeakYourMind)

\* If you are a parent or carer, please visit [www.niccy.org/SpeakYourMind](http://www.niccy.org/SpeakYourMind)  
for more information on how to take part.  
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# Government Policy on Children and Young People in NI – ‘Opportunities’

Programme for Government 2016-21

UNCRC &  
Concluding  
Observations  
2016

**Children & Young  
People’s Strategy &  
Action Plan 2017-’20**

Children’s  
Services  
Co-operation  
Act 2015

1. Physical &  
mental health

2. Play &  
Leisure

3. Learning &  
achievement

4. Safety &  
stability

5. Economic  
&  
environment

6. A positive  
contribution

7. Society  
respects  
rights

8. Equality &  
good  
relations

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES CO-OPERATION ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2015



Within the Act the term 'well-being' is defined through using 8 general parameters to demonstrate or indicate 'well-being':

1. Physical and mental health
2. Enjoyment of play and leisure
3. Learning and achieving
4. Living in safety and stability
5. Economic and environmental well being
6. Positive contribution to society
7. Respect for their rights
8. Promotion of good relations

# THE CHILDREN'S STRATEGY



## Requires:

- that when determining the meaning of 'well-being', regard is given to relevant provisions of UNCRC;
- every children's authority to co-operate with other children's authorities and with children's services providers to contribute to the well-being of children;
- publication of the **Children and Young Person's Strategy** outlining:
  - actions to improve well-being of C&YP;
  - monitoring and reporting on progress; and
  - provides for the pooling of funds and sharing of staff, goods, services, accommodation or other resources.

# THE CHILDREN'S STRATEGY – REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE ACT



## The Strategy must -

Set out what **outcomes** the NI Executive intends to be achieved;

- Detail **actions** to be taken by Departments;
- Explain how success or failure will be measured and determined i.e. establish '**Indicators**' for monitoring and reporting purposes;
- Be for a set period of time - **10 Years**
- Be developed with **stakeholders** including children and young people, parents and guardians.

# STATUTORY DUTY TO CO-OPERATE



*“Every children’s authority must, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of its children functions (functions which may contribute to the well-being of children and young persons), co-operate with other children’s authorities and with other children’s service providers in the exercise of those functions”*

*“The Executive must make arrangements to promote co-operation”*

## **Children’s authorities include:**

- NI Departments (and agencies)
- District Councils
- A Health and Social Care Trust
- The Regional Health and Social Care Board
- The Public Health Agency
- The Education Authority
- The Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- The Police Service of Northern Ireland
- The Probation Board for Northern Ireland



# WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE



- ETI Chief Inspector's Report 2014 – 2016 key message for the future of education – *“All young people need to build resilience”*
- ETI evaluation of preventative education and the statutory curriculum to inform the Independent Inquiry into CSE (2014)
- ETI's second evaluation of RSE (2016) - *“timely to review the need for strengthening the resilience of children and young people at all levels through stronger and more explicit preventative education within the wider taught pastoral care curriculum”*
- OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study on Wellbeing – Department of Education

# WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE



- Department of Education (DE) has responsibility for the implementation and oversight of the Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015;
- In 2016 DE participated in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study on Wellbeing;
- 5489 pupils from 80 post-primary/special schools completed a 'Student Wellbeing Survey' (consisting of 69 questions in health, emotional and social wellbeing, bullying and connectedness);
- Report published in 2016 and work is being taken forward; NICCY had proposed that the Wellbeing survey be formally adopted across all schools here and an annual well-being survey completed by every pupil in schools.

# #SPEAKYOURMIND



## **NICCY's Rights Based Review of Mental Health Services and Support for Children and Young People.**

Purpose:

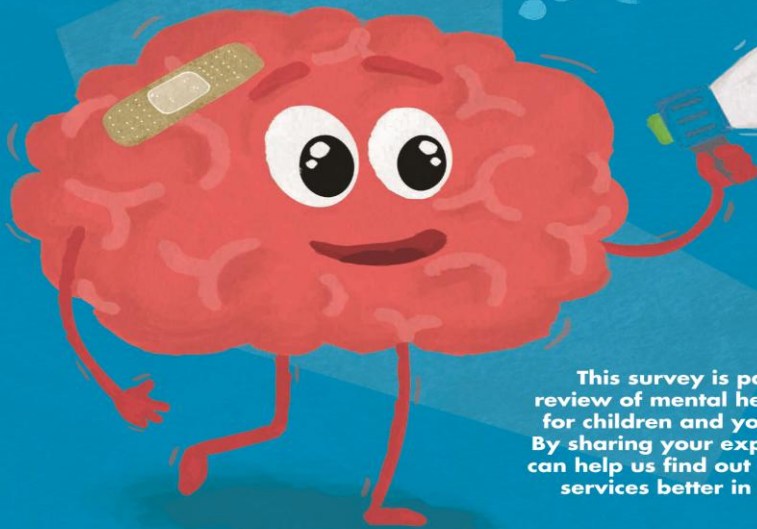
- To hear from children and young people of their experiences in accessing and/or trying to access mental health services and support;
- Inform and shape NICCY's necessary recommendations / calls to Government departments and their agencies for improving services for children and young people;
- Achieve better outcomes for our children and young people.

Website link: [NICCY.org/SpeakYourMind](https://NICCY.org/SpeakYourMind)

# #SpeakYourMind

Are you  
a young person  
aged 11 to 21?\*

Have you had  
or tried to get  
help for your  
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Help us tell  
government  
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mental health  
services

This survey is part of our  
review of mental health services  
for children and young people.  
By sharing your experiences you  
can help us find out how to make  
services better in the future.

**...if so, we want to hear from you.**

Take part in our survey here [www.niccy.org/SpeakYourMind](http://www.niccy.org/SpeakYourMind)

\* If you are a parent or carer, please visit [www.niccy.org/SpeakYourMind](http://www.niccy.org/SpeakYourMind)  
for more information on how to take part.

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# MOVING FORWARD



## **NICCY will:**

- Advise Government;
- Challenge and Hold Government to Account;
- Monitor Government Plans and Actions including CYPs;
- Ensure Better Wellbeing Outcomes and an Enhanced Focus on Resilience.

# Schools for Hope Conference

Ulster University,  
Magee Campus,  
26 June 2017,  
9am - 4pm.

Building  
resilience and hope  
in the children and  
young people of  
Northern Ireland:  
Prevention is  
better than  
cure!