



northern ireland commissioner  
for children and young people

## **NICCY Business Plan 2013 – 2014**

## **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 re-appointed in January 2011 for a 2<sup>nd</sup> 4 year term until January 2015.

## **Vision**

NICCY's Vision is:

**“A society 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 summarised below:**

1. To promote an awareness and understanding of the rights and best interests of children and young persons.
2. To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice relating to the rights and welfare of children and young persons.
3. To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided for children and young persons by relevant authorities.
4. To advise government and relevant authorities on matters concerning the rights or best interests of children and young persons.
5. 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.
6. To seek the views of children and young persons in exercising her functions.
7. 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 as summarised below where she can:**

1. 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.
2. Issue guidance on best practice in relation to any matter concerning the rights or best interests of children or young persons.
3. Conduct investigations as she considers necessary or expedient to meet her duties listed above.
4. 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.
5. Make representations or recommendations to any body or person relating to the rights and best interests of children and young persons.
6. Assist with complaints to relevant authorities.
7. 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 sets out the key corporate objectives to be achieved within the 3 year period. These objectives are:

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

## **Business Plan 2013-14**

This Business Plan links directly to the Corporate Plan 2011-14. 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 timescales. NICCY will ensure reference to the Programme for Government and liaison with our sponsor department OFMDFM both in terms of our accountability and monitoring roles as they impact on outcomes for Children and Young People. As Accounting Officer responsibility for this Business Plan rests with the Commissioner through the Chief Executive. Progress towards the achievement of these targets and objectives will be monitored closely and reported on throughout the business year. The Chief Executive will ensure appropriate monthly, quarterly and annual reporting processes are implemented as necessary.

## **The Role of the Commissioner**

The role of the Commissioner is to:

- Fulfil the duties of the role as laid out in legislation
- Exercise the powers of the role as laid out in legislation: (ref' page 3)

And is the:

- 'Public Face' of the 'Office'
- 'Corporation Sole' and the
- 'Accounting Officer'.

## **Internal Departmental Plans**

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

## **Resource Assumptions**

This Business Plan has been prepared in advance (as required) on the basis of the assumptions that it will be delivered within NICCY's current staffing and resource levels as provided via Grant-in-Aid from OFMDFM.

## **Involvement of Stakeholders including Children & Young People**

NICCY recognises the necessity to work with and involve our Stakeholders across all relevant spheres i.e. in the political, public, statutory, community and voluntary sectors. This is reflected in our updated Stakeholder Engagement Strategy in striving to enhance integrated working, partnerships, inclusion, co-operation, openness, accountability and information sharing.

The importance of the involvement of children and young people in all aspects of the realisation of our business plan targets is of primary consideration to NICCY. Children and young people's involvement and participation is embedded throughout each of the corporate and business objectives where appropriate/possible. NICCY has developed and will ensure implementation of a 'screening tool' to ensure such appropriate and necessary consideration when carrying out our work on their behalf.

### **Restructuring: Strategic & Operational Review**

The Chief Executive – tasked with restructuring on coming into post (Feb' 2012) - has given much attention to an overall review of the strategic and operational aspects of NICCY's work. This has entailed focus on a range of areas within NICCY and transition to 'new approaches'. A document outlining and contextualising the areas reviewed and changes introduced has been produced as part of the overall work on this. The Commissioner, Chief Executive, Heads of Department and Staff across the organisation have been key in ensuring NICCY as an organisation, is 'fit for purpose' today and in the coming years. In building on achievements to date we have already seen enhanced performance and performance management. These and other positive developments will continue to impact in this business year.

### **Integrated Work Streams [IWS]**

As part of restructuring - new strategic and operational processes to enhance how we work were introduced. These IWSs on specified programmes of work (PoW) aim to promote integrated, multi disciplinary working thereby enhancing our own internal efficiency and effectiveness and significantly increase our external impact and outcomes for children and young people. While 'Owners' of specific actions / targets are designated throughout the Business Plan they will entail integrated cross-disciplinary working. Programmes of Work will be assigned Leads before commencement of the Business Year 2013-14. Where one department is to take the lead on an area of work this is highlighted in bold.

This approach will be carried forward into our next corporate planning process 2014-17.

Also in recognizing that an organisation's greatest resource are its people, the skills, knowledge and expertise of our Staff will be utilized to best effect in achieving NICCY's aims and objectives.

### **Priorities and Flexibility**

NICCY acknowledges the requirement for this plan to be flexible to take account of changing priorities and circumstances, both internally and externally.

### **Consultations:**

NB: NICCY, as per statutory duty to do so, will advise and/or give guidance to Government Departments on matters of relevance to Children and Young People and will only respond to Government Consultation responses as per in-house policy and criteria following internal review.

Key: CE – Chief Executive; HoD – Head of Department; L&I – Legal & Investigations; P&R – Policy & Research; C&P – Communications & Participation.

## Business Plan 2013-14

Corporate Plan Objective 1			
Raise awareness of children’s rights and the functions of the Commissioner amongst children, parents and other stakeholders.			
Ref. No.	Aim Project outcomes/impact	Detail Targets/Actions /Outputs	Link to Statutory Duties/Powers(ref pg3)
1.1	<p>Build on baseline awareness levels and increase the Commissioner’s profile through enhanced knowledge and understanding of key Stakeholders e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children &amp; Young People</li> <li>▪ Parents</li> <li>▪ Politicians</li> <li>▪ Media</li> <li>▪ Legal</li> <li>▪ NGO</li> </ul> <p>[Ref also 1.2]</p>	<p>Implement relevant stakeholder plans as identified in NICCY’s Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.</p> <p>Develop ‘Children and Young People Engagement Plan’ to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioner to visit 10 schools / youth groups and Staff to deliver awareness raising programme / workshops promoting NICCY and the UNCRC to 10 school / youth groups;</li> <li>• Develop ‘partnerships’ with organisations working with marginalised C&amp;YP [2 projects];</li> <li>• Develop and promote age appropriate UNCRC resources to those working with C&amp;YP.</li> </ul> <p>Develop ‘Parents Engagement Plan’ and deliver 3 Programmes focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Younger parents;</li> <li>• Geographically broad locations;</li> <li>• Areas of high social &amp; economic deprivation.</li> </ul> <p>Deliver ‘Political Engagement Plan’ [II] to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 evidence sessions to Assembly Committees;</li> <li>• Formal Meetings with 4 key Ministers bi-annually (including Junior Ministers OFMDFM) (8);</li> <li>• Presentation to Ministerial Sub Group;</li> <li>• Scheduled Meetings with C&amp;YP Spokespersons from the 5 main political parties.</li> </ul> <p>Develop and deliver ‘Media Engagement Programme’ by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of online ‘News Centre / Press Office’;</li> <li>• Arrangement of Key interviews / meetings held with:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 2 NI wide broadcast outlets</li> <li>○ 3 daily newspaper</li> <li>○ 5 regional weekly papers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>D1 D5 P1 P4</p>

		<p>Develop and deliver 'Legal Engagement Programme' for the Judiciary &amp; Legal Community; C&amp;YP; Legal and other professionals through CPD through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrying out a survey of the judiciary and a baseline awareness survey among the Legal community:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Produce an engagement / action plan;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Conducting 3 Legal Outreach 'Clinics' for C&amp;YP across N.I.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Produce evaluation of Outreach programme;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Conducting 2 Legal CPD Events per annum.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Produce evaluation of CPD programme over Corporate Plan period</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Review and develop CRIS service through lunchtime legal seminars           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Design and deliver 2 pilot lunchtime legal seminars on relevant issues affecting C&amp;YP.</li> <li>○ Produce evaluation of CRIS pilot in years 2012/13 and 2013/14</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Develop and deliver 'NGOs Engagement Plan' including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Rights Implementation Group meetings</li> <li>• Participation Forum meetings</li> <li>• Review of NGO Forum meetings</li> <li>• Sectoral Rep's groups meetings - when necessary/relevant/requested e.g. on 'SEN &amp; Inclusion'</li> </ul>	
1.2	<p>Enhance Stakeholder implementation of C&amp;YP's Rights and/or Best Interests in each of the following sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government (NICS)</li> <li>• Universities</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Health &amp; Soc' Serv's</li> <li>• ALBs</li> <li>• Councils</li> <li>• Legal</li> <li>• NGOs</li> </ul> <p>[Ref also 1.1]</p>	<p>Deliver tailored Training &amp; Education Programmes through implementation of updated/developing Stakeholder Engagement and Training &amp; Education Strategies.</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 A.R. Sessions;</li> <li>• 4 Workshops;</li> <li>• 1 Capacity Building Programme;</li> <li>• 3 Seminars;</li> <li>• 2 CPD Events;</li> <li>• 3 Outreach 'clinics';</li> <li>• 1 Induction/Information Session.</li> </ul>	<p>D1 D5 P1 P4</p>

Ref. No.	Aim [Project outcomes/impact)	Detail Targets/Actions /Outputs	Link to Statutory Duties/ Powers (ref' page 3)
1.3	Update NICCY's Corporate Brand and enhance awareness of NICCY's functions to relevant stakeholders.	Implement agreed recommendations following Brand Review.  Produce new Corporate Brand Manual for NICCY incorporating 'Written Style Guide' for Staff.  Disseminate Brand development to relevant Stakeholders  Review and update NICCY information resources including online presence / resources / website.	D1 D5 D7
1.4	Create centralised resource of NICCY Training & Educational resources to enhance stakeholder awareness of NICCY and the UNCRC.	Build / collate a central resource of all NICCY Training & Educational materials, resources and programmes.	P4

<b>Corporate Plan Objective 2</b>			
<b>Review and advise Government on policies, services and legislation relating to children's rights and best interests.</b>			
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Aim Project outcomes/impact</b>	<b>Detail Targets/Actions/Outputs</b>	<b>Link to Statutory Duties/ Powers (ref Page 3)</b>
2.1	Progress development of Children's Rights legislation in NI.	Develop and produce draft proposals for Child's Rights legislation incorporating UNCRC standards – including ongoing engagement with C&YP's Sector and CRIG (Child's Rights Implementation Group). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Briefing paper.</li> <li>• Proposals drafted.</li> </ul> (Ref also 4.5)	D1 D2 D4 P1 P2 P4 P5
2.2	Advise Government in regard to issues, gaps, emerging trends via legal casework adversely impacting on C&YP's Rights and Best Interests.	Identify issues, gaps or trends via legal casework and issue advice to Government for action – following internal SMT approval.	D3 D4
2.3	Inform & advise 4 key Departments – OFMDFM, DE, DHSSPS, DoJ on matters relating to C&YP's Rights and Best Interests:	Provide advice and monitor subsequent actions to the four key departments (including the outworking of NICCY research recommendations); <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Age Legislation (Goods, Facilities and Services);</li> <li>▪ Delivering Social Change [C&amp;YP aspects];</li> <li>▪ Special Education Needs and Inclusion;</li> <li>▪ Transitions [to Adult Services for C&amp;YP with Learning Disabilities];</li> <li>▪ Adolescent Suicide &amp; Accidental Death [CMRs];</li> <li>▪ Youth Justice Review Recommendations ['Significant Adults' report recommendations];</li> <li>▪ Child Poverty / Welfare Reform.</li> </ul>	D2 D3 D4 P1 P2 P4 P5

Ref. No.	Aim Project outcomes/impact	Detail Targets/Actions/Outputs	Link to Statutory Duties/ Powers (ref Page 3)
2.4	Inform and advise Government and C&YP Sectoral Stakeholders on outcome of work undertaken to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the voice of C&amp;YP in upcoming proposals on Shared Education'</li> <li>• Budget Spend comparative Analysis [UK];</li> <li>• Budget Tracking Analysis of 'Spend on C&amp;YP'; and</li> <li>• Guardianship model for Separated Children subject to immigration control [UKBA linkages].</li> </ul>	Completion and dissemination of reports and research commissioned / undertaken in Q4 of 2012/13 business year (Shared education, Budget analysis and Separated children subject to immigration control)	D4 D6 P1 P4 P5
2.5	Address recommendations in Review of NICCY Legislation conducted in Business year 2012/13.	Respond to recommendations in Review of NICCY Legislation conducted in Business year 2012/13.	D2 P1 P2
2.6	Influence NI Assembly, Westminster Government to take action on UNCRC progressing C&YP's Rights e.g. through 4 UK CCs submission to CRC and CRC's Concluding Obs's.	Produce in collaboration with other 3 UK Jurisdictions' CCs [BINOCC] Submission to Committee on CRC. [UK State Party due to report Jan' 2014].  [NB: will progress into next business year given timeframes for reporting].	D1 D2 D3 D4 P1 P2 P4 P5
2.7	Progress development of Child's Rights Indicators with OFMDFM to 'measure' Govt outcomes against targets in PfG and for use in reporting to UN Cottee on CRC.	Continue involvement of NICCY staff in OFMDFM Steering Group and 'UNCRC Cluster' Workshops to develop Child's Rights Indicators.	D2 D3 D4

Ref. No.	Aim Project outcomes/impact	Detail Targets/Actions/Outputs	Link to Statutory Duties/ Powers (ref Page 3)
2.8	Ensure Rights and Best Interests of C&YP with disabilities continue to be addressed by NICCY through developing reporting systems re' UNCRPD.	Progress NICCY reporting systems on UNCRPD	D1 D2 D3 D4 P5
2.9	Increase Statutory Agencies 'Participation of C&YP'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation on phase 2 PPSI with Government Departments</li> <li>• Expand NICCY Participation Policy Statement of Intent (PPSI) across local councils to 40%</li> <li>• Ascertain practical steps of implementation by Councils to explore benchmarking for phase II.</li> </ul>	D1 D3 D4
2.10	Evaluate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Participation Awards programme in preparation for 2014/15 Awards.	Conduct evaluation of 2 <sup>nd</sup> NICCY Participation Awards programme and draft timeline & plan for 2014/15 Awards	D1 D3 D4

<b>Corporate Plan Objective 3</b>			
<b>Use the Commissioner's powers to challenge breaches of Children's and Young People's Rights.</b>			
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Aim Project outcomes/impact</b>	<b>Detail Targets/Actions/Outputs</b>	<b>Link to Statutory Duties/ Powers (Ref Page 3)</b>
<b>3.1</b>	Address and remedy breaches of C&YP's Rights and/or Best Interests by relevant Bodies/Agencies to help prevent repetition of similar breaches in future.	Continue to maintain an active casework service – intervening where necessary/appropriate to provide advice, opinion, direction, analysis and resolution regarding potential breaches of children and young people's rights, which are referred to us by C&YP, Parents, Carers and Others via Casework.	P2 P4 P5 P6 P7
<b>3.2</b>	Improve vulnerable and/or marginalised C&YP's access to remedies of breaches of their Rights and/or Best Interests. (Ref' 1.2)	Using NICCY's powers, intervene / take action on individual breaches/violations of C&YP's Rights as presented via casework and at Legal Outreach Clinics' across NI – (at least 3 per annum) (see 1.2)	D1 D6 D7 P6 P7
<b>3.3</b>	Work in collaboration with Inspectorate Bodies to as//when appropriate use NICCY's powers to aid enforcement of relevant recommendations and findings in support of C&YP's Rights and/or Best Interests.	Work in collaboration with Inspectorate bodies to identify opportunities for joint or phased working as necessary and appropriate.	D1 D2 D3 D4 P1 P5
<b>3.4</b>	Identify areas of concern re' violations of C&YP's Rights and/or Best Interests requiring formal investigation.	Identify areas of concern re' violations of C&YP's Rights and/or Best Interests producing periodic papers for SMT attention/recommended action.	D2 D3 P3
<b>3.5</b>	Promote C&YP's Rights and Best Interests in secure facilities in the health & social care and justice systems.	Examine key child rights issues including young people's 'movement'/referral between and experiences in secure facilities i.e. Lakewood, Beechcroft, Woodlands.  Produce a scoping paper for SMT to include proposals for action.	D2 D3 D4 D6 P1 P4 P5 P7

<b>Corporate Plan Objective 4</b>			
<b>Ascertain the views of children and young people in relation to issues which affect their lives</b>			
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Aim Project outcomes/impact</b>	<b>Detail Targets/Actions/Outputs</b>	<b>Link to Statutory Duties/ Powers (Ref. Page 3)</b>
4.1	Ensure the participation and involvement of C&YP on issues affecting their lives where appropriate/possible.	Integrate NICCY C&YP Participation/Involvement through application of NICCY initial Screening Tool across all relevant functional areas' work throughout the Business Year 2013-14.	D6
4.2	Ensure appropriate/relevant C&YP involvement / input for 2013-14 Business Year.	Draw up and implement C&YP Stakeholder Engagement Plan for 2013-14 Business Year.	D5 D6 D7
4.3	Ascertain the views and opinions of vulnerable and/or marginalised C&YP in relation to issues which affect their lives. (Ref' 1.2 / 3.2)	Identify issues, gaps and/or trends in relation to the lives of C&YP as presented via casework and at Legal Outreach Clinics' across NI – (at least 3 per annum) (see earlier)	D1 D6 D7
4.4	Address C&YP's issues as presented via work programmes already highlighted in this Business Plan which will inform NICCY's work and forward planning (Ref' CP Objectives 1 and 3).	Engage with C&YP re' issues affecting them via work programmes already highlighted in this Business Plan (Ref' CP Objectives 1 and 3).	D2 D3 D6
4.5	Gain C&YP's input and involvement in the development of Children's Rights Legislation in NI through inclusion in PR Strategy / Campaign on same following development of draft proposals in 2013/14. (see 2.1)	Establish mechanism to support C&YP's input and involvement in the development of Children's Rights Legislation in NI through inclusion in PR Strategy / Campaign following development of draft proposals in 2013/14. (see 2.1)	D1 D6

<b>Corporate Plan Objective 5</b>			
<b>Maximise NICCY's impact and corporate performance.</b>			
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Aim Project outcomes/impact</b>	<b>Detail Targets/Actions/Outputs</b>	<b>Link to Statutory Duties/Powers</b>
5.1	Maximise NICCY's impact and overall effectiveness and efficiency - internally and externally.	Further development and 'roll out' of strategic and operational review work in collaboration with Commissioner and HoDs – including new MIS [Management of Information System].	As per Office legislative function & remit / MSFM / Corporate Governance & Performance
5.2	Enhance NICCY's overall performance, outputs and outcomes following internal audits.	Address recommendations in Internal Audits conducted in 2012-13 Business Year.	As per Office legislative function & remit / MSFM / Corporate Governance & Performance
5.3	Enhance NICCY's impact and corporate performance through engagement on relevant issues/areas of work in local, national and international arenas e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NI Assembly</li> <li>• UK Government</li> <li>• BINOCC</li> <li>• ENOC</li> <li>• EU Commission</li> <li>• Council of Europe</li> <li>• United Nations</li> </ul>	Contribute to NICCY's impact and corporate performance through engagement on relevant issues/areas of work in local, national and international arenas e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NI Assembly</li> <li>• UK Government</li> <li>• BINOCC</li> <li>• ENOC</li> <li>• EU Commission</li> <li>• Council of Europe</li> <li>• United Nations</li> </ul>	As per Office legislative function & remit / MSFM / Corporate Governance & Performance
5.4	Highlight NICCY's 10 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary and achievements to date.	Hold High Level Annual Event to celebrate NICCY's 10 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary and achievements to date.	As per Office legislative function & remit / MSFM / Corporate Governance & Performance
5.5	Promote and highlight NICCY's work and impact via annual reporting processes.	Produce Annual Report and Accounts as necessary and lay before the NI Assembly	As per Office legislative function & remit / MSFM / Corporate Governance & Performance
5.6	Design, develop new Corporate Plan for 2014-17 period.	Commission external facilitation to contribute to production of Corporate Plan 2014-2017 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out C&amp;YP Consultation &amp; Analysis</li> </ul>	As per Office legislative function & remit / MSFM / Corporate Governance & Performance

Ref. No.	Aim Project outcomes/impact	Detail Targets/Actions/Outputs	Link to Statutory Duties/Powers
5.7	Draft and develop Business Plan 2014-15 based on Corporate Plan for period 2014-17.	Following on from development of Corporate Plan 2014-17 - Produce Business Plan 2014-15	As per Office legislative function & remit / MSFM / Corporate Governance & Performance
5.8	Prepare for required Review of this Office and consider recommendations.	Ensure liaison by OFMDFM with NICCY re' Review of this Office as required and respond to / address recommendations.	As per Office legislative function & remit / MSFM / Corporate Governance & Performance
5.9	Transition plan for new Commissioner.	In collaboration with Commissioner and relevant Officials, develop a transition plan - as term of office ends in January 2015 – to ensure readiness for appointment of new Commissioner.	As per Office legislative function & remit / MSFM / Corporate Governance & Performance