



Business Plan 2022-‘23

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 Department for Communities.

The Commissioner's full designated powers took effect from 1 October 2003. The Commissioner is Koulla Yiasouma. Date of appointment: 2 March 2015. Term of Office: 4 years renewable once. The Commissioner's current term ends 1 March 2023.

Mission

NICCY's Mission is:

“To safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people”

Vision

NICCY's Vision is:

“A society where the rights of all Children and Young People are respected and realised”

STATUTORY DUTIES AND POWERS OF THE COMMISSIONER

Article 6(1) of the 2003 Order established the Commissioner's principal aim - i.e. NICCY's mission: *To Safeguard and Promote the Rights and Best Interests of Children and Young Persons.*

- The Commissioner's paramount consideration shall be the rights of the child or young person.
- The Commissioner shall have regard in particular, to the ascertainable wishes and feelings of the child or young person (considered in light of age and understanding).
- The Commissioner shall have regard to the importance of the role of parents in the upbringing and development of their children; and any relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

NICCY will exercise the powers inherent in the role in fulfilment of the duties, as set out in legislation. In summary these are set out below:

Article 7 of the 2003 Order outline the duties of the Commissioner which are:

- To promote an understanding of the rights of children and young persons.
- To promote an awareness of the importance of those rights and a respect among children and young persons for the rights of others.
- To promote an awareness of matters relating to the 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 take reasonable steps to ensure that children and young persons and their carers are made aware of the functions of the Commissioner, the location of her office and the ways in which they may communicate with the Commissioner.
- To take reasonable steps to ensure that children and young persons are encouraged to communicate with the Commissioner.
- To take reasonable steps to ensure that the content of any matter published by the Commissioner takes account, so far as practicable, of the age, understanding and usual language of any children or young person by whom it is intended that such matter will be read and of the effect of any disabilities they may have.
- To take reasonable steps to ensure that the views of children and young persons and their parents are sought concerning the exercise by the Commissioner of her functions.
- To take reasonable steps to ensure the services of the Commissioner are, so far as practicable, made available to children & young persons in the locality in which they live.

Articles 8-15 outline the Commissioner's general powers which are to:

- 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.
- After consultation with such bodies as she thinks appropriate, issue guidance on best practice in relation to any matter concerning the rights or best interests of children or young persons.
- For the purpose of any of her functions, conduct such investigations as she considers necessary or expedient.
- Compile information, provide advice and publish any matter concerning the rights and best interests of children and young persons, including the outcome of any research or investigation and any advice provided by the Commissioner.
- Make representations or recommendations to any body or person about any matter concerning the rights and best interests of children and young persons.
- Conduct general reviews of advocacy, complaint, inspection and whistle blowing arrangements of relevant authorities.
- Review advocacy, complaint, inspection and whistle blowing arrangements of relevant authorities in individual cases.
- Provide assistance with complaints to relevant authorities.
- Conduct investigations of complaints against relevant authorities.
- Bring, intervene in or assist in legal proceedings.

Corporate Plan 2020-'23 & Corporate Plan 2021-'23

The Corporate Plan 2020-'23 links directly to the statutory duties and powers of the Commissioner for Children and Young People as enshrined within the legislation which established the Office of Commissioner i.e. the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and sets out the desired outcomes across identified key priorities. Our Plan was revised and updated for 2021-23 to reflect the impact of Covid-19. Mindful of the outcomes based accountability approach adopted in the draft **Programme for Government** and the **Children's and Young People's Strategy**, NICCY's approach is as previously, also outcomes based.

Business Plan 2022-'23

This Business Plan links directly to the Corporate Plan – period 2020-'23 and is final year of same. As such, it identifies the key objectives and SMART targets/outputs to be met/delivered during the course of the year based on the 6 high level corporate objectives including key performance indicators and verification methods. NICCY will ensure reference to changing political / public sector developments, new Programme for Government, Children's and Young People's Strategy and liaison with our sponsor department - both in terms of our accountability and our monitoring roles - as they impact on outcomes for Children and Young People.

Business Plan implementation, progression and reporting is the responsibility of the Chief Executive. Progress towards the achievement of these targets and objectives will be monitored closely and reported on throughout the business year by the Senior Management Team (SMT*) and the Leadership & Management Team (LMT**) who will ensure accurate monthly, quarterly and annual reporting, adopting an Outcomes Based Approach.

Programme for Government outcomes

As an Arms Length Body (Sponsor Dept: the Department for Communities), NICCY supports the delivery of key Programme for Government outcomes - in keeping with our independent role and statutory duties and powers - notably Outcome 12 (now 1): 'We give our children and young people the best start in life', whilst recognising that all outcomes impact on the rights, lives and outcomes for children and young people in NI.

Internal Departmental Work plans

This Business Plan is supported by more detailed departmental plans.

Fundamental Principles: Child Rights Proofing

Child Rights Focus/Approach in our Work and Government's: NICCY was established to support the protection, promotion and adherence to children's and young people's rights with due regard to the UNCRC. The application of these to legislation, strategy and policy development by Government is a key driver in all we do. We continue to apply UNCRC principles i.e. Articles 2, 3, 6 and 12 to our work and to ongoing improvement of our own practice in reflecting international rights standards and approaches. Our **Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA)** and **Child Rights Training** work is being further progressed this year following commitment to include in the NICS Staff Policy Handbook and on LinKS Training Platform. This will aid embedding of good practice in development of legislation, policy and strategies from the outset, across NI Departments.

Participation of Children and Young People: The importance of the involvement and participation of children and young people in all relevant aspects of the realisation of our business plan targets is of primary consideration to NICCY and is embedded throughout each of the corporate and business objectives where appropriate/possible. NICCY has also revised and updated **Participation Guidance** for government departments and statutory agencies in line with good practice and current thinking.

Stakeholder Engagement: NICCY recognises the necessity to work with and involve our Stakeholders across all relevant spheres i.e. in the political, public, statutory, legal, media, NGO, community and voluntary sectors. This is reflected in integrated working, partnerships, co-operation, openness, accountability and information sharing. We have developed a **Stakeholder Engagement Strategy** in parallel with our Corporate Plan period, setting out how we work with all those with whom we work in achievement of our mission.

Programmes of Work

Programmes of work aim to promote integrated, inter disciplinary working thereby enhancing our own internal efficiency and project management effectiveness significantly increasing our external impact and outcomes for Children and Young People. The 'Core Business' of NICCY is carried on via each 'functional area' throughout the year. Utilisation of the Organisation's greatest asset i.e. its people's skills, knowledge and expertise will be utilised 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 and will review and respond accordingly throughout the business year.

Resource Assumptions

This Business Plan has been prepared on the basis of the assumptions – as set out in the 2020-'23 Corporate Plan - that it would be delivered within NICCY's staffing and budget requirements for this business year. In the current climate of pressures on the 'public purse' we are mindful of the necessity to ensure effective delivery on the Statutory Duties and Powers of the Office.

Governance and Risk Management

NICCY will ensure adherence to and ongoing review of good governance systems including effective risk management in the delivery of our functions.

Key: NICCY – Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children & Young People; CE – Chief Executive; HoD – Head of Department; DP – Deputy Principal; CS – Corporate Services; L&I – Legal & Investigations; P&P – Policy & Participation.

*The Senior Management Team (SMT) comprises Chief Executive and Head of Department.

**The Leadership & Management Team (LMT) comprises Chief Executive, Head of Department and Deputy Principal Officers.

NICCY BUSINESS PLAN 2022-'23: Corporate Plan Objective 1

HLCO 1: To ensure that children's rights are respected, promoted and protected in the work of all duty bearers.

Key Outcome: NICCY's work influences Government and its Agencies to more effectively deliver in compliance with children's rights and best interests at local, national and international levels while progressing the implementation of UN General Measures of Implementation (GMIs) (as per UNCRC Article 4 and Committee's General Comment No. 5).

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
1.1	Highlight and Promote Key Child's Rights issues at Local, National and International levels.	<p>*SOCRNI 3 - Int'l Children's Day NICCY's 3rd 'Statement on Children's Rights in NI' to reflect Commissioner's 'end of terms' / period in office.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PoW Team, PID & Action Plan; SOCRNI text drafted by relevant staff; SOCRNI 3 Report published & launched; Dissemination Plan Dec'21-Feb'22 in place; and Monitoring of recommendations.
		<p>UNCRC Periodic Reporting 2022 NICCY input to inform UK State Party evidence session. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosting potential visit of UNCRC Taskforce members to NI; *Draft NICCY's input to UK Commissioners' Report in response to UK State Party Report (due Sept '22); Co-ordinate 4-Nation engagement with C&YP in adv' of periodic exam'n (Sept '22.) Support young people to attend and input to the Pre-sessional meeting (Oct '22) Attend and advise Committee at Scrutiny session (Jan '23) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit to NI in person / online by UN Taskforce, co-ordinated with UKCCs and NGOs; Input submitted to UKCCs' 'Response' Report; CYP Engagement plan in place; C&YP Report submitted; NICCY provides evidence to UN Committee RC at the Pre-sessional meeting and supports young people's input; NICCY influences Committee's scrutiny of State Party Report iro NI and assoc' Concluding Obs's; and

		NICCY Monitoring Table of UNCRC Cottee's Concluding Observations 2023 iro progress / plans by NI Executive Departments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated NICCY Monitoring Table developed on 2023 COs for DE collation across all NI Exec' Departments on progress at relevant time.
1.2	Progress UNCRC General Measures of Implementation.	Review of Legislation Monitor progress in relation to NICCY's 'Article 24 Report' recommendations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further advice provided as required; Meetings held with relevant departments; Response to DfC following formal reply as/when received from Minister; and Monitor progress iro implementation of agreed recommendations.
		Incorporation of the UNCRC Include chapter in *SOCRNI 3 on General Measures, including reiteration of need for incorporation of the UNCRC into NI legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *SOCRNI 3 report released; General Measures are key focus of communications [NICCY key calls addressed in briefings with stakeholders]; and Commitment by MLAs and Political Parties for incorporation of the UNCRC.
		Child Rights Impact Assessments Build on dissemination / information sessions held in 2021-22 iro ENOC CRIA Statement, Framework and Tool - providing advice to relevant authorities and finalise and issue training materials on Children's Rights and CRIA process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online training programme released and promoted to relevant authorities; Sessions held with Ras; All NICCY's advice to RAs reiterates requirement to undertake CRIAs at outset; CRIAs are carried out by RAs on an increasing number of policies (including strategies and legislation); and NICCY receives feedback from RAs on implementing CRIA approach.
1.3	Input and advise on ENOC 2022 Theme: 'Climate Justice'	ENOC 2022 Input to ENOC Position Statement as required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May Seminar/Workshops; Sept Annual ENOC Conference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Input to development of ENOC Statement; and Position Statement / Calls on Climate Justice' disseminated to NI Government and NI Departments.
		ENYA 2022 NYP participation in ENYA Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NYP members' input to ENYA project to provide advice/input to the drafting

		on ENOC Theme - 'Child Rights and Environmental Justice'	of ENOC position Statement.
1.4	Monitor and advise on implementation of Children's Services Co-operation Act (CSCA) (2015) including via 10 Yr Children's & Young People's Strategy (CYPS) Delivery Plan	<p>Advise on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CYPS Delivery Plan; • indicator set, including data development agenda; • development of Participation policy/mechanism; • integration with Programme for Government; and • Monitor and advise on compliance with CSCA across relevant NI Depts as necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice Paper on CYPS Delivery Plan to DE • Advice on indicators set and DDA; • Advice provided on Participation policy/mechanism; • CYPS and PfG connections promoted via relevant mechanisms; and • Children's Rights reflected in the outworking / implementation plans of the CYPS and relevant CYP Legislation/Strategies/Policies in line with the CSCA.
1.5	Monitor impact of 'Brexit' on the rights of Children and Young People.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brexit: Maintain a watching brief iro its impact on children's and young people's Rights and advise Government / relevant monitoring bodies as / when necessary. • Departmental Roundtable Meetings on their work iro Brexit issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise as / when necessary including iro NICCY Calls; • Liaise with Monitoring Bodies NIHRC & ECNI and IMA as necessary; • Updated information received on impact and implementation of Brexit and NICCY advice provided.
1.7	Monitor Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Children and Young People's Rights.	<p>Ongoing dissemination of COVID report 'A New and Better Normal' findings, including release of 'Update' (August 2022).</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring, advice, responding to queries in relation to impact of Covid on children's rights.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government is kept informed of ongoing impact of Covid on children and young people and are action to mitigate the negative impacts monitored; and • Clear and robust advice provided on an ongoing basis throughout the Covid pandemic response period.

NICCY BUSINESS PLAN 2022-23: Corporate Plan Objective 2

HLCO 2: To highlight and address critical issues which adversely affect children and young people.			
Key outcome: 2.1 Tackling Child Poverty: We will raise awareness of the high levels of child poverty in Northern Ireland, its impact on children's lives and advise Government on appropriate action to tackle it.			
Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
2.1	Advise Government on the development of an Anti-Poverty Strategy that will lead to eradication of child poverty.	<p>Child Poverty: Advise on the key actions required to eradicate child poverty to be included in the Anti-Poverty Strategy including the outcome of welfare reform mitigations Panel report.</p> <p>Publish statement on child poverty to on 17 October 2022 (international day for the eradication of poverty).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-Poverty Strategy reflects NICCY's advice and is child rights compliant; Key stakeholders including appropriate relevant authorities are aware of actions required to eradicate child poverty; and Statement released and NICCY engages key stakeholders in dissemination.

Key Outcome: 2.2 Improving Mental Health & Wellbeing: We will gather evidence as to the adequacy of child and adolescent mental health services with a view to outlining critical actions for Government to better meet the needs of children and young people.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
2.2.1	Advise and Monitor implementation of recommendations from NICCY's Rights Based Review – 'Still Waiting'.	Ongoing engagement with Duty Bearers and other Stakeholders to ensure decisive action is taken to address areas of concern identified in Monitoring Report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of action taken recorded and followed up - to ensure 'Still Waiting' priority areas including data, funding, acute care provision and young people with additional needs are addressed as a matter of urgency.
		Publish fourth and final annual 'Still Waiting' Monitoring Reports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDG and stakeholders are aware of NICCY's assessment of actions taken to deliver on 'Still Waiting' recommendations.
		Support NYP Mental Health subgroup to provide ongoing advice to IDG and NICCY.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NYP subgroup identified and capacity building programme in place; and Programme of meetings with IDG agreed.
2.2.2	Provide advice to government on legislation, policy and practice relevant to Child and Adolescent Mental Health & Wellbeing.	NICCY provides child's rights compliant advice in respect of law, policy and practice relating to children and young people's mental health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely advice issued based on rights compliance and RAs' action taken is monitored and recorded; and Implementation of advice monitored and recorded.

Key Outcome: 2.3 Overcoming Educational Inequalities and Promoting Inclusion: We will work to ensure that the education received by all children is of a high standard and develops every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
2.3.1	Work towards transformational reform of the education system.	<p>Monitor and advise on Independent Review of Education and emergent recommendations (as per 'New Decade, New Approach' Deal) with focus on Child Rights compliance.</p> <p>Quarterly meetings with EA, ETI and DE.</p> <p>Engagement with NYP Education Sub-Group to advise on Ind' Rev' Educ'.</p> <p>Provide advice to Government on other education related issues as identified by NICCY.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of outputs of IRE Panel; Advices issued; Action taken by RAs monitored and recorded. Implementation of advice monitored and recorded. Progress made with/by relevant stakeholders recorded. NYP Sub-Group on education produce recommendations informing NICCY's work on this and engage with relevant decision-makers. High quality advice provided to relevant authorities in a timely manner and action monitored.
2.3.2	Overseeing the monitoring and implementation of our Review of SEN provision, 'Too Little, Too Late'.	<p>Monitor progress by RAs iro 'Too Little, Too Late' recommendations.</p> <p>Action Plan in place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular engagement with relevant authorities to progress implementation of the Report recommendations Ongoing representation on the SEND Strategic Programme Board. Monitor developments iro SEND Project Plans which include recommendations from 'Too Little, Too Late'.

Key Outcome: 2.3 Overcoming Educational Inequalities and Promoting Inclusion: We will work to ensure that the education received by all children is of a high standard and develops every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
		Publish 'Too Little, Too Late' Monitoring Report. (Feb' '23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant authorities and stakeholders are aware of NICCY's assessment of actions taken to deliver on 'Too Little, Too Late' recommendations.
2.3.3	Monitoring the implementation of SEND Act (2016) Regulations and Code of Practice.	Ongoing monitoring of phases of implementation and advice to Government on progression of SEND Framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing advice provided on revised Regulations and SEN Code of Practice at the various stages of the legislative process. Action taken, recorded and monitored.
2.3.4	Review of restraint and seclusion in educational settings	<p>Continue to disseminate findings of the report 'Neither Seen Nor Heard' on the use of restraint and seclusion in schools - engaging with DE and DoH iro responses to the recommendations.</p> <p>Publish update on report.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building on NICCY's recommendations to inform DE policy and Education Minister's position; Representation on the DE R&S working group; Monitor implementation of calls from our report by relevant authorities. Update completed.

Key Outcome: 2.4 Addressing the Legacy of the Conflict: We will hold government to account in relation to the effective protection of children and young people from trauma, violence or mistreatment due to the continuing legacy impact of the conflict.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators	Target Date	Lead / Dept
2.4.1	Support and monitor recommendations of relevant Reports/Papers (e.g. 'Criminal Coercion and Exploitation', CVS' 'It didn't end in 1998') - addressing legacy of the conflict and its impact on Children and Young People.	Monitor relevant developments including those from Tackling Paramilitarism Team and advise Government accordingly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advices provided to Government and relevant Officials. 	Q1-4	P&P

Key Outcome: 2.5 Challenging Discrimination: We will provide robust challenge where children and young people experience discrimination.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
2.5.1	Age discrimination legislation in accessing goods, facilities and services includes all children and young people.	Advise on the importance of progressing 'Age Discrimination (Access to Goods, Facilities and Services)' Bill in SoCRNI 3 and UNCRC report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendation included in SOCRNI 3, and UK Commissioners' Shadow Report to UN Committee on the Rights of the Child; and NI Executive are aware of the importance of progressing this NDNA commitment without further delay.

Key Outcome: 2.5 Challenging Discrimination: We will provide robust challenge where children and young people experience discrimination.			
Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
		Engagement project with C&YP to include older people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people work with older people informs NICCY's work on legislation iro age in access to Good, Facilities and Services. ('Age GFS').
2.5.2	Ensure equal protection from assault in the home for children and young people and improved support for parents and families.	<p>Identify and advise on potential avenues for legal reform.</p> <p>Engagement and advise on government strategy supporting positive parenting.</p> <p>Ongoing engagement with key stakeholders including political representatives and NGO group.</p> <p>Engagement with NYP Equal Protection Sub-Group to advise NICCY's work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice issued and increased understanding of the evidence and rights basis of the case for legal reform; A change in the law is debated in the Assembly; Timely advice provided in relation to the DoH draft Family & Parenting Support Strategy so that it supports policy position iro legislative reform; NGO group meetings held and progress recorded; and Young people's voices are shared with key stakeholders

Key Outcome: 2.6 Strengthening Safeguarding provisions: Safeguarding arrangements for children and young people are strengthened as NICCY monitors and provides advice on provisions to protect children, including in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation and Separated Children Subject to Immigration Control.			
Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
2.6.1	<i>Sexual offences against children and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).</i> Ensure effectiveness of arrangements to protect and support victims of sexual offences.	Monitor implementation of the Gillen Review with reference to a Barnahus model for NI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NICCY reviews work undertaken by the Child Protection Senior Officials Group to progress further implementation of recommendations; and NICCY provides child rights compliant advice to government, drawing on the Barnahus research report.
2.6.2	<i>Children and Families subject to Immigration Control or new to Northern Ireland.</i> Ensure effectiveness of arrangements to support Separated Children and families subject to immigration control.	Monitor implementation of NICCY's recommendations from 'A Hostile Environment' regarding children and families affected by having no recourse to public funds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NICCY reviews of government response to scoping paper recommendations.
2.6.3	<i>Safeguarding and social care overall.</i> Provide advice on Review of Children's Social Care NI and areas as determined by NICCY.	Advice provided on a range of relevant safeguarding, social care and immigration matters as deemed appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advices issued and action taken monitored and recorded.

Key Outcome: 2.6 Strengthening Safeguarding provisions: Safeguarding arrangements for children and young people are strengthened as NICCY monitors and provides advice on provisions to protect children, including in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation and Separated Children Subject to Immigration Control.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
2.6.4	<p>Address coercive control, assaults and exploitation of children and young people by criminal gangs</p> <p><i>(X ref to 2.4.1)</i></p>	Monitor response to NICCY's papers and recommendations on safeguarding children from organised and criminal groups and gangs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review outputs of work undertaken by the Child Protection Senior Officials Group and Task and Finish Group.

Key Outcome: 2.7 Addressing Issues In Youth Justice: NICCY's advice promotes greater adherence to and consideration of, the Rights of Children and Young People in the youth justice system.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
2.7.1	<p>Children and Young People involved with the youth justice system have their rights respected and protected.</p>	Monitor, advise and challenge government and relevant agencies as/when necessary regarding the rights of children involved in the criminal justice particularly the Youth Justice Strategic Framework (including MACR and last resort) and Police regarding S&S, CHIS, S&BG and engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice produced and disseminated to stakeholders as / when necessary Monitor youth justice developments including against *SOCRNI Calls; Increased support from political parties to raise MACR. NICCY Response to YJF provided to Ras; and

Key Outcome: 2.7 Addressing Issues In Youth Justice: NICCY's advice promotes greater adherence to and consideration of, the Rights of Children and Young People in the youth justice system.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
		Engagement and participation in relevant fora including.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings held, action taken, recorded and monitored.

Key Outcome: 2.8 Addressing Homelessness: NICCY identifies the extent, and root causes of housing insecurity, to inform advice to Government.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
2.8.1	Publish report on the Rights of Children and Young People who are homeless or facing housing insecurity.	Commission a report on issue(s) facing families and children in housing crisis or insecurity which is informed by scoping study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report informed by scoping paper to be commissioned; and Report published and launched.

Key Outcome: 2.9 Addressing health waiting lists: NICCY's scrutiny of Health waiting lists leads to children facing shorter delays accessing appointments and treatment

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
2.9	Improve visibility of, and accountability for, child health waiting lists so that children face shorter delays, resulting in better outcomes.	<p>Disseminate findings and recommendations from report 'More Than A Number' to key stakeholders.</p> <p>Publish monitoring report on implementation of recommendations - Autumn 2022.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of key stakeholders of NICCY's report 'More Than A Number' is increased and RAs focus on reform of children's services; and Monitoring actions taken to address report recommendations.

Key Outcome: 2.10 Children's rights and the environment: Supporting a youth led initiative to explore the child rights implications of environmental matters including climate change - engaging a wide range of children and young people to inform NICCY's Calls

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
2.10	Support YP to advise government on Children's Rights and the Environment.	<p>Work with NYP to advocate for children's rights to environmental / climate justice with government officials, and to engage in ENYA process, and the development of the UNCRC General Comment on this area.</p> <p><i>x-Ref 1.3</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme of engagement produced and implemented; and

Key Outcome: 2.10 Children's rights and the environment: Supporting a youth led initiative to explore the child rights implications of environmental matters including climate change - engaging a wide range of children and young people to inform NICCY's Calls

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
		Support engagement between government departments and agencies, particularly DAERA, and young environmental activists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is better engagement between government departments/agencies, particularly DAERA and young environmental activists.

NICCY BUSINESS PLAN 2022-'23: Corporate Plan Objective 3

HLCO 3: To address breaches of children's and young people's rights.			
Key Outcome 3: Potential breaches of children and young people's rights are fully investigated and addressed.			
Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
3.1	Complete Formal Investigation and Produce Report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Report completed. Register of Recommendations produced and shared with relevant authorities. Complete post publication debrief and 'lessons learnt' to inform template for future Investigations. Monitoring of Relevant Authorities' implementation of recommendations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report launched and disseminated to relevant authorities; Register in place as required under legislation and shared with Ras; Creation of FI Template document and information to promote streamlined FI processes; and Monitoring successfully carried out as per legislative timeframes.
3.2	Conduct Independent Investigations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify any cases which may be appropriate for strategic investigation and progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If identified/agreed, draft ToR for Investigation and issue in line with appropriate process, recording monitoring of action/s taken.
3.3	Assist children and young people with complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All complaints triaged at case allocation & review (CAR) meetings and allocated appropriately in line with legislation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust records maintained on AP System; 90% successful resolution of cases;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints which are not within remit to be investigated, will be signposted to appropriate agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cases outside remit signposted appropriately; and Quarterly Trend Reports produced to identify trends and inform work planning.
3.4	Bring, Intervene in, or assist with, legal proceedings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proceedings issued as/when appropriate in line with NICCY's legislation. Increase strategic litigation including our involvement in interventions in same. Provide financial assistance to applicants iro cases adhering to NICCY's legislation and in line with NICCY LFC criteria and processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal cases / interventions progressed where 'added value' and the rights of child/ren realised. Cases' outcomes promoted as appropriate; Successful strategic litigation if/where appropriate including in interventions and outcomes benefitting greater numbers of children; highlighting issues integral to NICCY's remit and statutory duties / powers; and Action to safeguard Children's and Young People's Rights supported and outcomes monitored / promoted where appropriate.
3.5	Address and investigate Protected Disclosures in line with legislative requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protected disclosures processed as per 'Public Interest Disclosure Act' (as amended) and NICCY's Policy and Procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigation into relevant authority/ies action on behalf of 'originator'; Outcomes of investigations recorded; and Annual update issued in line with legislative and governance requirements.
3.6	NICCY's work is supported by robust legal advice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal advice (internal) provided to colleagues to inform ongoing work of NICCY. Legal opinions (external) sought as/when specialist knowledge is required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NICCY's legal advice supports compliance with legislation and other legal requirements; and Legal advice provided to inform our work as/when required and disseminated as/when necessary.

3.7	NICCY's legal work, UNCRC and NICCY's role is promoted among relevant audiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPD event/s held on areas of current interest / focus / legal developments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of NICCY's duties / powers is increased and impact/influence in legal sphere in safeguarding Children's Human Rights in NI is enhanced.
3.8	NICCY's legal functions are promoted and disseminated to ensure transparency and accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Complaints & Legal (ACL) Report 2021-'22 completed and published. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Complaints Casework & Legal Report 2021-'22 (retrospective) setting out performance across all legal functional areas produced; and • ACL Report 2021-22 is published and disseminated to relevant stakeholders.

NICCY BUSINESS PLAN 2022-'23: Corporate Plan Objective 4

HLCO 4: To raise awareness of children's and young people's rights, the UNCRC and the functions of the Commissioner.			
Key Outcome: 4 Greater understanding and awareness of children's and young people's rights, the UNCRC and NICCY's functions and work in achieving its mission.			
Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
4.1	Enhance, Promote and Monitor awareness of NICCY's work and profile among relevant 'audiences' i.e. as per Stakeholder Engagement Strategy (co-terminous with Corporate Plan).	<p>Develop an Annual Communications Strategy including section on Commissioners' Transition.</p> <p>Provide communication support across the range of priorities and workstreams.</p> <p>Produce NICCY publications and promotional materials.</p> <p>Proactive and reactive media engagement.</p> <p>Monitor media engagement i.e. print, broadcast and online.</p> <p>Monitor political developments of relevance to NICCY including relevant Assembly Business and AQs / AWQs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy developed and implemented; • Media and Online Analysis completed and Communications Strategy reviewed accordingly; • Plans developed and implemented so that NICCY's work informs stakeholders and influences public, political and broader debates; • Relevant publications and materials produced including for Children where appropriate, and disseminated as set out across the business year; • Monitor media, public engagement and feedback; • Media enquiries responded to appropriately in line with NICCY's legislative remit; • Media coverage of NICCY's positions and work meets objectives set out in Strategy and is accurate; • Colleagues are kept informed of political developments and relevant staff have most up to date developments to inform ongoing work in specific areas set out in the Business Plan;

Key Outcome: 4 Greater understanding and awareness of children's and young people's rights, the UNCRC and NICCY's functions and work in achieving its mission.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
		<p>Finalise work following the redevelopment of the NICCY website; and Ongoing maintenance of the new site.</p> <p>Online and social media activity to promote NICCY's work.</p> <p>*Raise awareness of Children's Rights, UNCRC and NICCY via Training, Presentations, CPD, Events, Information Sessions etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website is current and up-to-date; Enquiries responded to as received and website kept updated as/when necessary; Social Media sites updated with relevant content. Social Media enquiries responded to appropriately; and New *PoW Team established to progress and monitor content, quality assure, delivery and evaluations in increasing awareness and child rights implementation.
4.2	Enhance awareness of the UNCRC, C&YP's Rights and NICCY's work/role with Children and Young People.	Engage with children and young people across NI using appropriate materials to raise awareness of their rights, UNCRC and NICCY, and to hear from them about the issues affecting them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with Children and Young People Plan in place including vulnerable children and young people so they are better informed about these areas; Identify 3 key work areas to develop resource materials to support ongoing work e.g. SoCRNI, Age GFS, BoR, CRIA; and

Key Outcome: 4 Greater understanding and awareness of children's and young people's rights, the UNCRC and NICCY's functions and work in achieving its mission.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
		If feasible and appropriate, produce materials and supporting guidance for use by Practitioners working with Children to enhance awareness of same.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review (see *PoW) and delivery of workshops to raise awareness of the UNCRC, C&YP's Rights and NICCY's work to Practitioners who work with Children.

NICCY BUSINESS PLAN 2022-'23: Corporate Plan Objective 5

HLCO 5: To promote the participation of Children and Young People in decision making.

Key Outcome: 5 Increased involvement of, and effective mechanisms for, the participation of Children and Young People in decision making affecting their lives.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
5.1	Develop and support NICCY's Youth Panel to ensure that their voice is integral to the work of NICCY.	<p>Involve NICCY Youth Panel via subgroups in the implementation of Business Plan particularly in regard to key priorities.</p> <p>NYP subs groups to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Inequalities • Environmental / Climate Justice (x ref 2.10.1) <p>Continued involvement in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENYA programme • Mental Health sub group <p>Reactive engagement: It is anticipated that there will Covid related issues affecting all aspects of young people's lives. Engagement with the NYP may be on a reactive basis and additional to scheduled BP activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and training sessions for NYP members to build capacity, integrate and facilitate NYP planning; • NYP inform NICCY's work about issues facing children and young people including communication with children and young people; • NYP explore creative and innovative ways to campaign for change for children and young people across Northern Ireland; • NYP provides where possible, contemporary views and opinions on ongoing and developing issues facing children and young people; and

		Hold a NICCY Youth Panel Leavers' celebration event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebration event held and positive evaluation obtained.
5.2	Advising the NI Assembly, NI Executive, Departments and their agencies in the development of meaningful participation structures and practice.	Work with appropriate public authorities to support and advise on bespoke children and young people's engagement to inform legislative, strategy and policy developments. (x ref 1.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination of Participation Guidance; and Provide proactive and reactive advice to Statutory Agencies as required/necessary and monitor implementation.
		Engage with key Participation Practitioners through periodic NICCY Participation Forum meetings (x2) to promote best practice and share experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation practitioners across all sectors have a better understanding of and share good practice and provide evidence of positive engagement with children and young people.

NICCY BUSINESS PLAN 2022-'23: Corporate Plan Objective 6

HLCO 6: To ensure NICCY is an effective and efficient organisation.			
Key Outcome: 6 NICCY has used its resources effectively and efficiently in achieving its mission to safeguard and promote the rights of Children and Young People.			
Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
6.1	Deliver on our Annual Business Plan 2022 - 2023.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise organisational resources (financial, human and physical) effectively. Development of Departmental and Staff Work Plans incorporating Programmes of Work and Core Business as per JDs. Engagement with NI Govt Depts; Relevant authorities; and NGOs through, NICCY Advisory Forum, Dept'al Children's Champions Forum, Participation Forum and relevant fora including via representation on these. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate allocation & monitoring of organisational Grant-in-aid via Sponsor Dept DfC, Staff and Office resources; Expenditure within permitted variance; Periodic (Q'ly) reporting on achievement of set targets against corporate objectives; Achievement of agreed annual objectives as per functional areas/Programmes of Work; PoWs / Project Initiation Documents (PIDs); Action Plans in place - implementation as per timeframes; Staff Annual Objectives monitoring; Stakeholder engagement as necessary in achievement of Business Plan aims and objectives; and Representation in advisory capacity in line with NICCY's remit on relevant Boards, Working Groups and Fora.

6.2	Implementation of Hybrid Working (following Covid pandemic and return to the workplace).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hybrid working Policy & Procedures in place. • Agree working patterns of staff in line with business needs / policy. • Continue to ensure that Government advice is followed in relation to Pandemic response. • Return to the Workplace plans agreed with all staff and implemented. • Meetings of Ch Execs / Premises Committee held and feedback provided. • BCP Team Meetings held and relevant actions completed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of NICCY Hybrid Working Policy and Procedures; • All working patterns agreed and on record; • Implement NI Executive guidance as directed; • Working from home and clear and phased return to the workplace plans implemented in line with relevant guidance and advice; • Information and developments relayed to all Staff. All necessary arrangements in place in Equality House to ensure safe working practices; and • Information and actions to be taken relayed to all Staff as necessary. Records of meetings and completed actions noted.
6.3	Move to M365 IT system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of new records management system including liaison with IT Staff on an ongoing basis. • Telephony system stages of project implemented • Ongoing Training programme to be delivered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance in place and implemented by all Staff; • New records management system in place; • Plan in place ensuring understanding of all staff at each stage of project; • All phone calls can be answered via laptops and headsets using MS 365; and • Staff training completed.

6.4	Accurately Monitor and Report on NICCY's Performance and Impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated development schedule in place iro Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22 including 'Performance Impact Table'. • Quarterly Reports to our Sponsor Dept DfC; • Internal reporting 'Performance Monitoring Evaluation Framework' (PMEF)/ IG / Senior Management Team (SMT) / Leadership & Management Team (LMT)/ Staff Meetings/ Departmental workplans; Annual Appraisals and Reviews. • Ongoing Financial monitoring • Communications monitoring (<i>ref 4.2</i>). • Periodic reports / updates to stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule and production of Annual Report & Annual Accounts in line with latest FReM Guidance; • Performance Table to be completed as per schedule; • Annual Report laid in NI Assembly; and disseminated to stakeholders; • Quarterly ALB Corporate Performance Reports (x4) submitted to Sponsor Dept; • Quarterly and End of Year PMEFs completed for IG / SMT / LMT meetings; • 4-6 wkly reviews of Departmental Workplans; • Annual Appraisals & Objectives Set; • Quarterly 1-1 Reviews. • Annual Budget Allocations [Dept'al Budgets set]; • Monthly management accounts produced/reviewed; • Completion of periodic finance returns for DfC; • ChEx monthly finance reviews / internal monitoring; • Communications and Media monitoring – Daily, PR, Statements, Social Media activity; Mthly Mtgs; and • Feedback to Stakeholders at Meetings: Advisory Forum; Participation Forum; Children' Champions Forum; Events, Meetings and Seminars.
6.5	Ensure efficient systems of Corporate Governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adherence to MSFM and advice provided on the new Partnership Agreement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and input to DfC / DoF process and template;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Governance Statement and develop diagrammatic Overview • Implementation of systems of internal controls and financial management in line with Managing Public Money NI (MPMNI). • Quarterly Audit and Risk Assurance (ARAC) meetings, • Effective risk management [Corporate and Departmental Risk Registers]. • Internal Audits carried out and relevant action taken. • External Audit carried out by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and relevant action taken. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Governance Statement; • Governance mechanisms diagram; • Robust SIC in place ensuring effective governance mechanisms adherence and accountability; • Qly meetings / assurance mechanisms in place / relevant papers presented / follow up actions completed and recorded; • Risk Management Strategy in place and quarterly reviews & updates to Corporate Risk Register (CRR) alongside monthly reviews/updates to Dept'al Risk Reg's (DRRs); • Regular update on Organisational ext'/int' risks / horizon scanning. • Annual Audit Plan 2022/23. Planning meetings held, plans agreed, fieldwork completion, management responses input and appropriate action taken in regard to Internal Auditor's Reports; • Reporting of audit outcomes, recommendations and management responses to ARAC; • Planning meeting held; annual strategy agreed; fieldwork completion; management responses provided; relevant action taken; • External Auditor's Report (RTTCWG) / outcomes reflected in Annual Report as necessary; and
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress on recommendations from Review of Legislation [Article 24 Report]. (x ref to 1.2 GMIs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions taken following meetings as scheduled with Sponsor Dept Minister for Communities, relevant Officials and First and Deputy First Ministers (TEO).
6.6	Effective Performance Management across all areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competency Framework produced to support Performance Management Processes Regular reviews carried out for all staff and appropriately recorded. Annual Training Plan developed and actioned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Management Policy and Procedures in line with NICS best practice applied consistently across the organisation; Personal and Departmental Objectives set (xref 6.1); Competence framework used in setting of objectives and in subsequent reviews and annual appraisals; Training & Development costed Plan in place and opportunities undertaken by all staff recorded for LMT; and Delivery of relevant range of mandatory training for all staff throughout the year.
6.7	Prompt Implementation and / or updating of relevant policies, procedures and practice as required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of relevant information sources i.e. DoF, DfC, legislative req's. Processes in place followed to ensure all updates are incorporated into relevant policies, procedures, guidance etc. Clear communication to all staff on any changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NICCY advice and guidance up to date All policies, procedures and practices are informed by latest developments; Policies and procedures' reviews and updates as per internal processes following review schedule and relevant direction e.g. via legislative changes, Department of Finance (DoF), Dear Accounting Officer (DAO) / Financial Director (FD) updates; and All staff are informed of changes in areas of work and all relevant changes are implemented.

6.8	Organisational Culture and liP Accreditation levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Investors in People organisational accreditation 'journey'. • Organisational culture work developed including through LMT Action Plan following review of restructure. • Organisational values and behaviours demonstrated. • Staff Charter revisited to ensure adherence. • Implementation of 'People Strategy' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progression work towards next level of accreditation; • Ongoing improvements identified and actioned through internal processes / records kept; • Values and behaviours revisited and adhered to internally throughout NICCY; • Staff Charter revisited with all Staff - noted and monitored; and • All Staff aware of our People Strategy and feedback received.
6.9	Review NICCY's Corporate Social Responsibility Activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to review shared services in place and identify opportunities for further savings if possible. • Identify further opportunities for environmentally friendly activities. • Review opportunities for savings ensuring 'value for (public) money' / sharing of expertise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action as identified; opportunities re' shared services maximised within business needs context and further suggestions considered; • Equality House ChExec's', Premises & HR Committees' outputs actioned as/where appropriate; • Use of staff suggestion process re' ideas; • Environmentally friendly activities identified and promoted; sustainability theme included in policy; • Participation in relevant cost saving projects individually or as part of larger public sector network; and

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme of Wellbeing activities for Staff to be carried out. (x ref to org'al culture work) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant seminars / training / presentations / events / team days held to positively impact on staff wellbeing (e.g. <i>information provided on sources of support such as Occupational Health / Employee Welfare & Assistance Programmes, Health events, activities</i>).
6.10	Work with other organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities to work with other organisations whose work complements that of NICCY. • Communication to stakeholders of joint working positively identifying benefits and outputs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership working with other relevant organisations (including via MOUs / Protocols); • TOR clearly defined for each piece of work taken forward; and • Increased awareness of NICCY and work with other organisations.
6.11	<p>Develop 'Transitional' Annual Business Plan 2023-'24</p> <p><i>NB: New Corporate Plan 2023-27 to be developed following appointment of next Commissioner.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Schedule for drafting of transitional Annual Business Plan 2023-'24. • Draft 'Holding' Business Plan '23-'24 in advance of changes by new incoming Commissioner. • Submit to Sponsor Dept DfC by due deadline. • Business Plan to be published on website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule in place and disseminated for implementation; • Business Plan drafted including annual Budget requirements; • Business Plan submission to DfC; and • Business plan published on website.

6.12	Progress work on proposed future Premises move (2024/5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with DoF Team responsible for taking forward 'Belfast 2' project on 'agile' / blended working approach. • Keep Staff informed of developments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NICCY staff respond to communications / necessary requirements from DoF Team and inform developments; and • All staff consulted with, informed of developments and future premises move.
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