



# Business Plan 2023-24

## Context

**NB:** The original required budget figure submitted with the Business Plan (BP) was £1,850k. With severe budgetary cuts to the overall NI Budget, DfC, like other Departments, had to reduce expenditure including that provided to ALBs. This modified BP reflects the impact of reduced Grand-In-Aid in 2023-24.

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 current Commissioner is Mr Chris Quinn. Date of commencement: 18 September 2023. Term of Office: 4 years, renewable once. The Commissioner's current term ends 17 September 2027.

## 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 states NICCY's principal aim - i.e: *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 2023-2027

Our Corporate Plan links directly to the statutory duties and powers of the Commissioner for Children and Young People as enshrined within the 2003 legislation which established the Office. As a new Commissioner is to be appointed in 2023 we will be developing this new Corporate Plan, the period of which will now be co-terminous with the term of office i.e. 4 years. This will also entail engagement with a wide range of stakeholders as usual and include focus on the UNCRC Committee's Concluding Observations 2023 as well as NI Executive's PfG (and commitment to 'give our children the best start in life') and the 2020-2030 Children and Young People Strategy (CYPS). We will ensure outcomes based accountability in our approach as/where appropriate.

## Business Plan 2023-2024

This Business Plan is an 'interim' one given the commencement of the new Commissioner on 18 September 2023 and development of a new Corporate Plan. It is expected therefore that this will potentially necessitate review of the Business Plan in-year. As such, it identifies the key objectives and SMART targets/outputs to be delivered upon during the period, reflecting NICCY's statutory duties and work already 'in train' to be progressed. NICCY will ensure reference to changing developments including in the political, public and legal sectors, potentially a new Programme for Government (following elections), the Children and Young People 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.

## Internal Departmental Workplans

This Business Plan is supported by internal detailed departmental plans across NICCY's Legal & Investigations, Policy, Research & Participation, Corporate Services including Finance, HR, Communications & Administrative functions.

## Fundamental Principles:

**Child Rights Focus/ Approach in our Work and promoting that within Government:** NICCY was established to safeguard and promote children's and young people's rights with due regard to the UNCRC. The Convention and its principles (Art's 2, 3, 6 and 12) inform and guide our work in holding duty bearers to account on delivery for children in NI. To this end we have also progressed our work on child rights impact assessments/child rights proofing to have this available to inform NI Departments' practice. Our 2 Training Modules on [Children's Rights \(CRts\)](#) and on [Child Rights Impact Assessments \(CRIA\)](#) were launched in November 2022 and are now available on the NICS Links Training platform. This will aid child rights compliance and good practice 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 our business plan work is of primary consideration for us in NICCY and is embedded throughout each of the corporate and business objectives where appropriate/possible. Our [Participation Guidance](#) for government departments and statutory agencies is available to promote good practice.

**Stakeholder Engagement:** NICCY recognises the necessity to work with and involve our Stakeholders across all relevant spheres i.e. in the political, public, statutory, NGO, legal, media, community and voluntary sectors. This is reflected in integrated working, partnerships, co-operation, openness, accountability and information sharing. We have a **Stakeholder Engagement Strategy** to be co-terminous with our Corporate Plan, setting out how and with whom we will work / engage 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 assumption that it will be delivered within NICCY's staffing and budget requirements as set out in the 2023-'24 Business Plan. In the current climate of economic pressures and cost of living crisis, we are mindful of the necessity to ensure effective delivery on the Statutory Duties and Powers of the Office in line with our mission.

### 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; ChEx – 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 Heads of Departments of Policy & Participation and Legal & Investigations.

\*\*The Leadership & Management Team (LMT) comprises Chief Executive, Heads of Departments and all Deputy Principal Officers.

## NICCY BUSINESS PLAN 2023-24: 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	<b>Highlight and Promote Key Child's Rights issues at Local, National and International levels.</b>	<b>SOCRNI 3</b> – ongoing monitoring of progress on Calls across all themed areas (inc' CYPs 20-30 and CSCA implementation) by Duty Bearers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback on progress from NI Departments on recommendations collated/recorded.</li> <li>Progress updates inform NICCY's work.</li> </ul>
		<b>UNCRC Committee's Concluding Observations 2023</b>  Attend and advise Committee (if/where appropriate) at State Party examination session (May 2023).  Dissemination of Concluding Observations 2023 to Ministers, Departments, Assembly Committees, relevant stakeholders including children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NICCY influences Committee's scrutiny of State Party Report iro NI and assoc' Concluding Obs's</li> <li>Concluding Observations (including UNCRC incorporation) disseminated to NI Ministers, Departments and relevant authorities.</li> <li>Concluding Observations disseminated to other stakeholders, including children and young people.</li> <li>Monitoring Table 2023 drafted / engagement with DE as Lead Dept for NI Exec' for CYP.</li> </ul>
1.2	<b>Progress UNCRC General Measures of Implementation.</b>	<b>Review of Legislation</b> Monitor progress in relation to NICCY's 'Article 24 Report' recommendations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further advice provided as required</li> <li>Meetings held with relevant departments</li> <li>Response to DfC / Minister</li> <li>Monitor progress iro implementation of agreed recommendations.</li> <li>Consider if further recommendations required.</li> </ul>

		<b>Child Rights Impact Assessments</b> Continue broader dissemination of Template, Guidance and Training Modules across the public sector.  Advise Departments and Agencies on completion of CRIA process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All NICCY's advice to RAs reiterates requirement to undertake CRIAs at outset.</li> <li>• CRIAs are carried out by RAs on an increasing number of policies (including strategies and legislation)</li> <li>• NICCY receives feedback from RAs on implementing CRts / CRIA approach and monitoring record maintained.</li> </ul>
1.3	<b>Input and advise on ENOC 2023 Theme: Independent Human / Children's Rights Institutions (IHRIs / ICRIs) in Protection &amp; Promotion of CRts.</b>	<b>ENOC 2023</b> Input to ENOC Position Statement as required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jan' '23 - Wkg Grp Mtgs;</li> <li>• May '23 Seminar/Workshops;</li> <li>• Sept '23 Annual ENOC Conference.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Input to work / survey on development of ENOC Position Statement (PS);</li> <li>• ENOC Position Statement Issued;</li> <li>• ENOC PS disseminated to NI Government and NI Departments.</li> </ul>
		<b>ENYA 2023</b> NYP participation in ENYA Project	NYP members' input to ENYA project to provide advice/input to the drafting of ENOC position Statement.

## NICCY BUSINESS PLAN 2023-24: 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 eradication of child poverty.	<p>Advise on the key actions required to eradicate child poverty to be included in the Anti-Poverty Strategy.</p> <p>Work with partners to advise Government on the requirement for a Child Payment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-Poverty Strategy reflects NICCY's advice and is child rights compliant.</li> <li>• Key stakeholders including appropriate relevant authorities are aware of actions required to eradicate child poverty, including child payment.</li> </ul>



**Key Outcome: 2.2 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
2.2	Advise in relation to transformational reform of the education system including SEND.	Periodic meetings to advise on key areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent Review of Education and 'A Fair Start'.</li> <li>Use of restraint and seclusion in educ' settings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly meetings with Dep Perm Sec of DE and Officials and progress on outcomes on monitored</li> <li>Biannual meetings with DE Permanent Secretary</li> <li>Periodic meetings with EA</li> <li>Periodic meetings with ETI</li> <li>Evidence provided to Education Committee as/when necessary.</li> </ul>
		Monitor progress on implementation by RAs iro 'Too Little, Too Late' recommendations.  Action Plan in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular engagement with relevant authorities to progress implementation of the Report recommendations</li> <li>Ongoing representation on and advice provided to the SEND Transformation Programme Board</li> <li>Monitor developments iro SEND Project Plans which include recommendations from 'Too Little, Too Late'.</li> </ul>
		Publish Final 'Too Little, Too Late' Monitoring Report. (Feb' '24).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant authorities and stakeholders are aware of NICCY's assessment of actions taken to deliver on 'Too Little, Too Late' recommendations.</li> </ul>
		Monitor the implementation of SEND Act (2016) Regulations and Code of Practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing advice provided on revised Regulations and SEN Code of Practice at the various stages of the legislative process.</li> <li>Action taken, recorded and monitored.</li> </ul>

Key Outcome: 2.3 UK Covid Inquiry: Ensure UK Inquiry is informed of NI response to Covid Pandemic and its impact on children and young people here.			
Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
2.3	Evidence submission/s to UK Inquiry on the Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Children and Young People's Rights.	Witness Statement feedback monitored and further action taken as/when necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UK Covid Inquiry is provided with NICCY's evidence of the impact of Covid pandemic on children and young people and outcomes monitored.</li> <li>Relevant information, as requested or necessary is provided throughout the Inquiry.</li> </ul>

Key Outcome: 2.4 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
2.4	Ensure equal protection from assault in the home for children and young people and improved support for parents and families.	<p>Advise on potential avenues for legal reform inc' PMB.</p> <p>Engagement and advise on government strategy supporting positive parenting (FPSS).</p> <p>Ongoing engagement with key stakeholders including political representatives and NGO group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advice issued and increased understanding of the evidence and rights basis of the case for legal reform.</li> <li>A change in the law is debated in the Assembly</li> <li>Timely advice provided in relation to the DoH draft Family &amp; Parenting Support Strategy so that it supports policy position iro legislative reform.</li> <li>Meetings with politicians and NGO group held and progress recorded/monitored.</li> <li>Young people's voices are shared with key stakeholders</li> </ul>

Key Outcome: 2.4 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 with NYP Equal Protection Sub-Group to inform NICCY's work.	
2.5	Age discrimination legislation in accessing goods, facilities and services includes all children and young people.	<p>Advise on progressing of 'Age Discrimination (Access to Goods, Facilities and Services)' Bill by NI Executive.</p> <p>Engagement project with C&amp;YP to include older people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NI Executive are aware of the importance of progressing this commitment without further delay.</li> <li>Young people work with older people informs NICCY's work on legislation iro age in access to Good, Facilities and Services. ('Age GFS').</li> </ul>

**Key Outcome: 2.6 Addressing Homelessness:** NICCY highlights the extent and root causes of housing insecurity, to inform advice to Government (following publication of '*A Place to Call Home*').

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
2.6	Advise government on the Rights of Children and Young People who are homeless or facing housing insecurity.	Monitor government response to report on issue(s) facing families and children in housing crisis or insecurity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring process agreed with government, and initial feedback on actions received.</li> <li>NICCY provides assessment of government response to recommendations .</li> </ul>

**Key Outcome: 2.7 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
2.7	NICCY's Calls support YP to input to and inform government on Children's Rights and the Environment.	<p>Monitor government progress on the implementation of ENOC recommendations 2022 and UNCRC General Comment 26.</p> <p>Work with / support NYP to advocate for children's rights in environmental / climate justice with government.</p> <p>Support engagement between government departments and agencies, particularly DAERA, and young environmental activists.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key government departments give commitment to the implementation of recommendations as stated.</li> <li>NYP engages effectively with government officials and other duty bearers on environmental matters.</li> <li>There is better engagement between government departments/agencies, particularly DAERA and young environmental activists.</li> </ul>

**Key Outcome: 2.8 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 criminal coercion, exploitation and services for asylum seekers and refugees.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators
2.8	Monitor and advise on key safeguarding issues to ensure effectiveness of arrangements to protect vulnerable children and young people in NI.	<b>Health and Social Care:</b> Periodic meetings to advise on key areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gillen Review and Barnahus;</li> <li>- Waiting lists;</li> <li>- CSE;</li> <li>- Child Death overview mech';</li> <li>- Review of CSCNI.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular meetings held as / when necessary.</li> <li>• Progress and developments monitored.</li> <li>• Outcomes re' improvements / changes to practice etc recorded.</li> </ul>
		<b>Asylum Seekers &amp; Refugees</b> - Periodic meetings to advise on issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular meetings held as / when necessary.</li> <li>• Progress and developments monitored.</li> <li>• Outcomes re' improvements / changes to practice etc recorded.</li> </ul>
		<b>Youth Justice System</b> - Engagement with relevant policing and justice bodies to advise inc' on criminal coercion and exploitation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular meetings held as / when necessary.</li> <li>• Progress and developments monitored.</li> <li>• Outcomes re' improvements / changes to practice etc recorded.</li> </ul>

## NICCY BUSINESS PLAN 2023-24: 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	Monitor Implementation of NICCY's Formal Investigation Report Recommendations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop template formal investigation process based on first formal investigation.</li> <li>Monitoring progress of Relevant Authorities' implementation of recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creation of FI Template document and information to promote streamlined FI processes.</li> <li>Updated policy.</li> <li>Monitoring successfully carried out as per legislative timeframes and improvements recorded.</li> </ul>
3.2	Conduct Independent Investigations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify any cases which may be appropriate for strategic investigation and progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If identified/agreed, draft ToR for Investigation and issue in line with appropriate process, recording monitoring of action/s taken.</li> </ul>
3.3	Assist children and young people with complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All complaints triaged at case allocation &amp; review (CAR) meetings in line with legislation.</li> <li>Complaints which are not within remit to be investigated, to be signposted to appropriate agencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Robust records maintained on AP System.</li> <li>90% successful resolution of cases.</li> <li>Cases outside remit signposted appropriately.</li> <li>Quarterly Trend Reports produced to identify trends and inform work planning.</li> </ul>

3.4	<b>Bring, Intervene in, or assist with, legal proceedings.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proceedings issued as/when appropriate in line with NICCY's legislation.</li> <li>• Provide financial assistance to applicants iro cases adhering to NICCY's legislation and in line with NICCY LFC criteria and processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal cases / interventions progressed where 'added value' and the rights of child/ren realised. Cases' outcomes promoted as appropriate.</li> <li>• Action taken to support and safeguard Children's and Young People's Rights and outcomes monitored / promoted where appropriate.</li> </ul>
3.5	<b>Address and investigate Protected Disclosures in line with legislative requirements.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protected disclosures processed as per 'Public Interest Disclosure Act' (as amended) and relevant NICCY Policy and Procedures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigation into relevant authority/ies action on behalf of 'originator'.</li> <li>• Outcomes of investigations recorded.</li> <li>• Annual update issued in line with legislative and governance requirements.</li> </ul>
3.6	<b>Increase work in Strategic Litigation.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase strategic litigation including our involvement / NICCY process on same.</li> <li>• Build on our involvement in relevant seminars / events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful litigation if/where appropriate including in interventions where outcomes benefit greater numbers of children in line with NICCY's remit and statutory duties / powers.</li> <li>• NICCY's profile raised among relevant stakeholders.</li> </ul>
3.7	<b>NICCY's work is supported by robust legal advice.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal advice (internal) provided to colleagues to inform ongoing work of NICCY.</li> <li>• Legal opinions (external) sought as/when specialist knowledge is required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NICCY's legal advice supports compliance with legislation and other legal requirements.</li> <li>• Legal advice provided to inform our work as/when required and disseminated as/when necessary.</li> </ul>
3.8	<b>NICCY's legal work, UNCRC and NICCY's role is promoted among</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPD event/s held on areas of current interest / focus / legal developments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of NICCY's duties / powers is increased and impact/influence in legal sphere in safeguarding Children's Human Rights in NI is enhanced.</li> </ul>

	relevant audiences.		
3.9	NICCY's legal functions are promoted and disseminated to ensure transparency and accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Complaints &amp; Legal (ACL) Report 2022-23 completed and published.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Complaints Casework &amp; Legal Report 2022-23 (retrospective) setting out performance across all legal functional areas produced.</li> <li>ACL Report 2022-23 is published and disseminated to relevant stakeholders.</li> </ul>



## NICCY BUSINESS PLAN 2023-24: 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 new Corporate Plan).	<p>Develop an Annual Communications Strategy including section on Social Media, new Commissioner and updates to branding as necessary.</p> <p>Provide communication support across the range of priorities and workstreams.</p> <p>Produce NICCY publications and promotional materials, including iro new Commissioner.</p> <p>Proactive and reactive media engagement and monitoring i.e. print, broadcast and online.</p> <p>Monitor political developments of relevance to NICCY including relevant Assembly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy developed and implemented.</li> <li>• Enquiries responded to appropriately as received and website kept updated as/when necessary.</li> <li>• Social Media sites updated with relevant content.</li> <li>• Media and Online Analysis completed, and Communications Strategy reviewed accordingly.</li> <li>• Plans developed and implemented so that NICCY's work informs stakeholders and influences public, political and broader debates.</li> <li>• Relevant publications and materials produced including for Children where appropriate and disseminated as set out across the business year.</li> <li>• Monitor media, public engagement and feedback.</li> <li>• Media enquiries responded to appropriately in line with NICCY's legislative remit.</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>

<b>Key Outcome: 4</b> Greater understanding and awareness of children's and young people's rights, the UNCRC and NICCY's functions and work in achieving its mission.			
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>
		<p>Business and AQs / AWQs.</p> <p>Ongoing maintenance of the new site.</p> <p>Raise awareness of Children's Rights, UNCRC and NICCY via Training, Presentations, CPD, Events, Information Sessions etc and record.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website is current and updated in line with policies &amp; processes.</li> <li>Training content reviewed and monitored to quality assure delivery and evaluate increasing awareness of UNCRC, CYP's Rights and NICCY's work overall.</li> <li>Review and delivery of workshops to raise awareness of the UNCRC, C&amp;YP's Rights and NICCY's work to Practitioners who work with Children.</li> </ul>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Enhance awareness of the UNCRC, C&amp;YP's Rights and NICCY's work/role with Children and Young People.</b>	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"> <li>Engagement with Children and Young People Plan in place including vulnerable children and young people so they are better informed about these areas.</li> <li>Identify 3 key work areas to develop resource materials to support ongoing work as identified.</li> </ul>

## NICCY BUSINESS PLAN 2023-24: 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 sub groups 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"> <li>• Education Inequalities;</li> <li>• Environmental / Climate Justice</li> </ul> <p>Continued involvement in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ENYA programme</li> <li>• Mental Health sub group</li> <li>• Age GFS</li> <li>• Equal protection</li> </ul> <p><b>Reactive engagement:</b> Engagement with the NYP may be on a reactive basis (due to legacy of Covid etc) and additional to scheduled BP activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and training sessions for NYP members to build capacity, integrate and facilitate NYP planning.</li> <li>• NYP inform NICCY's work about issues facing children and young people including communication with children and young people.</li> <li>• NYP explore creative and innovative ways to campaign for change for children and young people across Northern Ireland.</li> <li>• NYP provides where possible, contemporary views and opinions on ongoing and developing issues facing children and young people.</li> </ul>
		Hold a NICCY Youth Panel Leavers' celebration event.	Celebration event held and positive evaluation obtained.

5.2	Informing members of 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dissemination of Participation Guidance by NICCY / Youth Panel.</li> <li>Proactive and reactive views provided to Statutory Agencies as required/necessary and monitoring record of implementation.</li> </ul>
		Engage with key Participation Practitioners through periodic NICCY Participation Forum meetings (x2 annually) to promote best practice and share experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation practitioners across different sectors have a better understanding of, share good practice and provide evidence of positive engagement with children and young people.</li> </ul>

## NICCY BUSINESS PLAN 2023-24: Corporate Plan Objective 6

**HLCO 6: To ensure NICCY is an effective and efficient organisation.**

**Key Outcome:** 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	<b>Deliver on our Annual Business Plan 2023-'24.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise organisational resources (financial, human and physical) effectively.</li> <li>Possible review of Business Plan 23-24 following new Corporate Plan.</li> <li>Development of Departmental and Staff Work Plans incorporating Programmes of Work and Core Business as per JDs.</li> <li>Engagement with NI Govt Depts; Relevant authorities; and NGOs through, NICCY Advisory Forum, Dept'al Children's Champions Forum, DE Q'ly Mtgs, Participation Forum and relevant fora including via representation on these.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate allocation &amp; monitoring of organisational Grant-in-aid via Sponsor Dept DfC, Staff and Office resources.</li> <li>Periodic (Q'ly) reporting on achievement of set targets against corporate objectives.</li> <li>Achievement of agreed annual objectives as per functional areas/Programmes of Work;</li> <li>PoWs / Project Initiation Documents (PIDs); Action Plans in place - implementation as per timeframes.</li> <li>Staff Annual Objectives monitoring.</li> <li>Stakeholder engagement as necessary in achievement of Business Plan aims and objectives;</li> <li>Representation in advisory capacity in line with NICCY's remit on relevant Programme Boards, Working Groups and Fora. Feedback provided via SMT/LMT Meetings.</li> </ul>

<b>Key Outcome:</b> 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
6.2	Hybrid / 'Agile' Working arrangements monitoring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hybrid working Policy &amp; Procedures in place.</li> <li>Continue to ensure that NI Executive advice is followed as in public sector overall.</li> <li>Meetings of Ch Execs / Premises Committee held and feedback provided.</li> <li>Periodic Business Continuity Team Meetings held and relevant actions completed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adherence to NICCY Hybrid Working Policy and Procedures – updated as per schedule.</li> <li>Implement NI Executive guidance as directed.</li> <li>Information and developments relayed to all Staff. All necessary arrangements in place in Equality House to ensure safe working practices.</li> <li>Information and actions to be taken relayed to all Staff as necessary. Records of meetings and completed actions noted.</li> </ul>
6.3	Move to M365 IT system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing Implementation of new records management system including liaison with IT Staff on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>Ongoing Training / familiarisation to be delivered.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New records management system in place.</li> <li>Guidance in place, shared with, and implemented by, all Staff.</li> <li>Staff training completed.</li> <li>Review to ensure that all aspects working as Departments as required</li> </ul>
6.4	Accurately Monitor and Report on NICCY's Performance and Impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule in place iro Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23 including 'Performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule and production of Annual Report &amp; Annual Accounts in line with latest FReM Guidance.</li> <li>Performance Table to be completed as per schedule</li> </ul>

**Key Outcome:** 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
		<p>Impact Table'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly Reports to our Sponsor Dept DfC;</li> <li>Internal reporting 'Performance Monitoring Evaluation Framework' (PMEF) / IG / Senior Management Team (SMT) / Leadership &amp; Management Team (LMT)/ Staff Meetings/ Departmental workplans; Annual Appraisals and Reviews.</li> <li>Ongoing Financial monitoring.</li> <li>Communications monitoring.</li> <li>Periodic reports / updates to stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Report laid in NI Assembly; and disseminated to stakeholders.</li> <li>Quarterly ALB Corporate Performance Reports (x4) submitted to Sponsor Dept.</li> <li>Quarterly and End of Year PMEFs completed for IG / SMT / LMT meetings;</li> <li>4-6 wkly reviews of Departmental Workplans;</li> <li>Annual Appraisals &amp; Objectives Set;</li> <li>Quarterly 1-1 Reviews.</li> <li>Annual Budget Allocations [Dept'al Budgets set]</li> <li>Monthly management accounts produced/reviewed;</li> <li>Completion of periodic finance returns for DfC</li> <li>ChEx monthly finance reviews / internal monitoring.</li> <li>Communications and Media monitoring – Daily, PR, Statements, Social Media activity; Mthly Mtgs.</li> <li>Feedback to Stakeholders at Meetings: Advisory Forum; Participation Forum; Children' Champions Forum; Events, Meetings and Seminars.</li> </ul>

**Key Outcome:** 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
6.5	Ensure efficient systems of Corporate Governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adherence to MSFM/new Partnership Agreement.</li> <li>Update Governance Statement and diagrammatic Overview.</li> <li>Implementation of systems of internal controls and financial management in line with Managing Public Money NI (MPMNI).</li> <li>Quarterly Audit and Risk Assurance (ARAC) meetings.</li> <li>Effective risk management [Corporate and Departmental Risk Registers].</li> <li>Effective risk management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No issues raised by sponsor dept DfC.</li> <li>Updated Governance Statement and Governance mechanisms diagram</li> <li>Robust SIC in place ensuring effective governance mechanisms adherence and accountability.</li> <li>Qly meetings / assurance mechanisms in place / relevant papers presented / follow up actions completed and recorded.</li> <li>Risk Management Strategy in place and quarterly reviews &amp; updates to Corporate Risk Register (CRR) alongside monthly reviews/updates to Dept'al Risk Reg's (DRRs).</li> <li>Regular update on Organisational ext'/int' risks / horizon scanning.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Reporting of audit outcomes, recommendations and management responses</li> </ul>



**Key Outcome:** 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
		<p>[Corporate and Departmental Risk Registers].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External Audit carried out by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and relevant action taken.</li> <li>Progress on recommendations from Review of Legislation [Article 24 Report].</li> </ul>	<p>to ARAC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning meeting held; annual strategy agreed; fieldwork completion; management responses provided; relevant action taken.</li> <li>External Auditor's Report (RTTCWG) / outcomes reflected in Annual Report as necessary.</li> <li>Actions taken following meetings as scheduled with Sponsor Dept Minister for Communities, relevant Officials and First and Deputy First Ministers (TEO).</li> </ul>
6.6	Effective Performance Management across all areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competency Framework used to support Performance Management Processes</li> <li>Regular reviews carried out for all staff and appropriately recorded.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competence framework used in setting of annual objectives and in subsequent reviews and annual appraisals.</li> <li>Performance Management Policy and Procedures applied consistently across the organisation.</li> </ul>

<b>Key Outcome:</b> NICCY has used its resources effectively and efficiently in achieving its mission to safeguard and promote the rights of Children and Young People.			
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Training Plan developed and actioned.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training &amp; Development costed Plan in place including mandatory training and opportunities for all staff - recorded for LMT.</li> </ul>
<b>6.7</b>	<b>Prompt Implementation and / or updating of relevant policies, procedures and practice as required.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring of relevant information sources i.e. DoF, DfC, legislative req's.</li> <li>Processes in place followed to ensure all updates are incorporated into relevant policies, procedures, guidance etc.</li> <li>Clear communication to all staff on any changes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NICCY advice and guidance up to date.</li> <li>All policies, procedures and practices are informed by latest developments.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>All staff are informed of changes in areas of work and all relevant changes are implemented.</li> </ul>
<b>6.8</b>	<b>Organisational Culture and liP Accreditation levels.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue Investors in People accreditation 'journey'.</li> <li>Organisational culture work progressed.</li> <li>Organisational values and behaviours demonstrated.</li> <li>Adherence to Staff Charter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progression work towards next level of accreditation.</li> <li>Ongoing improvements identified and actioned through internal processes / records kept.</li> <li>Values and behaviours adhered to internally throughout NICCY.</li> <li>Staff Charter adherence by all Staff - monitored.</li> <li>All Staff contribution to / ownership of 'Our People Strategy and feedback</li> </ul>

Key Outcome: 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
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of new and updated 'Our People Strategy'.</li> </ul>	received.
6.9	Review NICCY's Corporate Social Responsibility Activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to review shared services in place / opportunities for vfm 'public purse' savings / sharing of expertise.</li> <li>Identify further opportunities for environmentally friendly activities.</li> <li>Programme of Wellbeing activities for Staff to be carried out.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action as identified - opportunities re' shared services maximised within business needs context and further suggestions considered.</li> <li>Equality House ChExec's', Premises &amp; HR Committees' outputs actioned as/where appropriate.</li> <li>Participation in relevant cost saving projects individually or as part of larger public sector network.</li> <li>Use of staff suggestion process re' ideas.</li> <li>Environmentally friendly activities identified and promoted; sustainability theme included in policy.</li> <li>Relevant seminars / training / presentations / events / team days held to positively impact on staff wellbeing.</li> </ul>
6.10	Work with other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify opportunities to work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership working with other relevant organisations (including via MOUs /</li> </ul>

**Key Outcome:** 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
	organisations.	with other organisations whose work complements that of NICCY.	<p>Protocols);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased awareness of NICCY and work with other organisations.</li> </ul>
6.11	New Corporate Plan 2023-27 developed following appointment of next Commissioner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action Plan in place to develop new Corporate Plan 2023-27.</li> <li>Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2023-27 developed.</li> <li>Submit to Sponsor Dept DfC by due deadline.</li> <li>Corporate Plan to be published on website.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule in place and implemented.</li> <li>Stakeholder engagement strategy implemented.</li> <li>Corporate Plan drafted including projected Budget requirements.</li> <li>Corporate Plan submission to DfC.</li> <li>Corporate plan published on website.</li> </ul>
6.12	Review 'interim' Annual Business Plan 2023-'24 iro new Corporate Plan 2023-2027.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Schedule for drafting 'final' Annual Business Plan 2023-'24.</li> <li>Submit to Sponsor Dept DfC by due deadline.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule in place and implemented.</li> <li>Business Plan drafted including annual Budget requirements.</li> <li>Business Plan submission to DfC.</li> <li>Business plan published on website.</li> </ul>

<b>Key Outcome:</b> 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
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business Plan to be published on website.</li> </ul>	
6.13	Develop Business Plan 2024-2025.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule of development of Business Plan 2024-25.</li> <li>Submit to Sponsor Dept DfC by due deadline.</li> <li>Business Plan to be published on website.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule in place and implementation.</li> <li>Business Plan drafted including annual Budget requirements.</li> <li>Business Plan submission to DfC.</li> <li>Business plan published on website.</li> </ul>
6.14	Progress work on proposed future Premises move by DoF.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with DoF Team responsible for taking forward 'Belfast 2' project on 'agile' / blended working approach.</li> <li>Keep Staff informed of developments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NICCY staff respond to communications / necessary requirements from DoF Team and inform developments.</li> <li>All staff consulted with, informed of developments and future premises move.</li> </ul>