



Business Plan 2024-25

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 Chris Quinn.

Appointment start date: 18 September 2023. Term of Office: 4 years renewable once. 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 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 his 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 his 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 2023-27

The Corporate Plan 2023-27 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. 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 2024-25

This Business Plan links directly to the Corporate Plan – period 2023-27. As such, it identifies the key objectives and SMART targets/outputs to be met/delivered during the course of the year based on the six 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 (PFG) outcomes - in keeping with our independent role and statutory duties and powers. We await a new PFG, however our work delivers on Outcome 1 of the previous draft PFG: '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.

Initial Budget Allocation for 2024-25

Total Allocation 2024/25 (£000)	
Salaries	1,247
Premises	115
Overheads	157
Programme costs	83
Total	1,602

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 2024-25: Corporate Plan Objective 1

HLCO 1: Participation: To promote the participation of children and young people in decision making.					
Key Outcome: 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	Target Date	Lead Dept
1.1	Further build upon NICCY's Participation Strategy, ensuring young people's voices feature in our work	Revise and update NICCY's Participation Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative and engaging regional participation programme. • Enhanced visibility and accessibility of NICCY (X-ref Obj 4) • Targeted work with young people with lived experiences (X-ref Obj 2) 	Q1-4	P&P
1.2	Develop and support NICCY's Youth Panel and Youth Engagement Forum to ensure that their voice is integral to the work of NICCY	Involve NICCY Youth Panel (NYP) via subgroups in the implementation of Business Plan particularly in regard to key priorities. NYP subs groups to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Inequalities; • Environmental / Climate Justice • ENYA programme (X-ref Obj 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide ongoing support to NYP members to support key BP objectives. • Promotion of the NICCY Youth Engagement Forum (NYEP) • Exploration of the feasibility to develop space for young people to meet at / with NICCY 	Q1-4	P&P
		Arrange and deliver NICCY Youth Panel Leavers' celebration event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NICCY Youth Panel members are recognised for their participation. • Exit programme of support and guidance delivered 	Q2/Q3	P&P
1.3	Informing members of the NI Assembly, NI Executive, Departments and their	Work with appropriate public authorities to support and advise on bespoke children and young people's engagement to inform legislative,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide ongoing participation advice and support to government. 	Q1-4	P&P

<p>agencies in the development of meaningful participation structures and practice, encouraging that young people's voices are embedded in their work</p>	<p>strategy and policy developments.</p>			
	<p>Continue to advise DE on development of a participation policy and associated participation mechanism, including development of a School Councils/Pupil Participation policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review progress to date of DE's participation policy and associated participation mechanism and produce forward looking recommendations. 	<p>Q1-4</p>	<p>P&P</p>
	<p>Engage with key Participation Practitioners through periodic NICCY Participation Forum to promote best practice and share experience.</p>	<p>Two Participation Forum meetings held with NGOs, Academic and Statutory sector representatives.</p>	<p>Q1 & Q3</p>	<p>P&P</p>
	<p>Explore links with Ombudsman in ROI & Commissioners in England, Wales, Scotland.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop opportunities to explore good practice sharing and collaborative initiatives. 	<p>Q1-Q4</p>	<p>P&P</p>

NICCY BUSINESS PLAN 2024-25: Corporate Plan Objective 2

HLCO 2: INCORPORATION - To ensure that children’s and young people’s rights are incorporated 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 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) and incorporation of the UNCRC.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators	Target Date	Lead Dept
2.1	Incorporation of UNCRC into law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce policy paper outlining current case for incorporation. 	Legal opinion obtained to inform NICCY Policy Paper / Publication to influence support for incorporation.	Q3	P&P / L&I
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual ‘International Children’s Day’ marked with ‘Rights Roadshow’ across Northern Ireland 	A week or activities held across Northern Ireland led by young people; Stakeholder engagement; dissemination of publication and support on record.	Q3	ALL
2.2	Protecting our independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Article 24 [Review of NICCY’s legislation] Report recommendations progressed. 	Record of political / stakeholder engagement; progress in respect of recommendations; commitment to identified legislative reforms.	Q1-4	L&I
2.3	Holding government to account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting Concluding Observations to Duty Bearers in addressing Children’s Rights. 	Concluding Observations used to influence change in Duty Bearers’ policy, practice and case law.	Q1-4	ALL
2.4	Input and advise on ENOC 2024 Theme: ‘Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Children in Alternative Care’	ENOC 2024 Participate in ENOC Working Group to advise/input to ENOC Position Statement as required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NICCY input to work / survey on development of ENOC’s Annual Position Statement; ENOC Position Statement disseminated to NI Executive and NI Departments. 	Q1-3	P&P
		ENYA 2024 Working in partnership, ensure young people’s participation in ENYA Project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people with care experience develop recommendations to inform the drafting of ENOC Position Statement. 	Q1-3	

CSCA – Children’s Service Co-operation Act (2015)
CYPS – Children and Young People Strategy 2020-2030
ENOC – European Network of Ombuds’ and Commissioners for Children
ENYA – European Network of Youth Advisors
UNCRC – United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

NICCY BUSINESS PLAN 2024-25: Corporate Plan Objective 3

HLCO 3: PRIORITIES - Highlight and address critical issues which adversely affect children and young people.					
Key Outcome: 3.1 Ending 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 eradicate it.					
Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators	Target date	Lead Dept
3.1	Advise Government on the eradication of child poverty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partner organisations to build support for action to end child poverty; Advise government on Anti-poverty strategy and other actions to address child poverty, such as welfare reform mitigations; Disseminate paper on Free School Meal entitlement, and advise on changes; Advise DE on reform to School Uniform policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership working with others to produce clear calls for action; NICCY provides timely, high quality child rights based advice to government, and builds support for action to eradicate child poverty; Relevant authorities are informed of necessary changes to FSME in addressing child poverty; Advice provided to DE on necessary reform on School Uniform Policy. 	<p>Q1-4</p> <p>Q1-4</p> <p>Q1-2</p> <p>Q1-2</p>	P&P

Key Outcome: 3.2 Improving health and well-being: We will work to ensure that the healthcare received by all children, and the service delivery structure for healthcare for children and young people, are of a high standard and supports the development of every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators	Target Date	Lead Dept
3.2.1	Addressing the impact of Waiting Lists upon children's healthcare provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake monitoring and assessment of waiting lists for outpatient appointments, treatments, referrals for children and adolescent services. Produce scoping paper collating data collection and methodology proposals for future framing and work for MTAN monitoring. Engagement with relevant stakeholders including in data collection, collation, dissemination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of initial data collection from HSCTs and commencement of assessment. Completion of scoping paper to inform consideration of the future monitoring of MTAN and the research impact of same. Completion of preliminary engagement with stakeholders to support scoping paper development and design of future work. Production of rights-based advice and recommendations to government and relevant agencies to ensure understanding and focus of children's rights in interventions in addressing waiting lists, correspondence waiting times / delayed correspondence. 	Q1-4	P&P

<p>3.2.2</p>	<p>Improving access to and participation within Mental Health services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce proposal paper for future monitoring of and work for SW / SWAP. • Undertake monitoring and assessment of waiting lists for outpatient appointments, treatments, referrals for children and adolescent mental health services. • Monitor and assess the status and delivery of the MHS in the context of children and adolescent mental health services, including funding allocations and timeframes. • Engagement with the MHC office on items of shared concern / focus. • Engagement with relevant stakeholders including in data collection, collation, dissemination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of proposal paper to inform consideration of the future monitoring of SW / SWAP and the research impact of same for implementation in the 2026-27 year. • Completion of preliminary engagement with stakeholders to support scoping paper development and design of future work. • Production of rights-based advice and recommendations to government and relevant agencies to ensure understanding and focus of children's rights in the implementation of the MHS and mental health services and supports generally. • Engagement within relevant DOH opportunities such as MHS review workshops and PL2 AP review workshops. • Engagement with the MHC office on items of shared concern / focus. 	<p>Q1-4</p>	<p>P&P</p>
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Key Outcome: 3.3 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	Target Date	Lead Dept
3.3.1	Advise in relation to transformational reform of the education system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise as required in response to the Minister's response to the Independent Review of Education Report (IRE). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise on key aspects of the IRE as required. 	Q2	P&P
3.3.2	Advise on SEND System Reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and advise on implementation of the SEND Act (2016) Regulations and Code of Practice. Advise and monitor progress in implementing TLTL recommendations and wider SEND transformation. Engagement with relevant stakeholders to monitor and assess specialist provision in mainstream schools (SPiMs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued representation on the SEND Transformation Programme Board and SEND TP Project Board, influencing decision making to ensure a rights-based approach for children with SEND. Advice provided is reflected in the implementation of the Regulations and SEN Code of Practice. Monitor developments iro SEND TP projects which include TLTL recommendations. RAs held to account through engagement at periodic meetings and reporting processes. Issues and challenges in relation to SPiMS are identified and raised with relevant RAs, and reflected in advice to government. 	Q1-4	P&P

<p>3.3.3</p>	<p>Monitor and advise on RSE and Use of Restrictive Practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and advise on the implementation of the RSE (NI) (Amendment) Regulations 2023. Engagement with relevant RAs in periodic meetings on this issue. • Monitor and advise on progress in progressing NSNH recommendations, including the implementation of the statutory guidance on reduction of the use of restrictive practices in educational settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the RSE Regulations takes a child rights-based approach and involves recording, monitoring and evaluation processes. Engagement with young people is undertaken by government to inform implementation. • Regular engagement with DE to progress implementation of the statutory guidance. • Engagement with DE to progress our NSNH recommendations. 	<p>Q1-4</p>	<p>P&P</p>
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Key Outcome: 3.4 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	Target Date	Lead Dept
3.4.1	Ensure equal protection from assault in the home for children and young people and improved support for parents and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partner organisations to build support for action to legislate on equal protection; • Paper on Equal Protection in other jurisdictions, and advise on changes; • Advise DoJ and political parties on reform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NICCY provides timely, high quality child rights-based advice to government, and builds support for action to legislate to ensure equal protection from assault, and support for families; • Disseminate paper on Equal Protection in other jurisdictions and advise on changes. 	Q1-4	P&P

Key Outcome: 3.5 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
3.5.1	Address coercive control, assaults and exploitation of children and young people by criminal gangs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor relevant developments including those from TPCOCP and advise Government accordingly; • Support and monitor recommendations of relevant Reports/Papers on addressing legacy of the conflict and its impact on Children and Young People; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice provided to Government and relevant Officials; 	Q1-4	P&P

Key Outcome: 3.5 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
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Xref with CSE. 			
3.5.2	Provide advice to agencies to increase confidence in policing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Xref with 3.6.1 Monitoring of CYP Strategy; CYP engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth engagement forum with policing agencies; Monitor implementation of PSNI CYP Strategy; Advise government and agencies on strengthening measures to improve Children and Young People's confidence in PSNI. 	Q1-4	P&P

Key Outcome: 3.6 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	Target Date	Lead dept
3.6.1	Advise government on the Rights of Children and Young People involved with the youth justice system, to ensure they have their rights respected and protected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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), PSNI regarding S&S, CHIS, S&BG and strategy, NIPB Human Rights Review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice produced and disseminated to stakeholders as / when necessary; Monitor youth justice developments including against *SOCRNI Calls and UNCRC Concluding Obs; Ensure programmes and policies are trauma-informed; Increased support from political parties on Youth Justice requirements; Monitor PSNI CYP Strategy; Advice on CYP rights in policing – NIPB human rights review; Engagement and advice to Government on ASB. 	Q1-4	P&P

Key Outcome: 3.7 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	Target Date	Lead Dept
3.7.1	Sexual offences against children and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Advice and monitoring on the Child Exploitation work programme by SBNI and CPSOG ensuring a focus on CCE, CSE and Trafficking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review work undertaken by the Child Protection Senior Officials Group to progress further implementation of recommendations; Provide child rights compliant advice to government, drawing on the Barnahus research report. 	Q1-4	P&P
3.7.2	Digital rights / online safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a 'stocktake' piece of research to pull together existing data and research in NI and identify if any gaps. Establish an NYP stream of work around digital rights to respond and engage with Ofcom's work programme around the Online Safety Act. Joint approach and work with BINOCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizational understanding, thinking and priorities around online CYP rights have been developed. Active engagement and participation from NYP through establishment of team. Provision of ongoing advice to Ofcom either as NICCY or through BINOCC. 	Q1-4	P&P
3.7.3	Review of Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and advise on the implementation plans of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care & the Children's Social Care Reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of advice to DOH. Rights approach explicitly informs children's social care reform and health system reform. CYP participation is central to reviewing and monitoring progress. 	Q1-4	P&P

		<p>Programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in an ‘annual children’s social care conference’ as recommended in the Independent Review. • Explore the potential of collaborating on a separate CYP social care conference. • Develop an integrated CYP rights approach within NICCY in relation to health and social care transformation plans. 			
3.7.4	Ending violence against women and girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support of and engagement in EVAWG Youth Participation architecture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective Youth Participation architecture advising, shaping and monitoring the EVAWG action plan. 	Q1-4	P&P
3.7.5	Provide advice to government on other issues relating to safeguarding children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor, advise and challenge government and relevant agencies as/when necessary, including in relation to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expanding abuse of trust provisions ○ Domestic abuse ○ Ending child marriage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice produced and disseminated to stakeholders as / when necessary; 	Q1-4	P&P

Key Outcome: 3.8 Safeguarding the rights of asylum seeking and refugee children

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators	Target Date	Lead dept.
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<p>3.8.1</p>	<p>Monitor rights breaches in relation to asylum seeking and refugee children and intervene when possible and relevant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a programme of visits to contingency and dispersal accommodation using a child rights framework. • Monitor and review the effectiveness of law and practice and the adequacy and effectiveness of services in relation to displaced CYP. • To make representations or recommendations to anybody or person relating to the rights and best interests of displaced children and young people • To assist displaced CYP and their families in making complaints to the relevant authorities and bring, intervene or assist in legal proceedings. • To engage collaboratively with other arms-length bodies as well relevant community and voluntary sector groups and networks in respect of the above. • To seek the views and advocate the participation of CYP in all the above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards the production of an Annual 'state of CYP in the refugee and asylum system' report produced. 	<p>Q4</p>	<p>P&P</p>
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Key Outcome: 3.9 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	Target Date	Lead dept
3.9.1	Advise government on the Rights of Children and Young People who are homeless or facing housing insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor government response to report on issue(s) facing families and children in housing crisis or insecurity; Engagement with children and young people through Homelessness Awareness Week 2024; Work with sector organisations to tackle and raise awareness of youth homelessness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of monitoring process agreed with government, and initial feedback on actions received from NICCY report 'A Place to Call Home'; Monitoring and issuing feedback to agencies and government on change to Housing Selection Scheme; NICCY provides assessment of government response to recommendations. 	Q1-4	P&P

Key Outcome: 3.10 Children's rights and climate and environmental justice: Growing a CYP rights-based approach to tackling climate breakdown, pollution and biodiversity loss.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators	Target Date	Lead dept.
3.10.1	Supporting a youth led initiative to hold government to account with regards to climate change and the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and support a NYP team to lead on this work with other youth groups. Organise an event in the Autumn '24 in collaboration with other groups and organisations to baseline the 'state' of CYP rights in relation to climate and the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key government departments begin using rights-based language and framework to shape their climate and environmental actions and commitments. NYP engages effectively with government officials and other duty bearers on environmental matters. DAERA and TEO invests in CYP participation 	Q1-4	P&P

		<p>environment using GC26 and ENOC recommendations. To explore whether this becomes an annual event to monitor progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support engagement between government departments and agencies, particularly DAERA, and young environmental activists. 	<p>and engagement platforms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice papers submitted to relevant consultation processes. 		
3.10.2	Strategic Litigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document the learning from the FoE and PILS Diesel Emissions case and explore potential of further youth led strategic litigation. See 4.4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential of further youth led strategic litigation explored. 	Q1-4	L&I

Key Outcome: 3.11 Covid-19 impact legacy					
Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators	Target Date	Lead Dept
3.11.1	Monitor Covid-19 Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Rule 9 witness statements as required. Apply for Core Participant status if/when appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence provided as/when requested. Application for Core Participant status when appropriate. 	Q1-4	L&I

NICCY BUSINESS PLAN 2024-25: Corporate Plan Objective 4

HLCO 4: ADVOCATE: To address breaches of children’s and young people’s rights.					
Key Outcome 4: 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	Target Date	Lead dept
4.1	Continue Formal Investigation Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Relevant Authorities around ongoing progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring report published. Ongoing commitment to improvement. 	Q1-4	L&I
4.2	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, commence Investigation in line with appropriate internal process; • Draft report, recording recommendations; and monitoring of action/s to be taken. 	Q1-4	L&I
4.3	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. Complaints which are not within remit, will be signposted to appropriate agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust records maintained; Successful resolution of cases; Relevant trends and issues highlighted to Relevant Authorities to address issues Quarterly Trend Reports produced to identify trends and inform work planning 	Q1-4	L&I
4.4	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 on same. Complete strategic litigation toolkit Provide financial assistance to applicants iro cases adhering to NICCY’s legislation and in line with NICCY LFC criteria and 	<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; Engage children and young people in strategic litigation where 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 / recorded 	Q1-4	L&I

		processes.	/ promoted where app'.		
4.5	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. 	Q1-4	L&I
4.6	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 req'. 	<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. 	Q1-4	L&I
4.7	NICCY's legal functions are promoted and disseminated to ensure transparency and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Complaints & Legal (ACL) Report 2023-'24 completed and Published. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Complaints Casework & Legal Report 2023-'24 (retrospective) setting out performance across all legal functional areas produced; and ACL Report 2023-'24 is published and disseminated to relevant stakeholders. 	Q1-2	L&I

NICCY BUSINESS PLAN 2024-25: Corporate Plan Objective 5

HLCO 5: To raise awareness of children’s and young people’s rights, the UNCRC and the functions of the Commissioner.

Key Outcome: 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	Target Date	Lead dept
5.1	Enhance awareness of the UNCRC, C&YP’s Rights and NICCY’s work/role with Children and Young People	Wider engagement with young people to promote Child Rights and participation,, and to inform our work including those in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early years settings; • Primary schools; • Post primary schools; • Communities of interest, e.g., SEND, LGBTQI+, BME young people, refugee and asylum C&YP, cancer effected (and others in health care). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement 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. 	Q1–4	P&P / CS
		Explore delivery of public awareness campaign focusing on Inclusive Participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with relevant organisations to hear young people’s voices on the issue of Inclusive Participation. 	Q1-4	P&P / CS

NICCY BUSINESS PLAN 2024-25: Corporate Plan Objective 6

HLCO 6: Effectiveness: Ensure NICCY is an effective and efficient organisation.

Key Outcome: NICCY has used its resources effectively and efficiently as NI's independent Children's Rights Institution.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators	Target Date	Lead dept.
6.1	Deliver on our Annual; Business Plan 2024-25	<p>Develop detailed workplans across our internal Departments;</p> <p>Agree individual Staff Performance objectives as per JDs and BP;</p> <p>Utilise organisational resources – Human, Financial and Physical – to best effect;</p> <p>Liaison with Sponsor Department on resourcing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departmental Workplans (SMART) developed by CS / L&I / P&P; Achievement of agreed annual objectives as per functional areas/Programmes of Work; Allocation of Staff and budgets PoWs / Project Initiation Documents (PIDs); Action Plans in place - implementation as per timeframe; Ongoing liaison with and reporting to, Department at quarterly meetings. 	<p>Q1</p> <p>Q1-4</p> <p>Q1</p> <p>Q1-4</p>	CS
6.2	Ensure and apply robust Corporate Governance Systems in place	<p>Ensure adherence to our MSFM / ALB Partnership Agreement;</p> <p>Review and update Governance Statement to include SIC;</p> <p>Apply effective financial management and systems of internal control;</p> <p>Ensure quarterly ARAC meetings held;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No issues raised by sponsor department; Updated Governance Statement & Diagram in place; Robust financial systems in place as per MPMNI and relevant guidance (DoF, DfC, DAOs, etc); Qly meetings / assurance mechanisms in place / relevant papers presented / follow up advices, actions completed and recorded; 	<p>Q1-4</p> <p>Q2</p> <p>Q1-4</p> <p>Q1-4</p>	<p>CS</p> <p>CS</p>

Key Outcome: NICCY has used its resources effectively and efficiently as NI's independent Children's Rights Institution.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators	Target Date	Lead dept.
		Review Risk Management Policy; Review and update CRR quarterly;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update Risk Management Policy; Updated Corporate Risk Registers; 	Q1	CS
		Work with Internal and external audit on implementation of Strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning meetings held with NIAO and ASM to agree strategies / areas for audit; Provide management responses and implement agreed recommendations from Reports and RttcwG (included in our log). 	Q1-4 Q1-4	CS
6.3	Accurately Monitor and Report on NICCY's Performance and Impact	Accountability, Monitoring and Reporting on NICCY's performance and impact including through our: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Report and Accounts for NI Assembly, Quarterly Reports to our Sponsor Department, Internal reporting quarterly and individually by Staff; Periodic reports / updates to stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Schedule for completion of Annual Report and Accounts 23-24 (in line with FreM); Produce Annual Report & Accounts '23-24 and disseminate following laying in NI Assembly; Governance Checklist / Assurance Statement / Quarterly Performance Report submitted to DfC Quarterly PMEF completion; Staff 1-1s conducted by Line Managers (LM); Feedback to stakeholders via NICCY led meetings (see below) and via reports, publications, events, external engagement, social media platforms, interviews etc; 	Q1 Q3 Q1-4 Q1-4 Q1-4	CS

Key Outcome: NICCY has used its resources effectively and efficiently as NI's independent Children's Rights Institution.					
Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators	Target Date	Lead dept.
6.4	Implementation and / or updating of relevant policies, procedures and practice as required	<p>Monitoring of relevant information sources i.e. DoF, DfC, legislative req's;</p> <p>Updates / changes to relevant policies, procedures and practice with specific focus on cyber security, records management and IT.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developments and changes noted and relevant Staff made aware and added to Policy Review Schedule as required; • Updated Policies / Guidance / Practice directives (as per process) developed as required; • Disseminate to Staff for implementation as necessary. 	<p>Q1-4</p> <p>Q1-4</p> <p>Q1-4</p>	CS
6.6	Review NICCY's Corporate Social Responsibility Activities	<p>Review our corporate social responsibility approach and seek further opportunities to advance;</p> <p>Keep under review our shared services, sharing of expertise;</p> <p>Review our environmentally friendly practices and seek further opportunities to advance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record of CSR meeting / suggestions and implementation of agreed action including potential charity work to benefit children in NI; • Shared services arrangements continue to be of best practice and value for money; • Implement further environmentally friendly activities and add to where possible. 	<p>Q1</p> <p>Q1-4</p> <p>Q1-4</p> <p>Q1-4</p>	CS
6.7	Develop and apply our Stakeholder engagement Strategy in maintaining and developing working relationships and partnerships with others to achieve objectives	<p>Include relevant stakeholders/ groups in PoW / IWS action plans;</p> <p>Work with others with relevant remits e.g. ENOC, BINOCC, Rights Institutions, our Advisory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder engagement and working in partnership where possible, in achievement of Business Plan aims and objectives; • Participation and input to these Fora and influence in line with NICCY's remit; • Representation on the range of relevant 	<p>Q1-4</p> <p>Q1-4</p> <p>Q1-4</p>	ALL

Key Outcome: NICCY has used its resources effectively and efficiently as NI's independent Children's Rights Institution.

Ref. No.	Key Actions	Activities to be undertaken	Key Performance Indicators	Target Date	Lead dept.
		<p>Forum, Participation Forum, Children's Champions Forum and others to achieve objectives;</p> <p>Identify emerging issues and work with others as/when appropriate to address.</p>	<p>Programme Boards, Working Groups and Fora acting in line with NICCY's remit;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide feedback via SSE / SMT / LMT / Staff Meetings to inform our work overall. 	Q1-4	
6.8	Develop Business Plan 2025-2026	Develop schedule for completion of Business Plan 2025-'26 and submit to DfC, publishing on website following Ministerial approval.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule of development of Business Plan 2025-'26. • Completion and submission of Business Plan to Sponsor Dept DfC by due deadline. • Business Plan to be published on website. 	<p>Q2</p> <p>Q3-4</p> <p>TBC</p>	CS