

**NATIONAL POLICIES:  
PROGRAMMES,  
STRUCTURES  
AND FUNDING LINES  
RELEVANT TO TOGETHER 4 ALL**

**TOGETHER 4 ALL  
FAMILY SUPPORT PROJECT  
BETTER LIVES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**MAY 2007**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**Together 4 All**  
**Moylinn House Resource Centre**  
**21 Legahory Centre**  
**Brownlow**  
**Craigavon**  
**BT65 5BE**  
**Tel: 028 3831 7157**  
**[www.together4all.org](http://www.together4all.org)**

**Editorial / Production:** Philomena Horner, Chair, T4A  
Nuala Magee, Project Manager, T4A

**Acknowledgements:** Francesca Leyden, APSW, Southern HSCT  
Eileen Shine, Project Support Assistant, T4A

## FOREWORD

The Together 4 All Family Support Project is developing a new model of family support, designed to improve outcomes for children and young people. While focused on the children and young people of Lurgan, Brownlow, Aghagallon and Bleary, we believe that this local strategy will be replicable throughout Northern Ireland and wider a field.

The Strategy aligns closely with legislation, and with national and regional policies in relation to children and young people.

Since around 2000, much government policy has focused on the well being of children and young people. As early as 1998, the Children's Services Planning Order and its associated Guidance were 'designed to promote collaboration and co-ordination between agencies in the planning and delivery of services for vulnerable children'. The Together 4 All Strategy stresses the importance of integration of services for children, and proposes this as one of its ways of working.

Government has put considerable focus on children and young people, and a succession of policies and strategies has been put in place to address their needs. Recurring themes include:

- The need for both universal services and those targeted at specific groups of young people;
- Recognition and promotion of children's rights;
- Early intervention to prevent the need for more specialist services;
- Reduction of the number of young people engaged in anti-social behaviour;
- The importance of working closely with parents to increase their confidence and capacity to respond to the needs of their children;
- Recognition that Northern Ireland is no longer a bi-polar society, but is enriched by its increasing cultural identity;
- And arising from the latter, the need for awareness raising, human rights education, and anti-racism education in the school curriculum.

The Together 4 All Strategy aligns closely with each of these policies, and reflects the same aspirations. These are perhaps best summed up in this extract from the 10 Year Strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2006)

‘Our vision is that all children and young people living in Northern Ireland will thrive and look forward with confidence to the future’,  
and from ‘A Shared Future – Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland’ (2005)  
‘So that every child leaves school with a direct and sustained engagement with diversity and is better equipped to meet the challenges of being an adult in a shared society’.

My expectation is that those who see the Together 4 All Strategy unfolding will see it reflect an innovative approach to the fulfilment of these aspirations.

Philomena Horner, Ph. D.  
Chair  
Together 4 All Family Support Project  
May 2007

# **CONTENTS**

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| <b>SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>                                | <b>PAGE 6</b>  |
| <b>SECTION TWO: NORTHERN IRELAND CONTEXT</b>                    | <b>PAGE 7</b>  |
| <b>SECTION THREE: LEGISLATIVE BASIS FOR FAMILY SUPPORT</b>      | <b>PAGE 10</b> |
| <b>SECTION FOUR: NATIONAL POLICIES</b>                          | <b>PAGE 13</b> |
| <b>SECTION FIVE: DEPARTMENTAL BUDGETS AND REGIONAL POLICIES</b> | <b>PAGE 15</b> |
| <b>SECTION SIX: CHILD AND FAMILY FOCUSED POLICIES</b>           | <b>PAGE 37</b> |
| <b>SECTIONSEVEN: LOCAL INITIATIVES</b>                          | <b>PAGE 50</b> |
| <b>CONCLUSION</b>   | <b>PAGE 53</b> |
| <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>   | <b>PAGE 54</b> |

## SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

This paper has been compiled to assist the Planning Group of the Together 4 All Family Support Project to support the development of a ten year Strategy for Children and Young People in the areas of Lurgan, Brownlow, Aghagallon and Bleary. The objectives of the paper are as follows:

- To highlight key policies that are relevant to Together 4 All
- To highlight the Government Departments and Funding streams that are relevant to the Together 4 All Strategy
- To examine the local initiatives in the Together 4 All area to maximise opportunities, partnership working and integration in the delivery of services for Children and Young People.

The paper is divided in seven areas as follows:

- Section one introduces the paper and its content
- Section two outlines the Northern Ireland Context and Review of Public Administration
- Section three outlines the Legislative Basis for Family Support
- Section four identifies the National Policy
- Section five outlines Departmental Budgets and Regional Policies in Northern Ireland
- Section six maps the Child and Family focused policies
- Section seven summarises the local Initiatives in the Together 4 All area
- Section eight concludes with an examination how Together 4 All can use the information

## SECTION TWO: NORTHERN IRELAND CONTEXT

### Belfast Agreement

The Agreement (also known as the Good Friday Agreement or Belfast Agreement) was reached in Belfast on Friday, April 10 1998.

It sets out a plan for devolved government in Northern Ireland on a stable and inclusive basis and provided for the creation of Human Rights and Equality commissions, the early release of terrorist prisoners, the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons and far reaching reforms of criminal justice and policing.

The Agreement proposed an inter-connected group of institutions from three 'strands' of relationships.

Strand One deals with relationships within Northern Ireland and created the Northern Ireland Assembly, its Executive and the consultative Civic Forum. The Assembly has **108 members (MLAs)**, elected by proportional representation and Ministers to the Executive are appointed according to party strength under the d'Hondt mechanism. The last Assembly election was held in March 2007.

Strand Two deals with relationships between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. A North-South Ministerial Conference (NSMC) brings together members of the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government to oversee the work of six cross-border implementation bodies.

Strand Three deals with the East-West relationships within the British Isles. A **British-Irish Inter-Governmental Conference** was established to promote bilateral co-operation between the UK and Ireland. It replaced the Anglo-Irish Inter-Governmental Council and Conference set up by the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985.

A British-Irish Council was also created that incorporates members of all devolved administrations within the UK and representatives of the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands as well as the British and Irish governments.

The **Equality Commission** and the **Human Rights Commission** were created under the Agreement; there was a comprehensive review of criminal justice and policing arrangements and money was allocated to help victims of violence.

Northern Ireland is going through a significant period of change in terms of the Review of Public Administration and Public Services and the Restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

In October 2002, the **Northern Ireland Assembly** was suspended by the Government due to a breakdown in trust and confidence amongst the parties and today, Northern Ireland continues to be governed by direct rule Ministers.

The latest effort to restore devolution culminated in 3 days of talks at St Andrews, Scotland. The **St Andrews Agreement** was published on the 13th October 2006.

The Secretary of State has introduced legislation (**Northern Ireland (St Andrews Agreement) Bill**) to Parliament to pave the way for restoration of devolved Government in Northern Ireland.

### **A “Shared Future”**

In ‘A Shared Future ‘(2005), examined more fully later in this present document, all Northern Ireland Government Departments signed up and committed to a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society based and founded on reconciliation, toleration, mutual trust, protection and vindication of Human Rights, partnership, equality and mutual respect as a basis of good relationships.

Today, Northern Ireland is experiencing a significant period of change in terms of :

- the Restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly and
- the Implementation following the Review of Public Administration and Public Services

### **Northern Ireland Assembly**

The responsibility for Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister functions now lie with locally elected Ministers, who formally took up their positions on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2007.

Ministers for the remaining Northern Ireland Government Departments are nominated from, and representative of, the key political parties in Northern Ireland.

### **Review of Public Administration**

The Review of Public Administration is a comprehensive review that recognised that Northern Ireland differed from Great Britain in terms of the large number of public service workers in relation to the population. Under the review new structures have been developed, particularly within Health and Social Care, and within Education, which have relevance for Together 4 All.

## **Health and Social Care**

The Department for Health and Social Services and Public Safety will set targets and policies that relate to Health and Social Care. Under the new structures a Health and Social Services Authority will be responsible for Performance Management. A new system of integration of Health and Social Services Trusts became operational in April 2007. This will mean that five new Integrated Health and Social Services Trusts will replace eighteen of the nineteen existing Trusts, leaving in total six operational trusts in Northern Ireland. The Together 4 All Project is located within the new Southern Area Trust. In addition there will be primary care local commissioning group in each trust area responsible for assessing the needs of the community and commissioning of services. These will be operational by April 2008.

## **Education**

The Review of Public Administration will see the refocusing of the Department of Education as a single education body that has responsibility for overall direction and policy of Education and Youth. Funding allocations will link closely with the Department's Policy Priorities.

A new Education and Skills Authority will be established to replace the functions of the Education and Library Boards, CCEA and the Regional Training Unit that will provide frontline support for Catholic Maintained Schools, Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and Irish Language Schools. This new authority will be coordinated through a Director for Children's Services

An Education Advisory Forum will form an interface between Department of Education and the Education Sector. The aim of the forum will be to work in partnership with other Departments in the interests of children.

A significant change is the transfer of responsibility for policy and funding in relation to Early Years, (0-4 year olds), from Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety to the Department of Education, a change aimed at improving integration and practice. The commitment to phase out reception classes (i.e. three year olds attending primary school) and the Nursery School commencement age of 3 years 2 months have been established as outcomes of the Review of the Pre School Expansion Programme.

With regard to Youth Provision, the Department for Education will set the strategic direction and policy. The new Education Authority will establish funding levels and maintain services according to the Policy set by the Department.

## SECTION THREE: LEGISLATIVE BASIS OF FAMILY SUPPORT

Family Support Policies are based on existing domestic law, international legal obligations and social policy priorities.

The legislative basis for family support is set out in the **Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995**.

Article 18 of the Order states:

'It shall be the general duty of every authority (in addition to other duties imposed by this part) –

- (a) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within its area who are in need; and
- (b) so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of personal social services appropriate to those children's needs'.

Schedule 2 of the Children (N. I.) Order 'Provision of services for Families: Specific Powers and Duties'. Under the heading 'Identification of Children in Need' sets out –

'1. Every authority shall take reasonable steps to identify the extent to which there are children in need within the authority's area.

2. (1) Every authority shall publish information –

(a) about services provided by the authority under Articles 18, 19, 21 35 and 36; and

(b) where the authority considers it appropriate, about the provision by others (including, in particular, voluntary organisations) of services which the authority has power to provide under those Articles.

(2 ) Every authority shall take such steps as are reasonably practical to ensure that those who might benefit from the services receive the information relevant to them'.

The multi agency role in responding to the needs of vulnerable children was underlined in the **Children's Services Planning Order 1998** (an amendment to the Children Order) and its associated Guidance. The Guidance states –

'This guidance deals with the planning of services for children who are vulnerable within the community. It is designed to promote collaboration and co-ordination between agencies in the planning and delivery of services for vulnerable children and in doing so builds on the Children (NORTHERN Ireland) Order.'

Following the Children's Services Planning Order, a Children and Young People's Committee was set up in each of the four then Health and Social Services Board areas. The 2002 -2005 Children's Services Plans for each Board area has adopted the development of a 'coherent and integrated family support strategy' as one of four overarching themes.

The welfare of children is further emphasised in the **Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002**. In Part 4, paragraph 53, 'Youth Justice' it states:

'Aims of the Youth Justice System

- (1) The principal aim of the youth justice system is to protect the public by preventing offending by children.
- (2) All persons and bodies exercising functions in relation to the youth justice system must have regard to that principal aim in exercising their functions, with a view (in particular) to encouraging children to recognise the effects of crime and to take responsibility for their actions.
- (3) But all such persons and bodies must also have regard to the welfare of children affected by the exercise of their functions ( and to the general principle that any delay in dealing with children is likely to prejudice their welfare), with a view (in particular) to furthering their personal, social and educational development'.

The principle of supporting parents and family life is set out in the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**. In its preamble, the following statement occurs:

'... the family, as the fundamental group in society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community'.

Article 3 states:

'State Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as are necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him, or her, and to this end shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures'.

Article 18 further states:

'For the purposes of guaranteeing and promoting the rights set forth in the present convention, State Parties shall render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities and shall ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children'.

The duty to treat all people with equality and respect is emphasised in **Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998**.

Part VII 'Human Rights and Human Opportunities', states this as follows:

75 (i) 'A public authority shall, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity -

- (a) between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- (b) between men and women generally;
- (c) between persons with a disability and persons without;
- (d) between persons with dependants and persons without.

(ii) Without prejudice to its obligations under subsection (i) a public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.'

**The Race Relations (N.I.) Order 1997** follows closely the provisions of the 1976 Race Relations Act in Great Britain. It outlaws discrimination on grounds of colour, race, nationality, or ethnic or racial origin. The Irish Traveller community is specifically identified in the Order as a racial group against whom racial discrimination is unlawful.

**The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000**

The Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by the Amendment of 2000 gives public authorities a statutory general duty to promote race equality. The aim is to make racial equality central to the way public authorities work. The general duty says that organisations must have 'due regard' to the need to: eliminate unlawful racial discrimination; and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups.

Further, the Act places specific duties on schools to help them meet their duty. Their aim is to improve educational experience for all children, in particular those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The specific duties under the Act are:

- to prepare a written statement of the school's policy for promoting race equality , and to act upon it;
- to assess the impact of school policies on pupils, staff and parents of different racial groups, including, in particular, the impact of attainment levels of these pupils;
- to monitor the operation of the school's policies, including their impact on the attainment levels of pupils from different racial groups;
- to take reasonable steps to make available the results of its monitoring,

**The Commission of Racial Equality** has power under the Act to enforce the specific duties by issuing a compliance notice. This is a legal document that orders the school to meet the specific duties within a certain timescale. It is a powerful tool that can be used to raise minority ethnic achievement.

## SECTION FOUR: NATIONAL POLICIES

**Every Child Matters: Changes For Children.** In 2003 the UK Government issued a green paper entitled “Every Child Matters”. This is a National programme of services – wide reform designed to ensure that children’s services work better together and with parents and carers. It states the need to focus on both universal services which every child uses and on more targeted services for those with additional needs. It is designed both to protect children and maximise their potential. It aims to reduce the numbers of children who experience educational failure, engage in offending or anti-social behaviour, suffer from ill-health or become teenage parents.

The paper goes on to identify the five high level outcomes for children which have been subsequently been reflected in Regional Policies:-

- Being healthy; enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle
- Staying safe; being protected from harm and neglect
- Enjoying and achieving; getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood
- Making a positive contribution; being involved in the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour
- Economic well-being; not being prevented by social disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life

This paper first proposed

- (i) Setting up SureStart Children’s Centres in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods.
- (ii) Promoting full service extended schools as well as
- (iii) Investing in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and
- (iv) Reform of the Juvenile Justice System

**The Children’s Act 2004** provides the legal basis for Every Child Matters Changes for Children. A series of documents were also published to provide guidance under the Act and to support local authorities in implementing their new statutory duties. Section 10 of the Act directs agencies and department to co-operate in promoting the well-being of children, well-being defined as the five high level outcomes.

**The Children’s Fund (2000)** was launched as part of the Government’s commitment to tackle disadvantage among children and young people. The programme aims to provide early intervention to prevent social exclusion and to make sure that help and support are provided to ensure children reach their potential. The Children’s Fund encourages voluntary organisations and community and faith groups to work in partnership with local statutory agencies, children, young people and their families, to deliver high quality preventative services to children and families.

The underlying principles of the Fund are:

- Prevention; by providing better preventative services to 5-13 year olds
- Partnership; by setting up local partnerships for delivery of The Children's Fund Plan
- Participation; by involving children and young people in the design, operation and evaluation of the programme.

## SECTION FIVE: DEPARTMENTAL BUDGETS AND REGIONAL POLICIES

### Northern Ireland Priorities and Budgets 2006-2008

The Northern Ireland Budget is currently undergoing a comprehensive spending review but under the present budget for 2006-2008 priorities include:

- Health
- Education
- Cross cutting themes :
- Children and Young Peoples Package
- Skills and Science 14-19 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds

The overall allocations for 2007-2008 that relate to the Together 4 All project are as follows:

- DHSSPS £4,474.2m
- DE £2,232.5m
- DEL £740m
- D.S.D £522.7m
- OFM/DFM £74.3m
- DCAL £111.2m

Within this Priority funding includes:

- Children and Young People's package £33.3m
- Skills and Science £20.5m

Each Department is allocated its budgets in line with its strategic direction, policy and corporate plans.

Recent research compiled by NICCI indicates that 6% of the overall budget is on children's services.

### General Regional Policies

The Province has been ruled directly from Westminster and policies pertaining here have originated in UK Government, until March 2007, when devolved Government was restored to Northern Ireland.

The importance of children and young people and of support for families can be found in the **Programme for Government**. 'Growing as a Community' is one of the five priority areas identified in the Programme. Sub – priority 5 states:

'We will safeguard the rights and interests of children' and identifies a number of relevant targets:

'By November 2003, develop a detailed strategy for children in need, which will complement the overarching strategy for children and young people, and which will take account of the full range of services including fostering, residential care, family support and child protection'.

'By March 2004, have improved family and child care support services, strengthened our response to the needs of children and their families by, for example, providing fifty additional care places and increasing targeted support for deprived children and their families'.

The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) **Priorities for Action** are published annually. The overall aim of DHSSPS is "To improve the health and well being of the people of Northern Ireland." In pursuit of this aim, the 2007/08 identifies two objectives:

1. To improve health and well-being outcomes through a reduction in preventable diseases and ill-health by providing effective high quality, equitable and efficient health, social and public safety services to the people of Northern Ireland.
2. To create a safer environment for the community by providing an effective fire fighting rescue and fire safety service.

The Minister for Health and Social Services and Public Safety outlines 10 targets for raising standards in Northern Ireland. The document references the current Review of Public Administration – a major reorganisation of how statutory services are delivered in the Province and states that the detailed outworking of the reform is designed to put first the aims of promoting good health and well-being, the prevention of illness and injury, early intervention and good long term care. It is estimated that there are over 6500 avoidable deaths in Northern Ireland every year, attributable to preventable ill health. The document also recognises the impact of socio economic disadvantage, "There are, moreover, unacceptable inequalities in health often associated with socio-economic status and disadvantaged areas".

Among the services targeted in the **Priorities for Action**, those relevant to Together 4 All include

- A reduction in cigarette smoking by 7% in each Health Board area, to aim for an overall rate of 24% (Page 6)
- In the context of Children's Services, the Priorities document referenced **The Children and Young People's Funding Package** which supports mainstream services for children. **The Priorities for Action 07/08** targets Children in Care. It suggest that Looked After Children have better outcomes if they live in stable, long term foster placement and it aims to increase the numbers of foster carers in Northern Ireland by 175. (Page 11).

- Referring to health inequalities, the document specifies a number of actions which Health Boards must implement in order to achieve Government's Public Service Agreement targets.
- By March 2008, reducing by 10% the rate of births to mothers under 17 years of age, giving the Southern Board area (in which Together 4 All is located) a target rate of 2.2 per 1000 females.
- By March 2008, reducing the percentage of 15 - 64 year olds who use illicit drugs to an identified target per Health and Social Services Board area (4.8% for Southern Board area).
- From September 2007, data relating to the height, weight and Body Mass Index (BMI) of all year 8/9 pupils (i.e. aged 11/12 years) will be collected and recorded through the School Nursing Services as a way of identifying children who require further intervention.
- By March 2008, the health authorities will achieve 92% uptake of MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccination with efforts to increase uptake rates focused on identified socially excluded groups and communities with high deprivation indices.

### **Investing for Health (2002)**

Investing for Health sets out the Government's priorities for improving health for all but especially for the most disadvantaged in our community and recognises that a cross-departmental approach is required to implement the aspirations of the strategy.

### **A Healthier Future:**

**A Twenty Year Vision for Health and Well-being in Northern Ireland 2005 – 2025** is the most recent regional strategy for health and well-being and addresses the following issues:

- promoting health and well-being
- protecting and caring for the most vulnerable
- delivering services effectively and efficiently with the available resources
- closer working between all of the people and organisations that influence health and well-being.

Central to the strategy is the idea that people and communities are encouraged to become involved in promoting their own health and well-being. The main themes emanating from the strategy are:

- investing for health and well-being
- involving people – caring communities
- responsive, combined services
- teams which deliver

- improving quality

This document notes that “The mental and physical health and well-being of our population is not as good as it should be.” It goes on to reference the link between socio-economic status and health. It identifies a number of vulnerable groups, among them boys and young men who are less likely to access support for their health and more prone to suicide and girls and young woman among whom, smoking and alcohol related harm is increasing.

One key recommendation is (5.2) “ Our primary challenge over the next 20 years in delivering integrated services which genuinely respond to needs, will be to cross boundaries. We must break down professional, sectoral and organisational barriers. We must break down the barriers between services delivered in communities.

5(xi) “One of the best ways we can improve the health and well-being of the population is by improving the health and wellbeing of children and their parents..... ..” It is also clear that our approach to improving health and social outcomes must stem from a joined up approach across Government and at local level”

5.92 “Our service must recognise children and young people are important in their own right and have needs that are distinct..... They must be active partners in the design, delivery and reviews of these services.

A key action of the document is a **Strategy for Children and Young People (2004)** which aims to make sure that children and young people will be given a higher priority when policy is being made.

The document further highlights the importance of working closely with parents  
5.93 ‘We must continue to work with parents to develop more confidence in their abilities and assist them to respond more positively to their children’s needs. By improving their skills, parents will be better able to improve their children’s health and educational attainment as well as their own confidence and self esteem.’

A further key action is the development of a **Family and Parenting Strategy** which will focus on a range of preventative and universal measure to improve the quality of children’s lives through supporting parents. This will build on the work of Children’s Services Planning and the Children and Young Peoples Committee.

The Government also proposed to develop a specialist service for Children and Young People with Disabilities.

## **The Northern Ireland Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Strategy (2002)**

This strategy aims to reduce the numbers of unplanned births to teenage mothers and to minimise the adverse consequences of those births. Objectives of the strategy are to:

- improve communication
- promote educational opportunity
- invest in health by providing user-friendly services for young people
- create flexible employment opportunities
- improve research

## **The Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability (2006)**

included a review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Recommendations of the review relate to all four levels of the services, from early intervention to specialist inpatient treatment, and will impact on services provided by health, education, social services and youth justice.

Fundamentally, the recommendation is that CAMHS should provide timely clinical intervention, providing preventative measures against development of more serious illness and admission to inpatient treatment.

Provision for community based programmes should be available through the Children and Young People's Package, and could provide the Together 4 All Family Support Project with possible long-term funding, allowing sustainability of innovative mental health and well-being programmes.

## **COMMUNITY HEALTH- HALL4: Health for All**

From April 2005, all community health services are commissioned and provided in line with the Hall 4 recommendations. The thrust of service delivery is

- Preventative health care
- Health promotion
- Effective community based response to the needs of families, children and young people

## **KEY MESSAGES:**

- Every child and parent should have access to a universal/core programme of preventative preschool care
  - Delivery of agreed screening
  - Evidence in favour of health promotion procedures
  - Need to establish contact with families with more complex needs
- Support health promotion in a number of areas including prevention of infectious diseases and in supporting breast feeding
- Formal universal screening for speech and language delay, developmental delay, autism and post natal depression is not recommended but now need to elicit and respond to parental concerns
- Core programmes will include comprehensive ante natal care

- Personal child record to be maintained
- Healthcare of school aged children for their main needs
  - Support children and young people with special needs
  - Participation in Health Schools Programmes
  - Healthcare facilities for children and young people in line with clearly stated needs for privacy and confidentiality
- There must be clear lines of responsibility for all tasks including screening and Child Protection
- All staff to be appropriately trained

### **Core Programmes**

- Health promotion
- Building relationships with the family
- Health protection
- Screening
- Surveillance
- Immunization

### **Objectives**

- All parents and children have access to and understanding of all relevant health care messages
- Arrange and deliver immunizations
- Carry out agreed screening
- Enable parents to locate the help they need
- Support local communities in creating an environment at home and school where children can thrive
- Identify vulnerable children and young people
- Special educational needs are identified

**The Promoting Mental Health Strategy** contains specific action on:

- promotion of mental and emotional health of children and young people;
- development of anti-bullying approaches;
- raising awareness of mental health issues;
- reducing stigma attached to mental health problems.

Growing numbers of suicides among young people, especially males, led to the establishment of

### **The Suicide Prevention Strategy (2006)**

This document notes, among its salient findings, that the suicide rate in Craigavon Local Government District (1999 – 2003) was 10 per 100,000, which is higher than the Northern Ireland average of 9.8. Craigavon has the 7<sup>th</sup> highest rate of 26 Local Government Districts. The estimated total cost to the economy (district funeral costs, indirect costs which are the value of potential

earnings lost, and the intangible costs of human suffering, grief, loss and loss of non-market outputs – voluntary work and house work amount to £1.4 million per suicide. For 2004, the total estimated cost of suicide in Northern Ireland was approximately £202 million.

Among the issues raised by the Strategy are:

- The provision of a trusting environment for young people to be able to express their feelings.
- The raising of suicide awareness among young people in schools, youth settings and local communities

The Action Plan outlined in the Strategy sets the objective of enhancing the emotional health and well-being support provided to families and individuals.

“By 2009 it aims to provide families with the opportunity to avail of practical intervention skills to help improve parenting skills, emotional health and interactions between parents and children.”

“To ensure that families have access to a local emotional health and well-being support network including community and the voluntary sector provision within their local Health and Social Services Trust area. It states, significantly, that the strategy will ensure that the models of emotional health and well-being support provision including local support networks are joined up and welcoming.

From January 2007, all grant-aided post primary school pupils will have access to counselling support, independent of the school, with appropriately trained counsellors.

**A Strategy for Alcohol and Drugs** will prioritise:

- development of treatment and support for under eighteens in relation to drugs and alcohol
- particular focus on needs of those deemed to be vulnerable/ at risk;
- addressing underage drinking;
- ensuring education and preventative work.

### **Department for Education**

The remit of the department is Education and Youth Services, Policy and Strategic direction with the following aims:

- Valuing Education
- Fulfilling Potential
- Promoting Equality / Inclusion
- Resourcing Education

A two year strategic plan is produced that is linked to Government Priorities and Budget. Within this the challenges are:

- Raising Standards
- Innovation and models of good schooling

- Partnership working across and between sectors

The result envisaged will be better use of resources.

## **Aims of the Department of Education's Policy direction and Corporate Plan**

### **Early Years:**

- A coherent policy for 0-6 year olds with integrated services in programmes with more links to Pre School Education.

### **Department of Health and Social Services Role (DHSSPS):**

- **DHSSPS** Early Years Unit is now administered by the Department of Education (DE)

### **General aims:**

- **Special Education Needs (SEN) and Inclusion** – aim to improve standards for access and equality
- **Young People** - Raise knowledge and skills to achieve full potential – “Big Deal” programme for Youth Participation through the Lottery funding
- **ICT infrastructure:** Classroom 2000 (C2K) – Improving facilities in technology
- **(Children and Young People's Package) Extended Schools** - a significant investment to widen the role of schools within the community
- **Improved Infrastructure** – through Strategic Investment Plans for local areas

### **Education Reforms:**

- Curriculum Reform- more skills based curriculum combining personal development and active citizenship with enhanced Information, Communication and Technology and Employability skills.
- Review of Transfer Arrangement (11+)

**Lifetime Opportunities** – is the Government's **Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy (2006) for Northern Ireland** This Strategy is the result of a commitment by the previous Executive to review the **New Targeting Social Need Policy**. From this evaluation, it became evident that policy to tackle poverty and social inclusion was being promoted through separate departmental programmes with little evidence of a joined up approach at departmental level or co-ordination of services at local level. Strategic objectives were missing and those objectives which were set, reflected department targets rather than Government commitment to reducing poverty. Evaluation suggested that the policies to eradicate poverty and social inclusion were being driven through separate departmental programmes, with little evidence of joined- up thinking at departmental level and little co-ordination of services at local level.

Strategic objectives were missing and what objectives there were did not reflect a comprehensive commitment to reducing poverty.

Quantitative analysis suggests positive social and economic trends since the early 90s with continuing improvements in the economy and in standards of education, health and housing. Progress has also been made in socioeconomic differentials between the two main communities, which had been an explicit objective in New Targeting Social Need. Against these positive trends there remain around 327,000 people, including 102,000 children living in poverty in Northern Ireland.

**Lifetime Opportunities, the Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy** identifies a number of priorities for policy and action.

#### 1. Eliminating Poverty

The focus of future policy must be on the 327,000 people, including 102,000 children and 54,000 older people who live in poverty.

#### 2. Eliminating Social Exclusion

Aims to provide opportunities for everyone to participate fully in the social and economic life of the community. Government particularly wants to target families and individuals who suffer from social problems.

#### 3. Tackling Area-Based Deprivation

The policy highlights the concentration of multiple deprivation factors such as unemployment, crime and low educational achievement in mainly urban areas. There are 284,000 people living in such circumstances, and they are consequently more susceptible to the risk of poverty, poor health, both physical and mental, as well as despair and hopelessness resulting from having no apparent prospect of improvement.

#### 4. Eliminating Poverty from Rural Areas

While poverty and deprivation tend to be concentrated in urban areas, changes in the agricultural sector, demographic change and physical isolation leave many people in rural communities at serious risk of poverty and social exclusion.

The challenge here is to build a strong rural community infrastructure which will provide economic and social opportunities, particularly for young people who want to live and work in the country.

#### 5. Shared Future – Shared Challenges

The promotion of respect and tolerance is a significant challenge but is essential for achieving further economic and social change needed to eliminate poverty and social exclusion.

#### 6. Tackling Inequality in the Labour Market

The focus here will be on promoting equality of opportunity for all in accessing employment, addressing the factors which lead to inequalities: religion, gender and disability.

## 7. Tackling Health Inequalities

People who are better off tend to have longer and healthier lives than those living in poverty. The policy will seek to reduce inequalities in health between geographic areas, socioeconomic and minority groups and to direct spending towards those in greatest need.

## 8. Tackling Cycles of Deprivation

The strategy will try to break the cycle of children born into poverty developing into under-achieving young people with limited aspirations and low levels of educational achievement. These in turn become adults living on low incomes, in poor health and with the prospect of a shorter, less healthy and financially insecure old age.

In an attempt to address the impact of poverty and social exclusion on children and young people, the Strategy sets specific goals and targets for each of the life stages:

### Early Years (0 – 4 years)

Every child should have the chance to develop their full potential in infancy, regardless of background. Research recognises the importance. Early Years experience in shaping positive future development, so investment in early years will lay a solid foundation for the future.

### Children and Young People (5 – 16 years)

The goal here is to allow children and young people to experience a happy and fulfilling childhood, while equipping them with the education, skills and experience to achieve their potential to be future citizens.

Poverty impacts negatively on childhood and can reduce the chances of a young person achieving skills and qualifications. Research shows that one of the best ways to escape the cycle of poverty is through educational attainment. Therefore the strategy will focus on breaking the link between poverty and educational under-achievement.

The government has made the **Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy** one of its key cost-cutting priorities within the Comprehensive Spending Review. Consequently, departmental spending plans and resources will be directly linked to the delivery of the commitments within the Strategy.

In line with the **U.K. National Action Plan for Social Inclusion**, the U.K. and Irish governments will seek to co-operate and develop shared learning, exchange of best practice and joint working in tackling poverty and improving the quality of life of families and communities across the island of Ireland.

The first step to making this plan a reality is to ensure that poverty and social inclusion are given due consideration in the public expenditure planning process. This is happening through the Comprehensive Spending Review, which will set government spending up to 2010/2011. The Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy is one of a number of cross-cutting priorities, although final decisions on spending will be made by the devolved administration.

The Strategy proposes the setting up of a Ministerial-led Poverty Forum to oversee the process and monitor progress. The Forum will bring together key stakeholders including local politicians, employers, trade unions, statutory, voluntary and community sectors, social economy and people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

In the U.K. the **National Action Plan (NAP)** facilitated dialogue between government and civil society on social inclusion issues.

The Irish and U.K. governments are committed to developing further North/South consultation, co-operation, and common action concerning policies on poverty and social inclusion. Suitable areas for cross-border co-operation will be identified and mechanisms developed by which it can be delivered.

The Central Anti-Poverty Unit (CAPU) within the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the overall impact of the **Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy**.

An Inter-departmental Equality and Social Need Steering Group, chaired by an official within the OFMDFM will co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate the programme across departments and agencies.

## **CHALLENGES**

1. Building on the **Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy** model for tackling disadvantage and deprivation, the Strategy recommends focus on early intervention programmes to ensure that the early experience of young children promotes healthy social, psychological and educational development. The Strategy emphasises the need to therefore continue to expand pre-school provision and provide parents, particularly lone parents, with the help and support they need.
2. Break the link between educational underachievement and social disadvantage. This means supporting schools which work with disadvantaged children to work in partnership with parents and other service providers. The challenge is to make school years as rewarding and enjoyable as possible, with a clear prospect of good qualifications and skills.
3. Yet another challenge is to divert children from crime and substance abuse, to provide a supportive and understanding environment focused on enhancing the potential of each child, more than on criticising their shortcomings.
4. There is need to be particularly aware of the needs of children with disabilities and special educational needs.

## **In Summary**

Goals and targets are, therefore, set against each of these stages of the life cycle, with a focus on:

- Ensuring that every child should have a chance to develop to their full potential in infancy, regardless of social background
- Allowing all children and young people to experience a happy and fulfilling childhood, while equipping them with the education, skills and experience to achieve their potential to be citizens of tomorrow
- Ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to fully participate in economic, social and cultural life
- Ensuring that older people are valued and respected, remain independent, participate as active citizens and enjoy good quality of life in a safe and shared community.

Rurality is an aspect of life in Northern Ireland which impacts on access to services and opportunities. To address this, the **College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise** (part of the Department of Agriculture) has a primary function to develop the skills of people entering the agri-food industry, specifically targeting young people for training and employment opportunities. The college will also develop children's and young people's awareness of the rural environment, sustainability issues and farm safety through provision of community education initiatives and training.

Projects such as Together 4 All need to take cognisance of the Rural Proofing scheme introduced by the first Northern Ireland Assembly. This scheme seeks to ensure quality and accessibility of services for residents in Northern Ireland, no matter where they are domiciled. The Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People demands that all actions should be rural proofed by all eleven Government Departments at policy and delivery stage, to ensure that the needs of children and young people in rural areas are taken into account.

**The Rural Development Programme 2007 -2010** will provide opportunities for children and young people in rural areas to benefit from schemes such as ICT training, improving rural transport, day care provision, crèches and initiatives to support rural parents.

## **Safeguarding Children and Young People**

From the 1990s until 2006 each Health and Social Services Trust had a multi-disciplinary, interagency Child Protection Panel which monitored and drove activities to protect children in the community. These panels worked in conjunction with the Area Child Protection Committee in each Health and Social Services Board area, which had a Strategy for Child Protection, a business and action plan and terms of reference. The remit of each Area Child Protection Committee is defined as follows:

- to address how services in its area work together to safeguard children;
- to address how objectives set to improve outcomes for children are progressed;

- to address the implementation of child protection policies and procedures;
- to address the resources needed in the area;
- to address the use of, and access to, the child protection register;
- to address training and development needs of those working to safeguard children and deliver and design training which meets identified needs.

In 2006 the Government announced that, under the Review of Public Administration (RPA), these committees would be replaced by one **Regional Safeguarding Board in Northern Ireland**. The Board will take a comprehensive, co-ordinating and strategic view of safeguarding practice across the Province. Other significant changes in policies, procedures and protocols will be:

- The development and implementation of a Child Death Review;
- A review of sexual offences legislation with particular regard to offences against children;
- Strengthening of the current sex offender assessment and risk management arrangements
- Establishment of new disclosure arrangements for a more comprehensive strategy for criminal and police checks for those working with children and vulnerable adults;
- Changes in the law on the use of physical punishment in the home;
- A Road Safety Strategy to reduce numbers of children killed or seriously injured on Northern Ireland's roads by 50% each year.

### **Race Equality Strategy**

The Race Equality Strategy states its purpose as three-fold:

- To tackle race inequalities in Northern Ireland and to open up opportunities for all;
- To eradicate racism and hate crimes and
- Together with '**A Shared Future**' to initiate actions to promote good race relations.

It sets out a long term, high level vision of the society that we are working to achieve:

'A society in which racial diversity is supported, understood, valued and respected, where racism in any of its forms is not tolerated. And where we live together as a society and enjoy equality of opportunity and equal protection'.

The Strategy sets out six strategic aims which the Government will pursue in eradicating racism and tackling racial inequalities:

#### 1. Elimination of Racial Inequality

To eliminate racial inequality and unlawful racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity in all aspects of life, including public life, for people of different ethnic backgrounds in Northern Ireland.

## 2. Equal Protection

To combat racism and provide effective protection and redress against racism and racial crime.

## 3. Equality of Service Provision

To ensure equality of opportunity for minority ethnic people in accessing and benefiting from all public services.

## 4. Participation

To increase participation and a sense of 'belonging' of people from minority ethnic backgrounds in public, political, economic, social and cultural life.

## 5. Dialogue

To promote dialogue between, and mutual understanding of, different faiths and cultural backgrounds, both long standing within Northern Ireland and recent arrivals, guided by overarching human rights norms.

## 6. Capacity Building

To build capacity within minority ethnic communities to develop a vibrant and sustainable minority ethnic sector at both local and regional levels, and to help minority ethnic people to fulfil the Government's aim of a shared future for Northern Ireland.

The Strategy points out that it is for everyone, not just for the Government, and to ensure that it goes beyond mere words and translates into actions that make a real difference in the lives of minority ethnic people, it will be underpinned by effective delivery mechanisms. Further, it is not about privileging minority ethnic people over the majority community. Rather, it is about identifying and responding to the specific needs of different people and ensuring that everyone in Northern Ireland is accorded her or his human rights.

The Strategy recognises, however, that in line with the European Union, Racial Equality Directive, positive action will be required in certain circumstances to redress the existing disadvantage that certain communities have suffered.

The Strategy notes that while the Government will take the lead, they cannot eradicate racism alone. Each of us has a part to play in achieving the vision. There is a need for leadership to combat racism at political, civic and community level.

The Strategy is complementary to the **Good Relations Policy and Strategic Framework (2005)**, which acknowledges that Northern Ireland is no longer a bi-polar society but that it is enriched by its increasing cultural diversity. **The Good Relations Policy and Strategic Framework** are not just about sectarianism but apply equally to tackling racism and promoting good race relations.

Actions to implement the two strategies will therefore be carefully co-ordinated.

The Strategy recognises that the challenge is a big one. As '**A Shared Future**' puts it:

'Racism acts as a significant barrier to social and economic progress.....it lowers morale and prevents communities taking advantage of opportunities to build a better future'.

Reports of racially motivated incidents rose from 453 in 2003/2004 to 813 in 2004/2005.

These figures represent a disturbing increase in the number of racial crimes and racist attacks in Northern Ireland.

The Strategy identifies four main manifestations of racism:

- racist harassment (including assaults, racist graffiti, name calling, threatening behaviour, and incitement);
- discrimination, defined as restriction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin;
- Stereotyping and racial prejudice defined as 'characteris(ing) (groups) exclusively in terms of what makes them different, and differences are reduced to a few either/or distinctions - a fixed set of oppositions between 'us' and 'them'. 'Difference and inferiority are then seen as synonymous, and on that basis 'we' have a right to exclude 'them' from access to scarce material and cultural resources'.
- Systemic racism in public services.

Racial equality is not an 'add-on' but a statutory duty. Good relations and racial equality have to be mainstreamed. But before this can happen, public authorities have to explicitly recognise and acknowledge the barriers to equality and take action to overcome them.

Racism and the failure to accommodate diversity is often unintentional and can come about through lack of thought, lack of understanding, lack of planning or a 'one size fits all' approach. One incident of stereotyping can do incalculable damage, and the Strategy highlights the importance of training and awareness initiatives for public servants and those in frontline service delivery.

The Strategy points to the rapidly increasing number of people, who want to work, live and settle in Northern Ireland. The exact number is not known, but may be as many as 45,000.

Minority ethnic people make a significant contribution to social, public, economic and cultural life in Northern Ireland. As our economy grows, it suggests that Northern Ireland will become more and more dependent on attracting workers from other places. It also points out that

'Not only do minority ethnic people including migrant workers make an important contribution to the economy, but they also more than pay their way'.

(Ch.3.4) It goes on to say that 'they make an important contribution to the social, public and cultural life of Northern Ireland. They also have a genuinely

leavening effect on a society that has long been frozen in its 'two traditions' divide' (3.5)

### **Action to Implement the Strategy**

The Strategy goes on to indicate some of the actions which will be taken in order to implement the six strategic aims.

These include:

- legal protection through combating racist attacks as serious violations of human rights
- developing racial equality policies and practices in partnership with civil society
- education and awareness raising introducing human rights education including anti-racism, into the school curriculum
- enforcement of the new hate crime legislation (September 2004) which deals with crimes motivated by 'hatred based on' race, religion, disability or sexual orientation. The legislation gives judges crucial powers to take racial aggravation into consideration when sentencing.

Speaking of equality of service provision, the Strategy acknowledges that if minority ethnic people are to play a full part in Northern Ireland society, they must have equal access to, and benefit equally from, all public services including health, education, policing, training and employment. It refers to an 'ethnic penalty' suffered by minority ethnic people. Some are doing very well, but some are suffering poor outcomes in each of the areas cited above. Service providers do not always respond appropriately to all the needs of minority ethnic people. Services need to be flexible enough to respond to a variety of needs. The Strategy points out that 'a "colour-blind one size fits all" approach is not appropriate. The fundamental need is not to treat people all the same, but to treat people equally and to treat them with due respect for difference.' (4.17)

The Strategy references Paul Connolly's report '**Race and Racism in Northern Ireland: A Review of the Research Evidence**' which identifies a number of issues relating to service provision which disproportionately affect the minority ethnic population. They are:

- the language barrier
- lack of information in accessible form
- training needs of staff
- cultural needs of minority ethnic people (for example in terms of diet and religious observance).

## Guiding Principles of the Strategy

The **Racial Equality Strategy** is underpinned by a set of principles:

- respect and respond appropriately to the needs of all people
- take account of identified need and respond appropriately
- recognise and appreciate diversity within minority ethnic communities and take account of it
- identify and recognise the needs of individuals and avoid stereotyping on the basis of group characteristics
- promote a partnership approach
- target resources towards those experiencing greatest disadvantage
- build on work being done in the context of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998)
- recognise the need for meaningful and culturally appropriate consultation
- promote equal opportunity and anti-racism training for staff, starting with staff designing and delivering front line services.

The Strategy sets out an action plan for both regional and local level. Local councils have a statutory duty to make appropriate arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

The Strategy lists the issues identified during consultations with members of minority ethnic communities in terms of training, employment, housing, health, education, the criminal justice system and exploitation of migrant workers.

It particularly cites the accommodation needs of the Traveller community and the provision of transit sites as a priority.

## **A Shared Future - Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland (March 2005)**

This is presented as a search for the foundations of trust between all the people in Northern Ireland who have been divided on the basis of perceived political, cultural, religious, class or ethnic background. In recent years, the economic performance in Northern Ireland has shown significant improvement. With this economic progress, Northern Ireland has attracted an increasingly diverse workforce. Some companies depend on migrant workers for the success of their businesses.

However, a minority in Northern Ireland subject migrant workers to racially motivated violence and discrimination.

**The Shared Future Good Relations Policy** promotes a vision of an inclusive society. It sets out its goal as “The establishment over time, of a normal civic society, in which all individuals are considered as equals, where differences are resolved through dialogues in the public sphere and where all people are treated impartially. A society where there is equity, respect for diversity and recognition of our interdependence.”

Among its recommendations, **A Shared Future** (Page 2.4.7) insists, “It is essential that the challenges of diversity and tolerance are consciously integrated into the development curriculum of each child in all school sectors, so that every child leaves school with a direct and sustained engagement with diversity and is better equipped to meet the challenges of being an adults in a shared society.”

Page 2.4.11 emphasises that all schools should demonstrate their organisation commitment to a shared society.

The document outlines the strategy which will be taken forward by the Community Relations unit in the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), the Voluntary and Community Unit (VCU) in the Department of Social Development (DSD) and by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and specifies that each Council will develop a 3 year local Good Relations Plan. It is an economic imperative to address the costs of division.

**A Shared Future** references **the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy**. This recognises the link between community and Department of Community Relations and proposes investment in social capital as a way of promoting relationships within and between communities.

### **People and Place: A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (2003).**

The Strategy seeks to bring together the work of all Government departments in partnership with local people to tackle disadvantage and deprivation in everyday life. The Noble Multiple Deprivation Measure was used to identify communities suffering the worst levels of deprivation across Northern Ireland. Approximately one in six people in Northern Ireland are targeted in Neighbourhood Renewal. There are two Neighbourhood Renewal areas in Together 4 All – one in Brownlow and the other in Lurgan.

There are strong connections between the Neighbourhood Renewal agenda and the work of the Housing Executive. While the majority of social housing estates in urban areas in Northern Ireland are safe environments, at the same time the most disadvantaged individuals and communities are still more likely to be found in Housing Executive ownership areas.

The aims of Neighbourhood Renewal are:

- To develop confident communities

- To develop economic activity in the most deprived neighbourhoods
- To improve social conditions for the people who live in the most deprived neighbourhoods
- To help create attractive, safe, sustainable environments in the most deprived neighbourhoods

### **Northern Ireland Housing Executive Corporate Plan**

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) reports through the Department of Social Development (DSD) to the Minister responsible for Social Development. The Corporate Plan 2004/05 is a three year plan setting out the NIHE key objectives 2004-2007 which is informed by the **Northern Ireland Priorities and Plans 2004/06** document.

Many of the functions of the Housing Executive will transfer to the new local Councils in 2009. Until then, NIHE has a vision of a future in which everyone will have:

- The right to be housed with a real choice of decent, accessible and affordable housing options, included integrated housing in a diverse housing market;
- A renewed and strong sense of place and community;
- A sense of peace and well-being from living in a safe environment free from anti-social behaviour;
- A home which is set in a clean and pleasant environment;
- A home which is suitable to the individual's needs, which is well designed, well maintained and energy efficient;
- A home which has access to appropriate infrastructure in terms of transport, education, schools, shopping and recreation;
- Empowerment to have a real voice in matters affecting their home and community, and access to capacity for disadvantaged groups to encourage their participation;
- Support where it is needed to promote independent living.

### **Equality, Human Rights and New Targeting Social Need**

In setting the context for the corporate plan, it states that two key equality policies are now being introduced, promoting good community relations and race relations including migrant worker issues.

**The Community Relations Policy** is already being applied, and a **Race Relations Action Plan** is beginning to be implemented. NIHE is working

towards mainstreaming equality as a fundamental building block in all their operations, and engaging more fully with young people and children to ensure that their needs are addressed in NIHE policies. They reference the **Anti-Poverty Strategy** and the **Shared Future Strategy**, and the anticipated **Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland**.

### **Corporate Objectives**

The Corporate Plan sets out six objectives:

1. Delivering the Decent Homes Standard.  
They will work to achieve this by 2010.
2. Promoting Independent Living  
This standard recognises that different people have different needs and require services to meet their circumstances: young people, older people; homeless people; people with a disability; lone parents; Travellers; people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities/migrant workers; women fleeing domestic violence and people with mental ill-health are all referenced.
3. Urban and Rural Regeneration  
NIHE will work closely with Department of Social Development's (DSD) strategy, a strategy for **Neighbourhood Renewal (2003)**, **'People and Place'** to regenerate the physical and environmental aspects of urban housing estates and implement the rural housing policy, following review.
4. Promoting Affordable Housing  
In the coming year, NIHE will do this by working with the Department of Social Development (DSD) and housing associations to improve delivery of social new-build homes.
5. Building a Stronger Community  
This objective takes account of the continued sectarian tension, and the recent rise in racial incidents, homophobic attacks and harassment of people with a disability.  
The Corporate Plan acknowledges that as a strategic housing authority, they should not only deal with building and but must also work to foster settled communities, both within themselves and with their neighbours.  
NIHE recognises that this is a complex issue requiring a variety of responses based on recognising our diversity, interdependence and the need for equality. To improve community relations this year, their plan includes:  
Building on links with partners in the voluntary and community sectors;  
Developing policies on sexual orientation and disability  
Engaging with young people in estates and through the education sector.
6. Better Public Services

This will involve modernising their services, quality of service delivery and capability to work in partnership at local level.

**Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL)** remit covers Culture, Arts and Leisure. Under its New TSN Strategy 2006, Objectives are:

- Identification of action to overcome barriers in participation in Culture / Art and Leisure
- Increase participation in sport by disadvantaged people / minority ethnic communities - Brownlow
- Increased participation in museums by disadvantaged
- Increased participation in arts- Minority ethnic community programme
  - Creative Youth Partnerships
  - Disabled
  - Irish Speaking
- Increase use of libraries - partnerships with Education and Library Boards
- Increase capacity and Skills – Learning Strategy (ELB's)
  - Community Arts
  - Sports Development
  - Training for Interpreters / Tutors
- Increase awareness / understanding of Ethnic Minority Communities in Northern Ireland - Cultural Diversity Training / Cultural diversity in Art/ Review of library provision / access to information

### **Department of Employment and Learning Northern Ireland**

The aim of the Department's Corporate Plan is

- To promote learning and skills, to prepare people for work and to support the economy.

#### **Objectives**

- To promote economic, social and personal development through high quality learning, research and skills training; and
- To help people into employment and promote good employment practices.

## **Key Areas of Activity**

- Enhancing the provision of learning and skills, including entrepreneurship, enterprise, management and leadership.
- Increasing the level of research and development, creativity and innovation in the Northern Ireland economy;
- Helping individuals to acquire jobs, including self employment, and improving the linkages between employment programmes and skills development; and
- The development and maintenance of the employment rights and responsibilities of employers

## **SECTION SIX: CHILD AND FAMILY FOCUSED POLICIES**

### **Children First - The Northern Ireland Child Care Strategy - A Policy Statement**

The introduction to the Child Care Policy states:

'Family life is the foundation of our society, and support for families is a cornerstone of government policy in health and social services, education and training'. The document goes on to note:

'Actions to raise the quality of formal child care will be complemented by support for parents and informal carers'.

### **Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge Action Plan 2007/08**

This Plan sets out what will be done by all eleven Northern Ireland Departments and the Northern Ireland Court Service in short to medium term to deliver on the aims of the **10 Year Strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2006)**.

Publication of this strategy heralded the first integrated cross-departmental strategy in Northern Ireland. Departments have been asked to take simultaneous account of a number of cross cutting strategies: **The 10 Year Strategy for Children and Young People**, **The Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy**, and the **Shared Future Agenda, the Racial Equality Strategy**, all of which impact directly on children.

The 10 Year Strategy sets out what is to be undertaken by all eleven Government departments, the Northern Ireland Office and the Northern Ireland Court Services in order to achieve the aims of the plan. The 'shared vision' is described as the Government's overall pledge to all children in Northern Ireland:

'Our vision is that all children and young people living in Northern Ireland will thrive and look forward with confidence to the future'. (Page 5)

The majority of the actions described in the plan are universal and will be targeted at all children. In some cases, however, actions will be aimed at specific groups of children and young people, who for a variety of reason needs targeted responses to deliver on their rights and to narrow the gaps between them and their peers:- children with a disability, those with special education needs, those living in rural areas, those who are homeless, those at risk of suicide or teenage pregnancy, those with mental health difficulties, those engaged in risky behaviours, those from poor households or minority ethnic groups, traveller children and those who are at risk of coming into care, those leaving care, and those at risk of entering the criminal justice system. The Government is clearly mindful of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child with the inclusion of the above-specified groups of children in the Strategy.

The Action Plan is unique as an integrated strategy to deliver universal and specialised services to all children in Northern Ireland and aims to:

- specify key actions Government will take to deliver on the aims of the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People in the short to medium term;
- identify lead departments;
- outline time scales for delivery;
- link actions to the Strategy Outcomes Framework and strategic indicators.

The Action Plan considers:

- Education: Early Years education; the revised curriculum and Extended Schools
- Health: sport, play and recreation as key contributors to improved health outcomes for children
- Youth Justice: it recognised the importance of parents and families in the lives of children and young people – the need to provide support for parents. It announced an extension of the Children and Young People’s Funding Package to support a range of parenting initiatives, including SureStart. It also proposed a Family and Parenting Strategy.

The ‘whole child’ approach is embraced throughout the 10 Year Strategy for Children and Young People, in recognition of the complexity involved in children’s lives. The strategy defines the ‘whole child’ approach as embracing:

- the rounded nature of children’s and young people’s lives;
- individuality which characterises how children and young people grow, develop and express themselves;
- the capacity of children and young people to shape their own lives as they grow , and to learn from the mistakes they may make on the way;
- the way in which children and young people gain from and contribute to complex networks of social support.

Central to the Strategy is the **Outcomes Framework** by which all developments will be measured and reported on annually during the ten years of the Strategy. All outcomes have performance indicators and are related to the aspirations first enumerated in Every Child Matters (2003) and reflected in all Regional Policies since then i.e. that all children and young people are:

- healthy
- enjoying, learning and achieving
- living in safety and stability
- experiencing economic and environmental well-being
- contributing positively to community and society
- living in a society which respects their rights (page 7)

The infrastructure of the Outcomes Framework is supported by eight cross-cutting themes, which have particular relevance to the values and principles inherent in the Together 4 All project:

- the whole child approach
- working in partnership
- support for parents and carers
- responding appropriately to the challenges of a society emerging from conflict
- a gradual shift to preventative and early intervention approaches, without compromising those children and young people who currently most need the services
- the needs of children are fully assessed
- driving towards a culture which respects and progresses the rights of the child

There are clear opportunities for Together 4 All to link with the mainstream funding which may be available with the 10 Year Strategy, in an effort to secure viability and sustainability for the family support project.

**Families Matter: A Family and Parenting Strategy** went out to consultation in January 2007. It sets out a range of proposals to enhance the services available to parents to support them in their role:

- provision of positive parenting and parenting education;
- mediation services;
- development and expansion of Child Contact Centres;
- access to information through a regional database and
- provision of a regional helpline.

### **Children and Young People Funding Package (March 2006)**

This is a funding package, the aim of which is 'to reduce under achievement and improve the life chances of children and young people by enhancing their educational development and fostering their health, well being and social inclusion through the integrated delivery of the support and services necessary to ensure every child has the best start in life'.

Government has decided that the Department of Education will be the lead department in taking forward the Children and Young People's Funding Package, in partnership with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), Department of Social Development (DSD), and Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

The main target areas of the funding package are:

- Extended Schools
- Early Years Provision

- Provision for Looked After Children
- Youth Outreach
- Child Protection
- Children with Special Needs

The Package commits funding of £64 million over 2 years, allocated as follows:

£26 million -

- Extended Schools - Schools as the hub of their communities, integrating services and offering a wide range of support services. To be implemented in 470 schools: £20 million over 2 years
- Counselling in schools £3.55 million over 2 years
- Creative Learning Centres : e-learning and digital media £1 million
- Prioritising disadvantaged areas and groups

Early Years (0 - 4 years) £11 million

- SureStart targeted at the 20% most disadvantaged wards.£4.75 million
- Constructive Play in playgroups and nurseries – linked to SureStart £2.75 million
- Access to work - affordable childcare £1.85 million
- Traveller Children in pre-school £100,000
- Pre-school Expansion Programme ensuring a seamless transition to school in conjunction with SureStart £1.14 million

Improving Provision for Looked After Children £2.85 million

- Support for foster carers
- Support for residential care staff to improve educational outcomes for children in care.
- Computer equipment for children's homes.
- Accommodation with their former carers for young people who have left foster care.
- Empowerment of young people in care.

Youth Outreach £1.8 million

- Outreach youth workers to rural, marginalised youth (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, minority ethnic, disabled)

Child Protection £4.3 million

- Telephone helpline for children /young people experiencing abuse.

- Child Protection in sport.
- Child Protection in the Youth Sector
- Rapid Response Team to respond to abuse
- Child Contact Centres
- Improved interagency work between schools and social services.

#### Children with Special Needs £12.6 million

- English as an additional language and interpreting services
- Multi-disciplinary support teams including speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, nurses, psychologists, social workers. £8 million
- Transition to adulthood –funding to provide life skills training £1.8 million
- Child and adolescent mental health/disability services.
- Muckamore Abbey Hospital funded to resettle young people in the community.
- Life skills training as part of transition for young people aged 14 plus with statements of special educational needs.

#### Additional Funding

- Voluntary and Community Sector projects working with children in disadvantaged areas whose funding would otherwise come to an end £14 million
- Funding directly to schools in the Chancellor's budget. £10 million

#### **First Steps Towards Sustainability (2006)**

The Northern Ireland Sustainability Development Strategy was the Government's response to the challenges of securing a better future for the present generation and protecting the future for generations to come.

It set out the principles, which must underpin all decision making processes in order to ensure that we can achieve our objectives of a thriving economy, prosperity and quality of life in a healthy environment.

**Positive Steps (2006) is the Implementation Plan** for the **Sustainability Development Strategy**, which must be developed in conjunction with **A Shared Future**, and the **Racial Equality Strategy**. It seeks to put in place specific actions to meet the objectives and targets of 'First Steps'.

**Positive Steps** is particularly salient in that it replaces (**Partners for Change 2001-2004**) considers the role of the voluntary and community sector in the delivery of services. It recognises that despite the potential benefits of engaging in delivery of services, many voluntary and community organisations experience barriers to getting involved. These barriers include lack of recognition by funders of the full cost of service delivery, lack of investment in

relevant skills and knowledge or the need for a more secure funding base to facilitate bidding for public service contracts.

Positive Steps recognises the significant role of the voluntary and community sector in delivering services and developing stronger and more cohesive communities.

In order to increase efficiency, the Government has approved establishment of a modernisation fund of £3 million, which will be directed to voluntary and community organisations which are already directly involved in delivering services. Government wants to encourage voluntary and community sector organisations to tender for contracts to deliver public services.

The Department for Social Development leads Partners for Change, the Governments' strategy for support of the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland.

### **Youth Justice Agency Framework Document (2003)**

A framework document was published by Youth Justice Agency in 2003, setting out the Agency's policies, key performance indicators, relationship to Northern Ireland Office accountability to Ministers and Parliament.

It identifies five areas of business and associated strategic aims:

- Prevention of offending  
To help prevent offending by children and to assist integration into the community
- Security  
To maintain an appropriate level of security for children in our care
- Safety  
To operate a safe and caring environment across the agency for children, staff and public
- Delivering results through staff  
To respect and value staff and develop their potential in order to enhance quality of service
- Managing resources and promoting services to use resources effectively and deliver best value

### **Criminal Justice System and Policing**

The Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People (Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge) recognises that a coherent and joined up approach is required to deliver timely and effective responses to offending. To achieve this, a **Charter for Youth Justice** will be published. This will:

- articulate a set of agreed outcomes for the youth justice system;
- describe how these outcomes will be achieved;
- establish key priorities for joint action;

- combine in partnership to prevent marginalised children and their families from becoming involved in crime;
- work collectively to reduce delay in the system;
- develop greater transparency in the system to instil confidence.

Key new reforms to be introduced will be:

- Youth Conferencing in which the young person takes responsibility for his/her actions;
- transformation of custodial provision with the Juvenile Justice Centre;
- co-operation between the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the education sector to develop programmes to promote better understanding of policing, personal safety and rights and responsibilities;
- introduction by PSNI of arrangements through which young people can express their views on policing.

The Ten Year pledge also addresses the wider Government strategies for children and young people as they impinge on their rights as equal citizens.

### **A Strategy for the Prevention of Offending By Children and Young People in N.I (Draft 4, 2006)**

The Strategy aims to reduce offending by children and young people.

It has been developed by the Youth Justice Agency (Community Service), at the bequest of a group made up of the chairs of Children and Young People's Committees (CYPCs), Assistant Directors of Social Services, and the Youth Justice Policy Unit of Northern Ireland Office, the Probation Board and the Youth Justice Agency. It is intended that it will continue to have relevance following the restructuring of local administration.

The strategy is informed by the belief that all bodies whose activities impact on children have a contribution to the achievement of the outcomes identified in the **10 Year Strategy For Children And Young People In Northern Ireland 2006-2016.**

The strategy uses the model of service delivery based on the levels of prevention model devised by Hardiker as adapted by the Children and Young People's Committees (CYPCs) as the Northern Ireland Family Support Model.

- Level 1 - All children and young people
- Level 2 - Children who are vulnerable
- Level 3 - Children in need in the community
- Level 4 - Children in need of rehabilitation

The strategy recognises that it cannot be effective in isolation, but must harmonise with other strategies in support of children and families in Northern Ireland.

## **Extended Schools: Access To Opportunities And Services For All. A Prospectus.**

Government has decided that the Department of Education will be the lead Department in taking forward the Children and Young People's Funding Package, in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), Department of Social Development (DSD) and the Office of First and Deputy First Ministers (OFMDFM).

At the core of the Children and Young People's Funding Package is the Extended Schools concept, and £100 million has been earmarked to support activities based on schools' specific circumstances and needs, per year for two years. The aim is to create a new ethos in which schools are at the hub of their communities, and partnerships are facilitated and fostered in order to deliver better outcomes for children and young people.

The focus will be on supporting learning, healthy lifestyles and creativity. Extended Schools will engage in collaboration and partnership with neighbouring schools and statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations operating in the community.

The Children and Young People's Funding Package is seen as having the potential to make a significant contribution to the Government's **Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland**. This is a rights based strategy and identifies five high level outcomes for children and young people:

Being healthy

Enjoying, Learning and Achieving

Living in Safety with Stability

Experiencing Economic and Environmental Well-being

Contributing Positively to Community and Society.

Within this strategy, Extended Schools have a particular role to play. There is no prescribed model for an Extended School. Each will respond to the needs of its pupils and the wider community. Children with disabilities and special educational needs must be able to access all the services.

An Extended Schools has, however, a number of features:

- views working with its pupils, families and community as an essential element in raising the standard of pupils' achievement;
- builds partnerships to deliver better services for the community as a whole and for children and young people and their families;
- helps to strengthen families and communities through providing opportunities for lifelong learning and personal development;
- uses accommodation flexibly and outside school hours for the good of learners and the community.

By 2010, all children will have access to a range of activities beyond the school day. The vision of a school providing extended services including child care, after school clubs, breakfast clubs, community based health and social care services, parenting education and sports and cultural activities, fits well with the

Every Child Matters objectives of ensuring that children are safe, healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to society and enjoy economic wellbeing.

The extended schools initiative has already spent £160 million and Government plan to spend a further £680 million up to 2008.

The aim of the initiative is to bring services together in a single setting, making it easier for universal services like schools to work with the targeted services that some children need so that problems are identified early and handled effectively. Schools will need to work closely with parents to shape these activities around the needs of the community and in response to parental demand.

The core elements identified by the strategy are:

- By 2010 all parents of primary-age children will be able to access affordable childcare at or through the school from 8am to 6pm all year round.
- By 2010 all secondary schools will be open from 8am to 6pm all year round providing a range of activities for young people such as music, sport and holiday activities.
- By 2010 all 3 and 4 year olds will receive 15 hours of free integrated early learning care for 38 weeks of the year.

The services offered by the Extended School will include:

- swift and easy referral to a wider range of specialist support services
- support for families including opportunities for training in parenting skills, supporting their children's learning, leisure activities, ICT skills, healthy living skills;
- wider community access to ICT , sports and art facilities including adult learning;
- high quality child care available from 8 am to 6 p.m. all year round, provided by schools or in partnership with other providers.

The Extended Schools initiative is targeted at areas identified as experiencing deprivation, as measured by seven 'domains' i.e.

- Income deprivation
- Employment
- Health and Disability
- Education and Training
- Proximity to Services
- Living Environment
- Crime and Social Disorder

The Extended Schools Strategy recognises that parents are the biggest influence on their children's lives and are their child's fulltime education. The strategy will offer parents support in this role.

Research evidence confirms that schools which engage well with parents, experience positive results in terms of children's academic success, more positive behaviour, increased parental involvement in the life of the schools, and greater willingness for parents and schools to tackle problems at an early stage.

### **Strategic Plan for Education April 06 - March 08**

The vision for the education system is 'to educate and develop the young people of Northern Ireland to the highest possible standards, providing equality of access for all'.

The Department of Education has worked with key education partners to develop a high level strategic framework.

This is organised around four strategic themes:

1. Valuing education
2. Fulfilling potential
3. Promoting equality and inclusion; and
4. Resourcing education

The devised strategic outcomes for the education sector are:

- Widespread recognition of the value and benefits of education.
- Motivated young people who enjoy and are engaged in learning, encouraged and supported by their parents or carers.
- All young people having access to an education and youth curriculum in settings that meet their individual learning needs.
- Education attainment levels that are the best in the OECD and reduced differentials between pupils from different circumstances.
- Young people with self-esteem to be confident, happy and ambitious and contribute positively to their local community and wider society.
- Young people who are creative and have developed to their full potential, the skill, attitudes and expectation needed to live, work, learn and play in a global society.
- Young people who have access to appropriate learning provision, and are educated, as far as possible, in accordance with their wishes and those of their parents.
- Young people educated in a safe and caring environment where they are respected and receive the support they need.

- All those involved in the education and youth sectors demonstrating respect for those from different backgrounds and circumstances and valuing diversity as enriching society.
- Education and youth services organised appropriately and funded to meet the objectives agreed by government.
- Young people in all education and youth work settings having appropriately resourced and cost effective provision to allow them to benefit from learning and achieve their full potential.
- The varying learning and development needs of young people met by highly skilled and motivated teachers, youth workers, other staff and volunteers.
- Everyone in the education and youth sector fully understanding, appropriately skilled for and committed to their role in delivering high quality co-ordinated service and creating inspired, ambitious school communities.

The document outlines the challenges for education:

- **Raising Standards**  
Too many young people, mainly from disadvantaged backgrounds, leave school with low or inadequate qualifications. One in five of the working age population in Northern Ireland have problems with literacy and numeric. The challenge is to continue to raise overall educational standards while ensuring that the gap in achievement is reduced.
- **Early Years Provision**  
The early years are vital for children and their parents in providing opportunities for personal, social and physical development and enabling children to start school as confident learners.  
Children don't divide their lives into segments, but own current service delivery divides the early years between the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) (0-3 years old) and the Department of Education (DE) (above 3 years old).  
The challenge is to develop a coherent policy for 0-6 year olds which improves co-ordination and delivery of integrated services to young children. To this end, in November 2006 the Department of Education initiated **The 0 – 6 Strategy for Early Years Education, Care and Development** to provide educational opportunities from an early age. The strategy will include provision of a free pre-school place for every child whose parents wish to avail of it.
- **Special Educational Needs and Inclusion**  
We must ensure that young people who require particular help receive the support they need and we must provide appropriate forms of education for those with special educational needs

The challenge is to ensure continuity and quality of special educational needs provision while striving to improve the effective delivery of service within private resources.

- **The World of Work**

Northern Ireland has been experiencing economic growth, economic activity rates are among the lowest in the UK, and the workforce has a relatively low level of skills. And there is a productivity gap between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK.

The challenge is to provide young people with the knowledge and skills they need to live, work and learn in a global society and who develop to their full potential.

The document goes on to describe the measures put in place to meet the challenges: reform of the curriculum, abolition of the transfer test and academic selection at age eleven, new post-primary arrangements (Entitled to Succeed e2s).

This document again references **Extended Schools** and the **Children Of Young People's Funding Package**, which has provided a total of £100 million to reduce social, health and educational differentials and give children and young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds the best possible start in life.

The **Revised Curriculum and Entitlement Framework** is intended to give pupils wider access to courses which best meet their needs.

Strategies to support 'learning beyond the classroom' and widen educational experience include:

**The Public Library Service Policy Framework**

**The Creative Youth Partnership**

**Success through Skills – the Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland**

as well as the establishment of Creative Learning Centres.

### **Play Policy (2006)**

Until the establishment of the Children and Young People's Unit by the Office of the First and Deputy First Ministers (OFMDFM) in 2002, Northern Ireland was lagging behind the United Nations Convention requirements in relation to play provision for children. In October 2006, a Play Policy was distributed for public consultation. The aim of the Play Policy is to establish play within a policy framework which will place high value on play as an essential element in the development of children's lives, family, community and society.

Policies relating to a broad range of aspects of public life now also highlight or target the contribution of young people.

The Government is currently developing a ten year Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation (2006 – 2016) the goal of which is to establish a vision for sport and key priorities to support these.

### **The Accelerating Entrepreneurship Strategy 2003 (AES)**

The aim of this strategy is to promote entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity and hence a more competitive economy. The strategy has been extended to specifically target young people. It encourages young people from all backgrounds to consider positively creating a business venture.

**The Consumer Strategy for Northern Ireland** recognises that young people need to be educated about their rights and responsibilities as consumers.

### **The Strategic Energy Framework/ Sustainable Development Strategy**

Under this strategy, education programmes outlining informed choices for young people regarding energy issues are available to both primary and post primary schools throughout Northern Ireland.

### **Local Policies**

The Brownlow and Lurgan area is located in the Southern Health and Social Services Board area. The Southern Children and Young People's Committee (CYPC) Children's Services Planning Family Support Working Group has developed a **Family Support Strategy (2006)**.

The Strategy provides a context for interagency, single agency and partnership decision making on resource allocation and service development. It seeks to identify gaps in provision and assist planning groups in targeting resources at areas of greatest need. It further seeks to emphasise the importance of early intervention and prevention at all levels of the Northern Ireland Family Support model.

The model developed by Pauline Hardiker and adapted into the Northern Ireland Family Support model is used to map and understand the range of family support services. Family support is conceptualised in four levels.

Level One represents services for the whole population, such as mainstream health care, education, leisure facilities, etc.

Level Two represents support for children who are vulnerable, through assessment of need, and targeting of specific services.

Level Three represents support to families, or individual children and young people, where there are serious or chronic problems. It is provided through a complex mix of services, which usually need to work together well in order to provide the best support.

Level Four represents support to families or individual children and young people, where the family has broken down temporarily or permanently, with the aim of helping the child or young person back into the family.

This model enables a 'whole child' approach to service planning to be conceptualised and emphasises the important links between different levels of provision. Further, it is important that adequate service provision exists at all levels of the family support continuum.

It is widely acknowledged that early intervention, that is, the provision of basic care, such as quality early years services, produces positive dividends in terms of prevention of children needing more specialist services at a later date.

## SECTION SEVEN: LOCAL INITIATIVES

There are currently three major local Initiatives developing in the Together 4 All area. Together 4 All has established an Initiatives Exchange Group, which meets regularly to inform, share and maximise opportunities in the area to avoid duplication. In addition, the Southern Education and Library Board have initiated an Education Sub group for which offers schools an opportunity to discuss Neighbourhood Renewal. Together 4 All is a member of this group, in order to promote information exchange.

### **SureStart**

This is a major government initiative, being implemented in lower income areas of the U.K. and Northern Ireland, to support families with children under the age of four years. One such scheme has been established in part of the Together 4 All area.

The aim of Sure Start is:

“To work with parents and children to promote the physical, intellectual, social and emotional development of pre-school children particularly those who are disadvantaged to ensure they can flourish at home and when they get to school.”

### **Objectives**

- Improving children’s health;
- Improving children’s social and emotional health;
- Enhancing children’s ability to learn;
- Engaging and strengthening families and communities.

Within the Together 4 All project area there are currently 1077 children aged 0-4 years in the six electoral ward areas identified for Sure Start provision in Brownlow and Lurgan

| <u>Ward Area</u> | <u>Number of Children</u> |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| Drumgask         | 318                       |
| Dragger          | 177                       |
| Taghnevan        | 187                       |
| Church           | 89                        |
| Court            | 169                       |
| Drumnamoe        | 137                       |

**Proposed services for this project are:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1. Outreach Home Visiting, Family Support and befriending</b> -----  | Health Visitors; Midwife; Speech and Language Assistant; Family Support workers; Play Development Worker; Childcare Workers. |
| <b>2. Parent Support Services (Groups) that address Health; Education and issues regarding social support</b> ----- | Family Support Workers; Health Visitors; Midwife.  |
| <b>3. Services supporting good quality play, Learning and childcare for children</b> -----                          | Childcare workers; Play development worker; Toy library; Family support workers<br>Childminding Network<br>Co-ordinator      |
| <b>4. Strengthening communities</b> -----   | Work of all partner organisations in developing links with other initiatives and developments in the area.                   |

**Neighbourhood Renewal**

There are two Neighbourhood Renewal projects developing within the Together 4 All area.

The aims of Neighbourhood Renewal are:

- To develop confident communities
- To develop economic activity in the most deprived neighbourhoods
- To improve social conditions for the people who live in the most deprived neighbourhoods
- To help create attractive, safe, sustainable environments in the most deprived neighbourhoods.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships in the area are currently considering expression of interest and applications from key partners and community organisations. Details of Lurgan and Brownlow action plans are available on [www.dsdni.gov.uk](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk).

### **Extended Schools**

Within the Together 4 All area, there are nine Primary Schools and 3 Post Primary schools included in the Extended School Programme.

This initiative is an element of the Children and Young Peoples package.

The schools involved will see schools become hubs in their communities, integrating services and offering a wide range of support services beyond the traditional role of schools, such as breakfast and homework clubs, after school clubs and activities involving parents and the community. A key element of this initiative is to ensure partnership working with parents and communities in order to maximize the opportunities of the area. Together 4 All will engage closely with the schools in the area and with the Southern Education and Library Board to fulfill this potential.

## CONCLUSION

The information in this paper has been compiled so that Together 4 All Board members have access to a working document that can be added to, one which identifies the policies and priorities that specifically relate to the Together 4 All Strategy. This focus is particularly important for long term sustainability and mainstreaming of Together 4 All programmes.

The benefits in producing this paper for Together 4 All are to be considered for the following reasons:

- It is important, in the ongoing development of the Together 4 All strategy, to identify the programmes and funding streams of regional policies in order for long term mainstreaming of the Together 4 All services to be delivered.
- Policies are developed over time, with extensive consultative processes, that in turn are reflected in the priorities of government departments which are related to specific budgets which will be accessed by Together 4 All.
- Together 4 All is an example of locality planning. This is a needs-led approach, reflected in Together 4 All's consultation process and a strong Epidemiology Study, the results of which are a clear indicator of the major Government Departments which Together 4 All will need to liaise with in order to ensure that the strategy is in line with policies and priorities.
- The Together 4 All strategy will set an example of good practice in terms of innovation and integration of services that can be replicated across Northern Ireland and the island of Ireland and that can have an impact on shaping future policy and priorities.

This a challenging opportunity for the Together 4 All Board in taking forward the 10 year strategy and ensuring successful implementation of services, not only in their delivery but also in ensuring that the profile of Together 4 All is at the forefront of the Regional Government Agenda in relation to Children and Young People's programmes and priorities. A key to the success of the strategy will be, not only the securing of mainstream funding, but also the establishing of strong working relationships across departments and sectors for ongoing development, and for new integrated ways of working.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. A Shared Future – Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland (March 2005)  
[www.asharedfutureni.gov.uk/](http://www.asharedfutureni.gov.uk/)
2. A Strategy for Alcohol and Drugs  
[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/)
3. A Strategy for Children and Young People (2004)  
[www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/](http://www.ofmdfni.gov.uk/)
4. A Strategy for the Prevention of Offending By Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (Draft 4, 2006)  
[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/)
5. Commission for Racial Equality  
[www.cre.gov.uk/](http://www.cre.gov.uk/)
6. Charter for Youth Justice  
[www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk/](http://www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk/)
7. Children Act 2004  
[www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040031.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040031.htm)
8. College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise  
[www.cafre.ac.uk/](http://www.cafre.ac.uk/)
9. Community health – Hall 4: Health for All  
[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/)
10. Criminal Justice System and Policing  
[www.nio.gov.uk/](http://www.nio.gov.uk/)
11. Department of Agriculture and Rural Development: Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme (2007-2013)  
[www.dardni.gov.uk/index/rural-development/rural-development-programme.htm](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/rural-development/rural-development-programme.htm)
12. Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure: TSN Strategy 2006  
[www.dcalni.gov.uk](http://www.dcalni.gov.uk)
13. Department of Education: The Children and Young People Funding Package (2006)  
[www.deni.gov.uk/index/21-pupils\\_paretns-pg/children-and-young-people-funding-package-2.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/21-pupils_paretns-pg/children-and-young-people-funding-package-2.pdf)
14. Department for Employment and Learning

[www.delni.gov.uk](http://www.delni.gov.uk)

15. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: A Healthier Future (2005 – 2025)  
[www.dhsspni.gov.uk/healthfuture-main.pdf](http://www.dhsspni.gov.uk/healthfuture-main.pdf)
16. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Investing for Health (2002)  
[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/show\\_publications?txtid=10415](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/show_publications?txtid=10415)
17. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Priorities For Action (2007/08)  
[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/hss/priorities\\_for\\_action.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/hss/priorities_for_action.htm)
18. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Promoting mental Health Strategy and Action Plan (2003-2008)  
[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publications/2003/MenHealth.pdf](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publications/2003/MenHealth.pdf)
19. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Strategy and Action Plan (2002-2007)  
[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/teenagepregnancy-action0207.pdf](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/teenagepregnancy-action0207.pdf)
20. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Northern Ireland Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan (2006-2011)  
[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/phnisuicidepreventionstrategy\\_action\\_plan-3.pdf](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/phnisuicidepreventionstrategy_action_plan-3.pdf)
21. Department for Social Development: People and Place – A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal - Working Paper 2 – Urban Regeneration in Northern Ireland – Policy Measurement (2003)  
[www.dsdni.gov.uk/people\\_and\\_place\\_working\\_paper2.pdf](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/people_and_place_working_paper2.pdf)
22. Department for Social Development: People and Place - Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (2003)  
[www.dsdni.gov.uk/neighbourhood\\_renewal.htm](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/neighbourhood_renewal.htm)
23. Department for Social Development: Positive Steps (2006)  
[www.dsdni.gov.uk/publications/documents/Positive\\_Steps.pdf](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/publications/documents/Positive_Steps.pdf)
24. Every Child Matters: Changes for Children (2003)  
[www.everychildmatter.gov.uk/socialcare/](http://www.everychildmatter.gov.uk/socialcare/)
25. Every Child Matters: Outcomes Framework  
[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/content/documents/outcomes%20framework.pdf](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/content/documents/outcomes%20framework.pdf)
26. Every Child Matters: The Children’s Fund (2000)  
[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/childrensfund/](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/childrensfund/)

27. Every Child Matters: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child  
[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/uncrc/](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/uncrc/)
28. Equality Commission for Northern Ireland  
[www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)
29. Family and Parenting Strategy  
[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/)
30. Families Matter: A Family and Parenting Strategy  
[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/)
31. House of Commons: The Northern Ireland (St Andrews Agreement) Bill 2006-7  
[www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp2006](http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp2006)
32. Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002  
[www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/20020026.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/20020026.htm)
33. Northern Ireland Act 1998  
[www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1998/80047--j.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1998/80047--j.htm)
34. Northern Ireland Assembly (2007)  
[www.niassembly.gov.uk](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk)
35. Northern Ireland Assembly: Membership of the Northern Ireland Assembly  
[www.niassembly.gov.uk/members/membership07.htm](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/members/membership07.htm)
36. Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Northern Ireland Priorities and Plans 2004/06  
[www.nihe.gov.uk/home.asp](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/home.asp)
37. Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission  
[www.nihrc.org](http://www.nihrc.org)
38. Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission: Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland  
[www.nihrc.org/dms/data/NIHRC/attachments/dd/files/50/BoR\\_Introduction.pdf](http://www.nihrc.org/dms/data/NIHRC/attachments/dd/files/50/BoR_Introduction.pdf)
39. Northern Ireland Office (1999)  
[www.nio.gov.uk/index/key-issues/the-agreement/british\\_irish\\_intergovernmental\\_conference.htm](http://www.nio.gov.uk/index/key-issues/the-agreement/british_irish_intergovernmental_conference.htm)
40. Northern Ireland Office (2006)  
[www.nio.gov.uk/st\\_andrews\\_agreement.pfd](http://www.nio.gov.uk/st_andrews_agreement.pfd)

41. Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister: Programme for Government Unit  
[www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/programme-for-government-unit](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/programme-for-government-unit)
42. Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister: Lifetime Opportunities, Governments Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland (2006)  
[www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/antipovertynov06.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/antipovertynov06.pdf)
43. Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister: Initial Identification Of New Targeting Social Need  
[www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/tsn.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/tsn.pdf)
44. Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister: 'Race' and Racism in Northern Ireland: A Review of the Research Evidence: Paul Connolly (2002)  
[www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/racereview.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/racereview.pdf)
45. Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister: Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge. A Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2006 - 2016  
[www.allchildrenni.gov.uk/tenyearstrategychildren1.pdf](http://www.allchildrenni.gov.uk/tenyearstrategychildren1.pdf)
46. Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister: Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge Action Plan 2007/08  
[www.allchildrenni.gov.uk/strategy\\_action\\_plan\\_march\\_2007.pdf](http://www.allchildrenni.gov.uk/strategy_action_plan_march_2007.pdf)
47. Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister: First Steps Towards Sustainability (2006)  
[www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/sustain-develop.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/sustain-develop.pdf)
48. Race Relations (1997 Order) (Commencement) Order (Northern Ireland) 1997  
[www.uk-legislation.hmsso.gov.uk/sr/sr1997/Nisr\\_19970273\\_en\\_1.htm](http://www.uk-legislation.hmsso.gov.uk/sr/sr1997/Nisr_19970273_en_1.htm)
49. Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000  
[www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2000/20000034.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2000/20000034.htm)
50. Regional Safeguarding Board in Northern Ireland  
[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/)
51. The Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability (Northern Ireland) (2006)  
[www.rmhdni.gov.uk/index.htm](http://www.rmhdni.gov.uk/index.htm)
52. The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995  
[www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1995/Uksi\\_19950755\\_en\\_1.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1995/Uksi_19950755_en_1.htm)
53. The Children (1995 Order) (Amendment) (Children's Services Planning) Order (Northern Ireland) 1998

[www.opsi.gov.uk/sr/sr1998/19980261.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/sr/sr1998/19980261.htm)

54. United Kingdom National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (2003-2005)  
[www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2003/nap/nap.pdf](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2003/nap/nap.pdf)

55. Youth Justice Agency: Youth Justice Agency Framework (2003)  
[www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk/document\\_uploads/framework\\_web.pdf](http://www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk/document_uploads/framework_web.pdf)