



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**Committee for Enterprise Trade and Investment
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To: Kathy O'Hanlon
**Clerk to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy
First Minister**

From: Jim McManus
Clerk to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Date: 04 March 2015

Subject: Children's Services Co-Operation Bill

At its meeting on 03 March 2015, the CETI considered a written briefing paper from Steven Agnew MLA and a memo from the OFMDFM Committee dated the 12 February 2015 seeking the ETI Committees views.

Members agreed to forward the CETI response to the OFMDFM Committee.

I would be grateful if you could bring this to the attention of your Committee.

Jim McManus
Clerk
Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Children's Services Co-operation Bill – Committee Stage

Response from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade & Investment

Background

1. The Committee for Enterprise, Trade & Investment welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Committee for OFMdFM's request for views on the Children's Services Co-operation Bill.
2. The definition of children and young people encompasses those under the age of 25 years. This definition widens the responsibility attached to DETI and brings more areas of the Department's work within the scope of the Bill.
3. The Bill consists of six clauses. Although most clauses in the Bill have relevance to the work of DETI, the areas of relevance to the Committee and the Department can best be covered under six specified outcomes referred to under Clause 1.
4. Clause 1 creates a new two-fold duty on departments:
 - To work towards six specified outcomes relating to the well-being of children and young people; and
 - To co-operate with one another in order to further the achievement of those objectives.
5. The six specified outcomes are:
 - a. Being healthy
 - b. Enjoying learning and achieving
 - c. Living in safety and with stability
 - d. Experiencing economic and environmental well-being
 - e. Contributing positively to community and society
 - f. Living in a society which respects their rights
6. There are a number of policy areas within the Department where co-operation with other Departments would contribute to the provisions of the Bill. These are outlined below.

Areas for Co-operation by DETI with other Government Departments

Being Healthy

7. Departmental policies relating to petroleum licencing impact on environmental considerations. There may be scope for wider co-operation with the Department of the Environment on this area to protect the health of all people including children.

Enjoying Learning and Achieving

8. DETI's economic policies focussing on economic development and job creation link to the work of the Department of Employment & Learning through the development of skills in a growing and

developing economy. There is scope for further and continuing co-operation between the two departments in the development of training and apprenticeships for young people.

9. DETI's telecoms policies including the roll out of high speed broadband should take into account the growing trend towards the routine use of electronic communications in the classroom and for homework. Increase co-operation may help ensure that no child is disadvantaged through inadequate access to on-line learning resources.

Living in Safety and with Stability

10. The Department will cease farm safety campaign activity from April 2015. There is concern that any reduction in this activity may impact on the safety of those living and working on farms. Compared to other workplaces, farms are unique in that children are regularly exposed to farm work and machinery. Greater co-operation between DETI and the Department of Agriculture and rural Development may help ensure that specific policies are put in place to protect children and young people on farms.

Experiencing economic and environmental Wellbeing

11. DETI's energy policies contribute to both energy prices and security of supply which, in turn, contribute to energy costs for consumers. Co-operation between DETI, OFMDFM and DSD can help tackle the issue of fuel poverty which impacts on consumers of all ages but which also contributes to the safety, health and ability of children to learn and achieve.
12. Economic policies impact on wages and jobs for young people under 25. At a time when youth unemployment is high, co-operation between DETI and DEL can help increase opportunities for young people.

Contributing positively to community and society

13. Co-operation in areas to improve learning & achieving and economic & environmental wellbeing can contribute to increasing the positive contribution young people can make to community and society.
14. Co-operation between DETI and DCAL can help ensure that a sufficient proportion of child-centred and youth-centred, affordable tourism events and activities are provided.