

Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

Children's Services Co-operation Bill Response pro forma

For your convenience the Committee has prepared the attached pro forma to assist in responding to the main clauses of the Bill. The Bill can be found at <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/legislation/current-non-executive-bill-proposals/childrens-services-co-operation-bill-as-introduced/>

Please respond by Friday 27 February 2015 to committee.ofmdfm@niassembly.gov.uk.

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I wish for my organisation to be considered for oral evidence sessions in relation to the Committee's scrutiny of the Bill: No

Clause	Comments (200 words)
<p>1. General Duty</p> <p>Please provide comment on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The six specified outcomes relating to the well-being of children and young people as listed in the 10 Year Strategy for Children and Young People 2006 - 2016 • The duty on Northern Ireland Departments to co-operate with each other in order to further the achievement of these objectives • The mechanism in place for amending the specified outcomes 	<p>The 10 Year Strategy for Children and Young People and associated six outcomes were developed through a collaborative and consultative process in which Include Youth participated fully. At the time we said it <i>“has the potential to be one of the most crucial and significant advancements within our society for many years. The impact of the final Strategy will be far-reaching and long lasting. It is therefore crucial to get it right. This is an opportunity to create a framework across government which has children at its centre...”</i>. There has been undoubted progress, while the strategy may not have achieved everything it set out to do, alongside the provisions laid out in the Children’s Bill we can continue to improve how our government and society legislate, provide for and work with children and young people.</p> <p>Include Youth are extremely supportive of the Children’s Bill and pleased to see proposals related to a statutory duty to cooperate brought before the Northern Ireland Assembly. While there are pockets of good practice in cooperation across government this shows no sign of becoming wide spread and this is unlikely to change without a legislative and cultural shift. A statutory duty to cooperate will improve planning, provision and cohesion for children and young people. Include Youth fully supports the proposed statutory duty to cooperate; such a duty makes good policy and good financial sense.</p>

Clause	Comments (200 words)
<p data-bbox="185 240 472 268">2. Co-operation Report</p> <p data-bbox="185 316 539 343">Please provide comment on:</p> <ul data-bbox="185 387 539 887" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="185 387 539 632">• The requirement for OFMDFM to publish periodically a report on the progress of departments towards achieving the specified outcomes <li data-bbox="185 676 539 887">• The requirement for other Northern Ireland Departments to co-operate in the preparation and publication of the report 	<p data-bbox="575 277 2049 416">Include Youth believe that effective and efficient reporting mechanisms are essential in continuing to push forward progress and in ensuring outcomes are achieved. While there have been some concerns raised around an increase in bureaucracy, Include Youth believe that greater collaboration, planning and cooperation across departments can not only mitigate against that perception but improve on the status quo making for more effective and streamlined reporting.</p>

Clause	Comments (200 words)
<p data-bbox="185 311 492 375">3. Sharing resources and pooling funds</p> <p data-bbox="185 416 539 448">Please provide comment on:</p> <ul data-bbox="185 491 548 770" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="185 491 548 770">• The enabling power which will permit Northern Ireland departments to establish pooled budgets and shared resources to achieve the six outcomes in clause 1 	<p data-bbox="577 347 2051 520">Include Youth fully supports the enabling power which will permit Northern Ireland departments to establish pooled budgets and share resources. Whether with foundation or not some of the biggest criticisms of government include: a lack of joined up thinking, duplication and a silo or protectionism mentality around departmental budgets. This is further exasperated when considering children and young people who span multiple departments and stretch the current limitations of government structures.</p> <p data-bbox="577 563 2051 735">A provision for pooled resources is a more effective use of limited budgets and provides the opportunity for departments to share staff, resources and jointly commission relevant services which will help them achieve their goals and improve outcomes for children and young people. An enabling power on pooled budgets and resources can reduce costs and target limited resources, improve efficiency and most importantly have a positive impact on the lives of children and young people.</p>

Clause	Comments (200 words)
<p data-bbox="185 240 557 308">4. Children’s Services Planning</p> <p data-bbox="185 352 557 379">Please provide comment on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="185 424 557 847"> <p data-bbox="185 424 557 632">• The requirement for the Health and Social Care Board to review and publish a children and young people’s plan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="286 639 434 667">○ Content <li data-bbox="286 675 479 738">○ Review mechanism <li data-bbox="286 746 524 847">○ Co-operation between public bodies <li data-bbox="185 892 557 959">• The public bodies listed at Clause 4 (7) <li data-bbox="185 1003 557 1174">• The duties placed on the Health and Social Care Board particularly with regard to monitoring and reporting 	<p data-bbox="575 277 2022 379">The Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership already exists as a cross sectoral strategic partnership working on integrated planning and commissioning across departments, agencies and sectors. The Children’s Bill can assist with and ensure this work continues.</p> <p data-bbox="575 421 2045 595">Specifically listing the public bodies at Clause 4 is important in coordinating the work towards achieving the six high level outcomes and is consistent with the focus on collaboration running throughout the Bill. Given the central role DEL plays in the lives of many young people, they should be included alongside the current bodies listed. The definition of children and young people includes those from a care background up to the age of 21, making the inclusion of DEL even more significant.</p> <p data-bbox="575 636 1977 703">Include Youth would echo calls made by Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI) that to ensure flexibility, any other bodies identified in the future can and should be specified in subordinate legislation.</p>

Do you have any suggested amendments to the Bill? (200 words)

That the Department of Employment and Learning be added to the public bodies listed at Clause 4 (7).

Do you have any other comments? (200 words)

Policy making and the resulting services should be evidence based, collaborative, consultative and efficient. The Children's Bill provides a unique opportunity to improve policy as well as service creation and delivery for children and young people. More generally the Bill provides a new way of working across departments and has the potential to change the culture of how government works and in so doing improve outcomes for people. These opportunities should be grasped.