

**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](mailto: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 data-bbox="185 311 383 338"><b>1. General Duty</b></p> <p data-bbox="185 384 539 411"><b>Please provide comment on:</b></p> <ul data-bbox="185 458 555 1098" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="185 458 555 699">• <b>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</b></li> <li data-bbox="185 745 555 954">• <b>The duty on Northern Ireland Departments to co-operate with each other in order to further the achievement of these objectives</b></li> <li data-bbox="185 1000 555 1098">• <b>The mechanism in place for amending the specified outcomes</b></li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="575 458 2018 555">The Public Health Agency endorses the general duty of the Bill and the further achievement of the high level outcomes: being healthy; enjoy learning and achieving; living in safety and with stability; experiencing economic and environmental wellbeing; contributing positively to community and society; and living in a society which respects their rights.</p> <p data-bbox="575 745 2018 807">The Public Health Agency welcomes the duty on Northern Ireland Departments to cooperate with each other in order to further the achievement of these objectives.</p> <p data-bbox="575 1000 1966 1027">The mechanism for amending specified outcomes remains with the Office. The PHA is content with this mechanism.</p>

Clause	Comments (200 words)
<p data-bbox="185 240 472 268"><b>2. Co-operation Report</b></p> <p data-bbox="185 316 539 343"><b>Please provide comment on:</b></p> <ul data-bbox="185 387 539 887" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="185 387 539 632">• <b>The requirement for OFMDFM to publish periodically a report on the progress of departments towards achieving the specified outcomes</b></li> <li data-bbox="185 676 539 887">• <b>The requirement for other Northern Ireland Departments to co-operate in the preparation and publication of the report</b></li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="575 387 2047 560">The PHA endorses the proposal for OFMDFM to publish a report on progress of departments toward achieving the outcomes. The mechanism for ensuring that such cooperation happens in practice is not clear in the draft Bill. The publication of a report will not of itself ensure effective or efficient cooperation. It is suggested that some clear milestones and indicators are set for Government Departments against which progress can be measured with clear accountability agreed for such cooperation.</p>

Clause	Comments (200 words)
<p data-bbox="188 311 495 376"><b>3. Sharing resources and pooling funds</b></p> <p data-bbox="188 416 539 448"><b>Please provide comment on:</b></p> <ul data-bbox="188 491 546 767" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="188 491 546 767">• <b>The enabling power which will permit Northern Ireland departments to establish pooled budgets and shared resources to achieve the six outcomes in clause 1</b></li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="580 453 2045 518">However, the Agency is concerned that there needs to be clarity to ensure that pooling arrangements do not confuse lines of accountability among existing bodies or inhibit the PHA from fulfilling its statutory responsibilities.</p> <p data-bbox="580 560 2045 663">The PHA agrees with the suggestion of sharing resources between Government departments which would seek to enhance the alignment of policy goals and practical implementation. The Agency would suggest that Government Departments' planning and resource allocation is centred around the agreed goals of the Bill.</p>

Clause	Comments (200 words)
<p data-bbox="185 240 450 308"><b>4. Children’s Services Planning</b></p> <p data-bbox="185 352 539 379"><b>Please provide comment on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="185 424 539 847"> <p data-bbox="185 424 539 632">• <b>The requirement for the Health and Social Care Board to review and publish a children and young people’s plan, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="286 639 434 667">○ <b>Content</b></li> <li data-bbox="286 675 479 738">○ <b>Review mechanism</b></li> <li data-bbox="286 746 528 847">○ <b>Co-operation between public bodies</b></li> </ul> </li> <li data-bbox="185 890 528 959">• <b>The public bodies listed at Clause 4 (7)</b></li> <li data-bbox="185 1002 551 1177">• <b>The duties placed on the Health and Social Care Board particularly with regard to monitoring and reporting</b></li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="575 424 2029 667">The PHA agrees with the need for the Health and Social Care Boards (HSCB) to renew and publish a children and young people’s plan which is developed in consultation with a wide range of partners, including children and young people. The PHA would highlight the need for the plan to set clear goals, mechanisms for achieving such goals and clear measures of progress which are evaluated and measured over time to assess impact on the agreed outcomes. This aspect of measurement requires strengthened in the next phase of Children’s Services development and the duties placed on the HSCB with regard to the monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of impact. The PHA agrees with the list of public bodies included in the draft Bill.</p> <p data-bbox="575 710 2047 810">However, the PHA believes it is essential that commissioning through the Regional Board of actions under children’s and young people’s plans which apply to HSC bodies must be subject to section 8 (4) of the Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009.</p>

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

The PHA has no amendments, other than the points raised in response to specific sections of this consultation. In particular, the PHA would emphasise the need for greater rigour in the evaluation and performance reporting of the implementation of the Plan. Such evaluation should extend to the efficiency and effectiveness of existing and new mechanisms for delivery as well as impact on the agreed outcomes.

**Do you have any other comments? (200 words)**

No further comment.