



From: Brenda Henderson (on behalf of Colum Boyle)
Acting Permanent Secretary

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Our Ref: PSC 0262.24
Date: 15 August 2024

Daniel McCrossan
Chairperson
Public Accounts Committee
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
BELFAST BT4 3XX

Via email: Committee.publicaccounts@niassembly.gov.uk

Dear Daniel,

Public Accounts Committee: Evidence Session on inquiry into Child Poverty in Northern Ireland

Thank you for your recent letter in which you requested additional information further to the evidence I provided in the Public Accounts Committee Evidence Session on 27 June 2024.

In response to the Committee's additional queries, please see as follows:

Executive's Child Poverty Strategy

- Prior to publication of the Executive's Child Poverty Strategy, OFMDFM as the responsible department undertook public consultation in relation to Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People. This work took place between 20 January 2014 and 31 March 2014 and involved a series of engagement events, including direct consultation with children and young people.
- Almost 200 consultation responses were received, after the many consultative events with various groups, including direct consultation with children and young people; parents; and children's sector organisations representing rural



interests, persons with disabilities and child poverty - for example Barnardo's, Employers for Childcare, and Voice of Young People in Care Ltd (VOYPIC). As part of this work nine dedicated focus groups were taken forward comprising approximately 120 children and young people between the ages of seven and nineteen.

Development of Anti-Poverty Strategy

- To date the work on the development of the Anti-Poverty Strategy (APS) has undertaken several steps to ensure that children and young people's needs and requirements have been considered. This has included ensuring several groups which represent children and their needs were part of the APS Co-design Group (for example Barnardo's, Employers for Childcare, Children in NI, NICCY and VOYPIC amongst others.) As part of the process, feedback sessions were held (April-June 2021) by some of these groups with children and young people in order to ensure their voices were heard and considered.
- The Department also requested the Education Authority Youth Service (EAYS) to engage in discussion with a group of young people to prepare a report setting out the views of young people from both rural and urban areas across NI. This work was completed in May 2021.
- In total 31 children and young people were involved in the feedback sessions. Additionally, feedback was also sought from a range of participants with specific experience of children's issues, including parents but also including youth workers and teachers with experience of supporting children and young people who have grown up in poverty.
- This reflects only the engagement to date as the development and design of the Strategy is still ongoing and further engagement will be considered as appropriate. The work to date will inform the development of the Anti-Poverty Strategy and its consideration by the Executive by the end of this financial year. A full public consultation will also be necessary before the strategy is



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finalised and as part of this process the views of Children and Young People will be sought.

If you require any further detail in relation to any of your queries, please feel free to contact me at any stage.

Yours sincerely,

Brenda Henderson

Acting Permanent Secretary