

## EMAIL

Daniel McCrossan MLA  
Chair, Public Accounts Committee  
Room 344  
Parliament Buildings  
Stormont  
Belfast  
BT4 3XX

Ref: 24/CJS/CQ/106

16 August 2024

Dear Mr McCrossan

### **Re: Request for information**

Thank you for your recent correspondence requesting further details of specific examples of effective collaboration between Departments and the voluntary and community sector, such as the Thrive programme, highlighting any positive outcomes as a result of this collaboration.

You may be aware that each Department has nominated a champion for children and young people to act as a key point of contact on children's issues within Departments. NICCY hosts regular Children's Champion's update meetings, and at the most recent one in June 2024, we requested that each Department submit information on examples of where their Department is working cooperatively with others in relation to their delivery for children – what has helped this and what the challenges have been.

We also recommend that the Committee engage with the Executive Office Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime on the cross-Departmental and agency working, as well as information sharing via the Operation Encompass model between Education and the PSNI relating to domestic abuse, which was rolled out to all schools in Northern Ireland in 2023.

We have summarised some examples of cross-Departmental working issued to us to this letter and also include the presentation issued to us on the Thrive programme, however we are not in a position to evaluate these examples.

We further draw the Committee's attention to the Children's Services Co-Operation Act (NI) 2015. The CSCA places obligations on the Executive to prepare a report on the operation of the Act, 18

This document and any attachments are intended for the addressee only.

**Chris Quinn**  
Commissioner

**Northern Ireland  
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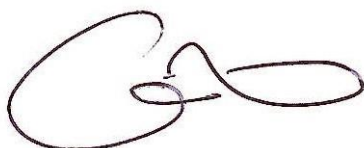
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months after the Executive has adopted a Children and Young People's Strategy and every three years thereafter, and to lay the Report before the Assembly. The first Report was due by June 2022. However, given the absence of an Executive, the Report was prepared but not published.

The Report must include statements on the actions taken by the Executive and Government Departments to achieve the outcomes, how Children's Authorities and other service providers have co-operated with each other in the provision of children's services, how they have shared resources and pooled funds, and how the well-being of children and young people has improved. We encourage the Committee to seek an update on the publication of this Report and would encourage the Committee to hear directly from the Children's Champions and Government Departments of their experiences.

Should you require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



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**Chris Quinn**  
**Commissioner**

Encs:

- Summary of Departmental Children's Champions examples issued to NICCY in June 2024
- PowerPoint presentation given to NICCY in June 2024 from Thrive

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## Appendix 1: Examples of inter-Departmental co-operation from Children's Champions update, June 2024

### *PSNI – EPPOC Programmes*

The Police Service have been allocated funding through the EPPOC programme to deliver in identified (B4) areas. Funding is sought by local officers to deliver in conjunction with partners/communities in dealing with identified harms impacting local communities. Key partners include:

- Education Authority;
- Local community groups;
- Activity providers; and
- Neighbourhood Policing Teams

### *Department of Finance*

The Public Spending Directorate in the Department of Finance can advise individual departments on the most appropriate method and recently provided advice to the CYPS Monitoring and Reporting Board on the main mechanisms for pooling and sharing resources, setting out the key principles and sources of detailed guidance available to departments and other public sector bodies.

### *EPPOC*

The Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime provides services across Northern Ireland in support of people and communities who are vulnerable to paramilitary influence and harm. Interventions are delivered collaboratively by government departments, statutory agencies and partners in the voluntary and community sector. The Programme has a particular focus on supporting young people and in addressing the impact of many decades of violence.

### *Department for Communities*

The 'Specialist Pathways' in Job Start is for individuals who were furthest from the labour market with multiple barriers to employment as a pathway to encourage them into the labour market.

This included engagement with all NICS Departments, Commissioners, NICSHR and NIPSA has allowed the development of a pathway into NICS for young people with a disability. This has been facilitated by buy-in from Permanent Secretaries and senior officials across Departments.

### *NISRA*

Through the Education Outcomes Linkages work, co-operation has been facilitated through the development of strong collaborative relationships between each of the departments involved. A Project Initiation Document was agreed, which confirms the scope, objectives, key activities and timetable for the project. A Project Board has been set up which contains members of staff from DE and NISRA, and the Project Team contains staff member from DE, NISRA and DfE.

### *Department of Health*

The Early Intervention Transformation Programme was given as the best example of pooling of resources. The Programme is a Delivering Social Change (DSC)/Atlantic Philanthropies Signature Programme which is funded jointly by five government Departments (DoH, DE, DoJ, DfC and DfE) DSC and Atlantic Philanthropies. EITP aims to transform ways of working through embedding early intervention knowledge and evidence based approaches to commissioning and delivering services for children, young people and families in order to achieve better outcomes. Information in relation to this is available on the Department of Health's website.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See: [The Early Intervention Transformation Programme | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Dear Lucia

20 August 2024

*I trust you are keeping well.*

*Last week, correspondence was issued to the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee Daniel McCrossan MLA in relation to a request for examples of cross-Departmental working and the Children's Services Co-Operation Act. Within the letter we stated that the Children and Young People's Strategy Report was due by June 2022 but this had not been published given the absence of an Executive, and encouraged the Committee to seek an update on its publication.*

*We have been made aware today that the Report has been laid in the Assembly and is available at the following link:*

*First Report on the Operation of the Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 | Department of Education ([education-ni.gov.uk](http://education-ni.gov.uk))*

*We would appreciate it if you would be able to inform the Chair and Committee Members of this Report. The Committee may wish to consider this Report and the CSCA in more depth.*

*Many thanks*

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Chris Quinn', with a large, stylized initial 'C'.

**Chris Quinn**  
**Commissioner**