



Response to

Integrated Care System NI Draft Framework

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Contact:

Children in Northern Ireland

Unit 9, 40 Montgomery Road Belfast BT6 9HL

Tel: 028 9040 1290 Fax: 028 9070 9418 Email: info@ci-ni.org.uk

Overview

Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI) is regional umbrella organisation for the children's sector providing policy, information, training, and participation services to our 150 members across NI. We:

- Engage with children and parents directly through our Participation Network and our Parent Led Disability Forum.
- Provide professional safeguarding training to the voluntary and community sectors workforce.
- Sit on the Children's & Young People's Strategic Partnership, knowing that working in co-operation and collaboration is the best way to improve outcomes for all children and young people.
- Operate a locality group through the CYPSP – these groups are a partnership for our members, front line staff and parents/carers with work focusing on engagement, early intervention, building capacity to improve outcomes for children, young people and their parents/carers.
- Run the Regional Parenting Helpline Parentline NI providing advice, guidance and support to parents and carers.
- Deliver Holiday Hunger projects for families and communities across NI
- Chair the Child Poverty Alliance and the Children with Disabilities Strategic Alliance which brings together organisations from across the children's and disability sector to inform Government and influence policy to improve outcomes for children, young people and parents.

We do this by:

Working directly with children, young people, parents/carers and families to identify their issues, supporting them to engage and influence policy thereby enabling positive social change

Facilitating the participation and inclusion of all children and young people, and parents/carers through our locality planning groups, parent helpline and parent led disability forum.

Advocating and influencing government at all levels for positive and lasting change, through listening to lived experience of children, young people and their parents and highlight evidence informed solutions

Building capacity within the children's sector through our regional learning and development programme.

Developing networks to share knowledge and collectively achieve positive social change for all children and young people and their parents/carers in Northern Ireland.

Working in partnership with others to achieve our vision of making Northern Ireland a society where all children are valued, treated fairly and are able to flourish.

Questions

Section 3 describes and defines what an Integrated Care System (ICS) model is which provides the blueprint for how we will plan, manage and deliver services in NI moving forward. Do you agree that this is the right approach to adopt in NI?

CiNI welcomes this framework and the clear commitment to an Integrated Care System (ICS). It is most certainly the best approach to improve outcomes for everyone in Northern Ireland.

However, we are concerned that there are some missing components to the model that has been described. For example, we agree that "the model enables collaboration, integration and partnerships which reach across traditional boundaries, with organisations, groups and individuals coming together to collectively plan and deliver services and

interventions.” Yet there is no mention of the Children’s & Young People’s Strategic Partnership (CYPSP), nor is there any mention of the Children’s Services Co-operation Act (NI) (2015) which is a key lever to utilize in ensuring the co-operation between government departments, statutory agencies and the community and voluntary sector. Indeed, there is no mention of children and young people who comprise 21% of the population in NI.

It is our strong view that the document and approach fails to take a whole life course approach as it omits the early years and the integrated planning and commissioning that has been and is being undertaken within the CYPSP and locality groups over the last 12 years. Furthermore, in light of the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on children, young people and families this Framework must deliver a whole person approach that includes Early Intervention and Prevention to reduce health inequalities particularly relating to the prevailing economic and Covid-19 circumstances.

Section 5 sets out the Values and Principles that all partners will be expected to adhere to. If applicable, please comment on anything else you think should be included.

The model being presented is the **exact model** operated by the CYPSP, yet CYPSP is excluded from this document. What is also omitted is how this new infrastructure will connect with and integrate within the existing CYPSP structures. As the Department of Health must be aware of the partnerships and locality groups already in existence, we would welcome feedback on how the framework will address the already integrated systems of CYPSP. It is important to make use of existing structures instead of duplicating or setting up new ones as well as ensuring children are not placed within a ‘silo’.

In line with the detail set out in Section 7 do you agree that the Minister and the Department's role in the model should focus on setting the overarching strategic direction and the expected outcomes to be achieved, whilst holding the system to account?

If there is to be a truly partnership approach, then overarching strategic direction and expected outcomes must have buy in from everyone. That means that it should be a bottom-up approach and not a top down one. This also means ensuring that there is representation on any boards/advisory groups from the community and voluntary sector as well as the CYPSP.

Section 8 sets out what the ICS model will look like when applied to NI. It is based on the principles of local level decision making which will see a shift of autonomy and accountability to local ICS arrangements. Do you agree with this approach?

The health and wellbeing of children and young people is a key outcome from the CYPSP as they understand that greater integration and working in partnership to deliver shared priorities is essential to reduce inequalities and to improve health services for children and young people. Local level decision making is important which is why there are locality groups operating within the CYPSP structure. While we agree in principle with the local level decision making, we have several concerns with the current model suggested. Firstly, where does the CYPSP sit within this model? Where would community planning partnerships sit within this model? Furthermore, this is a very limited view of social care and omits to take account of the health and wellbeing agenda, particularly as it relates to children and young people. Again, we refer you back to the questions of addressing silos as well as working in collaboration with existing structures.

As detailed in Sections 8 and 9, a Regional Group will be established to undertake an oversight, co-ordination and support function for the ICS. Do you agree with this approach?

The regional group must be made up for representatives from across the health and social care arena including the voluntary and community sector. It's also important to take account of the regional Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership.

Furthermore, we understand that some flexibility in membership allows for a tailored governance structure, this approach however does introduce a risk that key perspectives and experience may be missing from planning and commissioning decisions. To address this, we would expect further details on the governance arrangements including time that individuals would sit on a regional group, how members would be recruited etc.

As detailed in Sections 8 and 10, do you agree that the establishment of Area Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs) is the right approach to deliver improved outcomes at a local level?

We agree that this type of framework has the potential to provide stability and accountability for planning, commissioning and delivery of services. However, we ask how the Area Integrated Partnership Boards are going to be aligned to other planning networks and commissioning arrangements. They may be a vehicle for planning services for the adult population alongside CYPSP and its experience and expertise as a planning network for children and young people.

As set out in Section 10, do you agree with the proposed minimum membership of the AIPBs?

We have serious concerns regarding the membership of AIPBs as there is no information on how people will be recruited to the AIPBs. We also have concerns that there is only one representative from the Community Sector and one from the Voluntary Sector. We would like to know how this was arrived at. We would also like to have further information on selection and recruitment to the AIPBs and how conflict of interest will be managed especially in the commissioning of services.

In conclusion

We are somewhat disappointed in the lack of joined up approach taken to this framework. In practice, children and young people move between services. Whatever changes are introduced, it will remain the case that a joined-up approach and working in collaboration is needed, this means including the CYPSP in developing this framework. Any changes to the current system and how it will be of benefit to children and young people will need to be considered to ensure pathways are smooth, well aligned and deliver consistent and equitable access. It is deeply unclear how this framework aligns to other planning networks and commissioning of services. Also, there is no mention of a funding model. We would like information on how and where this is being developed and its link to the framework.