

APPENDIX 4

Model for ensuring Parental Participation in the planning of supports and services for children and young people

**Model developed by
Parenting Forum NI**

Introduction

The Parenting Forum has been asked to develop a strategy for the participation of parents in the planning processes overseen by the CYPSP.

An important aspect of this work will be to engage in transparent consultative processes that would provide a range of opportunities for parents to share their opinions and experiences at the three levels of planning.

The Parenting Forum NI (PFNI) was tasked with developing a model so that groups of parents and individual parents from across NI could be supported to be involved in the planning process. As a membership organisation the Forum has over 1400 individual parents and family support organisations and circulates information to over 140,000 parents quarterly. The Parenting Forum NI (PFNI) has considerable experience in developing appropriate models of participation and has carried out a number of consultations on a range of issue for Departments and other bodies including the OFMDFM, Department of Justice and Department of Education.

PFNI has regular contact with a considerable network of parents and parent support groups throughout NI. As the groups of parents come from diverse backgrounds and include parents of children with special needs and parents representing ethnic minority groups, PFNI is well placed to develop and support structures, which enable parents to be actively engaged in participation.

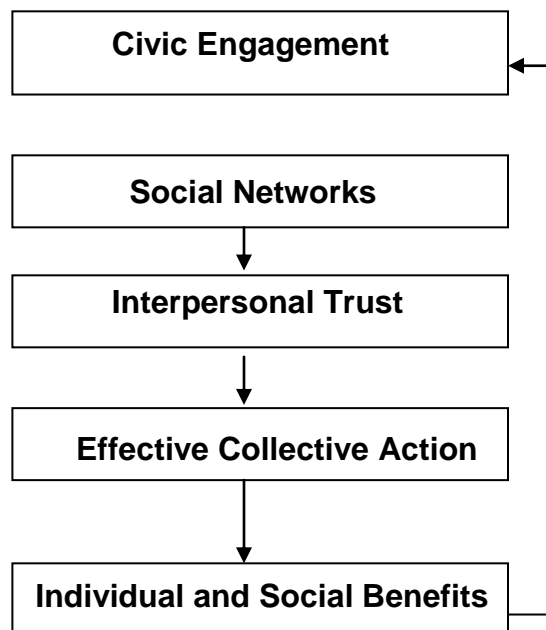
Consultation Methodology and Processes

In developing the methodologies and processes for parental participation the PFNI would adhere to three of the ten key defining characteristics to deliver Family Support as defined by Pinkerton, Dolan and Canavan (2006), which are:

- Working in partnership is an integral part of Family Support. Partnership includes, children, families, professionals and communities.

- Involvement of services users and providers in the planning, delivery and evaluation of family support services is promoted on an ongoing basis.
- Measures of success are routinely built into provision so as to facilitate evaluation based on attention to the outcomes for service users and thereby facilitate ongoing support for quality services based on best practice.

The model which would be implemented would also adhere to the principles of community development which Dolan (2008) puts forward as key to increasing Social Capital at local and strategic levels. Social Capital in Community Development is most active in 'bridging and bonding'. Parents would be supported at the different levels identified by Dolan (2008) to ensure that not only will services be planned with the input of parents, but parents will also feel valued. Parents may engage in any of the levels as demonstrated in Dolan's model below:



A three tiered model of participation would be implemented that reflects the new structures the CYPSP has put in place to deliver integrated planning

and commissioning arrangements for services to children, young people and families. A range of methods would be used which are appropriate to each tier to ensure real engagement and feedback from parents. These are detailed below:

Level 1 - Locality Groups

Currently there are a number of Locality Groups operating across NI. The remit of the groups is to put into place services at a local level which reflect local needs. The groups have representation of community, voluntary and statutory services operating within a specific geographic area.

The opportunity for parental participation at local level would be offered to all parents living within a locality area. There are three strands of engagement with parents:

- Supporting Locality members to represent the views and opinions of parents who attend their services at the Locality Group Meeting
- Supporting local parents to be involved on an ongoing basis in the work of the group.
- An annual meeting open to all parents who would be asked their views on the service delivery provision within the area and identify any gaps and to explore options for involvement on an ongoing basis using local support mechanisms .

Methodology

In order to deliver on these three requirements at local level two different methodologies would be applied.

- Training for the Locality Group members on engaging parents, supporting their views and feeding into locality planning at regular meetings (one per HSC Trust Area early in the implementation of the model).
- Consultation sessions with parents would be facilitated by the PFNI in each locality. Locality representatives will identify and support parents to take part in the events. PFNI would design and facilitate

the sessions and provide a report to each Locality Group on their specific issues. PFNI will collate the information from across all the Locality Groups to produce an overall report based on all the meetings for the Strategic Partnership. The sessions in each Locality area will be used to determine how PFNI will support ongoing involvement.

- PFNI to support local involvement in Locality Planning in each area as determined by initial meeting in each area.

Level 2 – Regional Sub Groups

The CYPSP is establishing a number of Regional Sub Groups, which will carry out integrated planning in relation to vulnerable groups of children and young people e.g. children and young people with disabilities and children and young people from black and ethnic minorities.

Two appropriate methodologies would be implemented to offer opportunities to ensure inclusion of parents.

Methodology

- For each such group, one group of 10-12 parents would be established. Parents will be recruited from parents who attend the locality group's sessions and parents who have experience or interest in the specific group of children and young people. This will include liaising with established existing groups, for example Black and Minority support groups or action groups.
- PFNI will design and facilitate each of the parents' meetings for the regional sub groups and collate the information into a report for each group.
- As some parents from particular groups may or will not sign up to be part of sub group work in this way the PFNI would also hold one off sessions with Parenting Forum Members (singled theme issue groups, for example; Black and Minority Ethnic Groups) as and when required.

Level 3 – Outcomes Groups

Each HSC Trust area will have one Outcomes Group. The role of local Outcomes Groups is to act as a local partnership for voluntary, community and statutory organisations to jointly consider how well local children and young people are doing in relation to the 6 high level outcomes for children and young people set out in the Ten Year Strategy, to identify where action on the priorities arising can be addressed and support such action.

Methodology

- One group of 10-12 parents will be established to form an Outcomes Group Consultation Panel Group.
- Parents will be recruited through Locality Groups and would act in a consultative role to the Outcomes Group.
- PFNI will design and facilitate each of the parents' meetings for the Outcomes Group consultation sessions with parents, to help to identify actions which need to be taken to support the priorities of the Outcomes Group.
- PFNI will collate the information and produce a report for each of the five Outcomes Boards.

Level 4 Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership

The CYPSP is a cross-sectoral, strategic partnership, consisting of the leadership of all key agencies who have responsibility for improving outcomes for all children and young people in NI including health, social services, education, policing and housing as well as representatives from the voluntary and community sectors.

The overall purpose of the CYPSP is to lead integrated planning and commissioning of supports and services aimed at improving outcomes for children and young people across NI. These six high level outcomes were

set out in the ten year strategy entitled 'Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge', developed by the NI Executive.

Methodology

One group of 20 parents would be established to form the Parents Advisory Forum. PFNI would design and facilitate the group sessions using appropriate information to be developed as directed by the CYPSP. PFNI will collate the information into a report for the Strategic Partnership. The parents will be recruited with two representatives from each Regional Sub Group and up to ten individual parents from the Locality Groups, the PFNI membership and the general population. This group will meet three times per year or as required by the CYPSP.

How will we measure that parental participation is working?

- More parents will be involved in service planning;
- Parents and carers will be able to see where changes have been made as a result of their involvement
- The CYPSP partner agencies, (those involved in planning or commissioning services), will be listening and acting upon regular feedback from parents/carers and parents will see evidence of this through feedback at group sessions and information produced in Parenting Forum NI newsletters
- Parents will have increased confidence in the quality and range of services that are provided

Parents Advisory Forum Functions

1. The members of the group will act in a consultative role to the CYPSP on integrated planning.
2. The members of the group will act as a source of information sharing with other parents the integrated planning process overseen by the CYPSP.

Parents Advisory Forum Proposed Framework

1. PAF would have representation from across all sections of the community and reflect Section 75.
2. PAF would have representation from the Regional Sub Groups parents groups, including each Chair and one other member as well as individual parents who self nominate.
3. PAF would have 20 members to reflect the range of parenting issues and themes. Members will be selected as part of the nomination process.
4. PAF will meet 3 times per year and within a month of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership meeting for up to 2 hours on each occasion. Times dates and venues to be agreed by PAF members.
5. Individual parent members can be nominated by a parents group, an organisation working directly with parents or self nomination. Selection will be made by an independent panel and serve for two year hence new selections to take place on a rolling basis.
6. Members of PAF will elect a chair and vice chair.
7. The facilitation, administration and support of the group and individual members would be the task of the Parenting Forum NI.

New Structures for Integrated Parental Participation

Planning for Children, Young People and Families

Structures

