

Delivering Social Change

Tackling poverty and social exclusion



Northern Ireland
Executive

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DELIVERING SOCIAL CHANGE

MARCH 2016

Appointment of a new Commissioner for Older People

On 11 March the First Minister Arlene Foster and deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness announced the appointment of Eddie Lynch as the new Commissioner for Older People. Eddie, who will take up his post on 14 June 2016, will be the second Commissioner for Older People, taking over from Claire Keatinge.

Having served as the Chief Executive of Age Sector Platform, Eddie is a long time advocate of the rights of older people and will bring considerable knowledge and experience to the job.



Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness and First Minister Arlene Foster pictured with the newly appointed Commissioner for Older People, Eddie Lynch

The post of Commissioner has a wide range of promotional, advisory, educational, legal and investigatory functions, powers and duties to be deployed in the interests of older people, both generally and individually. Established in 2011, the post of Commissioner has an important role in promoting and safeguarding the interests, advancing equality, challenging discrimination and empowering and enabling the voice of older people in Northern Ireland.

This post is a full-time appointment for a period of four years, which may be renewed for a further period of four years.

Further details are available at: <https://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/news/eddie-lynch-new-commissioner-older-people>

Information about the NI Executive's Active Ageing Strategy can be found at: <https://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/articles/age-equality>

Delivering Social Change – Our Population: What Matters Most?

As part of the broader stakeholder engagement under the Delivering Social Change (DSC) framework, OFMDFM Statistics and Research Branch worked with the DSC policy team to develop a set of open-ended questions which would help identify the key issues/worries for individuals and families in Northern Ireland, and what potential solutions could address these issues/worries.

These questions, which were placed on the January 2015 edition of the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey, were:

1. Please name up to three of the most important issues you face in your day to day life.
2. If you were able to change these for the better what would you do?
3. Thinking about you and your family, what three things do you worry about most often?
4. What do you think might help to ease these worries?

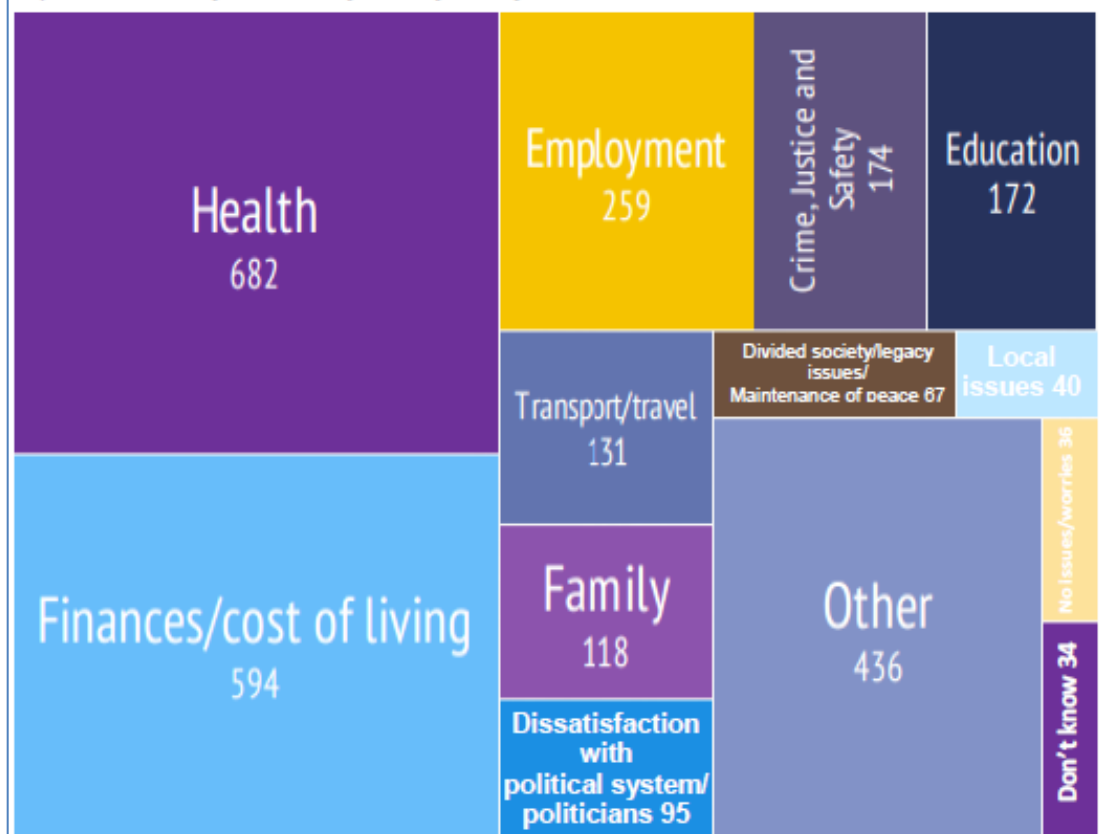
Analysis from the survey data has been published and can be accessed [here](#).

The main findings of the research were:

- When asked about the most important issues faced in day to day life, 'Health' was the most commonly identified issue, followed by 'finances/cost of living' and 'employment'.
- In terms of changing the identified issues 'for the better' the most common response was 'health service investment', followed by 'political change/public sector issues' and 'personal change'. Other commonly suggested areas for change included 'pay/income', 'education', 'employment' and 'welfare'. It is interesting to note that despite the question asking 'what would **you** do', many of the responses did not have a personal focus but sought change or action from other agencies.
- 'Finances/employment', 'health' and 'security/safety' were the three most commonly cited worries. In terms of things that might help ease these worries, the most common responses were 'good health service', 'adequate finance/financially secure' and 'decent government'. Again, solutions were mainly attributed to external agencies and not personal action.

- Analysis was also undertaken to explore the differences between different societal groups. The report presents a series of infographics detailing where statistically significant differences were found within these groups. For example:
 - Older people were more likely to say that 'health' was one of the most important issues for them than working-age people. In addition, married people were more likely to say 'education' was one of the most important issues than those who are widowed, and those who do not have a disability were more likely to say 'employment' than those who have a disability. 'Finances/cost of living' was more likely to be an issue for working-age people compared to older people.
 - 'Education' was more likely to be a worry for working-age people, those without a disability, married people and those with dependants. Older people and those with a disability were more likely to identify 'health' as a worry than those of working-age or those without a disability.

Figure 1.1: Most common responses to the question: "Please name up to 3 of the most important issues you face in your day to day life."



For more information please email: research@ofmdfmi.gov.uk

Delivering Social Change Signature Programmes – Early Intervention Transformation Programme



Getting Ready to Learn Project

On 18 March the Minister for Education initiated the *Getting Ready to Learn* (GRtL) programme. GRtL is part of Workstream 1 of the Early Intervention Transformation Programme (EITP).

Funded jointly by the NI Executive and The Atlantic Philanthropies, there is a total of £3million available for GRtL. GRtL is an application based programme available to all pre-school education settings to help them support parents of children in their immediate pre-school year to improve their home learning environment.

There are four learning programmes within *Getting Ready to Learn* – Big Bedtime Read; Education Works in Pre-School; Happy and Healthy Kids; and Ages and Stages 3-4. Each programme provides a range of resources to encourage parents to get involved in their child's education from the early years.

The Minister for Education encouraged settings to apply for funding:

“Getting Ready to Learn is an opportunity for all pre-school education practitioners to engage with parents and share their knowledge, skills and ideas to help parents support early learning at home. The four themes that schools can choose from all support my Education Works Campaign and I urge pre-school settings to become involved.”

The Education Authority is responsible for the management and implementation of GRtL. Further information and application packs are available from the [Education Authority](#) and [Department of Education](#) websites. There will be an annual call for applications around March of each year and the closing date for applications for the 2016/17 academic year is Friday 29 April 2016.



Building Better Futures Project

Delivering Social Change (DSC), through the Early Intervention Transformation Programme, is working to ensure we make good decisions for some of our most vulnerable children. The *Building Better Futures* (BBF) Project aims to improve children's outcomes by providing an evidence based model of social work assessment followed by targeted and effective interventions for children and families who have reached the threshold for the involvement of Trust Social Services Family Support Teams.

The need to strengthen social worker assessments and targeted interventions has been highlighted from a range of sources.

This Project seeks to address this need for assessments and reports to be evidence based and clear in their arguments. The quality of the assessment of children in need and subsequent intervention has a significant impact on outcomes for the children concerned. Good assessment and intervention contribute to better outcomes and understanding what makes for a good assessment is vital. Even with long-standing support from social workers and other agencies, some parents are unable to protect their children from harm. BBF aims to improve children's outcomes by developing and disseminating a regional model of parenting capacity assessment and intervention. The model for BBF has been developed in Northern Ireland by Professor Stan Houston and Dr. Lorna Montgomery QUB and is based on the McMasters Model of family assessment. The aim is to maximise the effectiveness of assessment and intervention and thereby improve outcomes for children.

With the DSC investment, it is anticipated that the model will be further developed and refined with the active involvement of Trust social work staff to ensure that it is fit for purpose and useful and accessible to social workers in busy social work teams. With the on-going involvement and support from Professor Houston and Dr. Montgomery the model will be further evaluated and refined. For a small number of children who cannot be safely supported

at home this assessment will highlight this earlier in the process, enabling social services and other professionals to intervene early and to seek wider family support or a care placement.

Supporting a Social Enterprise for Care Leavers and Homeless Young People



Delivering Social Change (DSC), through the Early Intervention Transformation Programme, is supporting an innovative approach to helping young people leaving care to design a social enterprise that will provide employment to this most vulnerable group. Securing employment is an important step in any young person's transition to independence as it provides not only financial independence but also promotes self-confidence and a sense of self-worth as well as being an important element in social inclusion.

The average young person does not leave the parental home until the age of 22 (Care Matters N.I .2007) or according to recent statistics by the Who Cares Trust 2015 the age of 24; approximately a quarter of children leaving care will do so between their 16th and 18th birthday. Care leavers are among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people in society and often do not have the levels of stability and support that other young people have. Young people in care are currently more likely than their peers to experience unemployment both when first leaving school and throughout their lives although strenuous efforts are being made to reverse this trend.

Within Workstream 3 of the Early Intervention Transformation Programme is a project for care leavers and homeless young people in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust area. The Project centres on the development of a business plan to establish a social enterprise in the area.

A consortium made up of LEDCOM/Business Led NI (LEDCOM charity group), Omagh Enterprise Company and Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency successfully tendered to complete this work. These three highly experienced companies are all existing social enterprises in their own right and between them have developed over 400 business plans for social enterprises. They have considerable previous experience in working with disadvantaged young people on a full range of business and self-development programmes and are all recognised as experts in their field. Together they will use their combined knowledge and experience to work with the young people and will provide relevant training, study visits and the opportunity to develop a business plan for a viable social enterprise in their area.

Through the training series there will be a focus on helping the young people to think about how business works, what ideas work and how to create potential employment for themselves. The focus of the consortium will be to ensure that the young people are at the centre of the project from day one, and that they are heavily involved in the project in both co-design and co-production. One to one mentoring will be offered to each young person participating in the project as well as work placements within different social enterprises. The aim of the Project is also to increase confidence amongst the young people and to demonstrate how, through social enterprise, they can be empowered to take control of their future.

We are excited to see what ideas the young people produce alongside this highly experienced, motivated and enthusiastic network of providers and how we can take the completed business plan forward. Watch this space



Further information about the Delivering Social Change Signature Programmes is available at: <https://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/topics/social-change/delivering-social-change-signature-programmes>

Development of the next Children and Young People's Strategy

We continue to co-design our strategy by engaging with stakeholders. In March we met with organisations who work with children with disabilities and their families in order to understand what issues they think need to be considered within the strategy. We would like to say a big 'thank you' to the children and parents who attend the Angel Eyes NI Youth Club for letting us join them on Saturday 19 March at Jordanstown Schools and for sharing their views and experiences with us.

An inter-departmental Children's Champion meeting was held to brief Departments on the new Children's Services Co-operation Act. The role of lead Department for the strategy for Children and Young People is moving from OFMDFM to the new Department of Education (DE) in May as part of the departmental restructuring which will see the number of departments reduced to nine. Katrina Godfrey, Deputy Secretary, DE explained that this signalled a significant change and wider role for the new Department. The meeting sought the departmental views on the many emerging themes/priorities, and outlined the role each Department will have in measuring the progress of their actions through measurable indicators which will be developed through co-design. Through the strategy, Departments will also outline how Government and stakeholders may work better together to support better delivery.

We also continue to meet with Department policy leads to discuss current implemented strategies and potential future strategies that will support improving the lives of our children and young people.

Many thanks to everyone who has already made a valuable contribution to date. Please don't miss your opportunity to give us your views on the shape of the next Children and Young People's strategy.

We welcome your contribution and urge anyone who is interested in this work area to get in touch with the Children and Young People's Unit, OFMDFM at:

CYP@ofmdfmi.gov.uk or telephone Alastair Carroll on 02890 523423.

Together: Building a United Community Strategy

On 10 March Junior Ministers Jennifer McCann and Emma Pengelly officially opened the first shared neighbourhood. The housing development, which is the first of ten shared neighbourhood schemes to be created under the NI Executive's Together: Building a United Community (T: BUC) Strategy, is located at Ballynafoy Close on the Ravenhill Road, Belfast.

The scheme includes 67 housing units with a mix of houses, apartments and dwellings for those with complex needs. It was developed in partnership with Apex Housing association.



Junior Ministers Emma Pengelly and Jennifer McCann with Ballynafoy Close resident Deborah Morgan and Martin Doherty, Apex Chairman

Ballynafoy Close is the first of 10 new shared neighbourhoods under the commitments in the T: BUC Strategy. A further four schemes have commenced in:

- Ravenhill Avenue, Belfast;
- Felden Mill, Newtownabbey;
- Crossgar Road, Saintfield; and
- Burn Road, Cookstown.

An additional five schemes are planned for 2016 in:

- Embankment Ballynafeigh, Belfast;
- Dromore Street, Banbridge;
- Main Street, Dundrum;
- Market Road, Ballymena; and
- Antrim Road, Ballynahinch.

More information about the *Together: Building a United Community Strategy* is available at: <https://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/articles/together-building-united-community>

Consultation on draft annual indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of the 'Active Ageing Strategy 2016 – 2021'

To monitor and evaluate progress against the outcomes included in the recently launched 'Active Ageing Strategy 2016-2021', OFMDFM, following feedback from stakeholders, has developed a draft set of indicators under each outcome.

A public consultation regarding these draft indicators is under way. The consultation document with a full list of proposed indicators can be found via the link below:

<https://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-draft-annual-indicators-monitoring-and-evaluation-active-ageing-strategy>

The consultation period closes on 17 April and responses should be made through the online consultation survey which can be found via the link below:

https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/active_ageing

Following the consultation period, a final set of indicators will be prepared, taking into account comments and feedback from the consultation process where possible. Once finalised, this set of indicators may be used by policy makers to demonstrate progress under each outcome and to measure the effects at a population level of implementation of the Strategy.

For more information please email: research@ofmdfmi.gov.uk

The UN Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The UK is currently preparing for its oral examination by the UN Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in Geneva in May 2016.

The oral examination is scheduled over a two day period commencing on 23 May, whereby the UN Committee will hold constructive discussions with the UK in order to make an accurate assessment of the child rights situation and make recommendations to the state to fulfill its obligations and advance child rights.

The UK Government has the lead role in communicating the work of the four jurisdictions in relation to any Treaties, periodic reviews or public examination by the UN. They also have the responsibility to determine the composition of UK delegations and as such, have sought nominations from the devolved administrations to participate at the oral examination.

In advance of the hearing and in identifying the key areas of focus by the UN Committee, the Children and Young People's Unit (CYPU) in OFMDFM, which is responsible for taking this work forward, has sought suitable nominations from Departments to ensure our support to the UK Government in Geneva is high level, knowledgeable and fully representative of the views of the NI Executive.

Delegates will be required to attend on both days of the oral examination and will address a list of key questions from the UN Committee on the implementation of child rights in the UK and in the Devolved Administrations.

While submission of the UK State party report back in May 2014 will have a significant bearing on proceedings, the involvement of children and young people, Human Rights organisations and the Children's Commissioners are also important parts of this reporting process, as the list of questions will be drawn by the UN Committee from submissions by these organisations, as well as, responses by the UK to a List of Issues published by the UN Committee in November 2015.

The Review will end with the publishing of the UN Committee's 'Concluding Observations' in June 2016 on how the UK can improve its compliance with the UNCRC. Departments and Agencies will then be required to ensure that due consideration is made in policy development and delivery to the rights of children as set out in the Concluding Observations

and the UNCRC. The Concluding Observations will also inform the development of the next Children and Young People's strategy.

***For further information contact the Children and Young People's Unit, OFMDFM at:
CYP@ofmdfmi.gov.uk or telephone Alastair Carroll on 028 9052 3423***

The Executive publishes Child Poverty Strategy

The Executive published its revised Child Poverty Strategy on 25 March.

Tackling social and economic disadvantage is a key priority for the Executive. The Programme for Government 2011-2015 set out a commitment to create opportunities, tackle disadvantage and improve health and well-being and we have been working since 2011 to do so. The Executive's new Child Poverty Strategy sets out an approach and a series of actions focused on improving the economic well-being of families and children's educational attainment, health and environment to improve both their well-being and life chances, reducing both the number of children in poverty and the impact of poverty on children.

The Executive's Annual Report on Child Poverty 2014-15 was also published on 25 March. This Report sets out some of the work undertaken to tackle child poverty.

The Child Poverty Strategy will help evaluate what we are doing – to make sure what we are doing is making a difference in the lives of those who need it most. This is an important development and a big step forward in our work to tackle child poverty.

The Executive's Child Poverty Strategy and 2014/15 Annual Report on Child Poverty can be found on the OFMDFM website:

<https://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/articles/poverty-and-social-inclusion#toc-1>



Junior Ministers Emma Pengelly and Jennifer McCann pictured at the opening of Cranmore Integrated Primary School official opening of new pre-school facilities. Pre-school facilities aim to give children the best start in life, preparing them for lifelong wellbeing and achievement, thereby creating a basis for a better future.

Childcare Strategy

The Childcare Strategy Branch held a successful Childcare Strategy stakeholder event on 16 March in Crumlin Road Gaol conference centre. It gave an opportunity for us to present, for discussion, emerging findings from our analysis of responses gained from public consultation.

Overall stakeholder responses from the event are being collated and will be used to help inform the final Strategy. The first phase of the Childcare Strategy (A Strategic Framework and Key First Actions) was launched on 25 September 2013. Development of the full Strategy has involved ongoing engagement with the main childcare stakeholders and further, extensive public consultation running from July to November 2015.

Under the restructuring of government departments, the Childcare Strategy Team will be moving to the Department of Education on 9 May.

Further information can be obtained from Stephen Wilson on 028 9076 5786 or email stephen.wilson.@ofmdfmni.gov.uk

***We welcome any comments you have about the Delivering Social Change newsletters.
You can contact us by.....***

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