

## Draft Consultation Response: Draft NI Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2021

### 1. Your Contact Details

Name Mairead Smith  
Agency Belfast City Council  
Address Cecil Ward Building  
Address 2 4-10 Linenhall Street  
City / Town Belfast  
Zip / Post Code BT2 8PB  
Email Address [smithmairead@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:smithmairead@belfastcity.gov.uk)  
Phone Number 028 9032 0202 ext 5373

### 2. Please select one:-

- I am responding as an individual
- I am responding as an organisation
- I am responding on behalf of myself as a parent / carer
- I am responding on behalf of myself as a child / young person
- I am responding on behalf of a group of children / young people
- I am responding as a practitioner, policy maker or other stakeholder

### 3. CYPSP agreed a focus on promoting early intervention as defined on page 4 of the plan. Are you in agreement with this definition:-

- Yes
- No
- Partially

### Additional Comments

Belfast City Council welcomes the Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) focus on promoting early intervention to tackle emerging problems.

A key priority within the Living Here theme of Belfast's community Plan, the Belfast Agenda, is ensuring an integrated, interagency approach to early intervention. Through Council's engagement with stakeholders, it has been highlighted that early intervention approaches are important for ensuring the best start in life for children and young people. It is however recognised that a similar approach needs to be applied to adults and families as part of a preventative / upstream approach to improving wellbeing.

Belfast City Council recognises that identifying vulnerable groups who will benefit from early interventions is challenging and recommends that a flexible approach surrounding existing networks, such as family hubs, is adopted.

To assist with measuring the appropriateness and impact of interventions, Council also suggests that the introduction of clearer parameters around the nature of early interventions would be beneficial.

### 4. CYPSP agreed a focus on promoting family support as defined on page 5 of the plan. Are you in agreement with this definition:-

- Yes
- No
- Partially

Additional Comments

Belfast City Council supports the CYPSP definitions in relation to family support as set out in the draft NI C&YP Plan 2019-2021.

Belfast's community plan, the Belfast Agenda, highlights the need for a focus on support for families through an integrated family, early intervention programme.

Council considers that it is important to highlight the value of implementing robust mechanisms to ensure that vulnerable families and parents can be identified as early as possible, in order to ensure they receive appropriate support to promote and protect the health, wellbeing and rights of all children, young people and their families.

**5. CYPSP agreed a focus on promoting Parenting support as defined on page 5 of the plan. Are you in agreement with this definition:-**

- Yes
- No
- Partially

Additional Comments

Belfast City Council supports the CYPSP definitions in relation to parenting support as set out in the draft NI C&YP Plan 2019-2021.

Belfast's community plan, the Belfast Agenda, highlights the need for a focus on support for families through an integrated family, early intervention programme.

Council considers that it is important to highlight the value of implementing robust mechanisms to ensure that vulnerable parents can be identified as early as possible, in order to ensure they receive appropriate support to promote and protect the health, wellbeing and rights of all children, young people and their families.

**6. The purpose of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Children and Young People's Plan is set out on pages 7-8 of the plan points A-G. Are you in agreement with this approach:-**

- Yes
- No
- Partially

Additional Comments

Belfast City Council welcomes the proposal to adopt a collaborative approach in the delivery of children's services in order to address the eight parameters of wellbeing, as set out in the draft NI Children and Young People's Strategy 2017-2027.

The purpose of the draft NI C&YP Plan 2019-2021, as set out on pages seven and eight of the document, reflects key synergies within the community planning process, as required by Part 10 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 (e.g. multiagency planning process, improving wellbeing outcomes etc.), which in turn highlights the need to ensure complementarity and alignment, to avoid duplication of effort and confusion for stakeholders.

In Belfast, these synergies between the CYPSP and the Belfast Area Outcomes Group planning processes to community planning, have led to early discussions (with Belfast Area Outcomes Group) on how these planning processes might be more coherently aligned in the future. On 16 May 2019, members of the Belfast Area Outcomes Group and members of the Belfast City Council community planning team held a joint workshop to:

- Establish shared insight into the work currently underway to help improve the outcomes for Children and Young People (CYP) within the city.
- Explore the synergies between the outcomes and priorities identified within the Belfast Agenda and by the Belfast Outcomes Group, identifying potential opportunities for further collaboration and co-designing delivery.
- Consider potential collaborative actions in the context of Community Planning.
- Examine how planning processes can be aligned to help inform future iterations of the Belfast Agenda and BAOG action / delivery plans whilst maximising opportunities to improve outcomes for Children and Young People.

Belfast City Council considers that it would be helpful if the '*Statutory Basis for Co-Operation in Children Services*' which is detailed on page six of the draft NI C&YP Plan 2019-2021 also references the requirements of the community planning legislation (Part 10 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014) for collaborative planning across partners and, particularly in relation to children and young people as highlighted with the statutory guidance for community planning.

The purpose of the draft NI C&YP Plan 2019-2021 would then need to be considered in terms of how it relates to the community planning process in each of the eleven Council areas. This would aid clarity for partners and stakeholders alike.

For information, a draft summary report in relation to the collaboration workshop held on 16 May 2019 has been attached.

**7. The Core Principles underpinning the work of CYPSP are set out on page 8 of the plan. Are you in agreement with these principles:-**

- Yes  
 No  
 Partially

**Additional Comments**

Belfast City Council agrees with the core principles underpinning the work of the Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership, as set out within the draft NI C&YP Plan 2019-2021.

**8. The CYPSP supports vulnerable families through a Northern Ireland wide early intervention infrastructure as set out on pages 8–12 of the plan. Are you in agreement with this infrastructure:-**

- Yes
- No
- Partially

**Additional Comments**

Belfast City Council welcomes the commitment that, the CYPSP partners support an intervention infrastructure model, which will be developed within the context of relevant strategies.

Council would highlight however that, the current Area Outcomes Group structures are coterminous with the Health and Social Care Trust boundaries; this is a significant issue in terms of the lack of co-terminosity with Community Planning Partnership boundaries. In Belfast, the majority of the city geography is covered by the Belfast Area Outcomes Group however there are also some significant areas covered by the South Eastern Area Outcomes Group. This presents challenges for the community planning process and Community Planning Partnership, in ensuring that effective planning working arrangements are aligned (including evidence and data as it pertains to the Belfast City Council boundary) and in facilitating joint working across the city in relation to multi agency planning, in order to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Council considers that it would be helpful if greater clarity regarding the links (if any) between, and membership of, the Family Hubs, Locality Planning Groups and Outcomes Groups could be provided.

Although the draft NI C&YP Plan 2019-2021 refers to the principles which form the basis for the quality standards developed for the Family Support Hubs and Locality Planning, it does not provide details in relation to a proposed evaluation framework nor does it identify specific targets and / or KPIs.

Belfast City Council would welcome the incorporation of specific targets / KPIs into the draft Plan together with details of monitoring and evaluation procedures in order to determine the impact of the Plan and outcomes achieved with regular updates disseminated.

**9. The CYPSP is committed to improving the use of data in planning and commissioning to support outcomes based planning as set out on pages 13-14. Are you in agreement with this approach:-**

- Yes
- No
- Partially

## Additional Comments

Belfast City Council welcomes the improved use of data and information to support outcomes based planning, as set out on pages thirteen and fourteen of the draft NI C&YP Plan 2019-2021.

The importance of data in planning and commissioning support outcomes is vital and Council recognises that within the region and Belfast level, there is a need for greater granularity of data and sharing of data between agencies to support service planning and delivery, in order to effectively deliver and measure the impact of interventions. The complexity and long term commitment to the development and effective use of data and information is not underestimated and requires a collaborative approach.

Council considers that it would be beneficial if the approach could highlight the potential for this work to support community planning partnerships and would welcome the opportunity to discuss options for sharing information with community planning partners, accessing more granular data at lower level geographies and the possibility of publishing information open data (which is a key strand in the Northern Ireland Public Sector's aim to increase awareness and transparency in government).

Council also recognises that there are a number of variables in relation to relevant data, some of which may indicate similar support needs and would suggest that data is illustrated in rates / proportions, to take into account changes in population numbers and structures. It may be helpful to consider data modelling to identify future trends and to plan ahead effectively.

### 10. The context for the CYPSP plan is set out on pages 15-17. Are you in agreement with this approach:-

- Yes  
 No  
 Partially

## Additional Comments

Belfast City Council acknowledges the context as set out in the draft NI C&YP Plan 2019-2021.

It is Council's opinion however that the context within the draft Plan does not currently reference the existence of community plans for each Council area. Similar to the other policies and legislative developments highlighted within the political context section, this should clearly highlight the Community Plans that exist in each Council area, which set out the vision, wellbeing outcomes and priorities for delivery, that statutory partners (including many of the CYPSP partners / Children's Authorities) have committed to deliver in collaboration.

The Belfast City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy highlights the importance of creating spaces in urban environments and the city centre that encourage play and are welcoming and inclusive for families, children and young people i.e. spaces for leisure, play and recreation. Council considers this is an important component in creating the environment that supports the outcomes and delivery of actions included in the draft NI C&YP Plan 2019-2021 and would welcome it reflected in the draft Plan.

### 11. The CYPSP Interface and links with other planning processes is set out on pages 18-19. Are you in agreement with this approach:-

- Yes  
 No  
 Partially

## Additional Comments

Belfast City Council welcomes the inclusion of the link to the Community Planning Process with Local Government.

As previously referenced, a joint planning workshop was held on 16 May 2019, during which members of the Belfast Area Outcomes Group and members of the Belfast City Council community planning team discussed the alignment of planning processes moving forward. Participants highlighted the benefit of a representative from the Belfast Area Outcomes Group being nominated onto the Living Here Board (a delivery structure within Belfast's community planning governance) to ensure alignment and maximising opportunities for collaboration.

Although Council does not have responsibility for education, the community planning process is underpinned by collaboration and partnership to address persistent economic, social and environmental challenges. The Belfast Agenda priority of Working & Learning highlights the need for an integrated approach to address issues associated with educational inequalities in Belfast. This would include issues such as improving school readiness of young people to managing transitions across the school setting. Importantly, the Council recognises the value of the use of community and non-formal educational setting, to improve outcomes for children and young people. The life chances and economic outcomes for children and young people are shaped by their early experience and their progress through the education system and living environment. There are a number of proposed actions in the Belfast Outcomes Plan which would support this work, such as the approach to joint commissioning and access to transition support. It is therefore vital that the Community Plan interfaces with the work of the CYPSP to deliver on improved outcomes for children and young people.

As previously highlighted, the Area Outcomes Group structures are currently coterminous with the Health and Social Care Trust boundaries. The lack of co-terminosity with Community Planning Partnership boundaries is a significant issue as, in Belfast, the majority of the city geography is covered by the Belfast Area Outcomes Group however there are also some significant areas covered by the South Eastern Area Outcomes Group. This presents challenges for the community planning process and Community Planning Partnership, in ensuring that effective planning working arrangements are aligned (including evidence and data as it pertains to the Belfast City Council boundary), and in facilitating joint working across the city in relation to multi agency planning and improving outcomes children and young people.

Council welcomes the multi-agency planning process which acknowledges the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) structures as well as the need to avoid duplication and harness potential of integrated planning. Furthermore, Council welcomes recognition in the draft NI C&YP Plan 2019-2021 of the need to maintain these effective links with other planning partners, that there is shared membership of some of our statutory partners and that PCSP staff will sit on all Outcomes Groups and Planning Groups which, it is considered, should help support the opportunity for the Joint Commission of work.

Belfast City Council is in the process of developing its first Belfast Resilience Strategy, which we hope to publish in the near future. Given that the Strategy has a focus on children and young people, it will be important going forward to align the CYPSP interface and links with the Belfast Resilience Strategy.

**12. The CYPSP key actions to support the planning process regionally are set out on pages 20-25. Are you in agreement with these key actions:-**

- Yes
- No
- Partially

## Additional Comments

Belfast City Council welcomes the identification of key actions and priorities in the draft NI C&YP Plan 2019-2021 to support the purpose of the children's services planning process.

Whilst in agreement with these key actions, Council considers that the proposed actions appear to focus on vulnerable / identified groups and it may be beneficial if preventative measures for the universal population could also be considered for inclusion.

Council notes that there is potential to align these key actions to the Belfast Agenda as well as the Belfast Resilience Strategy, currently in draft format and which is due to be published in the near future.

### **13. The CYPSP key actions to support the planning process locally via each Outcomes Group and Regional Sub Groups is set out on pages 25-35. Are you in agreement with these key actions:-**

- Yes
- No
- Partially

## Additional Comments

Belfast City Council agrees with the key actions to support the planning process locally via each Outcomes Group and Regional Sub Groups, which have been identified in the draft NI C&YP Plan 2019-2021.

Council notes that there is potential to align these key actions to the Belfast Agenda, as well as the Belfast Resilience Strategy, currently in draft format and which is due to be published in the near future.

### **14. The CYPSP will communicate key messages on outcomes based planning, using evidence, early intervention and Family support as set out on pages 35-36. Are you in agreement with this approach:-**

- Yes
- No
- Partially

## Additional Comments

Belfast City Council welcomes the proposals to communicate key messages on outcomes based planning, using evidence, early intervention and family support, as set out in the draft NI C&YP Plan 2019-2021.

### **15. The CYPSP has established a number of structures to support and deliver on their plan as set out on pages 36-37. Are you in agreement with these structures:-**

- Yes
- No
- Partially

## Additional Comments

Belfast City Council welcomes the proposals to improve structure and governance as set out in the draft NI C&YP Plan 2019-2021.

Council however considers that, as previously referenced, given the current Area Outcomes Group structures are coterminous with the Health and Social Care Trust boundaries, the lack of co-terminosity with Community Planning Partnership boundaries is a significant issue. In Belfast, the majority of the city geography is covered by the Belfast Area Outcomes Group however there are also some significant areas covered by the South Eastern Area Outcomes Group. This presents challenges for the community planning process and Community Planning Partnership, in ensuring that effective planning working arrangements are aligned (including evidence and data as it pertains to the Belfast City Council boundary), and in facilitating joint working across the city in relation to multi agency planning and improving outcomes children and young people.



Belfast Outcomes Group & Community Planning

**Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People  
Collaboration Workshop Report**

May 16, 2019

DRAFT

**CONTENTS**

<b>Section 1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Section 3</b>		
<b>Breakout Session 1</b>	<b>Shared priorities and outcomes</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Breakout Session 2</b>	<b>Challenges and Opportunities for collaboration</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>Breakout Session 3</b>	<b>Aligning planning processes moving forward</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>Next Steps</b>		<b>Page 6</b>

## 1. Introduction

Hosted by the Belfast Outcomes Group, the workshop brought together key stakeholders, service providers and support networks with role to play in improving outcomes for children and young people within Belfast.

Attendees included e.g. Children and Young People Strategic Partnership, Belfast Health Social Care Trust, Health Social Care Board, Public Health Agency, NI Housing Executive, Youth Justice, Women's Aid, Autism NI, Mencap, Bryson Children Services, Belfast Childcare Partnership, Belfast Strategic Partnership Reps and Belfast City Council.

The purpose of the workshop was to:

1. Establish shared insight into the work currently underway to help improve the outcomes for Children and Young People (CYP) within the city.
2. Explore the synergies between the outcomes and priorities identified within the Belfast Agenda and by the Belfast Outcomes Group and identify potential opportunities for further collaboration and co-designing delivery.
3. Consider potential collaborative actions in context of Community Planning.
4. Examine how we can align planning processes to help inform future iterations of the Belfast Agenda and BAOG action/delivery plans and maximise opportunities to improve outcomes for Children and Young People.

The starting assumptions for the workshop included:

1. The ambition is that Children and Young People have the best start in life and are supported to reach their full potential
2. That there is a lot of work currently underway that is effective in this field
3. There remains significant and entrenched challenges which still need to be addressed
4. That organisations/agencies could increase effectiveness if they work together better

Beyond these assumptions it was for the stakeholders in the workshop to provide context, prioritisation and help identify those opportunities to work together to deliver collaborative gain.

The workshop had three main sessions:

1. Exploring the shared priorities for improving outcomes for Children and Young People
2. Examining challenges and identifying opportunities for further collaboration
3. Exploring how we can better align planning processes to move towards an integrated plan

## 2. Context

We are proud of our children and young people and believe there is much to celebrate. We are aware, however, that not all children and young people enjoy the same opportunities and positive outcomes and we are, therefore, determined to address these inequalities.

Evidence shows that disadvantages experienced at birth can impact adversely on the life chances of our children and young people and result in poor health, employment and social outcomes throughout an individual's life. As partners, we have the highest aspirations for all children and young people and want them to grow up safe, healthy and be equipped to reach their full potential.

Improving the conditions of wellbeing of Children and Young People is at the heart of the Belfast Agenda, the community plan for the city. Whilst there is clearly significant and good work already underway, it is important to recognise that we are on a journey and there is still some way to go both in how we engage with children, young people and families in designing services and how we work together to address the key challenges to improve wellbeing. To get it right for children and young people at risk means being safe, healthy, happy, achieving at each stage of life, and playing their part in their city and community.

Whilst the workshop is the start of our discussions, ultimately we want to take a holistic view of outcomes, from the prerequisites of ensuring children and young people are safe and healthy, to the wider outcomes around ensuring that children and young people can take advantage of the unique opportunities the city provides.

The desire is to develop and deliver a realistic and ambitious integrated city plan for Children and Young People with a particular focus on integrating services to address their needs, where priorities can be addressed across services. This will require closer collaboration, imagination and innovation through working together to maximise resources. We strongly believe that working together is the best way to meet needs, address known gaps and improve outcomes for Children and Young People across the city.

During discussions at the workshop there were a number of underpinning principles emerged:

- Need for safeguarding children and young people
- Importance of managing transitions through all aspects of a C&YP life
- Importance of prevention and early intervention
- Need to 'think family' in planning for C&YP
- Ensure that all services are accessible by and take account of the needs of vulnerable groups
- Engage with and listen to the views of our C&YP (and families) when developing services
- Gather and use evidence of impact more creatively and intensively to inform future activity
- Being honest and open with each other of what works and what does not
- "Narrowing the gap" - target vulnerable children and families who are 'at risk' of poorer outcomes and life chances;
- Importance of emotional well-being
- Raising aspirations, self-esteem and confidence of C&YP

### **3. Breakout Session 1: Shared priorities and outcomes**

It was recognised that there are clear synergies and alignment between the stated outcomes and indicators set out within the Belfast Agenda, Programme for Government, Making Life Better Framework and the Belfast Outcomes Group in relation to Children and Young People. The discussion focused on those key areas which could deliver significant impact.



- (i) Every child has the best start in life (PFG, Making life Better – links to many BA indicators)
  - o Early intervention and its impact on a C&YP pathway through life
  - o Key areas include supporting parents and families ('whole family approach')
- (ii) Supporting C&YP in disadvantage/poverty – impacts on quality of life, health, behaviours and ability to access services.
- (iii) Health inequalities
  - o Emphasis on early/preventative support rather than end point care/treatment
  - o Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) – need to support BOTH children and young people, AND their parents/families carrying ACEs.

## Breakout Session 2: Challenges and Opportunities for collaboration

During discussion a number of key challenges had been identified including e.g.

- o How can we address systemic challenges of public services including accessibility and responsiveness of services?
- o How can we address the current challenges and financial pressures around early years support?
- o How do partners ensure right expertise is drawn into thematic areas of focus from their own organisations? – Effective communications within organisations is key.
- o How can we work in a more collaborative way to support C&YP through pathways/stages in life and help them reach their full potential?
- o The need to define the specific outcomes and conditions of wellbeing that we want to achieve for Children and Young People. How do we integrate and give clear focus/intent?

During discussion a number of opportunities had been identified including e.g.

- o Greater use of evidence based planning – sharing research, intelligence, identify data-insights, knowledge and understanding of 'what works'
- o Potential to build upon existing models of good practice (e.g. Family Support Hubs)
- o Potential to take an integrated and planned approach to engage with CYP sector. Opportunity to effectively utilise existing structures established/emerging around BAOG (e.g. locality planning groups) and Belfast Agenda (CVS forum). Opportunity to learn from each other in terms of effective approaches (e.g. Greater Shankill C&YP conversations).
- o Acknowledged that the Locality Planning Groups had a wealth of information and were excellent forums to engage. These groups are primarily made up of community and voluntary groups and could fill the Tier 2 role proposed in the CVS model.
- o Children Services Co-Operation Act - potential for joint planning and pooling resources.

### **Breakout Session 3: Aligning planning processes moving forward**

During discussion the following key points had been raised:

- Consensus on the need to create a shared plan and integrated approach with stronger alignment between BAOG and the Belfast Agenda.
- Recognition that creating a 'fully integrated approach' will take time to design and deliver. Real opportunity, however, with the pending refreshes of the Belfast Agenda and the Belfast Outcomes Group Action Plan in 2020/21.
- Potential to create a common framework/process for measuring outcomes and impact (outcomes star cited as an example).
- Benefit of a representative from the BAOG being nominated onto the Living Here Board to ensure alignment and maximising opportunities for collaboration.
- Need to develop a shared evidence base – sharing data and addressing known data gaps.
- Agreement that engagement across C&YP outcomes needs to be connected/joined up.
- Importance of understanding 'who does what' – the group highlighted the benefit of undertaking a scoping exercise to identify current activity and support in place, associated funding and anticipated outcomes seeking to achieve.

#### **4. Suggested Next Steps**

1. Provide an update to the Living Here Board on the initial discussions between the Belfast Outcomes Group and the Community Planning Team, outlining the emerging areas for consideration including e.g.
  - a. Proposal for representation from BAOG on the Living Here Board.
2. Establish a small joint team to further develop proposals in relation to:
  - a. Specific areas for collaboration (short/medium) and what is required to operationalise.
  - b. Map planning processes for the refresh of Belfast Agenda and BAOG Action Plan and identify opportunities joint engagement opportunities.
  - c. Understanding of the current landscape in terms of funding, desired outcomes, provision an impact of current work/services.