This is Community Development and Health Network (CDHN) response to Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People.

The proposed **Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People Strategy** encompasses policy on child poverty, policy on children and young people and children's rights (through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child).

8. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with this approach.

Strongly Agree

Agree X

Neither Agree / Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

9. Please provide any detail to further explain your response to the question above.

The amalgamation of legislation, policy and international obligations into one framework has potentially many benefits and drawbacks. The main fear is that it will lead to dilution, reduced legitimacy and accountability. It is felt that this framework offers an approach with the depth and rigour to prevent dilution in many ways but there are concerns that Ten Year Children and Young People Strategy – Our Pledge, may be somewhat diluted. CDHN would be concerned that the amalgamation means that there is an emphasis on children from disadvantaged background and while very important there is a lack of recognition for children who are vulnerable for other reasons such as those with disabilities. It is this which may mean lead to the dilution of the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Yong People.

There was a missed opportunity to alleviate concerns with regard legitimacy and accountability, due to the lack of information provided in terms of monitoring, and governance. However, it is felt that the benefits of creating a joined up approach through one delivery framework and the depth of information with regards outcomes, process and measurements outweighs the possible negatives. CDHN would like to see further work carried out to clearly illustrate accountability structures. It is also recommended that moves are made, as the policy is implemented to carry out regular engagement and review, to ensure that no dilution is occurring and help promote legitimacy.

CDHN agree with the approach but feel that further work is required to reduce the drawbacks and maximise the benefits of having a joined up approach.

**The Vision** included on page 10 of the consultation document states:

"That all children have the support and nurturing required to allow them to have a healthy, safe and active childhood, have access to good quality education, which will provide them with the skills to gain employment and fulfil their potential as active, engaged citizens."

10. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the vision as stated above.

Strongly Agree

Agree X

Neither Agree / Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

CDHN agree with the vision but feel that it could be worded to be more ensure that it is inclusive and holistic. For example “good quality education” could read “good quality and appropriate education.” CDHN recognises that employment is a crucial aspect of life and has a significant bearing on life chances and outcomes, and should be included in the vision. However, we would like the wording to emphases that this is not the only way through which people are valued and can make a contribution to society. Perhaps rewording to “ …good quality and appropriate education which enables them to become valued members of society, fulfil their potential as active and engaged citizens and to gain employment”

11. Is there anything not included in the vision that you think should be included for a Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People Strategy?

12. Is there anything included in the vision that you think should not be included in a Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People Strategy?

Building on the work on the Child Poverty Outcomes Framework NI published in September 2013 we have identified **six outcomes**. These complement the strategic priorities of the 2010 Strategy and the six outcomes from the ten year strategy for children and young people 20062016. The outcomes are detailed on page 10 and page 42 of the consultation document. The next few questions seek your views on those outcomes.

13. Outcome 1 states **"Families have adequate income and work that pays"**. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the inclusion of this outcome.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly Agree  | Agree **X** | Neither Agree or Disagree  | Disagree  | Strongly Disagree  |

Please provide further comment if you wish to explain your response above.

The wording of this outcome, especially in terms of “work that pays” is perhaps too simplistic. Accessing work that pays involves affordable childcare, accessible and affordable transport etc, rewording this outcome to acknowledge the complexity and range of support structures and services which must be in place in make work that pays achievable would be welcomed.

14. Outcome 2 states **"Children in poverty achieve good educational outcomes"**. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the inclusion of this outcome.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly Agree  | Agree **X** | Neither Agree or Disagree  | Disagree  | Strongly Disagree  |

Please provide further comment if you wish to explain your response above.

CDHN strongly agree with this outcome but have some concerns that it may lead to the side-lining of vulnerable children from other groups such as those with disabilities or children. Rewording this to encompass these groups would prevent side-lining; “All vulnerable children, including those in poverty achieve appropriate and good educational outcomes.” If it was reworded to be more inclusive CDHN would strongly agree with this outcome.

It is proposed that this outcome will be measured by the rate achieving GCSE grades A – C. CDHN would like to see measurement happening before this stage, so that it is not a measurement of failure or success. Rather that it can inform where and how the Key First Actions should be targeted, and prevent children and young people slipping through the net.

15. Outcome 3 states **"Children and families thrive and have a healthy future"**. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the inclusion of this outcome.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly Agree **X** | Agree  | Neither Agree or Disagree  | Disagree  | Strongly Disagree  |

Please provide further comment if you wish to explain your response above.

CDHN strongly agree with this outcome but have serious concerns with regards the indicators which have been adapted. They lead to a very narrow understanding of health and wellbeing and CDHN would like to see the inclusion of indicators which take cognisance of other models of health other than the medical and is not in line with the understanding and promotion of health advocated by UN. UN endorses WHO definition of health which is “*Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”.* CDHN would recommend that indicators which recognise this holistic and whole person understanding of health are developed. We ask if it would it be possible to have indicators with regards play and leisure, and to incorporate the data which is being gathered by Sure Start around their outcomes of:

* Improving health and well-being
* Improving social and emotional development
* Improving ability to learn
* Engaging and strengthening families and communities

16. Outcome 4 states **"Children and families live in a safe and secure environment"**. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the inclusion of this outcome.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly Agree **X** | Agree  | Neither Agree or Disagree  | Disagree  | Strongly Disagree  |

Please provide further comment if you wish to explain your response above.

CDHN strongly agree with the outcomes but feel that efforts should be made to include indicators which examine quality of housing and housing security. It is also argued that the emphasis of work in “What works better?” to provide more “investment in temporary accommodation” will lead to fire fighting rather than prevention. While understanding that the landscape of public and social housing will be changing greatly in the coming years, some recognition and moves to ensure affordable and secure long term housing within this framework would be welcomed.

17. Outcome 5 states **"Children contribute positively to community and society"**. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the inclusion of this outcome.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly Agree **X** | Agree  | Neither Agree or Disagree  | Disagree  | Strongly Disagree  |

Please provide further comment if you wish to explain your response above.

Again, CDHN strongly agree with the outcome but take issue with the indicator. As stated previously there are many ways in which people, including young people contribute to communities and societies. Indicators which capture information regarding volunteering, caring and involvement in youth club/scheme would sit well in understanding the valuable ways in which young people contribute.

18. Outcome 6 states **"Children live in a society which respects their rights"**. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the inclusion of this outcome.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly Agree **X** | Agree  | Neither Agree or Disagree  | Disagree  | Strongly Disagree  |

Please provide further comment if you wish to explain your response above.

Through pages 26 39, the document outlines the six outcomes and **associated indicators** for each outcome.

19. Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the indicators selected for each outcome.

**Outcome 1 (page 26)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly Agree **X** | Agree  | Neither Agree or Disagree  | Disagree  | Strongly Disagree  |

 **Outcome 2 (page 28)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly Agree **X** | Agree  | Neither Agree or Disagree  | Disagree  | Strongly Disagree  |

**Outcome 3 (page 31/31)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly Agree  | Agree  | Neither Agree or Disagree  | Disagree **X** – these indicators are too narrow. See answer to Q15 | Strongly Disagree  |

**Outcome 4 (page 33/34)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly Agree  | Agree **X** – would like to see further indicators included, see answer to Q 16. | Neither Agree or Disagree  | Disagree  | Strongly Disagree  |

**Outcome 5 (page 36)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly Agree  | Agree **X –** Further indicators required, see answer to Q 17. | Neither Agree or Disagree  | Disagree  | Strongly Disagree  |

**Outcome 6 (page 38)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly Agree  | Agree **X** | Neither Agree or Disagree  | Disagree  | Strongly Disagree  |

If you disagreed with any of the indicators, please provide more detail to explain your response.

20. If you have any further comments regarding the monitoring or evaluation of the proposals in this consultation document, please provide detail below.

CDHN would have liked to see greater detail outlining how and when and by whom monitoring and evaluation would be being carried out. This should have been complimented by clearly defining the structures and process through which information will be reported on, and how these will inform the reporting required of the Executive and UK government in terms of Child Poverty and reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. It is these details which will ensure that responsibility and accountability will be taken on and met by all relevant parties.