



Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

# **MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CHILDREN'S HOMES**

## **CONSULTATION RESPONSE QUESTIONNAIRE**

**May 2013**

## CONSULTATION RESPONSE QUESTIONNAIRE

### Introduction

You can respond to the consultation on Minimum Standards for Children's Homes by e-mail or letter.

Before you submit your response, please read Appendix 1 about the effect of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on the confidentiality of responses to public consultation exercises.

Responses should be sent to:

E-mail: [sgqu@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:sgqu@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

Written: Standards and Guidelines Quality Unit  
DHSSPS  
Room D1  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast, BT4 3SQ

Telephone: (028) 90522351

**Responses must be received no later than 5pm on <date>**

I am responding: as an individual   
on behalf of an organisation   
(please tick a box)

Name:	<input type="text"/>
Job Title:	<input type="text"/>
Organisation:	<input type="text"/>
Address:	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
Tel:	<input type="text"/>
Fax:	<input type="text"/>
e-mail:	<input type="text"/>

## **Background**

The Department has developed draft minimum care standards for children's homes in Northern Ireland.

The draft standards amplify and expand on the legal requirements for service providers set out in the Children's Homes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005, and will apply to children's homes including the regional secure centre at Lakewood as well as homes that provide short break care for children with disabilities.

The final version of the standards will be used by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) in registering and inspecting providers of these services.

Minimum care standards are a key element in the Department's drive to improve the quality of health and social care. Standards aim to promote a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach to providing family-centred care through specification of the facilities, processes and training and qualifications necessary for the delivery of a quality service.

As well as providing service users with information on the quality of service they can expect to receive, the standards will set a benchmark against which service providers can measure their provision. RQIA will use the final version of the standards to assess and report on the quality of services delivered by registered providers.

## **Purpose**

This questionnaire has been designed to aid those who wish to respond to the consultation exercise on the **Minimum Standards for Children's Homes**.

The questionnaire seeks your views on the draft standards and should be read in conjunction with the standards document itself.

The questionnaire also seeks views on the equality implications of the draft standards. A preliminary equality screening exercise has been carried out and copies are available on request.

## **Completing the questionnaire**

The questionnaire can be completed by anyone who has an interest in the provision of these services and can be completed by an individual or on behalf of a group or organisation.

**Q1. Are the standards easy to understand?**

Yes

No

If your answer is no, please identify the difficulties.

**Q2. Do the standards cover areas that are priorities for children and young people in residential care? If your answer is no, please identify any areas you feel are missing.**

Yes

No

Comment:

**Q3. Is it reasonable to expect providers of services to meet these standards now?**

Yes

No

Please outline any criteria which you think cannot be met and explain the difficulties.

**Q4. Will any of the standards have significant costs associated with compliance?**

Yes

No

Please comment on which standards you feel will have cost implications.

**Q5. Do you think Standard 3 (Living in a Supportive Home) is reasonable?**

Yes

No

Please outline the reasons for your answer.

**Q6. Do you think Standard 8 (Citizenship and Participation in Community Life) is reasonable?**

Yes

No

Please outline the reasons for your answer.

## **Equality implications**

**Q7. Are the draft standards likely to have an adverse impact on any of the nine equality groups identified under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998?**

Yes  No

If yes, please state the group or groups and provide comment on how these adverse impacts could be reduced or alleviated in the proposals.

**Q8. Are you aware of any indication or evidence – qualitative or quantitative – that the draft standards may have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity or on good relations?**

Yes  No

If yes, please give details and comment on what you think should be added or removed to alleviate the adverse impact?

**Q9. Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations?**

Yes

No

If yes, please give details as to how.

**Q10. Are there any aspects of the draft standards where potential human rights violations may occur?**

Yes

No

If yes, please give details as to how.



### **Further Comments**

**Please use the box below to insert any further comments, recommendations or suggestions you would like to make in relation to these draft standards.**

**Please return your response questionnaire.  
Responses must be received no later than 5pm on <date>  
Thank you for your comments.**

## **Appendix 1**

### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – CONFIDENTIALITY OF CONSULTATIONS**

The Department will publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. **Before** you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations and they will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.

The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity should be made public or be treated as confidential.

This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

- The Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided;
- the Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties "in confidence" which is not confidential in nature;
- acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office (or see web site at: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/>).

## **Appendix 2**

### **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the Department to “have due regard” to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; between men and women generally; between persons with a disability and persons without; and between persons with dependants and persons without. The Department is also required to “have regard” to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

In keeping with the above statutory obligations and in accordance with guidance produced by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the Department has carried out a preliminary equality screening exercise to determine if the draft standards are likely to have a significant impact on equality of opportunity and should therefore be subjected to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). The Department has concluded that an EQIA is not appropriate for a number of reasons including:

- The preliminary screening and engagement/consultation with key stakeholders to date has showed no evidence of any adverse impact on the different groups;
- The draft standards are intended to set a transparent and consistent regional benchmark for the quality of these services, which will benefit all those who use and provide these services.

Produced by:

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