

HSC Reform  
DHSSPS  
Annex 1, Room1  
Castle Buildings  
Belfast, BT4 3SQ

February 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Getting the Structures Right consultation**

NSPCC is grateful to be able to respond to the consultation on the reform and transformation of the Health and Social Care system in Northern Ireland.

The consultation response asks a series of limiting and closed questions and we have chosen not to use this format in our response. In summary, **NSPCC does not believe that consistent and independent regional commissioning can be delivered effectively within the proposed configuration of administrative structures.**

The consultation document glosses over the complexities of the role of the Health and Social Care Board relating to social care and the suggested model of removing the Board leaves major unanswered questions around the strategic provision of social care, its statutory functions and oversight role.

Our experience of the Health and Social Care Board is that it generally works well for social care and the regional commissioning of services. The consultation document does not recognise that many functions relating to children's social care are performed by the Board. These include Children's Services Planning, regional commissioning of specialist services, supervisory functions under delegated statutory functions and oversight of all aspects of the Children Order. In essence, the reform proposals treat social care as if it were acute hospital care without recognising the unique role that it plays in the protection of children.

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NSPCC does not support either the subsuming of functions into the Department or the fragmentation of social care across Health and Social Care Trust and believes that this will not support the complex task of protecting children.

We are also very concerned that the Minister in appointing an expert Panel has not sought the input or expertise of social care professionals. This is very concerning given 46% of spend by the Board is in relation to social and community based care.

NSPCC will advocate for the retention of the Board's functions in relation to social care.

**By this letter I wish also to register a request for an urgent meeting with senior officials in the Department such are NSPCC's concerns about these proposals.**

Yours faithfully,



**Neil Anderson**

National Head of Service - NI

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