



# Patricia Lewsley-Mooney

**Northern Ireland Commissioner for  
Children and Young People**



# Presentation to CYPSP Board



20 October 2014



# OUTLINE

1. The role of NICCY – Duties & Powers: A Summary
2. How we deliver – The NICCY Organisation
3. NICCY's current high level corporate objectives
4. Relevant projects
5. Engagement with CYPSP
6. Value of working together

# The Role of NICCY

**Legislation:** NICCY Order 2003

**Aim:** To safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people

**Term of Office:** 4 years renewable once

**Duties and Powers** – in summary over next 2 slides

# STATUTORY DUTIES AND POWERS OF THE COMMISSIONER

**Article 7 of the 2003 Order outlines the duties of the Commissioner as:**

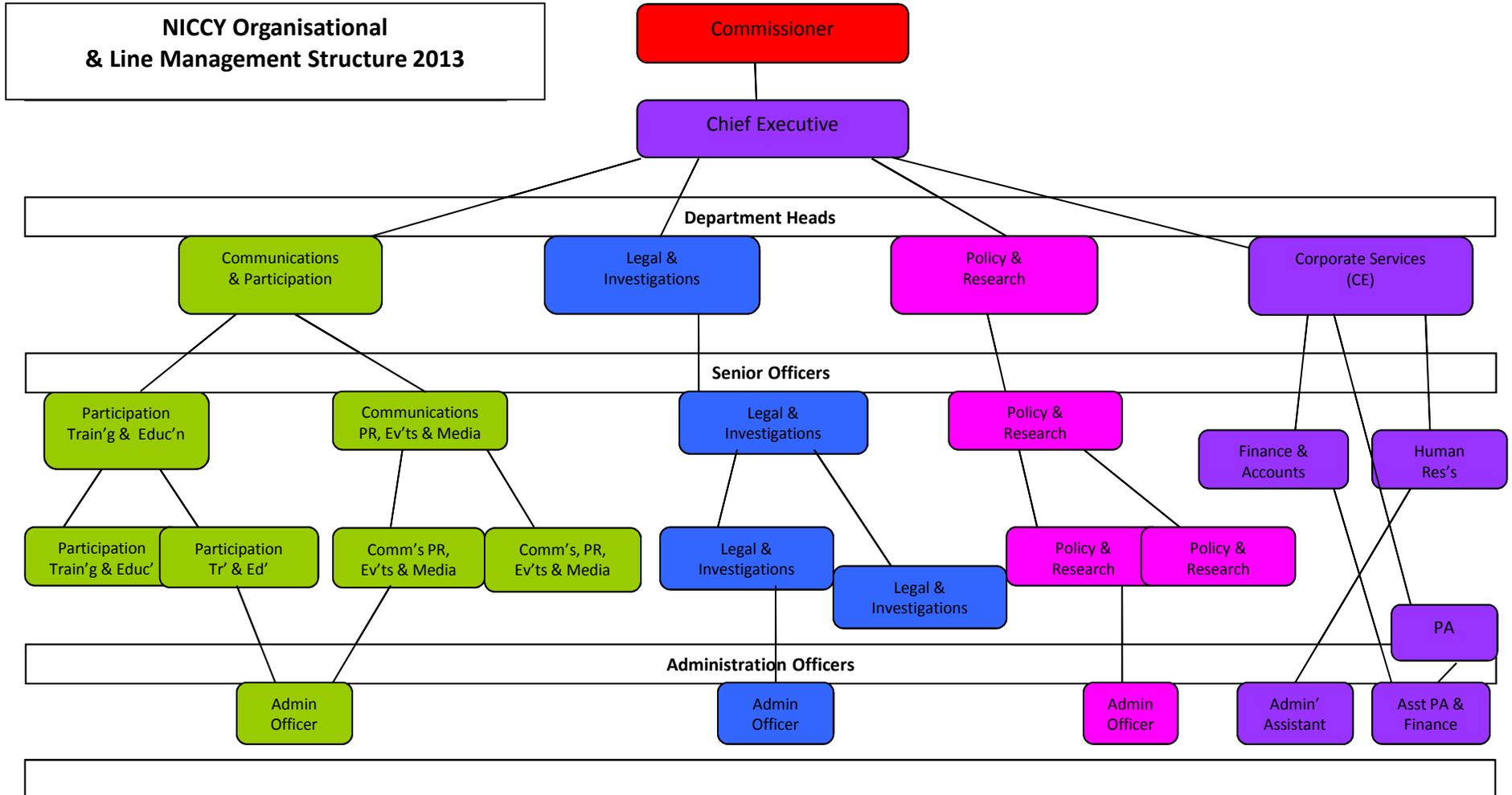
- To promote an awareness and understanding of the rights and best interests of children and young persons.
- To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice relating to the rights and welfare of children and young persons.
- To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided for children and young persons by relevant authorities.
- To advise government and relevant authorities on matters concerning the rights or best interests of children and young persons.
- To communicate effectively with children and young persons and their parents and raise awareness of the function and location of the Commissioner and how they can contact her.
- To seek the views of children and young persons in exercising her functions.
- To make the services of the Commissioner available to children and young people in their local area.

# The Commissioner's Powers

Articles 8-15 outline the Commissioner's general powers where she can:

- Undertake, commission or provide financial or other assistance for, research or educational activities concerning the rights or best interests of children and young persons or the exercise of her functions.
- Issue guidance in relation to any matter concerning the rights or best interests of children or young persons.
- Conduct investigations as she considers necessary or expedient to meet her duties listed above.
- Compile information, provide advice and publish any matter (including research, educational activities, investigations and advice) concerning the rights and best interests of children and young persons.
- Make representations or recommendations to any body or person relating to the rights and best interests of children and young persons.
- Assist with complaints to relevant authorities.
- Bring, intervene in or assist in legal proceedings.

# NICCY Organisation



# NICCY's Current Objectives

## **HLCO 1.**

**Government will meet its obligations to undertake all the appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the UNCRC.**

## **HLCO 2.**

**Breaches or violations of children and young people's rights will be identified, challenged and resolution sought / achieved using the most appropriate of the range of legal powers vested in the Commissioner**

# NICCY's Current Objectives

## **HLCO 3.**

**Key Stakeholders will have an increased awareness of Children and Young People's Rights, the UNCRC and the functions of the Commissioner**

## **HLCO 4.**

**All children and young people will enjoy a high quality education which develops their personality, talents and abilities to the full.**

# NICCY's Current Objectives

## **HLCO 5.**

**All children and young people will enjoy the best possible health and will be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect or mistreatment.**

## **HLCO 6.**

**All Children and Young People in Conflict with the law will be treated with dignity and their rights respected.**

# NICCY's Current Objectives

## **HLCO 7.**

**All Children and Young People who are vulnerable due to poverty, family background, age, disability or other reasons will not experience discrimination but enjoy their rights on an equal basis to other children.**

## **HLCO 8.**

**NICCY utilises Organisational resources – Human and Financial - effectively and efficiently to maximise overall Corporate Performance and Impact in pursuit of the Rights and Best Interests of Children and Young People.**

# Relevant Projects - Research

- **Shared Education consultation with pupils**
- **By their side and on their side: Reviewing the Evidence for Guardianship for Separated Children in NI- 2014**
- **Still Vulnerable- The Impact of Early Childhood Experiences on Adolescent Suicide and Accidental Death- 2012**

# Relevant Projects - Research

- **Children's Budgeting**
- **Welfare Reform**
- **Barriers report and Child Rights legislation project**

# Relevant Work – Policy Advice

- **Special Educational Needs and Inclusion and Transitions**
- **Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Further Provisions and Support for Victims) Bill**
- **Delivering Social Change**
- **Advising on Play and Leisure, Childcare, Child Poverty, Children’s Strategy,**

# Relevant Projects - Legal

**We recently supported a case before the SENDIST Tribunal where a child was found to have been discriminated against in relation to his access to education.**

**We also recently intervened in a case where a Trust refused to provide a bail address for a young person accused of a serious crime. The Trust stated they were not a child in need as their needs were being met in Woodlands. Judge disagreed and Trust had to provide a bail address.**

# Relevant Projects - Casework

- This year we are producing our first Annual Casework Report which will be published in November.
- In 2013-14 business year dealt with 483 enquiries
- Main areas are education and social care
- Within education SEN is the main areas (37%)  
Bullying is the next largest area of complaint.

# Relevant Projects - Communications

## Engaging with our Key Stakeholders

- **Media Engagement** – 90% of all media positive/neutral
- **Political Engagement** - 95% understanding of NICCY/increasing mentions of NICCY & UNCRC in debates, committee meetings & committees
- **Publishing Corporate Documents** (Corporate Plan, Annual Report)
- **Media/Campaign/Event management on key work programmes**
- **New enhanced website in 2015**
- **Social media channels** – Twitter (1,889 followers)
- **E-zine** – 2,000+ recipients
- **Strengthening Corporate Brand**

# Relevant Projects - Participation

- **‘Walking or Talking Participation?’ Report**
- **Participation Policy Statement of Intent (PPSI)**
- **Local Government Bill – Community Planning**

# Relevant Projects – Awareness Raising

**Train the Trainers & Capacity Building with:**

- **Teacher Training Colleges**
- **Community and Youth Work Students**
- **Local Councils**
- **Health Professionals**
- **Parents & Carers**
- **Children and Young People**

# Engagement with CYPSP

**Common objectives of NICCY and CYPSP grounded within the Rights of Children and Young People.**

**Protocol in place – NICCY & CYPSP**

**Attendance at meetings/subgroups:**

- **Children with emotional behavioural difficulties**
- **Transitions of C&YP with disabilities into adulthood**
- **C&YP with disabilities**
- **Looked after children / youth homelessness**
- **Think family**
- **Parents Reference Groups**

# Value of working together

- **Primary benefit: information sharing including research**
- **Positive experiences of working together**
- **Can promote consistency of messages on shared objectives**
- **Our shared goal is one of promoting children's and young people's rights and best interests**



**Thank you**

**[www.niccy.org](http://www.niccy.org)**



# **Vision**

**‘A Society in NI where  
all Children and Young People  
flourish, are valued and their views  
are respected.’**