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Description automatically generated**

**NORTHERN IRELAND**

**FOSTERING SERVICES**

**MINIMUM STANDARDS**

**Consultation Questionnaire**

**June 2025**

**Response Form**

**(If not responding online via Citizen Space)**

Please read the consultation document before completing this questionnaire.

You are strongly encouraged to submit your response via Citizen Space, at <https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/doh-1/consultation-on-fostering-services-min-standards>.

However, if you wish to provide a response using this document, you should indicate your answers by placing an X next to your selection. You may also provide further comments in any text boxes provided.

Completed documents should be sent to the email address below.

**Email address**

[lookedafterchildren@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:lookedafterchildren@health-ni.gov.uk)

**Please note that your response must be received by the deadline of 12.00pm on 7th September 2025.**

Please note that the 2025 Regulations are included in the associated papers with this consultation package, however, the Department is **not** consulting on the 2025 Regulations. Therefore, feedback provided should **solely** be on the draft Minimum Standards.

**About you**

The Department of Health (DoH) is committed to protecting your privacy. For more information about what we do with your personal data please see the Part 4 Privacy section at the end of this consultation questionnaire.

When completing this section, you only need to answer the questions that are relevant to you.

**1. Are you responding**

**​​​ as an individual? (Please complete questions 2-4)**

**​​ on behalf of an organisation? (Please complete question 6)**

**(Required)**

**2. Are you a child / young person (under the age of 18)?**

**Yes**

**​​​ No**

**3. Do you have experience of Foster Care?**

**​​Yes**

**​​ No**

**​​ Prefer not to say**

**4. If you answered yes to question 3, please confirm if you experienced Foster Care as:**

**​​​ a Child**

**​​​ a Parent**

**​​​ a Foster Carer**

**​​ Other**

**​​ Prefer not to say**

**If other, please specify:**

**5. If you are responding as an individual, please provide your name, postal address and an email address.**

**This is the end of this section for those answering as an individual. Please go to question 7.**

**6.** **If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please provide your name and position, the name and address of the organisation and an email address.**

**7. Are you / or your organisation interested in contributing to further Departmental work on the subject matter covered by the consultation?**

**​​ Yes**

**​​ No**

**If you have answered yes, please provide your name and a contact email address:**

**PART I – GENERAL**

1. **Do you agree that the Department should proceed with the introduction of Minimum Standards for Fostering Services?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what alternatives would you suggest, to demonstrate consistency and high quality in foster care services?** |
|  |

1. **Is the structure and layout of the Minimum Standards clear and easy to understand?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Can the Minimum Standards as drafted be applied in all fostering services, whether in the statutory or independent sectors?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

**PART 2 – DESCRIPTION OF STANDARDS**

**Standard 1** **- Each child in foster care experiences integrated care that supports their wellbeing**

1. **Do you agree with the content of the Standard Statement?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Are the key area headings appropriately worded to reflect the detailed actions in the associated indicators for each under this standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Do the indicators clearly set out what is required to demonstrate actual delivery against the standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

**Standard 2 - The needs of each child in foster care are understood and met**

1. **Do you agree with the content of the Standard Statement?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Are the key area headings appropriately worded to reflect the detailed actions in the associated indicators for each under this standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Do the indicators clearly set out what is required to demonstrate actual delivery against the standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

**Standard 3 - Foster parents, staff and other caregivers have the right skills and support to care for children**

1. **Do you agree with the content of the Standard Statement?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Are the key area headings appropriately worded to reflect the detailed actions in the associated indicators for each under this standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Do the indicators clearly set out what is required to demonstrate actual delivery against the standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

**Standard 4 - Leaders inspire and enable high quality care that delivers the best possible outcomes for children**

1. **Do you agree with the content of the Standard Statement?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Are the key area headings appropriately worded to reflect the detailed actions in the associated indicators for each under this standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Do the indicators clearly set out what is required to demonstrate actual delivery against the standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

**Standard 5 - The physical environment within the foster home is welcoming, safe and inclusive for children**

1. **Do you agree with the content of the Standard Statement?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Are the key area headings appropriately worded to reflect the detailed actions in the associated indicators for each under this standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Do the indicators clearly set out what is required to demonstrate actual delivery against the standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

**Standard 6 - Children and their foster parents and carers are meaningfully involved**

1. **Do you agree with the content of the Standard Statement?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Are the key area headings appropriately worded to reflect the detailed actions in the associated indicators for each under this standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Do the indicators clearly set out what is required to demonstrate actual delivery against the standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

**Standard 7 - The intrinsic worth of each child in foster care is valued and promoted**

1. **Do you agree with the content of the Standard Statement?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Are the key area headings appropriately worded to reflect the detailed actions in the associated indicators for each under this standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Do the indicators clearly set out what is required to demonstrate actual delivery against the standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

**Standard 8 - The unique experiences of each child in foster care are recognised and responded to with tailored support that acknowledges and addresses adversity and trauma**

1. **Do you agree with the content of the Standard Statement?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Are the key area headings appropriately worded to reflect the detailed actions in the associated indicators for each under this standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Do the indicators clearly set out what is required to demonstrate actual delivery against the standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

**Standard 9 - Children benefit from relationships with foster parents, birth families and people important to them**

1. **Do you agree with the content of the Standard Statement?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Are the key area headings appropriately worded to reflect the detailed**

**actions in the associated indicators for each under this standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Do the indicators clearly set out what is required to demonstrate actual delivery against the standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

**Standard 10 - Children benefit from well-managed, positive and individualised transitions**

1. **Do you agree with the content of the Standard Statement?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Are the key area headings appropriately worded to reflect the detailed actions in the associated indicators for each under this standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Do the indicators clearly set out what is required to demonstrate actual delivery against the standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

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| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

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| --- |
| **Standard 11 – Children in foster care with more complex needs receive timely, high quality specialist interventions to help them recover and thrive** |

1. **Do you agree with the content of the Standard Statement?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Are the key area headings appropriately worded to reflect the detailed actions in the associated indicators for each under this standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Do the indicators clearly set out what is required to demonstrate actual delivery against the standard?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **No Comment** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, what changes would you suggest?** |
|  |

1. **Do you have any other comments on these Minimum Standards?**

|  |
| --- |
| **Please provide details below** |
|  |

1. **Are you content for a copy of your response to be made available, if**

**requested[[1]](#footnote-1)?**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  |

**PART 3 – SCREENINGS**

**EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY**

1. **Are the actions/proposals set out in this consultation document 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.** |
|  |

1. **Are you aware of any research or evidence — qualitative or quantitative — that the actions/proposals set out in this consultation document 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** |
|  |

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If yes, please give details as to how** |
|  |

1. **Are any of the proposals likely to interfere with or limit the rights of looked after children and young people?**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Please provide details below** |
|  |

1. **Does the policy in any way promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and/or encourage their participation in public life?**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Please explain your response** |
|  |

**DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

1. **Do you agree with the outcome of the draft Data Protection Impact Assessment?**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, please explain your response** |
|  |

**RURAL NEEDS IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

1. **Do you agree with the outcome of the draft Rural Needs Impact Assessment?**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, please explain your response** |
|  |

**REGULATORY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING**

1. **Do you agree with the outcome of the draft Regulatory Impact Assessment Screening?**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, please explain your response** |
|  |

**CHILD’S RIGHTS IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

1. **Do you agree with the outcome of the draft Child’s Rights Impact Assessment?**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Yes** |  | **No** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **If no, please explain your response** |
|  |

**PART 4 - PRIVACY**

**Privacy, Confidentiality and Access to Consultation Responses**

For this consultation, we may publish all responses except for those where the respondent indicates that they are an individual acting in a private capacity (e.g. a member of the public). All responses from organisations and individuals responding in a professional capacity will be published. We will remove email addresses and telephone numbers from these responses; but apart from this, we will publish them in full. For more information about what we do with personal data please see our consultation privacy notice.

Your response, and all other responses to this consultation, may also be disclosed on request in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR); however, all disclosures will be in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) (EU) 2016/679.

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential, so that this may be considered if the Department should receive a request for the information under the FOIA or EIR.

For further information about this consultation please contact the consulting branch at:

Looked After Children and Adoption Policy Unit

Department of Health

Castle Buildings

Stormont

Belfast

BT4 3SQ

Email: [Lookedafterchildren@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Lookedafterchildren@health-ni.gov.uk)

1. Please note that if you ask for your response to be kept confidential this will only be possible if it is consistent with our obligations under Freedom of Information Act 2000. (see Part 4 Privacy) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)