

To Consultees

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Date: 27 October 2022

Consultation on the draft Foster Placement and Fostering Agencies Regulations (Northern Ireland)

I am writing to inform you that a consultation exercise has been launched by the Health Minister in respect of a draft set of Regulations governing fostering services in Northern Ireland.

It is intended that the new Foster Placement and Fostering Agencies Regulations (“the draft Regulations”) will, once made, revoke and replace The Foster Placement (Children) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996. The draft Regulations will allow Health and Social Care Trusts to make arrangements for fostering agencies to assess and approve foster parents on their behalf, subject to a written agreement. The new Regulations will also bring fostering agencies within the scope of inspection and regulation by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority.

The draft Regulations were originally developed and consulted on in 2014 and received the broad support of stakeholders. However, for a number of reasons it was not possible to make the Regulations at that time. Given the passage of time since the previous consultation, the Department is consulting again on the draft Regulations.

In order to inform responses, we have provided a summary of the consultation feedback received in 2014 and Department’s proposed actions, including where changes have been made to the draft Regulations as a result.

We are also seeking your views on some additional issues that have arisen since the original consultation took place. The consultation package, including the response questionnaire, can be accessed at the following link:

<https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/doh-1/foster-placement-and-fostering-agencies-regulation>

If you require any assistance, please email lookedafterchildren@health-ni.gov.uk or telephone 02890 520521.

Responses should be completed and submitted on-line using the above link by **23 December 2022**.

Thank you in anticipation for taking the time to consider these important draft Regulations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eilís McDaniel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'M' and 'D'.

Eilís McDaniel
Director of Family and Children's Policy