

Eastern Area Childcare Partnership

**Childcare Plan
2002-2005**



Foreword

The Eastern Childcare Partnership consists of twenty-nine highly committed and experienced individuals representing a wide range of organisations. Members of the Eastern Childcare Partnership have worked exceptionally hard over the past 3 years, since the production of the first Eastern Childcare Plan to implement its recommendations. Our thanks are due to them and many others who have engaged in the implementation process.

The responsibilities of the Childcare Partnership are large and complex: assessing the demand for Childcare and family support for all children; setting achievable targets for filling the gaps between existing supply and demand; producing childcare plans; ensuring that childcare information services are available which meet national standards; and to raise the quality of child care.

The Partnership is responsible for considerable resources (£7.2 million) to meet these tasks. In order to help them a staff team of 15 people (a mixture of part time and full time) has been established. These are situated and managed in various partner agencies. They have worked tirelessly to help the Partnership meet its objectives and targets.

We are now moving to a new era with this plan which covers the period 2002-2005. The plan is full of interesting information about the Eastern Area, the child population, the provision of services, the policy context, information about the partnership staff, its values and principles, its decision making process and funding. The Plan shows how we have consulted widely in order to agree this plan.

The action plan itself sets out clearly and concisely the strategic objectives and key result areas to which we aspire and what it is we need to do to achieve them.

The plan is dynamic by which we mean that it is a living document. Everyday of every week some action is being taken to ensure that targets are met. Our annual reviews will demonstrate achievements that have been made.

We commend this plan to you and give you our commitment to continue to try to ensure that the partnership makes a difference to children's quality of life experiences in the Eastern Area.

John Richards
Chair, Eastern Area Childcare Partnership (2001/2002)

Theresa Nixon
Current Chair, Eastern Area Childcare Partnership

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Section One

Introduction

The Eastern Area

The Eastern Area has a population of 689,683¹, which accounts for 40% of the total population of Northern Ireland. It covers a geographical spread from Belfast (North) to Newcastle (South) and from Dromara (West) to Portavogie (East) (see Fig 1). The area has both urban and rural populations with 50% of the population living in the Greater Belfast area. The area that the Eastern Childcare Partnership is responsible for is coterminous to the boundaries of the Eastern Health and Social Services Board.

A significant number of residents in the Eastern Area live in some of the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland. The following map² identifies by Electoral Ward, the areas of deprivation using the Noble Index. This multiple deprivation index shows that the areas most deprived in Northern Ireland are located in North Belfast. It is generally accepted that there is a clear link between measures of deprivation and the need for health and social care.

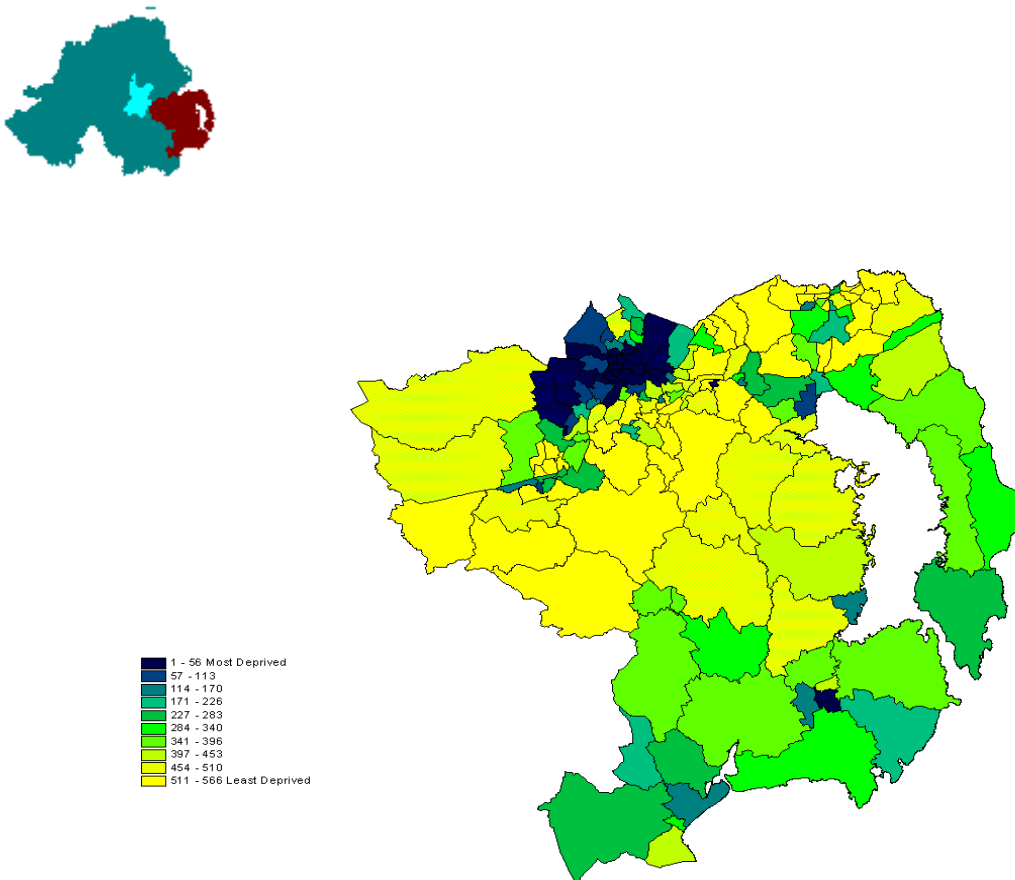


Fig: One

¹ Community Health Index, March 2002

² Ordnance Survey Map Licence. No. 20218

Child Population (Children aged 0 -14)

Within the Eastern Area, the Childcare Partnership has a responsibility to deliver services to children from 0 to 14 years of age. There are approximately 136,588 children aged 0 to 14, which accounts for 20% of the **total population** in the Eastern Area. Within the child population there are 40,429 that is 6% of the total population who are of pre-school age, 75,259 (11%) are of primary school age and 20,900 (3%) are in their early teens. **Table One** gives a breakdown of the child population according to age band.

Eastern Area CHILD POPULATION (0-14 YEARS)				
Child Population by Age Band				
Age Band	0-3	4	5-12	13-14
Total	31,599	8,830	75,259	20,900

Table One³

Table Two gives a breakdown of the age of children and young people and where they are living in the Eastern Area according to Health and Social Service Trust area. In each of the age bands more than 50% of the children live in the Greater Belfast area i.e. in North and West Belfast and South and East Belfast area. However early indications from the 2001 Census suggests there is a population shift from Belfast to areas outside greater Belfast.

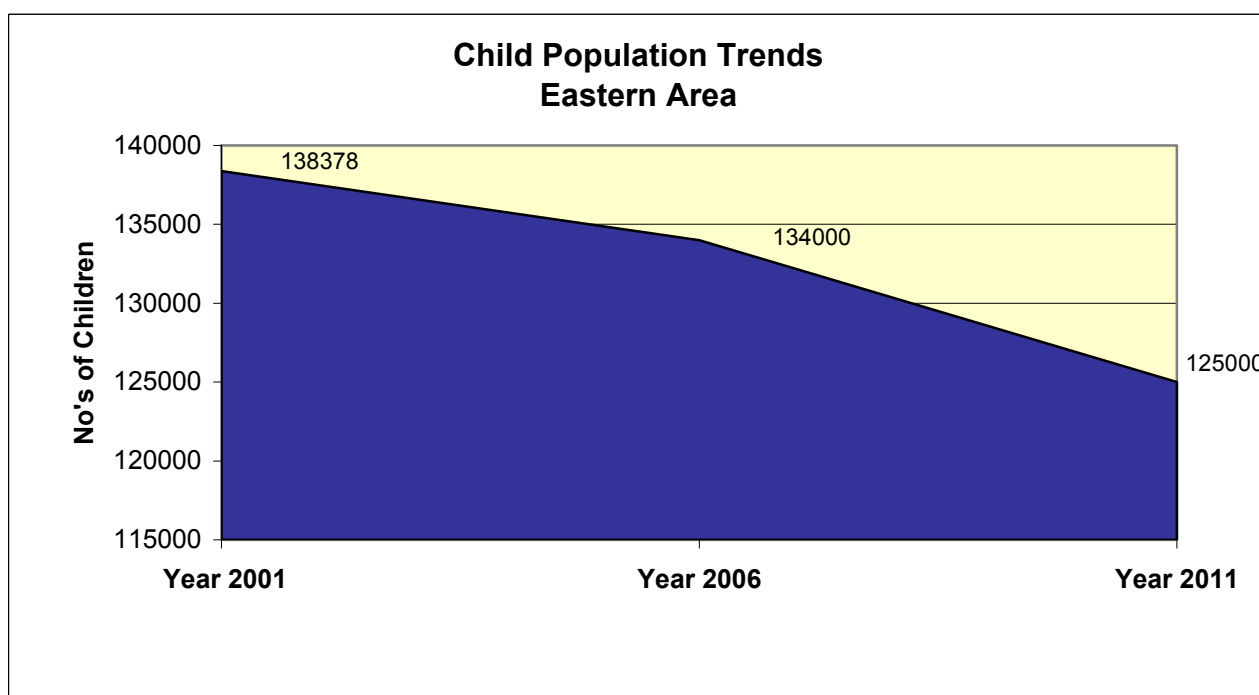
Eastern Area CHILD POPULATION (0-14 YEARS)					
Child Population, by Trust and by Age Band					
TRUST	0-3	4	5-12	13-14	TOTAL
DLT	9,424	2,676	22,000	6,056	40,156
NWBT	7,456	2,041	18,593	5,460	33,550
SEBT	7,981	2,256	19,322	5,197	34,756
UCHT	6,738	1,875	15,344	4,187	28,126
TOTAL	31,599	8,830	75,259	20,900	136,588

Table Two

³ Child Health System 22nd October 2002

Child Population Trends in Eastern Area

General trends in the child population in the Eastern Area show that the number of children has declined. Future estimates (**Graph One**) predict that this trend is likely to continue with the child population falling by 13,000 (10%) to 125,000 by 2011. These general population trends will have a significant impact on the future planning and delivery of services within the childcare sector.



Graph: One⁴

Current Range of Provision (Children 0-14)

Children First: The Northern Ireland Childcare Strategy, placed a responsibility on the Childcare Partnerships to identify the current range of childcare provision in their area and to increase the supply of childcare places to meet the needs of the child population. This section gives a synopsis of the number and type of childcare places that exists within the Eastern Area and highlights some of the issues that effect service provision within this sector.

⁴ Source: Government Actuary Department, London (via Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency). Projections are based on the 1999 mid year population estimates. Totals do not equate due to rounding.

▪ Provision by Trust Area

The Eastern area has the highest childcare provision in Northern Ireland for children under the age of 12 with 163.3 places per 1,000 population. The Northern Ireland average rate for children under the age of 12 is 129.3 places per 1,000 population. **Table Three**⁵ outlines the type of provision by type and volume within each Trust Area (up until March 2002).

Childcare Provision Eastern Area										
Provision	Down and Lisburn HSST		North and West HSST		South and East HSST		Ulster Community and Hospitals HSST		EHSSB	
	No	Places	No	Places	No	Places	No	Places	No	Places
Childminders	516	3096	522	3132	583	3984	633	3021	1921	10333
Crèche	6	88	33	409	14	236	4	86	55	770
Playgroups	82	1712	47	1485	66	1609	51	1468	263	6502
Day-care	18	528	12	547	30	1375	14	399	65	1692
Out of School	14	279	41	1017	16	470	5	64	71	1616
*Parent/Toddler	27	N/a	24	N/a	81	N/a	50	N/a	144	N/a
Total	663	5703	679	6590	790	7674	731	5038	2519	21913

Table Three

*These do not require registration under Children (NI) Order 1995

• Pre-school Education

The Pre-school Education Expansion Programme is part of the Northern Ireland Childcare Strategy it is aimed at providing an integrated and coherent range of care, health and education services to meet the needs of children and their families. Implementation of this policy requires close working partnerships between Education and Library Boards, Health and Social Services Agencies and representatives of the voluntary and private sectors.

This partnership is reflected in the membership of the Pre-school Education Advisory Groups (PEAGs), which have been established by the Department of Education within in each Education and Library Board. Both the BELB PEAG and the SEELB PEAG are represented on the Eastern Area ChildCare Partnership. Each Pre-school Education Advisory Group produces an annual review of preschool provision in each Board area.

⁵ Source: Early Years Teams (Article 20 Reviews)

The Pre-school Education Expansion Programme has provided funding for an additional 859 preschool places in the BELB area and 2098 additional places in the SEELB area. These places are available in both statutory nursery settings and in voluntary and private playgroups and day care provision. This is in line with Government targets of a funded preschool place for every child who requires one by March 2003. Details of provision are included in **Appendix One**.

The Pre-school Education Advisory Groups are aware that the Expansion Programme has made considerably increased demands on professional advisory and support services within both the voluntary and statutory sectors. Both the BELB PEAG and the SEELB PEAG would support the creation of a development fund to ensure that the early years sector, as a whole, receives the support required to ensure that the key issue of quality provision is addressed on an ongoing basis.

Section Two

The Eastern Area Childcare Partnership

Policy Context

In September 1999 the Government launched 'Children First: The Northern Ireland Childcare Strategy' which was a response to the need for an Early Years Strategy by the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) and the Training and Employment Agency (T&EA). One of the central aims of Children First was to combine the social and economic responsibilities of each Department into a coherent 'joined up' Strategy for Early Years.

Children First, sets out the agenda for action needed to increase the quantity and improve the quality of affordable childcare for children up to the age of 14 in Northern Ireland.

This strategy was initiated when the Government recognised that services fell short of their vision. It was assessed that provision was erratic, poorly coordinated, expensive and of variable quality, particularly childcare provision for school aged children and children with special needs.

The Government sought to address these issues by integrating Early Years education and care within a wider supportive framework of services for children and parents. In order for this to happen it was recognised that Government Departments needed to work closely together to develop common standards, establish good practice networks, develop standards of accreditation, involve parents, develop a national qualifications framework to help people enter, move and progress in the childcare sector.

Specifically the strategy addresses the principles of:

- **Social Inclusion**

By providing a range of good quality childcare and early education, which will make a vital contribution towards equality and social inclusion.

- **Quality**

By providing good quality care and education, which will benefit children's physical, social and intellectual development in the long term.

- **Affordability**

By ensuring that childcare is affordable to all families.

- **Accessibility**

By developing a range of childcare provision available in every community, which gives parental choice.

- **Family Friendly Work Places and Practices**

By encouraging employers to play an important role in the development of childcare through family friendly policies.

- **Information**

By providing accurate and up to date advice and information on the childcare sector, including childcare benefits and tax credits.

- **Partnerships**

By ensuring a cohesive partnership approach to childcare provision and that the voices of service users are considered at all times.

In order to deliver the strategy the Government set a wide range of initiatives including, Sure Start, Pre-School Education and Expansion Programme, New Opportunities Fund, Out of School Provision, Working Families Tax Credit and the development of Family Friendly Employment Practices. These measures will help achieve the vision of an integrated response to the needs of children and parents within local communities, and to substantially increase the number of places available in different settings.

Responsibility for taking forward the policy at local level was given to the four Childcare Partnerships.

Links with Children's Services Planning

In April 1999, a multi-agency Children's Services Plan was produced by the Children and Young People's Committee of the Eastern Health and Social Services Board, which included references to Early Years Services. Considerable overlap exists between the Childcare Plan, relating to childcare services for all children aged 0-14, and the Children's Services Plan for Early Years. A Joint Strategic Planning Group (JSPG) was formed to take responsibility for the strategic planning of Early Years services as part of the Children's Services Planning process. Following the launch of Children First in September 1999, it was agreed that the JSPG would continue as a sub-group of the Childcare Partnership and would work on developing multi-agency strategic planning for all childcare services, including the Children's Services Plan for Early Years. The aim of the JSPG is to develop a shared vision amongst the key stakeholders in childcare to ensure that childcare services develop in a coherent and consistent manner.

Figure two illustrates the responsibility the Eastern Area Childcare Partnership and the Children and Young People's Committee has in relation to Early Years Services.

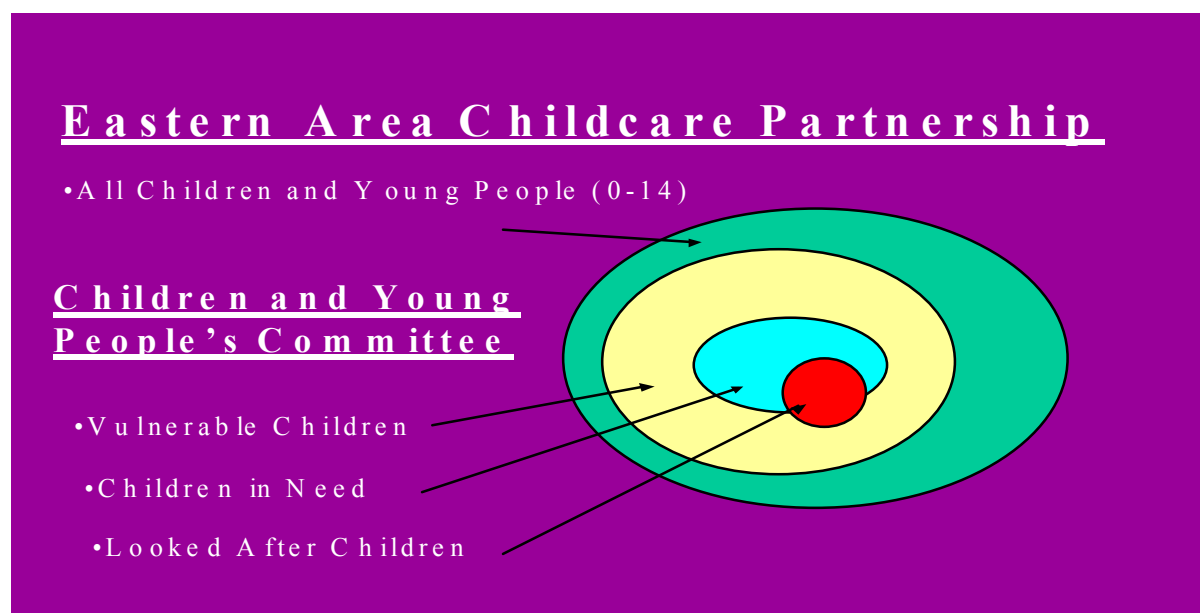


Figure Two

The Eastern Area Childcare Partnership

The Eastern Area Childcare Partnership was established in February 2000 to develop and agree a Childcare Plan, which meets the needs of children and parents within the Eastern Area, and to monitor and progress the implementation of the plan.

Children First, outlines the five core responsibilities of the Childcare Partnerships:

- Assess the demand for childcare and family support for all children and the supply of places and services to meet it
- Set achievable local targets for filling the gap between existing supply and demand across the range of services
- Produce Childcare Plans
- Ensure that childcare information services are available which meet national standards
- Raise the quality of childcare

Membership of Eastern Area Childcare Partnership

The Eastern Childcare Partnership has currently twenty-nine members and is intended to be a group, which is representative of the various childcare sectors and geographical areas with the Eastern region.

In terms of sector representation there are currently 19 members from the statutory sector, 7 members from the voluntary sector, 2 members from the community sector and 1 member from the private sector.

Figure Three outlines the composition of the Eastern Area Childcare Partnership. A full list of members, their roles, their organisations and their localities is contained in Appendix Three

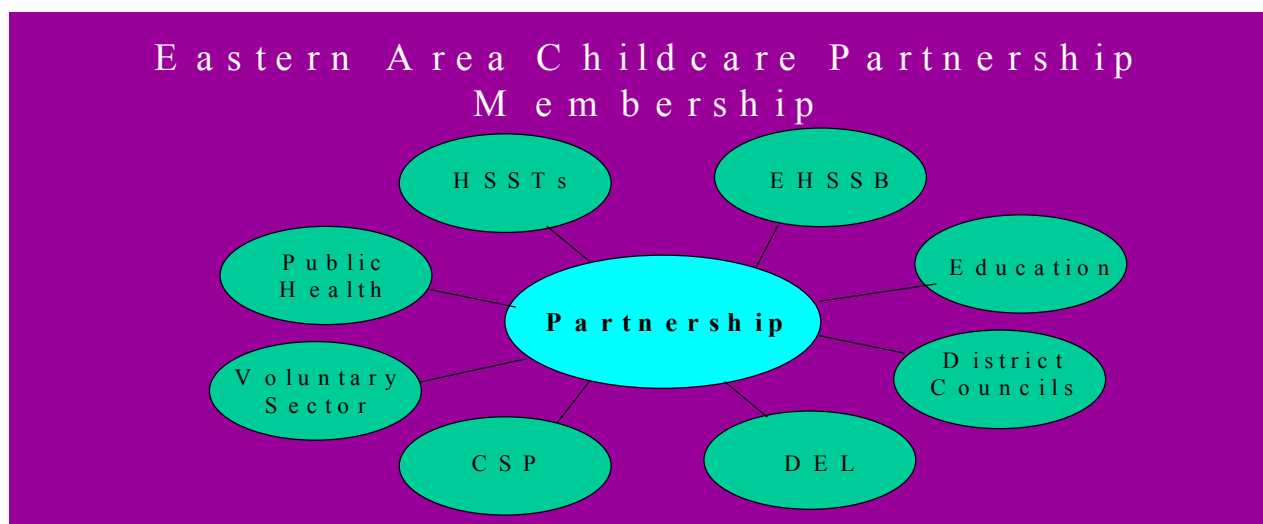


Figure 3

Structures

Within recent years, the Early Years sector has promoted several multi-agency structures within the Eastern Area all of which are based within Health and Social Services Trust boundaries. As a consequence of the evolution of the Partnership from the Area Early Years Committee the local fora became the 'District Childcare Partnerships'. Membership of the 'District Childcare Partnerships' reflect the sectoral structure of the Area Partnership, including key practitioners and community representatives. Within the Eastern Area, four District Partnerships now exist (see Figure Four). Although each District Partnership is unique in structure and membership, they all endeavour to reflect the priorities, issues and good practice within the Early Years sector in their respective locality. The Chairs from each of the District Partnerships represent the views and issues raised at local level at the Eastern Area Childcare Partnership.

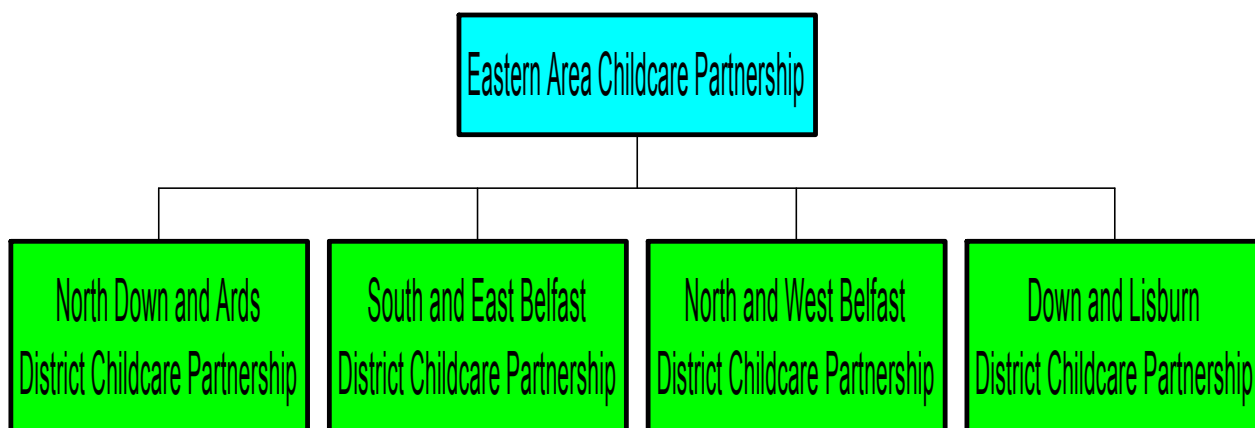


Fig: Four

Currently two members from each of the District Partnership's have attend the Area Partnership; this representation reflects the sectoral mix of the local partnerships and includes Community and Statutory representatives.

It is believed that the inclusion of District Childcare Partnership members is vital to the effective functioning of the Area Partnership as it provides the 'grass roots', locally based perspective of 'Early Years' practitioners and providers. The breadth of issues within the Area Partnerships remit must be progressed not only by Statutory and Voluntary partners but specifically by those in touch with the local context of Early Years within the Sector.

This link between the District Partnerships and the Area Partnership ensures the strategic messages from the Area Partnership are implemented at local level and that the Area Partnership hears of local issues which go towards informing strategic development.

The Area Partnership provides funding for the four District Childcare Partnership Co-ordinators to support and progress the local agenda as well as reflecting the local issues that effect and impact on the Partnership's strategic work.

Specifically, the Area Childcare Partnership and the Local District Partnerships work together to profile agendas and inform the planning process through the Planning Group and the Strategic Funding Panel.

The Partnership Team

A primary link exists between the Area and District Partnerships through the close working relationships of the respective Co-ordinators for each District and the Area Co-ordinator; this reinforces the link between Local and Strategic action and ensures the roll out of Children First is area wide.

In addition, the Eastern Childcare Partnership is supported by a number of Development Officers working within the early years sector.

The New Opportunities Fund (NOF), Out of School Hours Childcare Initiative (OOSHCC) is the key strategy for progressing childcare for school age children within the Region. To support this initiative the Eastern Area Partnership has engaged two Development Officers, based at PlayBoard, to take forward the provision of accessible, affordable childcare for school aged children.

The Partnership also funds two Development Officers, based at the Northern Ireland Child Minding Association (NICMA), to promote the uptake of registration within the community sector.

Although not funded by the Area Partnership, PlayBoard and NIPPA-the early years organisation, employ Development Officers to promote Playcare and Childhood Fund Initiatives, both of which are intrinsically linked to the Eastern Area Partnership's objectives.

The collective expertise, skills and strategic understanding of the Development Team are essential to the decision-making processes of the Strategic Funding Panel. Further discussion will take place to review the effectiveness of the above structures and recommendations may be put forward to enhance their opportunities for working more closely together in the future.

Table Four gives a brief overview of the officers of the Eastern Area Childcare Team.

Eastern Area Partnership Team			
Title	Responsibility	Base	Funding
Area Childcare Partnership Co-ordinator	Ensures a “joined up thinking” and consistent working approach towards furthering Children First	Eastern Health and Social Services Board	Eastern Area Childcare Partnership
District Childcare Partnership Co-ordinators (4)	To support and progress the local agenda as well as reflecting the local issues that effect the Partnerships strategic work.	*North and West Belfast. *South and East Belfast. *North Down and Ards. *Down and Lisburn	Eastern Area Childcare Partnership
Partnership Development Workers (2)	Progress the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) and Out of School Hours Childcare Initiative (OOSCH)	PlayBoard OOSHC	Eastern Area Childcare Partnership
Training Co-ordinator	Co-ordinate training for the Partnership in the Eastern Area	NIPPA-the Early Years Organisation	Eastern Area Childcare Partnership
NICMA Development Workers (2)	To ensure the promotion and uptake of registration within the Childminding Sector	Northern Ireland Childminding Association	Eastern Area Childcare Partnership
Information Officer (vacant)	To develop and maintain the Partnerships information systems	Eastern Health and Social Services	Eastern Area Childcare Partnership
Childhood Fund Development Worker	Promote the Childhood Fund (Measure 2.5)	NIPPA-the Early Years Organisation	S.E.P.B. (European Programme)
Playcare Development Officers (2)	Promote the Playcare Initiative (Measure 1.5)	PlayBoard	S.E.P.B. (European Programme)
Sustainability Development Officers (vacant)		PlayBoard (vacant)	S.E.P.B. (European Programme)

Table Four

Decision Making Process

The Eastern Area Childcare Partnership operates as a multi-agency collective where decisions are made in consultation with key stakeholders; however due to the nature of Early Years, specific expertise and guidance is often required to ensure clarity in relation to specific agenda items. In order to facilitate this the Partnership operates a Sub-Group structure. Each Sub-Group is responsible for progressing a specific agenda, in consultation with the Area Partnership. Additionally, Sub-Groups advise the Partnership in relation to Strategy and overview.

Figure Five outlines the sub-groups of the Eastern Area Childcare Partnership.



Figure Five

Each Sub-Group has Terms of Reference stating the accountable relationships to the Partnership. Clear expectations exist around the reporting of the Sub-Groups to the Partnership, ensuring the wider membership is informed of the work undertaken. Additionally, the Partnership may refer particular areas of work to a Sub-Group for action. Ultimately the Sub-Group must ensure decisions, particularly in relation to the allocation of resources are ratified by the Area Partnership.

The effectiveness of this structure ensures that the membership is both informed and responsible for the activity of the Partnership in respect of Children First. Having such a broad membership assists and encourages

partnership working. This enables the Partnership to be involved in a process where 'joined up' thinking is facilitated through the building of relationships and collective working, to champion the cause for children and childcare throughout the Eastern Area.

Funding

A total of £7.2 million is being managed by the Eastern Childcare Partnership to progress the principles and aims of "Children First" Policy document.

A range of funding programmes have been created to support the delivery of quality, affordable and accessible Childcare for children (0-14 yrs) within Northern Ireland'. Table five gives a breakdown of the available funding allocated to support Childcare Provision in the Eastern Childcare Partnership area.

Children First Funding Eastern Area Childcare Partnership Awards to March 2002	
Childhood Fund	£2,468,455
New Opportunities Fund/Out of Hours Childcare Initiative	£1,902,208
Playcare	£746,713
Sure Start	£2,082,976
Total	£7,200,352

Table Five

The Partnership's priority is to target the above resources to those areas most in need.

Local Trust Funding

The following tables outline the funding allocation in relation to the four Trust areas. Further details may be sought from each Trust's Article 20 Review Documents.

Childhood Fund (Administered by NIPPA):

Priority 2 Social Integration, Inclusion and Reconciliation.

Measure 5. Investing in Childcare

Childhood Fund	
Trust Area	Awards
North and West Belfast	£1,230,014
South and East Belfast	£457,114
Ulster Community and Hospitals Trusts	£283,916
Down and Lisburn	£497,411

Table Six

New Opportunities Fund/ Out of School Hours Childcare Initiative

New Opportunities Fund/Out of Hours Childcare Initiative	
Trust Area	Awards
North and West Belfast	£742,318
South and East Belfast	£553,406
Ulster Community and Hospitals Trusts	£334,241
Down and Lisburn	£272,243

Table Seven

Playcare Initiative: (Administered by PlayBoard)

Priority 1. Economic Renewal. Measure 5. Positive Action for Women

Playcare	
Trust Area	Awards
North and West Belfast	£425,657
South and East Belfast	£146,206
Ulster Community and Hospitals Trusts	£0
Down and Lisburn	£174,850

Table Eight

Sure Start (Rounds 1 and 2)

Sure Start			
Round	Project	Trust Area	Award
2	Clan Mor	North and West Belfast	£203,836
2	Colin Neighbourhood	Down and Lisburn	£250,702
2	Shankill	North and West Belfast	£166,000
1	Inner East Belfast	South and East Belfast	£294,957
1	Inner South Belfast	South and East Belfast	£407,130
1	Lower Ards	Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust	£191,730
1	Downpatrick	Down and Lisburn	£322,200
1	Kids 'n' Kin	North and West Belfast	£246,421

Table Nine

In addition to the above funding the Eastern Childcare Partnership has recently submitted a capital portfolio bid to the New Opportunities Fund for £2.2 million. This additional money is targeted for the improvement of capital projects.

Article 20 Reviews

Within each Health and Social Services Trust, colleagues have been progressing Article 20 Reviews, under their responsibilities within the Children Order (NI) 1996. The Article 20 Reviews, which are produced on a three-year cycle, refer to the whole Early Years sector. The Reviews are essentially a survey of provision including an analysis of the supply and demand of service provision. The findings from the Article 20 Reviews are used to make recommendations as to the way forward from a Health and Social Services perspective. The Article 20 Reviews are key planning documents and it is essential that the findings from these Reviews be given cognisance within the Eastern Area Childcare Plan.

The Childcare Partnership will consult with the District Partnerships re: Article 20 reviews to ensure that gaps in provision are identified and that future resources are targeted to meet the key themes of the plan.

Section Three

Underpinning Principles of the Childcare Plan

Underpinning Principles

The key principles in the process of developing the Childcare Plan were: Social Inclusion, Equality and Human Rights. These are also the core themes outlined in the Children's Services Plan. The Children's Services Plan is the over arching policy document for Children's Services in the Eastern area.

These principles were strengthened by consultation with key stakeholders including parents and service providers.

- **Promoting Social Inclusion**

One of the central themes to emerge from the Good Friday Agreement was the theme of Social Inclusion. This placed an onus on planners of services to promote social inclusion and to ensure that no individual, group or community are excluded from receiving services.

At the centre of the Eastern Area Childcare Plan is the explicit recognition that services have to be planned and co-ordinated to take into account the needs of all children up to the age of 14.

- **Equality and Human Rights**

The new statutory duty arising from Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) made equality central to the whole range of public policy decision-making. The equality perspective - requiring the promotion of equality of opportunity amongst nine specified groups of people, and the good relations between people of different religious beliefs, political opinions and racial groups must be incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages.

The Eastern Childcare Partnership has employed the guidance and instructions of the EHSSB Equality Scheme in creating the outline of this Action Plan.

The Human Rights Act, which came into effect on 2nd October 2000, brings in new rights and responsibilities, giving further effect to the rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights. The principles adopted by the Eastern Area Childcare Partnership in its first

Childcare Plan are explicitly linked to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the introduction of the Human Rights Act will strengthen this position.

Consultation

An integral part in developing the Childcare Plan was to consult with a wide range of stakeholders on the key strategic objectives of the Eastern Area Childcare Partnership.

- **Consultation with Parents**

The voice of parents is acknowledged as vital to any planning process in respect of Childcare. In August 2001, the "Engaging Parents in the Childcare Partnerships" pilot project (1 year) began on a regional basis. The four Area Partnerships commissioned the Parenting Forum to establish two "Parent Reference Groups" within each Partnership Area. Within the Eastern Area, the Ards Peninsula and Twinbrook/Poleglass were selected as Reference Group focal points. These areas reflect the demographic and geographic diversity within the Eastern Area,

The one-year Pilot Project has been evaluated and the Partnership will consider the recommendations of this to ensure the voice of parents can continue to be heard within the Eastern Area.

On going consultation through the work of the Partnership Development Team and projects such as Surestart and local community networks, ensure that the voices of parents are consistently sought and incorporated into the planning process.

- **Consultation with Employers**

The Partnership has consulted with Employers for Childcare, a registered charity mandated to promote the facets of the Work Life Balance agenda.

An event organised in collaboration with Employers for Childcare in November 2001 profiled the role of the Partnership and outlined the intended mechanisms for consultation with Employers. This event ensured that Childcare issues among employers were headlined. The Partnership will be participating in the 'next steps' event in 2002, "Breaking the Childcare Barrier". This will create opportunities for consultation with Employers.

- Consultation with the Community and Voluntary Sectors

In November 2001 a Stakeholders Consultation Event took place with key stakeholders from the voluntary and community sectors. During this event draft priorities for action were agreed. As a result of this, a number of key themes were incorporated into the Eastern Childcare Partnership Plan (2002-2005).

- Sustainability

In response to the issues raised by the Childcare sector around this theme, the Joint Strategic Planning Group for Early Years have developed a strategy which will address the immediate and long term funding issues which the childcare sector face.

- Capacity Building

To address the infrastructure needs of the childcare sector at local level the Eastern Childcare Partnership allocated additional resources to the district partnerships to facilitate specific workshops for groups. These workshops gave opportunity to groups to develop a more coherent development strategy.

- Training

As a result of the consultation, the training needs of the Childcare sector were outlined and identified as a priority. To this end, the Eastern Childcare Partnership have employed a Training Co-ordinator whose core responsibility is to ensure that training courses and events are made available to the Childcare sector throughout the Eastern Area. In addition to this, the Disability Grant Scheme has commissioned a range of training events to address the needs of children and families and providers who care for children with disabilities.

- Information

The consultation event highlighted the need for information, which is up to date and relevant to the needs of the Childcare Sector. In response to this need, the Eastern Childcare Partnership has developed an information resource. This will provide current robust and relevant information to be circulated to the childcare sector, parents, carers, children and young people.

- Quality

As a result of the consultation the need for a standardised approach to quality throughout the Eastern Area identified. The Joint Strategic Planning Group for Early Years is currently looking at a number of

accreditation schemes in conjunction with the Common Standards document.

- **Targeting Need**

The consultation event in conjunction with the Article 20 Reviews, have given the Eastern Childcare Partnership an up to date picture of current Childcare provision. The priority for the Partnership is to work strategically with available resources to target gaps in Childcare provision.

Section Four

Action Plan

Strategic Objectives

The Eastern Area Childcare Partnership's strategic objectives are set out by the Joint Strategic Planning Group for Early Years. Part of this group's function is to be a principle advisor on strategic matters to the Childcare Partnership. It is these objectives that form the basis of the Childcare Plan.

The Eastern Area Childcare Partnerships Plan 2002-2005 (Appendix Two) strategic objectives are broken down into key result areas, associated objectives, tasks, timescales and outcomes, which are:

- **Workforce support and supporting parents to return to work, education or training**

It is expected that a number of objectives will be achieved. These include:

- The provision of comprehensive information to parents about services
- The promotion of a positive response to childcare needs by employers
- The promotion of good practice by those providing childcare e.g. staff qualifications, terms and conditions of service and quality standards.

Much useful work has already been done to meet these objectives.

1. Provision of comprehensive information to parents, service providers, service users. This objective will be achieved by:
 - Working with the DHSS&PS to develop a regional information strategy
 - Building on existing information resources to provide up to an up to date parents/carers pack
 - Using the article 20 information to launch and maintain a data base of providers
2. To promote the childcare needs of the workforce with employers. This will require:
 - Engaging in a partnership with Employers for Childcare
3. To promote good practice e.g. staff qualifications, terms and conditions.

This will be achieved by:

- The introduction of mechanisms for consultation
- Agreeing common standards within the quality assurance standard

▪ The personal, physical, social, emotional, educational and cultural development of children and young people 0-14

1. To develop the Eastern Childcare Partnership Quality Standard including Training and Play Settings. This objective will be progressed by:
 - Scoping existing models of quality by consolidating existing work of the Area Early Years Committee
 - Creating a model for best value play provision
 - Developing a process which enables service providers to achieve quality assurance standards
 - Organising a conference to promote policy and strategy in relation to good practice and quality showcases
 - Organising a conference which addresses the need for an anti bias curriculum
 - Launching Quality Assurance Standards
2. Support Government strategy in relation to healthy communities. It is intended that this objective will be achieved by:
 - Supporting the development of the Play for All initiative, Top Start and Physical Focus on Play
3. To ensure that available resources are targeted appropriately as evidenced by partnership mapping. It is planned:
 - To update the 1999/2000 indicators broader than the Nobel index, ensuring an informed planning process
 - To commission small scale research where no information exists
 - To determine what need indicators are to be used for which funding source
 - To ensure that applications are invited from under represented communities
4. Supporting District Councils Cultural Strategies and ensure that Early Years and the Childcare Partnership are represented.

-
- The JSPG will continue to ensure that children's play is represented and acknowledged within Cultural Strategies
5. To support a holistic approach to community safety, including child protection. This will include encouraging urban regeneration, road safety and anti pollution initiatives.
 - Ensure that child safety is acknowledged within local authority initiatives.
 - To promote and support ongoing initiatives such as Health Action Zones, Home Zones and the Keeping Safe Programme.
 6. To support Service Providers in specific priority areas. It is intended that the Childcare partnership:
 - Will analyse Article 20 Information to ensure that it is accurate and robust
 - Will use this information to increase service provision to under represented communities
 - Will use this information to support staff development and training
 - Will consult and review Voluntary Grant Aid within HSS Trusts
 - Will promote and support the registration of child minders within the Area
 - Will ensure there is proactive recruitment in areas of low provision
 7. Address issues of short/long term viability, self-sufficiency and supporting the professional withdrawal of services. This will be achieved by:
 - Establishing best practice in withdrawal and planning of exit strategies
 8. To identify the barriers that prevent mainstream services being accessed by children with a disability, special needs and children with challenging behaviour, and progress action to promote Best Practice in relation to inclusion. This will be achieved by:
 - Using the Article 20 Information to determine gaps in Disability training
 - Clarifying and promoting legislative requirements and relevant information through Newsletters and other networks.
 - Commissioning training specific to disability and special needs
 - Building upon existing models of good practice
 - Rolling out and monitoring access/uptake of training

▪ Social inclusion in respect of communities or individual children and their families

1. To ensure the recommendations of the Research Project, Childcare Needs of the Chinese Community are supported by:
 - Publishing, launching and progress research in an accessible and appropriate way

2. To ensure that Early Years Provision meets the needs of Minority Ethnic Communities and takes into account the Cultural Diversity of Chinese, Irish Traveller, Indian, Philippine communities et al, by:
 - Liaising with existing consultation Fora, to determine needs and barriers to the uptake of services by Minority Ethnic Communities
 - Determining a process for assessing identified need
 - Implementing the process
 - Introducing monitoring tools reflecting Minority Ethnic Communities' uptake and access of provision

3. To begin to respond to the needs of Refugees and Asylum Seekers, flexibly and creatively by:
 - Engaging with Asylum Seekers and Refugee Support Groups re presenting issues from Needs Assessments

4. To ensure that the Early Years Provision is responsive to the needs of parents by:
 - Ensuring there is a mechanism for consulting with parents and carers in relation to service delivery
 - Exploring the recommendations of the parents' pilot evaluation

5. Evidence the impact of the Surestart initiative on young children, their families and communities by:
 - Examining the DHSS&PS Regional Evaluation
 - Supporting quality local evaluations in each Surestart Project which reflects good practice
 - Mapping unmet need within the 0-3 years population using key indicators

- Reviewing both new services created and existing services against the Partnership principles and inter disciplinary practice of Surestart.

Review Mechanisms

There are several mechanisms that have been put in place to continuously review the implementation of the Childcare Plan.

The above key result areas and associated objectives have related key tasks, lead persons, timescales, outcome performance measures and resource implications. (See appendices).

The Eastern Area Childcare Partnership is committed to ensuring that the actions promised are carried out. It will be the Partnership's responsibility to monitor and report on progress on a quarterly basis. It will also be their responsibility to ensure that the key indicator base line is determined so that progress can be demonstrated and measured.

New resources are required for some of the actions. Where this is the case, the constituent agencies of Eastern Area Childcare Partnership are charged with jointly bidding for funds from whatever source is appropriate.

The first review of the 2nd Childcare Plan is due in April 2003 and will be an opportunity for progress to be demonstrated publicly.

Glossary of Terms

Article 20 Reviews

These are the statutory reviews of Early Years Services carried out by Health and Social Services Trusts and Education Boards under the Children (NI) Order (1995)

Pre-School Education Expansion Programme

The Government Strategy to provide universal funded pre-school education

Children First

The Northern Ireland Childcare Strategy – A Policy Statement

Sure Start

A Government initiative to support the development of services for children 0-3 and their families

New Opportunities Fund (NOF)

National Lotteries Charity Board funded initiative, which has the responsibility for the Out of Schools Childcare Initiative

Eastern Area Childcare Partnership

A partnership of those interested in the development of child care for children 0-14 in the Eastern Region

Working Families Tax Credit

A benefit that the Inland Revenue give to families who earn less than £22,000

Children's Services Plan

Is a multi-agency Children's Services Plan produced by the Eastern Health and Social Services Board, Children and Young People's Committee. The current plan 'For All our Children' is for 2002-2005.

Joint Strategic Planning Group (JSPG) Early Years

Is a sub-group of the Early Years of the Children and Young People's Committee, which has responsibility of the strategic planning of Early Years Services in line with the Children's Service Planning Process

District Childcare Partnerships

Are four local sub-groups of the Area Childcare Partnership based in Health and Social Service Trust Areas

Appendix One

**Belfast Education and Library Board
PEAG Places by Ward Area**

Ward	Places	Ward	Places	Ward	Places
Ballyhackamore	36	Ravenhill	10	Windsor	19
Andersonstown	51	Highfield	25	Cliftonville	40
Malone	14	Waterworks	23	Cavehill	17
Blackstaff	9	The Mount	8	Musgrave	23
Glencolin	10	Ligoniel	18	Stranmillis	6
Rosetta	19	Botanic	48	Belmont	12
Chichester Park	20	Falls Park	19	Ardoyne	15
Orangefield	16	Falls	12	Duncairn	8
Island	10	Upper Springfield	43	Glen Road	13
Beechmount	55				

**South Eastern Education and Library Board
PEAG Places by Ward Area**

Ward	Places	Ward	Places	Ward	Places
Ballygowan	24	Ballywalter	30	Glen	10
Carrowdore	18	Loughries/Carrowdore	15	Killinchy	18
Kircubbin	26	Scrabo	10	Movilla	28
Portaferry	18	Central Ards	17	Ballyrainey	20
Scrabo/Loughries	18	Comber East	10	Enler	10
Grahamsbridge	20	Carryduff East	20	Cregagh	15
Newtownbreda/Knockbracken	18	Wynchurch	10	Carryduff East	10
Moneyreagh	22	Ardglass	34	Seaforde/Lillough	18
Crossgar/Ballymote	18	Drumaness	27	Dunmore	10
Dundrum	12	Kilmore	30	Tollymore	12
Castlewellan	20	Killough	16	Killyleagh	18
Catheral	16	Donard	18	Quoile	16
Strangford	12	Drumaness/Kilmore	18	Dromara	32
Glenavy	15	Derriaghy	18	Seymour Hill	24
Dunmurry	28	Ballymacbrennan	10	Harmony Hill	19
Twinbrook	18	Ballinderry	10	Ballymagee	15
Churchill	15	Bangor Castle	13	Springhill	36
Conlig	15	Ballycrochan	22	Criagavad	10
Rathgaele	14	Rathgaele/Clandeboye	11	Rathgaele/BloomfieldN	13
Loughview	18	Springhill/Bryansford	10	Ballyholme	20

Appendix Two**JSPG Work Plan****▪ Workforce Support**

It is expected that a number of objectives will be achieved. These include the provision of a comprehensive information to parents about services; the promotion of a positive response to child care needs by employers; the promotion of good practice by those providing child care e.g. staff qualifications, terms and conditions of service and quality standards. Much useful work has already been done to meet these objectives.

Workforce Support					
ASSOCIATED OBJECTIVE	KEY TASK(S)	LEAD	TIME SCALE	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE MEASURE	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
To provide comprehensive information to parents about services.	To work with DHSS&PS to develop comprehensive regional information strategy.	ECP Rep	Ongoing	Comprehensive regional information strategy with robust IT system	Capital Investment in IT
	To use results of 2000/2001 Consultation to build on NIPPA Information Pack for parents and carers.	ECP and District CCPs	2002-2003	To capture levels of parental satisfaction or otherwise.	Reproducing a Parents Pack
	To use Article 20 Information to develop and maintain a database of providers.	Dedicated information resources and Voluntary Partners.	April 2002	Article 20 Reviews completed	None
	To launch database of providers.	ECP	Sept 2002	Database in place	£1000
To promote a positive response to child care	Engage a Partnership relationship with Employers for Child Care.	ECP	Ongoing	More employers responding to employees child care needs	None for JSPG

Workforce Support					
ASSOCIATED OBJECTIVE	KEY TASK(S)	LEAD	TIME SCALE	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE MEASURE	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
needs of the workforce with employers.					
To promote good practice ie staff qualifications terms and conditions	Introduce mechanisms for consultation. Agree common standards within Quality Assurance Standard	ECP		Common standards agreed	Use of in-house staff

- **The Personal, Physical, Social, Emotional, Educational and Cultural Development of Children and Young People**

Associated objectives under this key result area, include the plan to develop an Eastern Childcare Partnership quality standard.

Personal, Physical, Social, Emotional, Educational and Cultural Development of Children and Young People					
ASSOCIATED OBJECTIVE	KEY TASK(S)	LEAD	TIME SCALE	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE MEASURE	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Personal, Physical, Social, Emotional, Educational and Cultural Development of Children and Young People					
ASSOCIATED OBJECTIVE	KEY TASK(S)	LEAD	TIME SCALE	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE MEASURE	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
To develop the Eastern Child Care Partnership Quality Standard including Training, Play, Settings, Staff Issues (as above) and sustainability issues.	Scope existing models of quality by consolidating existing work of AEYC, including the 'Common Standards' Document.	JSPG	2002-3	Agree Quality Models and standards (including Charter Mark) using Best Value Principles as outcomes.	Use of ECP nominated staff.
	Create a model for Best Value play provision	BCC, NIPPA, PlayBoard, Barnardos, NICMA, Kids Club, High/Scope Ireland	2002-3	Yearly improvement in numbers achieving standard.	Use of ECP nominated staff.
	Propose a process to enable service providers to achieve Quality Assurance Standards.			No of groups reaching NIPPA Accreditation. No of groups reaching High/Scope Accrediation.	None for JSPG.
	Organise conference to promote policy and strategy in relation to good practice, quality and showcase Good Practice Networks	ECP and District Partnerships Also ELBs, DENI, DEL, DCAL, ETI	June 2002	Conference completed and evaluated	£2000 to plan and deliver Conference (DEL, DENI, DHSS&PS and DCAL)

Personal, Physical, Social, Emotional, Educational and Cultural Development of Children and Young People					
ASSOCIATED OBJECTIVE	KEY TASK(S)	LEAD	TIME SCALE	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE MEASURE	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
	Organise conference to develop an anti bias curriculum	JSPG, Barnardos, CRC and Partner Organisations	Autumn 2002		£1000 to plan and deliver conference (CRC et al)
	Launch Quality Assurance Standards.				
Support Government strategy in relation to healthy communities and Best Value practice in provision of services.	Support the development of the Play for All initiative and Physical Focus on Play, including 'Top Start'.	ELBs, Sports Council, Voluntary Orgs, NIPPA, PlayBoard, NICMA	Ongoing	Long term: participation rates through child and physical development profiles.	Achieving successful bids (£110,000)
To ensure that available resources are targeted appropriately at the areas of highest need as evidenced by Partnership mapping.	To update 1999/2000 need indicators, broader than Noble, ensuring an informed planning process.	Dedicated Information Resources.	June 2002	Appropriately activating the findings of the mapping.	Use of existing staff
	To commission small scale research where no information exists.	ECP in consultation with ELBs et al		Robust information re PEAGs etc.	
	To determine what need indicators are to be used for what Funding source.	JSPG, ECP and Selection Panel	April 2002	Gap areas are targeted affectively.	Core funding base to be established as short term funding ends

Personal, Physical, Social, Emotional, Educational and Cultural Development of Children and Young People					
ASSOCIATED OBJECTIVE	KEY TASK(S)	LEAD	TIME SCALE	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE MEASURE	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
	To ensure that applications for Funding are invited from communities that are under represented.	All parties including NICVA	Ongoing	Increased applications from communities that are under represented	Appropriate technical support
Supporting District Councils Cultural Strategies and ensure that Early Years is represented in the City of Culture Bid	Ensure children's play is acknowledged within cultural strategies and the City of Culture bid	ECP	April 2002-2003	Evidence of ECP working collaboratively with Lead Organisations.	To be determined
Support a holistic approach to community safety including child safety and child protection reflecting urban regeneration, road safety and anti pollution initiatives.	Ensure child safety is acknowledged within local authority initiatives, ongoing health initiatives and child protection requirements (e.g. HAZ, Home Zone, Keeping Safe)	ECP working with HAZ, NSPCC, Local Councils, VSB, HSS Trusts, Healthy Cities, Health Promotion Agency, ELBs, NIHE, KEY VOLs, Sports Council:	April 2002-2003	Evidence of ECP working collaboratively with Lead Organisations. Generate Awareness of statistical evidence that is collated and impacts on initiatives.	To be determined; primarily use of ECP staff and nominated individuals.

Personal, Physical, Social, Emotional, Educational and Cultural Development of Children and Young People					
ASSOCIATED OBJECTIVE	KEY TASK(S)	LEAD	TIME SCALE	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE MEASURE	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
To support Service Providers in specific priority areas.	To update Article 20 Information to ensure that it is suitable and robust.	Key Early Years Organisations and ECP information resource	2002-3	See performance measures 1 and 2.	Trust/Board staff
	To use information to increase service provision to under represented communities.				
	To use the information to support staff development and training.				
Address issues of short/long-term viability, self-sufficiency and supporting the professional withdrawal of services.	Consult and review Voluntary Grant Aid Policy within HSS Trusts.	ECP and Partner organisations	2001-2002	Review and recommend actions	Use of Existing Staff
	Promote and support the registration of childminders within the Area.	ECP, NICMA, HSS Trusts		Registrations to be completed within 3 months of receipted application to Trusts	Capacity of HSS Trusts teams to complete registration process and develop a quality approach to childminding.
	Proactive recruitment in areas of low provision	As above		As above	As above

Personal, Physical, Social, Emotional, Educational and Cultural Development of Children and Young People					
ASSOCIATED OBJECTIVE	KEY TASK(S)	LEAD	TIME SCALE	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE MEASURE	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
To identify the barriers that prevent mainstream services being accessed by children with a disability, special needs and children with challenging behaviour, and progress action to promote Best Practice in relation to Inclusion	To use Article 20 Information to determine gaps in Disability training.	Barnardos, NIPPA, PlayBoard, Disability Grant Scheme Task Group, Training Sub-Group, all District Councils	Ongoing	Increase number of Inclusive services as per Quality Standard. Broaden uptake of Staff and Volunteer Training. Creating a community support network i.e. Inclusive Play Exchange.	Use of existing staff in ECP Use of existing staff in ECP Use of existing staff in ECP
	Clarify and promote legislative requirements and relevant information through Newsletters and other networks.	As above	As above	As above	As above
	To commission training specific to disability and special needs.				
	To build upon existing models of good practice.				
	To roll out and monitor access/ uptake of training.	ECP Disability Task Group			

Social Inclusion					
ASSOCIATED OBJECTIVE	KEY TASK(S)	LEAD	TIME SCALE	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE MEASURE	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
To ensure that the recommendations of the Research Project, Childcare Needs of Chinese Community are supported.	Publish, launch and progress Research in an accessible and appropriate way.	JSPG and Barnardos supported by ECP.	2002-5	Review progress and report to ECP prior to September 2004.	Costs already met
To ensure that Early Years provision meets the needs of Minority Ethnic Communities, and takes into account cultural diversity.(Chinese, Irish Traveller, Indian, Philippine communities et al)	To liaise with existing consultation forums, to determine needs and barriers to access of Minority Ethnic Communities; commissioning additional research if required.	Area and District Co-ordinators, Barnardos, MCRC, Equality Commission, NICEM, CWA, BTSG, TMNI et al.	2002-3	Evaluate process in consultation with relevant organisations.	Use of ECP, Trust and Board staff
	To determine a process for addressing identified need.		2003-4	Progress reports and final products for assessing needs and monitoring methodologies	Use of existing ECP/Board/ Trust staff

Social Inclusion					
ASSOCIATED OBJECTIVE	KEY TASK(S)	LEAD	TIME SCALE	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE MEASURE	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
	To implement process.		2003-5		
	To introduce monitoring tools reflecting Minority Ethnic Community uptake and access of provision.				
To begin to respond to the needs of Refugees and Asylum Seekers, flexibly and creatively.	Engaging with the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Support Group re presenting issues from Needs Assessment (by Equality Research Commission & AS + R Support Group)	ECP, Equality Commission, Asylum Seekers and Refugee Support Group, NICEM and Interested Parties.	2002-3	Report produced on work undertaken	Use of existing staff
To ensure that Early Years provision is responsive to the needs of parents	To ensure a mechanism for consulting with parents and carers in relation to service delivery. (Engaging Parents pilot) Explore the recommendations of the evaluation	ECP, DCCPs, Parenting Forum, existing networks.	2001-2002	Robust mechanism in place	Use of ECP/Trust and Board staff

Social Inclusion					
ASSOCIATED OBJECTIVE	KEY TASK(S)	LEAD	TIME SCALE	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE MEASURE	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
Evidence the value of Sure Start initiative upon young children, their families and communities	DHSS&PS Regional Evaluation.	DHSS&PS	Ongoing	To be determined by DHSS&PS.	
	To support quality local evaluations in each Sure Start Project which reflect Good Practice; ensuring the unique relationships within Sure Start are quantified	ECP and Sure Start Projects.	Ongoing	Parental, Community satisfaction	ECP staff
	Mapping unmet need within 0-3 years population using key indicators.	ECP and Sure Start Projects	Ongoing	Mapping completed	Existing staff
	Review both the new services created and existing services against the partnership principles and inter disciplinary practice of Sure Start			Review completed	Existing staff

Appendix Three

Membership of Childcare Partnership

Name	Organisation	Role	Address
Mr John Richards (Chair)	Eastern Health and Social Services Board	Director of Social Services	Champion House Linenhall Street Belfast
Ms Pauline Leeson	Childcare Northern Ireland	Director	216 Belmont Road Belfast
Ms Evelyn Curran	Eastern Childcare Partnership	Coordinator	Champion House Linenhall Street Belfast
Mr Malachy McCrudden	CCMS	Education Adviser	Down and Connor Diocesan Education Office 160 High Street Holywood
Mr Peter Elliott	Training and Employment Agency	District Manager	Gloucester House Chichester Street Belfast
Mrs Marguerite Hunter-Blair	PlayBoard	Chief Executive Officer	59/65 York Street Belfast
Mr Colm Conway	NIPPA	Director of Services	6c Wildflower Way Apollo Road Belfast
Mr Liam Kinney	Northern Ireland Housing Executive	Principal Officer Belfast Area	2 Adelaide Street Belfast
Ms Anne McDermott	South Eastern Education and Library Board		16 Grahamsbridge Road Dundonald
Mr Colin McKay	Down and Lisburn HSST	Programme Manager	Lisburn Health Centre Linenhall Street Lisburn
Mrs Maria Maguire	North and West Belfast HSST	Assistant Principle Social Worker	124 Stewartstown Road Belfast

Membership of Childcare Partnership

Name	Organisation	Role	Address
Ms Lorna McAlpine	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education	Development Officer	44 University Street Belfast
Ms Patricia Nicholl	Ulster Community and Hospital HSST	Programme Manager	The Health and Care Centre 39 Regent Street Newtownards
Mrs Theresa Nixon	Eastern Health and Social Services Board	Deputy Director Child and Family Services	Champion House Linenhall Street Belfast
Mrs Bridget Nodder	NICMA	Director	16-18 Mill Street Newtownards
Ms Sue Pentell	Ionad Uibh Eachach	Chair of North and West Belfast District Childcare Partnership	34A Iveagh Crescent Belfast
Mr Kevin McCormick	Barnardos	Project Leader	265 Belmont Road Belfast
Ms Sylvia Moore	Belfast City Council	Community Services Manager	4-10 Linenhall Street Belfast
Prof David Vance	Eastern Health and Social Services Board	Assistant Director of Social Services	Champion House Linenhall Street Belfast
Mr John Veitch	South and East Belfast HSST	Head of Childrens Services	Knockbracken Healthcare Park Saintfield Road Belfast
Mrs Marilyn Warren	Belfast Education and Library Board	Primary Adviser	40 Academy Street Belfast
Seamus McElroy	Over the Rainbow		2 Deramore Drive Belfast
Sheila Bailie	Company Secretary	Healthy Living Coordinator	Kircubbin Health and Care Centre 4 Church Grove Kircubbin

Membership of Childcare Partnership

Name	Organisation	Role	Address
Mrs Soibhan Slavin	Sure Start	Coordinator	The Mall Downshire Hospital Ardglass Road Downpatrick
Patricia Johnston	Short Strand Community Forum	Senior Play Worker	Short Strand Community Centre 26a Beechfield Street Belfast

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