



Response to: Play & Leisure Implementation Plan

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Policy Subgroup
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1. Introduction

1.1 The Women's Centres Regional Partnership (WCRP) is a partnership of four lead regional women's organisations linking with fourteen frontline women's organisations across Northern Ireland to provide support and services to women living in disadvantaged areas. (See Appendix 1)

1.2 Vision

WCRP's vision is "our vision of communities where women are recognised and valued as equal partners working toward a future based upon shared values of equality, participation and inclusion."

1.3 Mission

WCRP's mission is "To work in partnership to support and strengthen the voice of community based women's organizations."

1.4 Background

The four key lead partners of the Partnership are the **Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA)**, **Women's Support Network (WSN)**, **Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network (NIRWN)** and **The Women's Centre, Derry**. The fourteen women's organisations are spread across Northern Ireland with seven from the Greater Belfast and Lisburn area, four in the North West and three in Dungannon, Magherafelt and Craigavon. Together the WCRP seeks to develop and strengthen a regional infrastructure which will support community based women's organisations across Northern Ireland:

- To build a strong, effective and inclusive partnership for the benefit of partners and stakeholders;
- To advocate for the sustainability of frontline services for WCRP partners and stakeholders;
- To promoting best practice and quality standards training, education, advice and childcare services in the women's centres;
- To Influence policy relating to women's lives by identifying and publicising emerging issues facing women in disadvantaged areas.¹

2. **Comments**

2.1 WCRP welcomes the department actively engaging with children and young people, we would like to see further detail as to how the voices of children and young people will be incorporated. We would also urge the department to seek the views of the community based women's centres and wider women's sector because of their important role providing community based childcare provision in areas of disadvantage.

2.2.1 The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child² recognises the rights of children to engage in play appropriate for their age. We would encourage the department to include additional impact areas ensuring opportunities are made available for the broad range of children from 0-18 years.

2.2.2 In relation to the key impact areas outlined in the draft plan under championing play and leisure, there is a need to include parent organisations as well as women's centres as a delivery partner. The community based women's centres already work with parents delivering parenting classes and could help in meeting the department's objectives in this strategy.

¹ <http://www.wcrp.org.uk/mission.php>

² United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 31: States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

- 2.2.3 We would urge the Department to provide further detail on the monitoring and evaluation processes which will be used in the implementation of this plan. Without this detail it will be difficult to know how effective the plan is. Timeframes would also ensure the strategy is fit for purpose.
- 2.2.4 Furthermore, we have particular concerns over OFMDFM's plan for reducing the Play Policy spend as outlined in the draft budget, i.e. 'advanced status of the Play Implementation Policy enables OFMDFM to reduce spend on Play Policy by £0.55m per annum in the 2011-15 period'. We would like further detail as to how this plan will be implemented considering current budget constraints and priorities on Councils.

Conclusion

WCRP welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation document. Whilst welcoming this document, we have offered some constructive recommendations as to how it could be improved. We particularly wish to highlight the excellent work of the community based women's sector and the positive role they already play in meeting the needs of children and families within disadvantaged areas³. We are happy to further discuss this response if required.

³ "Childcare Mapping & Research Report 2010", Women's Centres Regional Partnership (WCRP).

Appendix 1:

Lead Organisations:

NI Rural Women's Network (NIRWN)
15 Molesworth Street
Cookstown
BT80 8NX

The Women's Centre, Derry
Beibhinn House
5 Guildhall Street
Derry
BT48 6BB

Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA)
6 Mount Charles
Belfast
BT7 1NZ

Women's Support Network (WSN)
109-113 Royal Avenue
Belfast
BT1 1FF

Partners:

Waterside Women's Centre

170 Spencer Road
Waterside
Derry
BT47 6AH

Foyle Women's Information Network

The Junction
8 Bishop Street
Derry
BT48 6PW

The Women's Centre

Beibhinn House
5 Guildhall Street
Derry
BT48 6BB

Strathfoyle Women's Centre

12 Bawnmore Place
Strathfoyle
BT47 6XP

Atlas Women's Centre

81 Sloan Street
Lisburn,
BT27 5AG

Ballybeen Women's Centre

34 Ballybeen Square
Belfast
BT16 2QE

Falls Women's Centre

256 - 258 Falls Road
BELFAST
BT12 6AL

Footprints Women's Centre

84a Colinmill
Poleglass
Dunmurray
BT17 0AR

Greenway Women's Centre

19 Greenway
Cregagh Road
Belfast
BT6 0DT

Windsor Women's Centre

136-144 Broadway
Belfast
BT12 6HY

Shankill Women's Centre

151-157 Shankill Road
Belfast
BT13 1FD

First Steps Women's Centre

21a William Street
Dungannon
Co Tyrone
BT70 1DX

Magherafelt Women's Centre

The Learning Lodge
27-29 Moneymore Road
Magherafelt
BT45 5JE

Chrysalis Women's Centre

520 Burnside
Brownlow, Craigavon
BT65 5DE
