

Civic Forum Review Team  
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**patricia lewsley**  
commissioner

**barney mcneaney**  
chief executive

16 June 2008

To Whom It May Concern

**Re: Review of the Civic Forum**

Thank you very much for forwarding 'the review of the civic forum' consultation to the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY), we welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

NICCY was created in accordance with 'The Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order' (2003) to promote and protect the rights and best interests of children and young people in Northern Ireland.

Under Articles 7(2)(3) of this legislation, NICCY has a mandate to keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law, practice and services relating to the rights and best interests of children and young people by relevant authorities. The remit of our Office is children and young people from birth up to 18 years, or 21 years of age if the young person is disabled or in the care of Social Services.

In determining how to carry out her functions, the Commissioner's paramount consideration is the rights of the child and NICCY is required to base all its work on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Article 12 of the UNCRC states that "*States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child*". This article applies to decisions made at government level which affect children and young people such as policy development.




Our Children and Young People- Our Pledge: A Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People contains specific pledges relating to the participation of children and young people. "In accordance with the UN convention of the rights of the child, we will be proactive in obtaining the views of children on matters of significance to them."<sup>1</sup>

In line with both the UN convention and OFMDFM strategy, NICCY would like to see children and young people represented on the Civic Forum. It is important that OFMDFM encourage participation by children and young people in fora such as this, especially on issues that have an effect on their lives.

NICCY would encourage OFMDFM to consider possible mechanisms for the participation of children and young people in the Civic Forum.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Seana Hume". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Seana Hume

**Policy Officer**

**Research, Policy and Service Review Department**

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<sup>1</sup> OFMDFM (2006) Our Children and Young People- Our Pledge: A Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People