

# Involving the young citizen: Better policies, better planning

**Wednesday 25 June 2008**

at 9am – 12noon

in The Stormont Hotel



**THE  
PARTICIPATION  
NETWORK  
ENGAGING/  
EMPOWERING**



Office of the  
First Minister and  
Deputy First Minister  
[www.ofmdfmi.ni.gov.uk](http://www.ofmdfmi.ni.gov.uk)

## Context

The Participation Network facilitated a seminar, **Involving the Young Citizen: Better Policies, Better Planning**, on 25<sup>th</sup> June at Stormont Hotel which was opened by Junior Minister Gerry Kelly. The event was designed to inform senior civil servants about children and young people's participation in public decision making and how children and young people's participation improves policies and services. It was organised in association with CAL (Centre for Applied Learning) to respond to a need expressed by department officials. There was attended by 78 delegates from a range of government departments (refer to appendix 1). There was a 23% non attendance rate.

## Opening speech



Junior Minister Gerry Kelly opened the seminar with an encouraging speech, outlining government's commitment to including children and young people in public decision making, stating:

*"... the wellbeing of our children and young people is an issue which we are all determined to put at the very top of our priorities."*

One of the key messages delivered by Minister Kelly was that all government departments' work has an impact on children and young people:

*"It is hard to think of an area of government policy making which does not impact on the lives of our young people. So this is an issue and a challenge which faces us all."*

Junior Minister Kelly outlined that children and young people are already participating in the development of policies and services and The Participation Network has been developed to enhance this existing work and to support this to develop further.

He continued to emphasise the benefits to involving children and young people in public decision making.

*"We will all miss out if we fail to tap into the wealth of ideas that young people have. We need to listen to them ...."*

## Presentation

The morning provided participants with a 'flavour' of training, an overview of The Participation Network's role, and how The Participation Network can support public decision makers.



(Left to right: Paula Keenan, Junior Minister Kelly, Roberta McLarnon, Shannon Sickels)

### Evaluation Summary

99% of delegates' expectations of the seminar were met. 91% of participants said they would do something differently in their work, after what they learned at the seminar.

*"I found the seminar to be hugely motivating and stimulating."*

*"Extremely useful for those approaching it for the first time."*

*"Very useful in raising awareness of the need to engage with children and young people and practical signposting."*

*"Very useful – feel similar event should be based within departments for all staff at senior levels."*

*"Excellent – very informative and well structured."*

*"I wished that I had this training at the start of my job."*

*"I found the seminar very useful and was impressed by the enthusiasm and insight of the presenters and the breadth of the participants attending."*

*"Thank you - an excellent morning!"*

Delegates were asked to set themselves short term goals to integrate their learning into their work environment by end of September 2008. Some of these short-term goals included: share information with colleagues and other management, explore The Participation Network website, attend training, identify departmental Children's Champions, and arrange for consultancy

support. The Participation Network will follow up with each delegate to offer support in meeting these goals.

#### Conclusion

The Participation Network is delighted with the positive response received from delegates about the content, delivery and relevance of the seminar.

The Participation Network is grateful for the support provided by CAL and OFMDFM in organising the event.

Another session of '**Including the Young Citizen: Better Policies, Better Planning**' will be offered on 19 September 2008, at The Pavilion.

## Appendix 1

### Attendance List; 25 June 2008

Andrew Meenagh	Northern Area Plan manager EHS Education and Internal Communications Manager	DOE
Anne P Hayes		DOE
Barbara Ward		OFMDFM
Bob Cairns	Director of Engineering, Roads Service	DRD
Brenda Conlon		DHSSPS
Brendan O'Mahony		NIO Criminal Justice Policy Division
Bridgeen Magorrian (Dr)		Environment and Heritage Service
Bronagh Regan	Quantity Surveyor	Health Estates
Catherine Thompson		EGI
Christine Leacock		DENI
Colin Jack	Head of Good Relation and Reconciliations Division	OFMDFM
Damien Brady	Equality Officer	DCAL
Dave Foster	Head of Water Management Unit	Water Management Unit
David Cheddy	Planning Policy Section (PEPG)	DOE
Deirdre Kenny	Director Corporate Services	OFMDFM
Eddie Rooney	Director of Equality	OFMDFM
Edel Davidson		NI Fire & Rescue
Eileen Curry	DP	DOE
Erika Couchman		OFMDFM
Esther Moore	Policy & Economics Division	DARD
Geraldine Quinn	Deputy Principal	DENI
Gerry Kelly	Secondary Officer	NEELB
Gillian Burns	Office of the Permanent Secretary	DSD
Gregor Kerr	Regional Planning and Transportation Division	DRD
Heather Davidson	Staff Officer	DHSSPS
Heather Neagle (Dr)	Medical Officer	DHSSPS
Heather O'Neill	Learning & Litigation Unit	DHSSPS
Helen McConkey		DENI
Ian Evans	Careers Manager	DEL
Irene McAllister	Equality & Diversity Unit	DETI
James McEldowney	DP - Policy Innovation Unit	OFMDFM
Jan Harvey	Strategy and Equality Unit	DEL
Janet McConville	Head of Planning for Mental Health & Disability and Children & Young People's Services	Southern HSCT
Jayne Millar	Primary Officer	NEELB
Jessie Roy		DCAL - Equality Unit
Jim Jewhurst	European Unit Managing Authority	DEL
Jim Livignstone (Dr)	Director of Safety, Quality & Standards	DHSSPS
Joan Cassells	RPA Policy and Legislation	DENI
John Millar	NI CMED Operations Manager	DWP
Karen Jane Wright		DSD
Karen McFarland		Strabane District Council
Kathryn Menary	Pupil Support Unit	DENI
Kay French	Children and Young People's Unit	OFMDFM
Kevin McMahan	Western are Office - Regional Development Office	DSD

Laura McAleese		DOE Equality Unit
Leona McMullen		OFMDFM
Lisa Boal	Curriculum & Assessment Team	DENI
Lynda Hurley	Voluntary and Community Unit	DSD
Marc Macpherson	Learning and Curriculum Policy Branch	DEL
Marie Boyd	DP	DEL
Marie Queiry		
Marion Johnson	Clerical Officer	OFMDFM
Maura Anderson	Equality Officer	PPS
Maureen McCartney	Mental Health Unit	DHSSPS
		NIO Criminal Justice
Maurice Campbell		Policy Division
Michael Leonard	Staff Officer	DOE
Michael Swann		8 DHSSPS
Niall Moore	Participation Officer	NICCY
Noel McCann	Director	DHSSPS
Norman Maynes		Translink
Norrie Breslin	Senior Policy & Development Officer	Big Lottery Fund
Pat Stewart	Equality Officer	Equality Commission
Patricia Murray	Project Officer	SCELB
Patrick McCloskey	Sports and Countryside Dev Officer	Down District
		Agri-Food and
		Biosciences Institute
Paul Brennan	HR Manager	(AFBI)
Paul Noonan		Equality Commission
		Children in Northern
Pauline Leeson	Director	Ireland
Peter Devine	Equality Unit	DHSSPS
Philip Magee		DSD
Richard Hyslop	Equality and Rights Unit	OFMDFM
Robert Sye	Equality Guidance and Coordination	DENI
Rosemary Beau		Policing Board
Sharon Henry		DHSSPS
Stephanie Harcourt	Central Statistics and Research Branch	DRD
Tom Kiernan	Voluntary and Community Unit	DSD
Tom Reid		OFMDFM
Valerie Adams		PRONI
Walker Ewart	Education and Training Inspectorate	DENI