



Department of
Justice
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“Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities”

A CONSULTATION ON A NEW COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

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1. Foreword By Minister of Justice

Following my election as Justice Minister on 12 April I set out my ambition to reshape the justice system; to build a safer Northern Ireland with lower levels of crime, safer shared communities and justice for all.

Devolution of justice powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly provides a once in a generation opportunity to achieve those ambitious goals and build a justice system that is accountable to the people that it serves, providing local solutions to local needs by working in partnership within, across and well beyond government to deliver for local communities.

Devolution is not a one-day event, but a process that must deliver for the people of Northern Ireland. I recently introduced into the Assembly Northern Ireland's first Justice Bill in almost 40 years. This is a significant piece of legislation which, when passed into law, will start to make a difference as to how the justice system deals with citizens.

The Assembly has also recently passed my Department's contribution to the Programme for Government, which sets out my key priorities for action in the short term, as well as providing a framework for a longer-term agenda for change.

This consultation paper sets out my proposals for a new Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland, which will contribute to creating safer, shared and confident communities over the longer term.

I have already announced my intention to bring forward a new, comprehensive Reducing Offending Strategy, which will take us to a new level in terms of collaborative working between Executive Departments, statutory and non-statutory agencies. This strategy will reshape our approach to tackling the problems that lead people into the criminal justice system, and which hinder them from getting back out of it. The proposals set out in the Community Safety Strategy will inform and support this work.

In a number of respects, Northern Ireland is a comparatively safe place to live, and overall levels of crime and anti-social behaviour have been reducing in recent years. The risk of becoming a victim of crime here is low and I do not believe that we should exaggerate or sensationalise the risk of crime.

However, I recognise that communities in towns, villages and cities across Northern Ireland do suffer from crime and anti-social behaviour, and do not always feel safe.

Community concerns around crime and anti-social behaviour cannot be solved by the police alone. Community safety involves working in partnership at all levels to provide local solutions to local problems. That partnership approach will be central to building safer, shared and confident communities. And it must go beyond the criminal justice system and government departments, with partnership with the voluntary and community sector, the private sector and individual communities themselves.

Community Safety Partnerships and District Policing Partnerships have brought substantial benefits to communities across Northern Ireland, providing local solutions to communities' concerns around crime and anti-social behaviour. The Justice Bill seeks to build on the success of these partnerships to bring them together and create new Policing and Community Safety Partnerships. These reforms will improve the effectiveness of local partnership working and contribute to building safer, shared and confident communities.

Much good work has been done in recent years to prevent and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and to build communities that feel safe. I intend to build on what already works, with evidence-based solutions tailored to the needs of local communities. In a period of tightening public finances, we must focus our resources on where they are needed the most, and where they will have greatest impact.

As well as reducing the opportunities for crime in the short and medium term, we must also take a long term approach and address the underlying risk factors that can

lead to offending. Early years intervention in the lives of children and young people can reduce the potential risk of involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour. I recognise the benefits that it can have over the longer term in creating safer communities and I want to work with Executive colleagues to support early interventions.

That is one element of the broader theme of partnership: partnership with Executive colleagues, with statutory agencies and with the community. Partnership matters because the challenge of reducing crime is not simply a challenge for me as Justice Minister alone – it is a challenge for us all. Crime, anti-social behaviour and offending cannot be separated from housing, environmental issues, education, health, social care or employment.

Underpinning all of this will be a focus on building a shared future. I firmly believe that shared communities are safer communities. The justice system can play a positive role in helping to build that shared future by confronting sectarianism and other forms of hate crime and prejudice, by celebrating the diversity of our society and helping to build vibrant, confident and sustainable communities.

This is an important consultation, setting out proposals to shape a new approach to building safer, shared and confident communities in the years ahead. I would encourage you to contribute to the debate.



David Ford
Minister of Justice

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Following the devolution of policing and justice powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly on 12 April 2010, Justice Minister David Ford announced his intention to lead a debate on a new Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland, to contribute to creating a safer Northern Ireland.

2.1.2 This consultation paper seeks views on a new Community Safety Strategy for 2011/12 to 2014/15, in line with the Budget 2010 period, and sets out proposals to create safer, shared and confident communities and contribute to the Department of Justice's wider vision of a fair, just and safer community.

2.2 Background

2.2.1 As part of recommendations from the 2000 Criminal Justice Review¹, Community Safety Partnerships were established in every council area and a five year Community Safety Strategy was published in 2003, which set out the direction for reducing crime, the fear of crime and tackling anti-social behaviour.

2.2.2 A further consultation paper was issued in late 2008 seeking views on the way forward for Community Safety in Northern Ireland, with further consultation in light of concerns raised on a number of issues. Following devolution the new Justice Minister decided to look afresh at the priorities for community safety, and has engaged widely with key stakeholders on community safety issues to inform this consultation.

2.3 Policy context

2.3.1 'Community safety' refers to an approach to reducing crime, fear of crime

and anti-social behaviour which provides local solutions to local issues and is delivered through a partnership approach, recognising that addressing crime and anti-social behaviour is not just the responsibility of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and justice agencies, but requires the participation of local communities and the public, private and voluntary and community sectors.

2.3.2 The mission of the Department of Justice is to build a fair, just and safer community, with a range of policies to achieve this vision, which will complement a new Community Safety Strategy. The Justice Minister has announced plans to reduce offending, a review of the youth justice system and a code of practice for victims of crime. In addition, the Justice Bill introduces provisions to improve community safety, by creating new Policing & Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs), which will bring together the work of District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs).

2.3.3 The new Community Safety Strategy will be developed in the context of wider Executive policies, notably the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration, Neighbourhood Renewal strategy and Early Years Strategy, which all reflect the cross-cutting nature of community safety and have a part to play in addressing crime and anti-social behaviour.

1 Review of the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland, 2000

2.4 Aims and objectives

2.4.1 The overall goal for a new Community Safety Strategy is to help build:

- **Safer communities:** with lower levels of crime and anti-social behaviour;
- **Shared communities:** where everyone's rights are respected in a shared, and cohesive community;
- **Confident communities:** in which people feel safe and have confidence in the justice agencies that serve them

The proposals in this consultation paper build upon what has worked in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.

Safer communities

2.4.2 While statistics show Northern Ireland is a relatively safe place to live, with levels of crime and anti-social behaviour on a downward trend in recent years, there is still a lot to do to improve this further. We want to maintain and build upon efforts to reduce crime, and create a safer Northern Ireland with lower levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

The proposals include actions to:

- address anti-social behaviour effectively;
- support early interventions for long term crime reduction;
- reduce the opportunities for crime;
- work in partnership to reduce harm caused by alcohol and drug abuse, and;
- tackle domestic and sexual violence.

Shared communities

2.4.3 One of the distinctive aspects of this consultation in contrast with previous engagements about community safety is

the central focus on shared communities. The Minister of Justice has highlighted the opportunity provided by devolution of policing and justice to address the divisions in society and build towards a shared future. This section of the consultation includes proposals to:

- work to maximise the impact of Government efforts in interface and other areas facing community safety problems;
- work with communities seeking the reconfiguration or removal of physical barriers;
- support communities to overcome community safety related constraints to the use of shared spaces;
- develop a strategic approach to addressing hate crime.

Confident communities

2.4.4 Whilst crime in Northern Ireland has reduced in recent years, surveys indicate that two in three people think crime is worse than two years ago, and people have relatively high levels of worry about certain crimes. This section examines how we can help improve and maintain public confidence in the agencies that address crime and anti-social behaviour, and suggests a number of approaches including proposals to:

- build confidence at regional and local level;
- empower and support local communities;
- encourage reporting of crime and anti-social behaviour;
- improve our understanding of the fear of crime.

These proposals are designed to help to build confident communities, which feel safer and have confidence in the agencies that serve them.

Delivering in partnership

2.4.5 The effective delivery of the strategic outcomes of safer, shared and confident communities will depend on the quality and effectiveness of partnership at all levels between the organisations and sectors with a role in community safety. This section sets out the key drivers for successful delivery, such as resources, communications and capacity building, with specific proposals to:

- work in partnership with the Policing Board and local councils to develop and support new PCSPs to deliver safer, shared and confident communities at local level, through the new Community Safety Strategy;
- continue to work with the third sector to explore its role in the delivery of community safety solutions at a strategic and local level;
- continue to maximise investment in community safety issues by leveraging funding from a range of partners;
- develop and build capacity at all levels to improve the delivery of community safety;
- develop a communications strategy to highlight and share key messages to help reduce crime and make communities feel safer;
- produce a range of short, medium and long term indicators to achieve the strategic outcomes of the new Community Safety Strategy. These will align with other key measures, e.g. Policing Plan confidence measures.

2.5 Equality

2.5.1 The Department of Justice is fully committed to fulfilling its Section 75 obligations on the promotion of equality of

opportunity, good relations and meeting legislative requirements in Northern Ireland. In developing this consultation paper the Department has followed the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's (ECNI) revised Section 75 guidance "**A Guide for Public Authorities**" published in April 2010, as well as the relevant Departmental guidance. The proposals contained in this consultation paper are at a high level and have been screened accordingly. However, as the screening is at the initial stage of the development of the strategy further screening will take place as proposals and associated policies are developed. Opinions received as part of this consultation will play an important part in that process. We are keen to get any views or comments on the initial screening decisions.

2.6 How to respond

2.6.1 The consultation period runs from 20 January 2011 to 15 April 2011, and your views are welcome on the issues and questions raised in the consultation paper.

3. Introduction

3.1 The devolution of policing and justice powers to the Assembly and the appointment of a new Minister of Justice in April 2010 was a major step forward in the governance of Northern Ireland. Devolution provides greater local accountability for the justice system here, with greater opportunities to work across government to build a safer Northern Ireland with lower levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

3.2 A key priority for the Justice Minister, as set out in the Department of Justice addendum to the Programme for Government², is to develop a new Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland. This consultation sets out proposals and invites views on a new strategy for 2011 to 2015, to set the priorities and actions to help create safer, shared and confident communities.

3.3 Our overall goal for a new Community Safety Strategy is to help build:

- **Safer communities:** with lower levels of crime and anti-social behaviour;
- **Shared communities:** where everyone's rights are respected in a shared and cohesive community;
- **Confident communities:** in which people feel safe and have confidence in the justice agencies which serve them.

3.4 This consultation paper sets out our ideas for how we will achieve these ambitious goals, with our approach underpinned by these guiding principles:

- **Partnership working:** with other Departments and making best use of resources to deliver a safer Northern Ireland in a way that reflects the wider objectives of the Executive's Programme for Government;

- **Strategic approach:** ensuring that community safety matters take account of wider Executive policies such as Neighbourhood Renewal and the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration;
- **Early interventions:** recognising the importance of early interventions to help address the underlying risk factors that can lead to crime and anti-social behaviour;
- **Evidence based solutions:** focusing on solutions that prevent and reduce crime which are evidence-based, innovative and responsive to local needs;
- **Balanced approach:** ensuring the right balance of prevention, intervention and enforcement to build community confidence and effectively address community safety issues;
- **Supporting local delivery:** developing and supporting effective partnerships at all levels, in particular through the proposed Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, and providing strategic direction to ensure effective delivery at a local level.

3.5 This approach builds on earlier consultation and discussion with key stakeholders from across the statutory, voluntary, community and private sectors (see Chapter 4) and sets the framework for how we propose to deliver **safer, shared** and **confident** communities. It also reflects the difference that devolution has made, in terms of the process used to shape the consultation, the approach taken and the possible content of the strategy itself.

² http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications/doj_addendum_to_the_pfg.htm

3.6 The new Community Safety Strategy comes at a time of potential change to local and central government structures, which will impact on how we deliver safer, shared and confident communities. The devolution of policing and justice provides the opportunity for greater partnership working at Executive and Departmental level to co-ordinate our approach to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, and to align with linked strategic developments from across the Executive, including the ongoing development and agreement of a Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration, Early Years Strategy, Neighbourhood Renewal strategy and other initiatives.

3.7 Locally, the proposed creation of new Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) will also impact on the delivery of community safety at local level; a Community Safety Strategy will provide the strategic direction for addressing crime and anti-social behaviour but also be sufficiently flexible to

take account of local communities' priorities. Longer term changes to structures at local level, including the development of Community Planning and any potential changes from the Review of Public Administration, will also shape the delivery environment for the new Community Safety Strategy.

3.8 A strategic approach will set the direction for building a safer Northern Ireland, and in a period of reduced public finances, it is important to look critically at what works and allocate resources to where they are needed most and can have the greatest impact.

3.9 As a result, the time is right to set the strategic context for community safety in Northern Ireland for the years ahead, taking account of the longer term changes which will impact on its delivery. The following chapters set out the background to this new approach, and the proposals to create safer, shared and confident communities.

4. Community Safety A New Approach for Northern Ireland

4.1 What is community safety?

4.1.1 “Community safety” involves an approach to preventing, reducing and responding to crime which:

- provides local solutions to local problems;
- focuses on wider social issues, including anti-social behaviour, fear of crime, quality of life issues, and social and economic factors;
- is delivered through a partnership approach, involving the statutory, voluntary and private sectors, as well as community groups and individual citizens, and;
- offers holistic and problem-oriented solutions.

4.1.2 The community safety approach recognises that addressing crime and anti-social behaviour is not just the responsibility of the PSNI and justice agencies, but requires the participation of local communities and the public, private and voluntary and community sectors.

4.2 Scope of the Community Safety Strategy

4.2.1 While the concept of community safety can have a wider scope and address issues around public safety, fire safety, safety in the home and road safety, we propose that the focus of the new Community Safety Strategy should remain on certain types of crime which affect people’s quality of life. The proposals do not attempt to address every crime category recorded by the PSNI; for example serious violent crime and organised crime are addressed through separate approaches by the Department of Justice and its partners.

4.2.2 Equally, the focus of ‘community safety’ should be on prevention, diversion and early interventions. Efforts by other criminal justice agencies to address offending, such as the work of the Probation Board and other agencies, in partnership with voluntary and community groups, have a positive impact on community safety but are beyond the scope of the new Community Safety Strategy.

4.3 Community Safety – Strategic Context

4.3.1 Community safety in Northern Ireland has its roots in the 2000 Criminal Justice Review, which recommended the establishment of a central Community Safety Unit and local Community Safety Partnerships in every council area in Northern Ireland. The review, flowing from the 1998 Belfast Agreement, recognised the importance of ‘everyday’ quality of life issues that affected communities around crime and anti-social behaviour, from domestic burglaries to car crime.

Creating a safer Northern Ireland through partnership – 2003 Community Safety Strategy

4.3.2 A five year Community Safety Strategy³ was published in 2003, flowing from the Criminal Justice Review, which set the direction for reducing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and reducing the fear of crime. The first strategy identified nine crime types for priority action, including youth offending, business crime, domestic violence, and anti-social behaviour. Targets were set in the strategy for reducing vehicle crime by 10% and domestic burglary by 15%, with reductions of 53% (vehicle crime) and 25% (domestic burglary) actually achieved against those targets.

3 *Creating a safer Northern Ireland through partnership: A Strategy Document*, Northern Ireland Office Community Safety Unit, 2003

‘Together, Stronger, Safer’ – 2008/09 Consultation document.

4.3.3 In 2008, proposals for a new Community Safety Strategy were published, seeking views on community safety proposals based on three cross-cutting themes: creating safer neighbourhoods; focus on families and young people; and building strong, confident communities. Many of the 86 respondents to the consultation agreed that the themes were suitable, although some had concerns about the focus on young people and proposed powers to address anti-social behaviour.

4.3.4 As a result of the concerns raised during consultation, further engagement with key stakeholders was conducted to respond to concerns raised and a draft action plan was published in light of the consultation. However, with the prospect of devolution at that time, it was agreed that work on a new Community Safety Strategy should be the responsibility of the devolved Justice Minister.

4.4 Community Safety Strategy – a new approach

4.4.1 Following devolution, Justice Minister David Ford announced his intention to revisit proposals for developing a Community Safety Strategy and look afresh at how we create safer communities.

4.4.2 As a result, decisions have already been taken to signal a new approach. For example, the Minister has reviewed powers that were proposed in ‘Together, Stronger, Safer’ in specific areas covering Parenting Orders, Dispersal Zones and Support Orders. Taking on board the concerns raised during the consultation around these proposals, the Justice Minister decided that these powers

would not be considered in a new strategy, unless there were compelling arguments presented for further consideration. This decision has been broadly welcomed by organisations involved in pre-consultation engagement.

4.4.3 The process to develop a new strategy has also undergone significant change. The Department has undertaken a wide ranging, inclusive process of pre-consultation engagement. This paper has been produced on the basis of discussions with a range of interested groups ahead of the public consultation, to look afresh at how we approach community safety issues in the context of devolved justice powers and the potential for greater co-ordination between Executive Departments. This new approach will continue during the public consultation period, with a range of public events and consultation with voluntary and community groups and communities across Northern Ireland to hear directly from communities affected.

4.4.4 New supporting structures were also put in place at a strategic, policy and operational level to develop proposals in the light of devolution. The Community Safety Forum (CSF)⁴ was expanded to include representatives from key government departments; a Strategic Reference Group was established, with representatives from the voluntary sector, business community, local government, community relations sector and academia, to both quality assure and challenge the thinking behind any proposals; and at an operational level we engaged with a wide range of key organisations and stakeholders with a recognised interest in community safety issues.

⁴ A sub-group of the Criminal Justice Board; the Board brings together the statutory agencies that make up the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland

4.4.5 A discussion paper was circulated to a range of organisations from the statutory, voluntary and community and private sectors with an interest in community safety, setting out some high-level aims, inviting comments on what the priorities should be within the new strategy, and how we could use the opportunity provided by devolution to work in greater partnership. A copy of the discussion paper together with an analysis of responses can be found on the Department's website at www.dojni.gov.uk.

4.4.6 We recognise that the nature of pre-consultation meant that not everyone who may have wished to comment at an early stage would have had the opportunity to do so. However, we consider the representations to be broad enough to provide a sound basis for this public consultation. The feedback

from this process affirmed the view that responsibility for addressing community safety goes beyond the PSNI and criminal justice agencies, and a new strategy should have a greater focus on addressing the underlying causes of crime, with a greater emphasis on early interventions.

4.4.7 The next chapters set out ideas for a new Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland, and reflect the views expressed through the pre-consultation process. We want to hear from you, and welcome your views on how we can create a safer, shared and confident community. Details of how to participate in this consultation can be found at Chapter 10.

5. Safer Communities

Aim: A safer Northern Ireland with lower levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

We will:

- consider views on the approach to tackling anti-social behaviour, and the use of available powers including ASBOs;
- support early interventions with Executive Departments, and promote it at local partnership level;
- work with partners to reduce the opportunities to commit crime:
 - support efforts to 'design out' crime in communities;
 - maintain the historic downward trend in levels of domestic burglary;
 - address business and retail crime to promote safer towns and cities and the night-time economy;
 - increase our efforts to address rural crime;
- work with strategic partners to reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drug abuse;
- lead on addressing domestic and sexual violence and work in partnership with DHSSPS and other agencies.

5.1 Background

5.1.1 Preventing and reducing crime is not just the responsibility of the PSNI or any single agency, but requires a partnership approach involving the public and private sector, community and voluntary groups, and local communities. Effectively addressing crime and anti-social behaviour requires an approach to both reduce the opportunity to commit crime, and to identify and address the longer term risk factors that can increase the likelihood of offending through early interventions.

5.1.2 The approach to Community Safety to date has mainly focussed on reducing the opportunity to commit crime, and there have been some significant successes over the period of the first Community Safety Strategy, for example in reducing car crime and domestic burglary. We will continue to build upon what works in reducing and preventing crime, and work in greater partnership with other Executive Departments to create safer

communities over the long term particularly in the areas of health, education and addressing inequality and social disadvantage.

5.2 Crime in Northern Ireland

5.2.1 Northern Ireland is a comparatively safe place to live, with crime levels almost one quarter lower than in England & Wales. Recorded crime has been on a downward trend in Northern Ireland in recent years, having fallen from a high in 2002/03 when 142,496 offences were recorded. The level of crime recorded in 2009/10 was almost a quarter lower than the peak recorded in 2002/03 and was the second lowest level since 2000/01 (the lowest being in 2007/08). However, in recent years (2007/08 onwards) crime levels have remained relatively constant at about 110,000 a year.

5.2.2 Recorded levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents have also been decreasing in recent years. In 2009/10 there

were just over 82,000 ASB incidents recorded by the police compared to almost 100,000 two years previously. We want to build on this success and continue the downward trend in recorded crime and anti-social behaviour levels over the longer term. We also recognise that a large proportion of crime goes unreported and people's perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour may differ from actual levels of crime; chapter 7 sets out proposals to raise awareness and improve community confidence, with communities which feel safer and have confidence in the agencies that serve them.

5.2.3 The following sections look at how we can address a range of community safety issues, with proposals to:

- address anti-social behaviour effectively;
- Support early interventions for long term crime reduction;
- Reduce the opportunities for crime;
- Work in partnership to reduce harm caused by alcohol and drug abuse, and;
- Tackle domestic and sexual violence.

5.2.4 These proposals set the overall context for what we consider to be the strategic priorities over the longer term to help create safer communities, with an evidence-based approach to preventing and reducing crime. The new Community Safety Strategy should also be flexible enough to meet local priorities and be responsive enough at strategic and local level to address emerging issues over the longer term.

5.3 Effectively addressing Anti-Social Behaviour

Definition

5.3.1 'Anti-social behaviour' can mean

different things to different people, with understanding of what constitutes anti-social behaviour (ASB) influenced by a number of factors including the context, location, and quality of life expectations. As a result, what might be considered as ASB by one person can be seen as acceptable behaviour by another. This subjective nature can make it difficult to identify a common understanding of anti-social behaviour.

Strategic goals

5.3.2 The Department of Justice has plans in place to tackle anti-social behaviour and to reduce the number of recorded ASB incidents by 15% (against 2007/08 levels) by March 2011. The PSNI, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and District Councils also have the same target, reflecting their role in addressing anti-social behaviour.

Approach to ASB

5.3.3 Our approach to addressing anti-social behaviour has been to work closely with partner organisations at regional and local level to deliver actions based on three themes:

- **Prevention** - a combination of capacity building measures to increase community confidence and encourage community involvement in crime prevention and the provision of physical measures to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour and crime. Examples of such measures include community safety wardens, Neighbourhood Watch, the Clean Neighbourhood Programme and CCTV;
- **Intervention** – including diversionary initiatives to reduce the potential for young people to become involved in ASB and criminal activity through to a graduated intervention from warning

letters to Acceptable Behaviour Contracts to address the behaviour and provide solutions;

- **Enforcement** – where earlier interventions have not successfully addressed the issue, Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) may be applied for to protect communities

ASB Forums

5.3.4 PSNI, the Housing Executive, local councils and the Youth Justice Agency meet regularly in ASB Forums, with other partners such as social services, educational welfare or mental health professionals. These forums allow agencies to discuss individual cases of ASB as well as local hotspots and priorities, to share information and agree actions for addressing local problems in a partnership approach.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

5.3.5 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), introduced in Northern Ireland in 2004, are civil orders granted by a court to protect the public from behaviour that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress. They last for a minimum of two years and can ban the individual from repeating the offending behaviour, or prevent them from entering a specified area. Breach of any of the terms of the order is a criminal offence. The Department of Justice has been notified by PSNI, the Housing Executive and District Councils that there have been 122 ASBOs issued in Northern Ireland between 2005 and 2009.

5.3.6 ASBOs were subject to some criticism following their introduction in Northern Ireland in 2004. However, a 2008 Criminal Justice Inspectorate report⁵ found that ASBOs were a useful tool in tackling anti-social behaviour, and generally used as a tool

of last resort, with time given for alternative approaches and support for individuals involved in ASB.

5.3.7 In July 2010 the Home Secretary announced a review of the range of powers available to tackle anti-social behaviour in England & Wales. As justice powers have now been devolved, that review does not extend to Northern Ireland. Any amendment to the law in Northern Ireland would require legislation approved by the Northern Ireland Assembly. The law on anti-social behaviour in Northern Ireland continues to be governed by the Anti-Social Behaviour (Northern Ireland) Order 2004.

5.3.8 This consultation provides an opportunity to consider proposals to address anti-social behaviour which are suited to the needs of local communities in Northern Ireland and to consider the powers available, including ASBOs. We welcome your views on the questions below.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Q.1 What should the priorities be for addressing anti-social behaviour? How can we best measure success in tackling it?

Q.2 Do you agree that the prevention-intervention-enforcement approach to anti-social behaviour is the right one? What more needs to be done?

Q.3 How can we support local communities to address anti-social behaviour?

Q.4 What is your view on the effectiveness of ASBOs in addressing anti-social behaviour? What, if any, alternatives to ASBOs should we consider?

Q.5 Are there any other powers that should be considered to address anti-social behaviour?

⁵ Anti-Social Behaviour Orders: An inspection of the operation and effectiveness of ASBOs, Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, October 2008

5.4 Early interventions for long term crime reduction

5.4.1 An effective approach to preventing and reducing crime over the longer term should consider how best to address the underlying causes and risk factors that can lead to offending. The new Community Safety Strategy will consider how we can support early interventions, either at early years or other stages, to reduce those factors.

Early Years Interventions

5.4.2 There is strong evidence linking criminal behaviour to early childhood experiences and family surroundings. Studies have shown that early years intervention reduce the risk of involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour in later life.

5.4.3 The rationale for early years interventions goes well beyond the potential for reduced criminal and anti-social behaviour in later life; the justice system has a limited role in providing early years interventions, and it is rarely appropriate for the justice agencies to engage at such an early age. However, we recognise the wider societal benefits of early years support and the link between intervention and reducing the risk of crime and anti-social behaviour.

5.4.4 Executive Departments are investing in early years support, for example through Sure Start and the Department of Education's Early Years Strategy, in recognition of the benefits of such intensive support in the short and longer term.

5.4.5 Case study - The Perry Preschool Project, a US-based scheme, provided high quality pre-school education to a group of children and followed the progress of those who participated back in the late 1960's, with the most recent

findings relating back to the original group at age 40. The project found that the life chances of those who participated in a child development programme had improved relative to those who did not participate. The cost-benefit analysis showed a £7 return for every pound invested.

5.4.6 Case study - Another long term study of prenatal and early childhood home visitation by nurses in the United States was found to reduce the number of subsequent pregnancies, the use of welfare, child abuse and neglect, and criminal behaviour on the part of low-income, unmarried mothers for up to 15 years after the birth of the first child.

Early Stage Interventions

5.4.7 Early intervention to reduce the risk factors that lead to offending are not just limited to an individual's early years. Interventions can occur at any time during a person's lifetime, and are usually focussed on key transition periods and 'pathways' at various stages, e.g. moving from primary to secondary level education; beginning adolescence; experimenting with alcohol or illicit drugs, or obtaining a driving licence. These 'pathways' are cross-roads, which in certain circumstances, can lead to exposure to risk factors that could lead to offending. Early intervention at these stages has been shown to reduce the risk of offending, or further offending.

5.4.8 For example, community addiction workers and PSNI custody staff work together in three locations as part of Drug Arrest Referral Schemes to offer access to health services for those offenders whose illicit drug use can lead them to commit crime. These projects aim to tackle the underlying causes of crime by the provision of treatment. Research studies into the treatment of offenders for drug and

alcohol issues suggest that for every £1 spend on treatment, £2.50 is saved elsewhere.

5.4.9 Another example is Child Intervention Panels (CIPs), which are being piloted in Northern Ireland to identify the most vulnerable children under 18 years and to provide them with coordinated services in order to divert them from offending or other problematic behaviours. CIPs are compatible with a range of strategies in Northern Ireland, including the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People and will link with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including Community Safety Partnerships, Family Support Panels and Anti-Social Behaviour Forums.

5.4.10 Youth Conferencing Schemes could also be considered a form of early stage intervention, whereby young people who have offended are challenged to face up to the emotional and physical consequences of their actions and to make amends to the victim. The scheme also provides support for the young person through programmes and services that meets their needs, to divert them from future offending behaviour, providing a successful early stage intervention to steer the young person away from a pathway of offending.

5.4.11 *We will work with other Executive Departments to consider how we can support early intervention and promote it at local partnership level where appropriate. We will continue to support and develop early stage intervention projects, and review what works in early stage provision.*

EARLY INTERVENTIONS - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Q.6 Do you agree with the greater emphasis on early intervention to help reduce the risk of crime and anti-social behaviour?

Q.7 How can the Department of Justice support early years and early stage intervention approaches?

5.5 Reducing the opportunities for crime

Designing out crime and addressing environmental factors

5.5.1 Designing out crime involves planned changes to the built or natural environment to reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour. Designing out crime provides sustainable, long term benefits to neighbourhoods and communities by helping to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

5.5.2 At a practical level, all social housing in Northern Ireland must achieve 'Secured by Design' status before it can be funded. This will ensure that the risk of burglary is reduced through the provision of high standard door and window locks. PSNI have been working in partnership with the Planning Service to provide community safety advice on new domestic and commercial property, allowing PSNI to consider proposed layout of areas to ensure that they are open and lighting is adequate and so reduce the risk, and fear, of crime.

5.5.3 *We will continue to work with PSNI and other Executive Departments to ensure that designing out crime principles are applied, where appropriate, to help reduce the risk of crime and anti-social behaviour.*

Addressing environmental crime

5.5.4 The physical appearance of a neighbourhood can have an impact on levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in the area with graffiti, signs of vandalism, poor street lighting and broken windows giving an appearance of neglect, which in turn can lead to crime and disorder.

5.5.5 Community Safety Partnerships deliver projects to help to clean up communities and remove the appearance of crime and disorder, helping to improve the quality of life of residents. Another example is the Reimaging Communities programme which places artists in the heart of communities to work with local people to tackle visible signs of sectarianism and racism to create a more welcoming environment for everyone.

5.5.6 At a strategic level the Department of the Environment's (DoE) Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill will address a wide range of low level environmental crime issues such as graffiti, fly-posting, littering, dog-fouling, noise and other nuisance issues, abandoned vehicles and also anti-social and environmental problems arising in back alleys or entries. The Bill will strengthen the powers available to District councils to deal with such environmental crime issues more effectively, and to provide local solutions for local communities.

5.5.7 *We will work with DoE and other partners to support the implementation of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill.*

Tackling domestic burglary

5.5.8 The first Community Safety Strategy included specific measures to address domestic burglary, with a target to reduce domestic burglary by 15% by March 2007 against 2001/02 levels. In that period domestic burglary was reduced by 25%, then increased by 8% over the next two years before dropping slightly in 2009/10. This recent increase, following a significant decline indicates the need to continue to proactively address domestic burglary, and to build on the partnership with PSNI, the Policing Board and local deliverers.

5.5.9 PSNI estimate that around 40% of domestic burglaries in Northern Ireland occur because householders fail to close or lock an accessible door or window. The **Close It Lock It Check It** scheme, an awareness campaign involving DOJ, PSNI and NI Policing Board, has helped to raise awareness of the issue and of the need to secure property. Likewise, the PSNI's Quick-Check scheme, supported by the DOJ, aims to prevent bogus callers by providing a 24-hour telephone service to allow householders to make a call to verify the individual identity of anyone calling at their door.

5.5.10 *We will continue to work with partners in PSNI, the Policing Board and other Executive Departments to consider how we can stabilise and reverse recent increases in domestic burglary through prevention, enforcement, awareness raising and other approaches.*

Promoting Safety in town and city centres

5.5.11 The business community is a key partner in creating safer communities in Northern Ireland. The main forum for addressing retail crime at a strategic level is the Business Crime Partnership (BCPNI).

The Partnership, chaired by a representative from the private sector, provides a forum for representatives of the business community to work together with PSNI, government departments and other statutory agencies to set the strategic priorities for addressing business and retail crime.

5.5.12 A range of initiatives have been undertaken in recent years to make our town and city centres safer and promote the daytime and night-time economy. Over £2million has been invested in CCTV cameras in town centres across Northern Ireland, and DOJ is funding projects to reduce shoplifting and retail crime, as well as supporting 'Business Watch' schemes with partners in the business community, PSNI and the Policing Board.

5.5.13 The recently introduced Justice Bill also proposes new powers for the police to tackle shoplifting by way of Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). PSNI will be able to issue FPNs of £40 or £80, for first time shoplifting offences involving goods of up to £100 which are recovered in a re-saleable condition or where the offender offers to pay for the item.

Case study – In 2006 the Craigavon Community Safety Partnership, in partnership with the PSNI, Council and licencees, worked together to deliver a two-stranded approach to address crime and disorder around the night-time economy in Lurgan. The first strand involved a licencee forum to bring together all the relevant partners to discuss build relationships and develop solutions to the issues. The second strand of the project was to provide a Get Home Safe bus to remove large crowds of people from the area in a safe and timely manner to prevent crime and disorder. Evaluation of the scheme shows that incidents decreased by half immediately

following the introduction of the scheme, and a decrease was maintained over the longer term.

5.5.14 *We will work with partners in the business community through the Business Crime Partnership to develop strategic solutions to existing and emerging issues facing the business community in Northern Ireland. We will evaluate current projects and support new initiatives to address business and retail crime to promote the economic development of villages, towns and cities across Northern Ireland.*

Rural crime

5.5.15 A new Community Safety Strategy needs to take account of the specific needs of rural communities across Northern Ireland. A number of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), in conjunction with other stakeholders including District Policing Partnerships and the PSNI, are undertaking local initiatives providing crime prevention advice to rural communities with the aim of tackling theft of farm vehicles and machinery. For example Strabane CSP has developed a cross border farm security initiative and produced a Farm Security booklet, in co-operation with the PSNI and An Garda Síochána, which offers crime and theft prevention advice. At a regional level DOJ is represented on both the Interdepartmental Committee on Rural Policy (IDCRP) and the recently established Rural White Paper Project Board.

5.5.16 *We will continue to ensure that CSPs in rural areas work with the local community in addressing their unique community safety needs. At a strategic level DOJ will work with DARD so that community safety matters are reflected in the Rural White Paper.*

REDUCING CRIME – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Q.8 Do you agree with our approach to reducing crime? What else can we do in partnership with the community to reduce the risk of crime?

Q.9 What more needs to be done to address the unique community safety needs of rural areas?

5.6 Supporting efforts to reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drug abuse

5.6.1 The harms related to alcohol and drug misuse go beyond the health risks to the individual – families, friends, communities and society as a whole are all affected. A recently published report⁶ put the social cost of alcohol misuse alone at as much as £900 million pounds every year, and the misuse of both alcohol and drugs impact on community safety, crime and the fear of crime, and the resilience of our communities.

5.6.2 At a strategic level the DOJ works with DHSSPS and other partners through the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs 2006-2011 (NSD) to reduce the level of alcohol and drug related harm in Northern Ireland.

5.6.3 The NSD outlines a number of key priorities and activities that will be taken forward by the broad range of statutory, community and voluntary organisations working in partnership. The strategy is currently being refreshed, with a final version expected to be in place in 2011 and implemented over the following five years.

5.6.4 A key activity within the NSD includes

tackling the issue of young people and alcohol. The 'Addressing Young People's Drinking in Northern Ireland' Action Plan was launched in 2009 which sets out actions to reduce demand and restrict the supply of alcohol to young people. One of the first key activities to be targeted under this Action Plan was young people's drinking and this is represented by the "You, Your Child and Alcohol" campaign that encourages parents to talk about the issue with their children.

5.6.5 It is proposed that through the NSD and the Community Safety Strategy we will continue to stress the importance of addressing those issues which fall within the domain of the law and criminal justice. As well as continuing those efforts aimed at preventing drug misuse, the strategy will encourage the provision of a range of diversionary activities, supporting and empowering communities to identify local needs around alcohol and drug related issues, addressing anti-social behaviour, reducing the supply of illicit drugs and tackling irresponsible (particularly underage) sales of alcohol.

5.6.6 We will continue to support community safety initiatives such as arrest referral schemes, treatment and in the prison setting, which aim to reduce the level of harm associated with alcohol and drug use with an increased emphasis on diversion to treatment.

5.6.7 The Department of Social Development recently introduced the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill into the Assembly. It proposes new enforcement powers over licensed premises for the PSNI and a new penalty points system for breaches of the

licensing law. More recently new proposals to address alcohol promotions (to ban 'buy one drink, get one free' promotions) were included in this Bill. It is envisaged that this legislation will lead to a reduction in underage drinking, contribute to reducing alcohol fuelled anti-social behaviour and tackle retail premises that persist in breaching the licensing laws.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG MISUSE - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Q 10. Do you agree with the proposals for preventing and addressing this issue? What more should we be doing?

5.7 Tackling domestic and sexual violence

5.7.1 Domestic violence and abuse is essentially a pattern of behaviour which is characterized by the exercise of control and the misuse of power by one person over another within an intimate relationship or a family. It is usually frequent and persistent. It can include violence by a son, daughter or any other person who has a close or blood relationship with the victim. Domestic violence occurs right across society. It knows no boundaries as regards age, gender, race, ethnic or religious group, sexual orientation, wealth, disability or geography, and whilst the majority of victims are female, there are also male victims and victims in same sex relationships.

5.7.2 The abuse can go beyond physical violence. It can involve emotional abuse, for example undermining of self-confidence or threats to others, including children.

Domestic violence is a crime and is not acceptable in any circumstances. Government is committed to working in partnership

with other in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors to tackle this heinous crime. At a strategic level, the DOJ and DHSSPS, lead on 'Tackling Violence at Home', a multi-agency, cross-Government strategy for addressing domestic violence and abuse in Northern Ireland.

5.7.3 An example of effective multi-agency co-operation for addressing domestic violence has been the implementation of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC) across Northern Ireland. The main aim of a MARAC is to reduce the risk of serious harm or homicide for a victim and to increase the safety, health and well being of victims – adults and children. In a MARAC local agencies will meet to discuss the highest risk victims in their area. They will share information about the risks faced by those victims, the actions needed to ensure their safety, and the resources available locally to create a safety plan for that victim.

5.7.4 Public protection arrangements (PPANI), provided by the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008, are dedicated to reducing the risk posed to the public, particularly to vulnerable groups and individuals, by assessing and managing the risk posed by sexual offenders and certain violent offenders. MARAC closely links with PPANI, with persons convicted or interviewed by PSNI (with a view to a prosecution) for an alleged or suspected of a violent offence in domestic or family circumstances subject to referral into PPANI.

5.7.5 DOJ and DHSSPS also jointly lead on the five year Regional Strategy to tackle Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland, published in 2008. It seeks to raise awareness of the prevalence of sexual violence and abuse in society, encourage the reporting of

offences and concerns about children at risk, implement prevention strategies, and support victims and their families through the justice process.

5.7.6 The strategic action plan for 2010-12 is due to be published soon, and Ministers have agreed to develop a single Sexual and Domestic Violence Strategy when the current strategies end in 2013.

5.7.7 We will lead on addressing domestic and sexual violence and work in partnership with DHSSPS and other agencies to develop a single strategy by 2013.

TACKLING DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Q.11 Do you agree with the approach to tackling domestic and sexual violence? What other approaches should be considered?

6. Shared Communities

Aim: A society where every person is safe to live free from threat or intimidation, free to take employment or travel to work without fear and free to access and utilise all public services and facilities in all places and at all times.

We will:

- engage with government departments, service providers and communities to maximise the impact and focus of the efforts of government in interface and other areas facing significant community safety problems exacerbated by economic and social disadvantage and the legacy of the conflict;
- work with communities seeking the reconfiguration or removal of physical barriers and engage with other agencies to address inhibitors to progress;
- support communities in seeking to overcome community safety related constraints to the use of shared spaces;
- develop and publish draft proposals for a strategic approach to addressing hate crime.

6.1 Background

6.1.1 The devolution of policing and justice provides an important opportunity to address the deep divisions in our society and contribute to a shared future, with shared and safer communities. A new Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland can contribute to building that shared future by addressing issues of prejudice and division and by working to support the efforts of many to overcome the physical and psychological barriers which exist in some communities.

6.1.2 Solutions to the most deep-rooted problems facing our communities cannot be owned or delivered by any one government department, or indeed by government alone. Shared approaches to shared problems requires co-operation and partnership at many levels: government; service delivery partners in the statutory or private sector, community or voluntary groups; and critically

with local communities ensuring they play a leading part in defining priorities and needs and contributing to decisions about how those can most effectively be met within a constrained resourcing environment.

6.1.3 That shared approach requires clear and reasonable expectations about what government can fund, support or deliver. The role that communities themselves can play in addressing some of the problems they face also needs to be identified and recognised. But in order for that to happen effectively, there is a role for government to partner with communities, support new capability and leadership and enable medium and long term development and planning rather than relying on a series of short term initiatives. The Department of Justice is committed to playing a full role within that broader governmental work and sees the new Policing and Community Safety Partnerships

as an important means of engaging with communities and of delivering programmes which have been designed to meet the needs of those communities locally.

6.1.4 To be effective in contributing to shared communities, community safety needs to be part of a wider cohesive approach by Government through programmes and policies such as Neighbourhood Renewal, urban and Rural Regeneration, and the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Programme (CSI). In this way community safety will contribute to progress on issues like economic development, housing, shared space, and employment growth. The Justice Minister has begun to discuss with a number of Executive colleagues how best to work with and across communities.

6.2 Interface areas and shared space

6.2.1 The Department also has an important role – alongside other government departments - in those areas which suffer from the impact of community division including particularly interface areas and those most affected by the legacy of conflict. There has been considerable investment over years aimed at improving the delivery of services and the physical environment in those interface areas which face some of the most acute divisions in our society. Many of those areas face multiple difficulties resulting from high levels of social deprivation and economic disadvantage.

6.2.2 These social factors are often linked to problems of criminality and anti-social behaviour or the fear of them and these issues cannot be addressed in isolation. Whilst there is already a huge amount of positive work being done through local community groups

working within their own communities and beyond, it is equally clear that significant problems remain to be addressed.

6.2.3 We will engage with government departments, service providers and communities to maximise the impact and focus of the efforts of government in interface and other areas facing significant community safety problems exacerbated by economic and social disadvantage and the legacy of the conflict.

6.2.4 The legacy of division and segregation is often still obvious – for example, in the contention over some public processions and for communities that continue to see the need for physical barriers of one sort or another at an interface in their area. These physical barriers have in the past been known as ‘peacewalls’ although the term appears increasingly outdated.

6.2.5 Northern Ireland has been characterised by a reliance on permanent security barriers to provide safety in a context of violence and conflict. The Department of Justice is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of 47 such structures.

6.2.6 The Department is committed to facilitating alternative mechanisms which can enable safety for communities. Indeed, the Department is committed to supporting a transition from the view that safety is achieved through separation, towards the view that safety is better achieved through sharing. It is recognised that approaches in interface areas leading to changes to the physical infrastructure, including barriers, and the creation of shared spaces need to assure the safety of all those living in the shadow of these barriers and to be supported by those

communities. The Department will work with communities seeking the reconfiguration or removal of physical barriers including working with other government agencies to address inhibitors to progress in a concerted and innovative way.

6.2.7 *We will work with communities seeking the reconfiguration or removal of physical barriers and engage with other agencies to address inhibitors to progress.*

6.2.8 The promotion of shared space is an issue which goes well beyond areas with physical barriers at interfaces. While it is the responsibility of other departments to lead the creation and use of shared space in communities for employment, leisure and access to services, the Department of Justice has a contribution to make in terms of supporting communities to overcome barriers to the use of shared spaces where they relate to community safety issues. In some cases, the development and use of shared spaces are inhibited by displays of flags and emblems used as an expression of identity in local areas. In other areas, geographic barriers such as rivers or major roads can reinforce a sense of separateness. While lead responsibility for such matters falls to other departments, the DOJ will work with those departments to address any issues which fall within its remit.

6.2.9 The next section of this consultation addresses explicitly the approaches which could help to support the development of confident communities and to overcome fear of crime issues. In addition, by work through policing and community safety partnerships communities can seek the prioritisation of initiatives which can support shared space approaches.

6.2.10 *We will support communities in seeking to overcome community safety related constraints to the use of shared spaces.*

6.3 Hate Crime

6.3.1 Northern Ireland is a much more diverse society than it has ever been, with new residents enriching the economic, cultural and social fabric of our society. The growing diversity of society in Northern Ireland over the past decade has presented many benefits to communities - cultural, economic and social. Diversity also brings challenges to society, with increasing tensions within rapidly changes communities manifesting itself in hate crimes.

6.3.2 Hate crime is any crime which is motivated by prejudice or hostility towards a person because of their actual or perceived: race, nationality or ethnic group; political opinion; sexual orientation or gender identity; disability; or religion or faith.

6.3.3 Hate crimes are an attack on someone because of their identity, and as such can have a devastating impact on victims. The impact of a hate crime goes beyond the victim to their immediate family and other members of their 'group', to the wider community and society as a whole.

6.3.4 There were over 2,148 hate crimes reported to the PSNI in 2009/10; over half (1264) were sectarian hate crimes, with one third (712) racist crimes, and 112 homophobic hate crimes. There were also recorded disability (41), transgender (4) and faith (15) hate crimes. The level of recorded hate crime has remained steady in recent years, but hate crimes, by their very nature, are under-reported for a range of reasons.

6.3.5 The justice agencies have a key role to play in tackling hate crime, from investigation of hate crimes, support for victims, through to prosecution and conviction of perpetrators. Progress made by these agencies in tackling hate crime has recently been reviewed by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate which has identified significant progress in a range of areas while calling for further improvements in other aspects such as the need to develop across the Criminal Justice system a strategic approach to addressing hate crime.

6.3.6 There are many good examples of partnership working at local level to confront hate crime. Belfast Community Safety Partnership has developed a Tension Monitoring model, which acts as an early warning to any potential flashpoints during the year, and brings together relevant agencies to ensure that issues are addressed at an early stage.

6.3.7 The new Community Safety Strategy provides an opportunity to set a strategic approach to tackling hate crime, in line with the goals of the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration. We propose working with a wide range of partners to develop an action plan to address a range of priority issues, which may include:

- increasing public awareness of all types of hate crime and the harm it causes;
- supporting victims of hate crime;
- encouraging reporting of hate crimes, particularly those which are particularly under-reported, e.g. disability hate crime;
- working with communities to prevent hate crime;
- supporting efforts to undertake research on hate crime perpetrators;
- ensuring an effective legal framework for hate crime.

6.3.8 We will develop and publish draft proposals for a strategic approach to addressing hate crime.

SHARED COMMUNITIES – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Q.12 Do you agree that the Community Safety Strategy should recognise the particular challenges facing interface areas? Are there particular approaches you believe should be adopted?

Q.13 Can more be done to enable the safety of all in communities without relying on physical barriers?

Q.14 Do you agree with the proposals on addressing hate crime? What more do we need to do?

7. Confident Communities

Aim: to build confident communities, which feel safe and have confidence in the justice agencies which serve them

We will:

- support efforts to improve public confidence in the criminal justice system;
- support efforts to build the capacity of local communities;
- continue to support the rollout and development of Community Safety Warden schemes by local partnerships;
- explore ways in which the principles of community-based restorative justice can be used to address local crime;
- continue to promote Neighbourhood Watch and other 'Watch' schemes with our partners to communities across Northern Ireland;
- encourage reporting of crime, particularly for those crime types which are underreported;
- ensure that the safety of older people remains a priority;
- consider our approach to measuring and understanding the fear of crime.

7.1 Background

7.1.1 Crime has fallen in Northern Ireland in recent years: recorded crime has decreased by around 8% in the last five years, and anti-social behaviour has fallen by 17% in the last two years⁷. Despite this downward trend, almost two in three respondents to the Northern Ireland Crime Survey believe that crime is either a little or a lot worse than it was two years ago⁸. Confidence in the effectiveness of the criminal justice system could be improved, and it is estimated that less than half of all crimes are reported to the PSNI.

7.1.2 This section examines what would improve and maintain public confidence in the agencies that address crime and anti-social behaviour, and suggests a number of approaches including proposals to:

- build confidence at regional and local level;
- empower and support local

communities;

- encourage reporting of crime and anti-social behaviour;
- improve our understanding of the fear of crime.

7.1.3 These proposals are designed to help to build confident communities, which feel safer and have confidence in the agencies that serve them.

7.2 Building confidence at regional and local level

7.2.1 Safer communities depend on the willingness of people to assist the police service and criminal justice agencies, for example to report crime. This requires communities to be confident in the police and other agencies and their ability to address crime and anti-social behaviour. This could be done at a local level by the local partnership

⁷ Anti-social behaviour incidents have been systematically recorded since 2007/08

⁸ Perceptions of crime: findings from the 2008/09 Northern Ireland Crime Survey, NIO Statistics and Research Branch

dealing with community safety matters so that a very local focus is given to enhancing confidence. At a regional level the Department will work with PSNI, Policing Board as well as umbrella organisations such as NICVA.

7.2.2 *We will support efforts to improve public confidence in the criminal justice system.*

7.3 Empowering communities

7.3.1 Local communities play a crucial role in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in their areas in partnership with the PSNI and other agencies. The current Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) are the main forum for communities to raise the issues that matter to them. There are a range of other formal and informal structures that help in creating safer, shared and confident communities.

7.3.2 We will support efforts to strengthen the skills, abilities and confidence of people and community groups to take effective action and work in partnership with local agencies to address local priorities around crime and anti-social behaviour. For example, community toolkits and case studies could be developed to provide a guide for communities to address anti-social behaviour.

7.3.3 *We will support efforts to build the capacity of local communities to effectively identify and address local priorities around crime and anti-social behaviour.*

Community Safety Wardens

7.3.4 Community Safety Wardens operate in a number of district council areas and provide a highly visible presence in targeted hot spot areas to address levels of anti-social

behaviour, crime, environmental damage and deterioration in public order. Wardens work closely with local communities and act as a link with statutory agencies. A range of enforcement powers can be made available to Wardens, as determined locally by councils based on local need.

7.3.5 *We will continue to support the rollout and development of Community Safety Warden schemes by local partnerships.*

Case Study - Derry City Wardens

The Community Safety Wardens were appointed by Derry City Council Community Safety Partnership in 2006, and began patrols in September of that year.

Patrolling around the University area of the city between 10:00pm and – 5:00am, Sunday – Thursday, the wardens are tasked with helping to reduce antisocial behaviour, low-level crime, reduction of late night noise and environmental issues. Providing these high visibility patrols has helped to reassure the local community and the student community, and has helped to build relations between them. Working in partnership with University of Ulster, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, PSNI, and various departments within Derry City Council the wardens continue to cement the partnerships in place as well as seeking to build others. The initiative is targeted at students returning to the University Campus from a night out.

Community Restorative Justice

7.3.6 Sixteen community-based restorative justice schemes have been accredited under the Government Protocol for CBRJ Schemes since it was first published in 2007. Dealing with issues of local crime in communities remains a small part of their workload but their work has increasingly expanded into the area of neighbourhood renewal, mediation, training

in restorative principles and diversionary youth work. Their principal funding is now received from the Department of Social Development for delivery of neighbourhood renewal projects. The effective use of CBRJ can have a positive impact on public confidence in the criminal justice system.

7.3.7 *We will, together with PSNI, NIHE and other partners, continue to explore ways in which the principles of community-based restorative justice can be used to address local community safety issues.*

Watch Schemes

7.3.8 Neighbourhood Watch schemes help reduce crime, reduce fear of crime and promote social cohesion in local communities. Other types of Watch schemes including Business Watch and Campus Watch have also been established in Northern Ireland, and have been shown to have an impact on crime levels and community confidence. DOJ, in partnership with PSNI and the Policing Board, promote and support the development of 'Watch' schemes, with over 600 Neighbourhood Watch schemes across every district council area in Northern Ireland.

7.3.9 *We will continue to work with our partners in PSNI and the Policing Board to promote Neighbourhood Watch and other 'Watch' schemes to communities across Northern Ireland.*

7.4 Encouraging reporting of crime and anti-social behaviour

7.4.1 It is estimated that under half (45%) of all crimes are reported in Northern Ireland; the main reasons people give for not reporting crime are that the police could not have done

anything or would not have been interested, according to the Northern Ireland Crime Survey.

7.4.2 We will assist efforts by the PSNI and other agencies to encourage the reporting of crime and anti-social behaviour; as public confidence grows and more people are likely to report crime there may be a corresponding increase in recorded crime statistics. We propose that a particular focus is given to those crime types thought to be under-reported, such as hate crime, domestic and sexual abuse and sexual abuse.

7.4.3 *We will continue to work with partners including PSNI, Policing Board and Crimestoppers to encourage reporting, particularly for those crime types which are underreported.*

Reassuring the Community

7.4.4 In 2009 the Government published 'Safer Ageing: a strategy and action plan for the safety of older people', setting out actions to help older people be safer and feel safer in their homes, neighbourhoods and communities. We recognise that not all older people are vulnerable; indeed many older people play an active role in their communities and can make a positive contribution to creating safer and shared confident communities. We have supported intergenerational projects at regional and local level to build relationships across the generations and address fear of crime and perceptions around anti-social behaviour.

7.4.5 However, whilst the likelihood of an older person becoming a victim of crime is very low, the impact of a violent crime or crime such as domestic burglary can have a disproportionate impact on the victim, can

have a greater impact on the victim's ability to recover and cause disproportionate levels of worry amongst other older people.

7.4.6 We will continue to work with our partners in the age sector to ensure that the safety of older people remains a priority, and work with OFMDFM and other departments in the review 'Ageing in an inclusive society' strategy, to co-ordinate cross-departmental actions to address older people's issues .

7.5 Improving our understanding of the fear of crime

7.5.1 The Northern Ireland Crime Survey measures the impact of fear of crime on quality of life, with 64% of respondents saying that 'fear of crime' has a minimal impact on their quality of life, 31% saying it has a moderate effect, and only 5% believing that it has a great impact.

7.5.2 The notion of fear of crime and people's perceptions of the risk of becoming a victim of crime are complex issues, and are linked to a range of personal, environmental and socio-economic factors including age, gender, health and income levels.

7.5.3 Fear and worry about crime can affect different sections of the community in different ways; older people, for example, can be disproportionately affected by fear, with an impact on their health and wellbeing. The physical appearance of a neighbourhood and the sense of 'disorder' can contribute to levels of fear.

7.5.4 We will consider our approach to measuring and understanding the fear of crime and ensure that we effectively communicate with communities to ensure people have an accurate understanding of the risk and likelihood of crime in their communities.

CONFIDENT COMMUNITIES – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Q 15. What more could be done to empower local communities?

Q 16. How might we encourage reporting of crime and anti-social behaviour?

Q 17. What crime types might we prioritise to encourage reporting?

Q 18. How can we continue to address concerns around community safety issues, including those of older people?

Q 19. How can we gain a greater understanding of issues around the fear of crime to better address it?

8. Delivering In Partnership

Aim: to ensure the effective delivery and implementation of the new Community Safety Strategy

We will:

- work in partnership with the Policing Board and local councils to develop and support new PCSPs to deliver safer, shared and confident communities at local level;
- continue to work with the third sector to explore its role in the delivery of community safety solutions at a strategic and local level;
- continue to maximise investment in community safety issues by leveraging funding from a range of partners;
- develop and build capacity at all levels to improve the delivery of community safety;
- develop a communications strategy to highlight and share key messages to help reduce crime and make communities feel safer;
- produce a range of short, medium and long term indicators to achieve the strategic outcomes of the new Community Safety Strategy. These will align with other key measures, e.g. Policing Plan confidence measures.

8.1 Background

8.1.1 The effective delivery of the strategic outcomes of safer, shared and confident communities will depend on the quality and effectiveness of partnership at all levels between the organisations and sectors with a role in community safety. This chapter sets out the key drivers for successful delivery, such as resources, communications and capacity building.

8.2 Changing Delivery environment

8.2.1 At a strategic level, the devolution of policing and justice powers provides the context for greater co-ordination and partnership working across Government. The Department of Justice will play a key role in ensuring that the Community Safety Strategy fits within wider policy directions, both within justice and policing and wider Executive aims.

8.2.2 The DOJ addendum to the Programme for Government⁹ includes a focus on reducing offending through a new Offender Management Strategic Framework and a review of youth justice, both of which will influence the new Community Safety Strategy.

8.2.3 And there are clear links between community safety and a range of Executive strategies and priorities, notably on issues such as the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration, the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People, Neighbourhood Renewal and Urban Regeneration, strategic efforts to reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drugs, and a greater focus on early interventions to reduce offending and build safer communities over the longer term. Devolution provides the opportunity to ensure that these strategies

⁹ http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/publications/doj_addendum_to_pfg.pdf

are aligned towards the same outcomes, and allows for greater partnership working at a strategic level.

8.3 New local partnership arrangements

8.3.1 The Justice Bill, introduced into the Assembly on 18 October 2010, sets out proposals for the creation of joint Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs)¹⁰, bringing together the work of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and District Policing Partnerships (DPPs). The Justice Bill also includes a clause which places a duty on public bodies to consider the crime, anti-social behaviour and community safety implications in exercising their duties.

8.3.2 Over recent years CSPs and DPPs have brought substantial benefits to communities across Northern Ireland. By delivering local solutions and increasing local accountability, they show the value of effective partnership. The review of CSPs and DPPs and the proposed outcome to create single partnerships builds upon their achievements, and should take partnership working to the next level. It will provide for a more joined-up approach and will result in better local delivery and accountability, more closely targeted on the real issues of concern in local neighbourhoods.

8.3.3 *We will work in partnership with the Policing Board and local councils to develop and support new PCSPs to deliver safer, shared and confident communities at local level through the new Community Safety Strategy.*

8.4 The role of the voluntary and community sector

8.4.1 The voluntary and community sector

in Northern Ireland already plays an important role in delivering a range of services and support to citizens, including those which help to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and those that help victims and witnesses of crime.

8.4.2 Strong partnerships between the Department of Justice and the voluntary and community sector already exist on a number of fronts. In relation to community safety issues the DOJ, both centrally and locally through CSPs, has funded projects and initiatives delivered by voluntary groups, including those working with older people, ethnic minority groups and victims of domestic violence.

8.4.3 The Department of Justice also provides funding to NIACRO and Extern who both work with offenders, ex-offenders and those at risk of offending. A range of programmes are provided such as early intervention programmes for young people; programmes that deliver training and assistance to those leaving prison to help them gain employment; and services that help and support prisoners' families. Also, through significant Department of Justice funding to Victim Support NI (VSNI), support services are offered to victims of crime immediately after a crime occurs, when claiming Criminal Injuries compensation, and to adult prosecution witnesses called to give evidence at court.

8.4.4 Further evidence of the strong partnerships between the DOJ and the voluntary and community sector can be found in the development of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime. The Code seeks to set out the minimum standard that every victim can expect from the criminal justice system as a whole. It provides details of the support provided for victims by both statutory

¹⁰ The Justice Bill provides for two or more councils to establish a single PCSP by agreement.

and voluntary agencies working together in partnership.

8.4.5 *We will continue to work with the third sector to explore its role in the delivery of community safety solutions at a strategic and local level.*

8.5 Resources

8.5.1 Whilst the resource allocation to the Community Safety Strategy has not yet been agreed, the strategy will be delivered in a challenging period of reduced public finances. Given the challenges, it is important to look at innovative approaches to achieving the goals of the strategy by targeting resources at areas of greatest need and where they will have the greatest impact.

8.5.2 As previously noted, early year interventions yield long term benefits, but early stage interventions can provide short term success in addressing crime and anti-social behaviour. Upfront investment in prevention will reduce costs to the criminal justice system and wider society in the short, medium and long term: it costs around £77,000 to house a prisoner for one year in Northern Ireland. Even modest justice reinvestment in prevention and early intervention will reduce longer term costs.

8.5.3 We will consider how voluntary and community groups can deliver value for money solutions, and move away from top down solutions to support community-led schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch. In addition, we will consider how to continue to lever funding from other partners to ensure value for money, and at how to pool resources across boundaries to meet shared goals.

8.5.4 We will promote the co-ordination of community safety at all levels and develop the skills sets available at a strategic and local level e.g. through secondments, knowledge transfer and the development of knowledge networks to share best practice across partnerships. We will support the capacity-building of local partnerships to ensure that they are effective, efficient and provide evidence-based solutions tailored to local needs.

8.5.5 *We will continue to maximise investment in community safety issues by leveraging funding from a range of partners.*

8.5.6 *We will develop and build capacity at all levels to improve the delivery of community safety.*

8.6 Information and communication

8.6.1 Having access to effective knowledge and analysis of problems in a local area is the first step to identifying a solution. There is a range of publicly available data and information on crime and anti-social behaviour levels. But there is a disconnect between actual and perceived levels of crime – and that disconnect suggests that we do not always communicate and engage with the public effectively.

8.6.2 The DOJ can play a role in supporting the strategic development of local partnerships by helping to continue to build their capacity in providing evidence-led solutions which are evaluated for their effectiveness. It will be essential that as well as listening closely to the people on the ground, we ensure that policies are developed with a sound evidence base.

8.6.3 We will develop a communications strategy to highlight and share key messages to help reduce crime and make communities feel safer.

8.7 Measuring success

8.7.1 Measuring progress in creating safer, shared and confident communities will require a range of quantitative and qualitative indicators. We do not propose to set arbitrary targets e.g. for recorded crime figures, not least because as confidence increases so too does reporting levels. We will monitor recorded crime levels in order to respond to any emerging issues, and use other robust sources such as recorded crime statistics and the Northern Ireland Crime Survey to measure crime levels and confidence in a more holistic way.

8.7.2 We will develop a range of short, medium and long term indicators to achieve the strategic outcomes of the new Community Safety Strategy. These will align with other key measures, e.g. Policing Plan confidence measures.

DELIVERING IN PARTNERSHIP – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Q20. What should the role of community and voluntary sector be in supporting delivery of safer communities?

Q 21. How do we best enable local partnerships deliver evidence-led solutions?

Q 22. How can we communicate effectively with communities?

Q 23. How should we measure success?

9. Equality

EQUALITY STATEMENT

9.1 Background

9.1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires all public authorities in Northern Ireland to have due regard to equality of opportunity between the nine equality categories and have regard to promote good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group, and meet legislative obligations under the Disability Discrimination Order, particularly in the formation of public policy making.

9.1.2 The Department of Justice is fully committed to fulfilling its Section 75 obligations on the promotion of equality of opportunity, good relations and meeting legislative requirements in Northern Ireland.

9.1.3 The Department of Justice is currently working on a new equality scheme as requested by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. As part of that work, the Department is undertaking an audit of inequalities to inform a Departmental action plan.

9.1.4 The audit of inequalities will be a systematic review and analysis of inequalities as they relate to the Departments functions. The audit will involve an evidence based approach to identifying and prioritising key inequalities for those affected by the Department's policies. By informing the Action Plan, the audit will enable the Department to identify potential areas for further or better discharge of Section 75 statutory duties.

9.2 Development of the Equality Aspect of the Consultation Paper

9.2.1 In developing this consultation paper the Department has followed the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's (ECNI) revised Section 75 guidance "**A Guide for Public Authorities**" published in April 2010, as well as the relevant Departmental guidance. In addition to this, the Department has also met ECNI and has agreed an approach to ensure that it is complying with its duties as a public authority for this consultation process.

9.2.2 In line with the both the guidance and advice received the Department has implemented an initial screening process at this stage of the strategy's development. The Department also recognises the importance of consulting on the outcome of this process.

9.2.3 This consultation paper contains a number of proposals, namely:

SAFER COMMUNITIES PROPOSALS

- consider views on the approach to tackling anti-social behaviour, and the use of available powers including ASBOs;
- support early interventions with Executive Departments, and promote it at local partnership level;
- work with partners to reduce the opportunities to commit crime:
 - o support efforts to 'design out' crime in communities;
 - o maintain the historic downward trend in levels of domestic burglary;
 - o address business and retail crime to promote safer towns and cities and the night-time economy;
 - o increase our efforts to address rural crime;
- work with strategic partners to reduce

the harm caused by alcohol and drug abuse;

- lead on addressing domestic and sexual violence and work in partnership with DHSSPS and other agencies.

SHARED COMMUNITIES PROPOSALS

- engage with Government Departments, service providers and Communities to maximise the impact and focus of the efforts of Government in interface and other areas facing significant Community Safety problems exacerbated by economic and social disadvantage and the legacy of the conflict;
- work with communities seeking the reconfiguration or removal of physical barriers and engage with other agencies to address inhibitors to progress;
- support communities in seeking to overcome community safety related constraints to the use of shared spaces;
- develop and publish draft proposals for a strategic approach to addressing hate crime.

CONFIDENT COMMUNITIES PROPOSALS

- support efforts to improve public confidence in the criminal justice system;
- support efforts to build the capacity of local communities;
- continue to support the rollout and development of Community Safety Warden schemes by local partnerships;
- explore ways in which the principles of community-based restorative justice can be used to address local crime;
- continue to promote Neighbourhood Watch and other 'Watch' schemes with our partners to communities across Northern Ireland;
- encourage reporting of crime, particularly for those crime types which

are underreported;

- ensure that the safety of older people remains a priority;
- consider our approach to measuring and understanding the fear of crime.

DELIVERING IN PARTNERSHIP PROPOSALS

- work in partnership with the Policing Board and local councils to develop and support new PCSPs to deliver safer, shared and confident communities at local level;
- continue to work with the third sector to explore its role in the delivery of community safety solutions at a strategic and local level;
- continue to maximise investment in community safety issues by leveraging funding from a range of partners;
- develop and build capacity at all levels to improve the delivery of community safety;
- develop a communications strategy to highlight and share key messages to help reduce crime and make communities feel safer;
- produce a range of short, medium and long term indicators to achieve the strategic outcomes of the new Community Safety Strategy. These will align with other key measures, e.g. Policing Plan confidence measures.

In relation to these proposals the Department intends to undertake the following process:

- consult on the results of the initial screening as part of the wider consultation on the Community Safety Strategy;
- consider any resultant views of new or existing policy changes on the screening exercise as part of the development of the new Community Safety Strategy and,

- if necessary, carry out further screening and Equality Impact Assessment; and
- take the lead in ensuring a joined up approach to screening and if necessary conduct a full Equality Impact Assessment by the public authorities concerned if the implementation of any of the strategy proposals has implications for other public authorities.

9.3 Report on initial screening

9.3.1 As set out in the relevant ECNI and Departmental guidance, screening has been undertaken for the new proposals outlined in the consultation document using relevant and available qualitative and quantitative information. The four screening questions, below, were used to identify if the new proposals were likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

9.3.2 The purpose of this consultation is to seek views on a new Community Safety Strategy. The proposals contained in this consultation paper are at a high level and in many cases do not constitute fully developed new policies. However, further screening will take place as proposals and associated policies are developed. Opinions received as part of this consultation will play an important part in that process.

9.3.3 The equality impacts have been considered at a range of levels. In looking at the outcomes of the proposals we are seeking to reduce the harm done to people and increase their sense of confidence. The proposals also focus on a range of ways to address the communities or sections of the community most at risk of facing harm including specific attempts to address issues like hate crime

which affects section 75 groups. None of the proposals however seem to create an adverse impact on any of the Section 75 groups.

9.3.4 However, it is also necessary to look at the impact of implementation on the participation rates and the specific needs and requirements of the community. There may well currently be differential experiences for groups in terms of community safety. The approaches set out in this document do target improvements for some Section 75 equality categories - for example in the work being done to reduce the vulnerability and impact of hate crime or within divided communities as part of the efforts to develop a shared and cohesive community. However, there are mitigating factors in each of these matters. For example, the proposals to address hate crime will positively promote good relations and equality of opportunity. Any interventions within one part of a divided community aim to improve the quality of life both for that area and for neighbouring areas and would be based on objective need.

9.4 Consultation on initial screening report

9.4.1 The Department recognises it would need to screen any detailed policy flowing from the proposals and that as a result of this screening an EQIA may be needed. But at this initial stage it is seeking views of respondents on any equality considerations related to the proposals which need to be taken into account and will continue to work with the ECNI as part of the development of the strategy itself. As many of the areas identified in the proposals do not appear to have differential impacts in terms of outcomes or opportunity, it is unlikely that these aspects would require an EQIA unless issues are raised in consultation,

or the detailed policy development at a later date moves in a different direction.

9.4.2 As part of this consultation we are keen to get any views and comments on the initial screening decisions and so the following screening questions will be asked in respect of each of the proposals outlined below.

EQUALITY QUESTIONS

Q1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?

Minor/Major/None

Q2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?

Q3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Minor/Major/None

Q4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

10. How To Respond

10.1 We would welcome your views on the proposals in this consultation and we would invite you to send your comments, in whatever format you choose, to:

Community Safety Strategy Consultation
Community Safety Unit
Department of Justice
Millennium House
Great Victoria St
Belfast, BT2 7AQ

Telephone: 02890 828 555

Fax: 02890 828 556

Text phone: 02890 527 668

E-mail: CSUconsultation@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk

Mark Higgins

Central Co-ordination Branch

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Department of Justice

Castle Buildings

Stormont Estate

Belfast, BT4 3SG

E- mail: mark.higgins@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 02890 765784

Text phone: 028 90 527668

10.2 Comments should be returned by 15 April 2011.

10.3 In an effort to make responding to this consultation easier for some recipients, we are enclosing a questionnaire that you might wish to use to provide us with your views but we are happy to receive your responses in whatever format is most convenient. We will acknowledge receipt of all comments that we receive (where a contact address is provided) and will try to answer any questions raised.

10.4 If you have any queries about the information provided in this document please contact the DOJ Community Safety Unit (details listed above) for assistance. However if you have any queries or concerns about the way in which the consultation process itself has been handled, you may raise these with the DOJ Consultation Co-ordinator at the following address:

Alternative Formats

10.5 An electronic version of this document is available to view and download from the DOJ and CJSNI websites (www.dojni.gov.uk and www.cjsni.gov.uk). Hard copies will be posted on request. The text phone contact details are detailed above. Copies in other formats, including Braille, large print, audio cassette, computer disc etc may be made available on request. If it would assist you to access the document in an alternative format or a language other than English, please let us know and we will do our best to assist you.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESPONSES

10.6 The DOJ will publish a summary of responses following the completion of the consultation process. Unless individual respondents specifically indicated that they wish their response to be treated in confidence, the nature of their response may be included in any published summary of responses. Respondents should also be aware that the DOJ's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 may require that any responses not subject to specific exemptions in the Act may be disclosed to other parties on request.

