

# THE LINK NEWSLETTER

Issue 5  
Spring 2022

## Regional Facilities for Children and Young People Programme

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### Welcome!

Even in light of the ongoing challenges we all face, spring provides us with the opportunity to renew our focus across the various workstreams within the Regional Facilities for Children and Young People Programme to provide our young people who cannot safely remain in the community with a safe and secure and therapeutic environment, which provides relationship-based, trauma-informed, individually tailored interventions to facilitate a return to community based services in the shortest time-frame possible.

This edition of *The Link* provides you with an update on these workstreams and other substantive elements within the Programme since the last edition in autumn last year. Spring is also a time to reflect on the progress of the Programme that, although not without challenge, provides us with an excellent opportunity to make a difference and make a positive change in the lives of our young people. This can only be achieved by building on the skills, talents and dedication that those of you working in Lakewood and Woodlands, as well as the wider health, social care and justice sectors, bring to your roles every day— your dedication and professionalism is greatly appreciated in all that you do for our children and young people right across the sector.

We thank you for all your contribution to the Programme during 2021 and look forward to continuing to working with you to implement the Regional Facilities Programme throughout 2022.

**Seán Holland and Ronnie Armour**

Senior Responsible Owners

Regional Facilities for Children and Young People Programme

### Woodlands JJC



### Lakewood



## Focus on...

### Governance and Accountability

As you know, the [Review of Regional Facilities for Children and Young People Report](#) made 11 recommendations including the establishment of a new integrated Regional Care and Justice Campus comprising Lakewood and Woodlands. We previously told you about the consultation we carried out on the proposals for the new Campus and the analysis of responses published in June 2021.

The consultation told us that, in general, you supported the establishment of a shared Campus and recognised the common needs of children and young people who've been admitted to secure accommodation. However, the responses to the consultation also told us about the concerns organisations and young people themselves had about integrating young people from a Care and Justice background. Recognising these concerns, the Departments emphasised that the safety, security and stability of young people will always be at the centre of our proposals and will be a key consideration for future Programme decisions.

The consultation set out 4 options for the future governance and accountability arrangements of the Campus:

- **Option 1:** The regional facilities are run by a single government Department;
- **Option 2:** The regional facilities are run by both Government Departments under a formal partnership agreement, supported by a jointly managed Partnership Board;
- **Option 3:** The regional facilities are run by an existing Agency or Arm's Length Body (ALB) of either the Department of Health or Department of Justice under normal accountability arrangements;
- **Option 4:** The regional facilities are run by an existing agency or ALB of either the Department of Health or the Department of Justice and is accountable to both Departments working together under a formal partnership agreement, supported by a jointly managed Partnership Board.

Option 2 received the most support, with 58% of respondents indicating a preference for this approach.

In considering how to give the best effect to the views and concerns raised in the consultation, it has been decided that both Woodlands and Lakewood will continue to operate as separate entities but will work together to improve overall provision for young people by developing support services (such as healthcare) on a shared basis across both sites and, where possible, sharing physical space. We are also aiming to increase alignment in education and training services, and staff will have the opportunity to come together for joint training. The Northern Ireland Framework for Integrated Therapeutic Care (NIFITC) will be rolled out across Woodlands and Lakewood, as well as for all children who are looked after or adopted, providing them with consistent support in the two centres and in their communities before entry to secure care and when they leave. Overall, this decision will support greater consistency of care and support for those who spend time in both facilities. In line with Option 2 of the consultation, this approach will operate under a formal partnership agreement, supported by a jointly managed Partnership Board.

We'll be keeping you updated on our plans for harmonising shared services across Lakewood and Woodlands in future editions of *the Link*.



## Programme Workstream Updates

### PACE and Remand Admissions

Work has begun on developing proposals to reduce unnecessary admissions to the Juvenile Justice Centre on police detention and on remand.

Relevant stakeholders are being involved in this work which is considering a number of issues including diversion from the criminal justice system and prevention of arrests (building on what has already been achieved); alternatives to the use of secure accommodation as a place of safety; and addressing the needs of children who have not been granted bail by court because due to accommodation issues.

Related to this work, [Guidance for Social Services on Supporting Looked After Children in the Criminal Justice System](#) has been published and is available on the Department of Health's website.

### Health and Therapeutic Services

The Programme has more recently been considering how to ensure that young people receive appropriate wider health services, such as nursing support, GP and dental services, as well as the best way for drug and alcohol addiction services to be accessible to those who need them. While there has been agreement in principle on the services that will be needed, consideration is now being given to how these can be provided and funded as we move forwards.

In keeping with our shared services aims, an on-site, multi-disciplinary therapeutic service will operate across both sites. Ruth Fleck has recently been appointed, as Interim Clinical Lead, to establish and develop the service, taking full account of any interface and clinical governance issues, which remain to be resolved.

### Step Down and Satellite Support

The vision for integrated secure care includes a safe return, as soon as possible, of a young person to their community and to prevent readmission to secure care. Support in the community and effective step-down from secure care will be key to this. Proposals on a way forward for step-down support in the community where a residential component is integral to the support were discussed at both the Programme Working and Stakeholder Reference Groups during December. It has been agreed that proposals for an on-site step-down unit will be developed in more detail – including in-depth consideration on what the on-site unit should provide and who would benefit from the provision. To progress this, the team is currently linking in with Secure Children's Homes providers in England and Scotland to learn from how on-site step-down provision is provided there. It was also agreed that local residential step-down is best delivered by ensuring that residential provision – as part of a continuum or trauma-informed provision - is as good as it needs to be. The NIFITC will be key to this in strengthening mainstream residential care to support placement stability and trauma recovery.

## Programme Workstream Updates continued...

### Participation and Engagement

Stefani Millar was appointed as Programme Implementation Manager in summer 2021. As part of her role she engages informally with staff, and at times young people, in both Lakewood and Woodlands. This has been invaluable in further enhancing the understanding within the Programme Team of the day-to-day work, strengths and challenges, across both facilities. It has also provided staff with the opportunity to informally discuss the Programme as a whole, raise queries and provide feedback directly to a Programme Team member, and this input has contributed to the ongoing development of proposals around, for example, health and therapeutic care, exit planning and standards.

With the support of members of the Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG), the Programme Team is currently developing plans for ongoing engagement with young people who have experience of Woodlands and Lakewood, which will inform the Programme's work plan. To date, the Programme Team has been considering how best to complement, but not duplicate, existing engagement fora, as well as identifying areas of good practice of, and key learning from, engagement with young people. Following further refinement and discussion with SRG members, it is anticipated that this will lead to a new model of co-production with young people as the Programme workstreams progress.

In advance of this new model, the Programme Team sought views from young people in Lakewood and Woodlands in respect of future education and training provision. It is planned that further ad-hoc consultation exercises, to inform ongoing development and refinement of proposals, will continue, to complement the co-production model agreed.

### Standards and Regulatory Responsibility

A Workstream Advisory Group has been established and met for the first time in December 2021 to assist in progressing the development of standards. The work is being informed by best practice in the development of standards for secure care in other jurisdictions, relevant legislation and human rights, as well as input from both young people with experience of secure care and staff who work with them in Lakewood and Woodlands.

### Education and Training

A multi-agency Education and Training Workstream Advisory Group was established, in September 2021. The aim of the Advisory Group is to develop a vision and outcomes for the shared model of education and training provision in the new Centre (now across the two separate centres) and to agree the strategic framework and associated timescales. The Group has met a number of times, and discussed the existing education provision; the current statutory and legal framework; and how best to progress this work. Further discussions with Education Authority and the Department of Education will inform the way forward with this workstream.

# Programme Updates

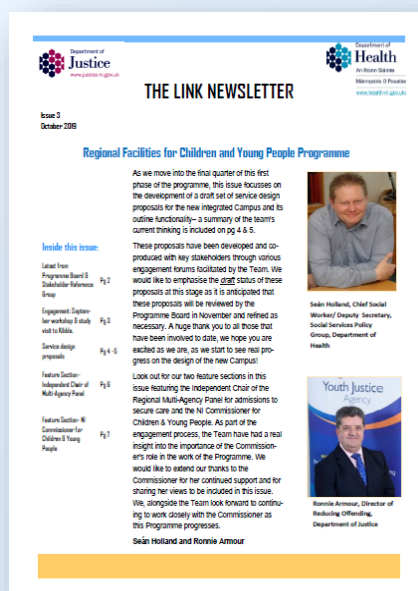
## Multi-Agency Panel

The [Review of Regional Facilities](#) recommended the establishment of a regional, independently chaired panel for admission to secure care. An interim Multi Agency Panel has been operational since September 2019 and aims to provide a regionally consistent decision making process to improve the safety and wellbeing of highly complex children who are at risk and in need of the protection of a placement in a secure care environment. Panel membership includes representatives from the Health and Social Care Board; Health and Social Care Trusts; the voluntary sector; the Education Authority and Lakewood Secure Care Centre.

**From September 2019 to August 2021 80 young people presented to the interim Multi Agency Panel for admission to secure care.**

To date, the Panel has been operating on a 'pilot' basis, with annual reports setting out the work to date and highlighting the positive impact of this new regional approach. The next stage is for the Programme Team to consider how best to provide a permanent basis for the Panel and, in particular, whether it should be established through legislation. This work will be progressed over the coming months.

You can find out more from Judith Brunt about her role as Independent Chair of the interim Multi Agency Panel in a previous edition of [the Link](#) and we'll be taking a closer look at the work of the interim Multi-Agency Panel in an upcoming edition of *the Link*.



## Programme Updates continued...

### Northern Ireland Framework for Integrated Therapeutic Care (NIFITC)

In our last edition we told you about the regional [Framework for Integrated Therapeutic Care for Looked After Children in Northern Ireland \(NIFITC\)](#) which is being introduced to provide consistent therapeutic care for all looked after young people. NIFITC is based on models of *trauma and attachment informed care* and uses four core concepts—**building safety; getting help that's needed; developing agency and taking part; and addressing inequalities.**

An NIFITC Implementation Lead is in place in each Health and Social Care Trust area. Together with the Regional Implementation Lead, they have been working collaboratively to ensure a consistent approach to NIFITC's introduction across Northern Ireland, along with developing their capacity to lead trauma-informed service development. The Implementation Team has also developed an implementation governance structure and is progressing the development of this structure within each Health and Social Care Trust area.

[Connecting Care: An Overview of the Northern Ireland Framework for Integrated Therapeutic Care for Care Experienced Children and Young People](#) has recently been published. Hard copies of Connecting Care are available from the NIFITC Implementation Leads in each Health and Social Care Trust area:

|                      |                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Northern Trust:      | <a href="#">Lynsey Black</a>   |
| Southern Trust:      | <a href="#">Niamh McGeown</a>  |
| South Eastern Trust: | <a href="#">Esther Teggart</a> |
| Western Trust:       | <a href="#">Paulene Burns</a>  |
| Belfast Trust:       | <a href="#">Leanne Glover</a>  |

You can also find out more about NIFITC in previous editions of [The Link](#) or on the [Department of Health website](#).



## Recent Engagement

### Working Group

- The Programme Working Group mostly recently met remotely on 1st December 2021.
- The Working Group met to discuss the ongoing work of the programme and specifically the draft proposals developed by the Programme Team on Residential step-down and alternative place of safety and bail arrangements.
- Going forward, the Working Group will meet again at key programme decision points rather than on a quarterly basis.



### Stakeholder Reference Group

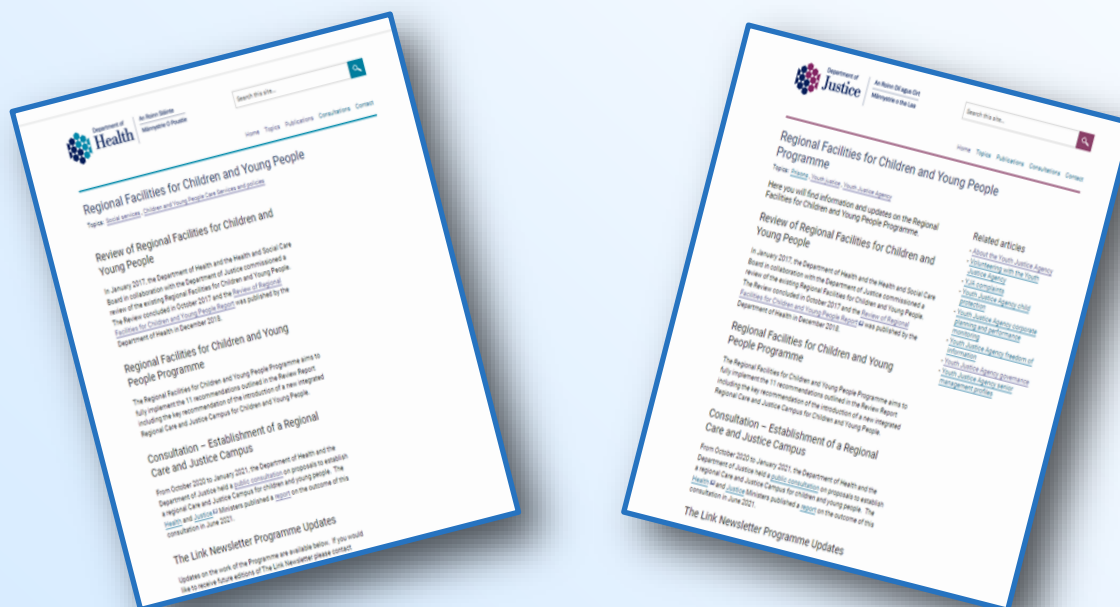
- The Programme Stakeholder Reference Group mostly recently met remotely on 8th December 2021.
- The Stakeholder Reference Group met to discuss the ongoing work of the programme including the draft proposals on participation and engagement in the programme and on residential step-down and alternative place of safety and bail arrangements receive a presentation from the Youth Justice Agency on the Children's Diversion Forum.
- Going forward, the Stakeholder Reference Group will meet again at key programme decision points rather than on a quarterly basis.



## Programme Website Updates

You can find out more about the [Review of Regional Facilities for Children and Young People](#) and the work of Regional Facilities for Children and Young People Programme on the [Department of Health](#) and the [Department of Justice](#) websites

You can also access the latest, and previous, editions of the *Link* newsletter on both websites.



Minutes of the Regional Facilities Programme Board and Stakeholder Reference Group have been added to the websites and we'll regularly be adding more information to the websites about the Programme and future plans.

You can also let us know what you'd like to see on the websites by contacting us via: [RegFacilitiesProgrammeTeam@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:RegFacilitiesProgrammeTeam@health-ni.gov.uk)

## Get in touch!

If you'd like more information about the Programme, you can also contact us via: [RegFacilitiesProgrammeTeam@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:RegFacilitiesProgrammeTeam@health-ni.gov.uk)

You can also let us know what you'd like to see featured in future editions of *The Link* by contacting us via the email address above.