

12 March 2019

Cheryl Lamont, Chief ExecutiveReply sent via email to: publicconsultations@nihrc.orgNI Human Rights Commission
39 North Street
BELFAST
BT1 1NA

To whom it may concern

Re: Response to NIHRC Consultation on Draft Strategic Plan 2019-22**Introduction**

PBNI welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Commission's draft strategic plan for 2019-2022.

PBNI is a non-departmental public body and its aim is to change lives for safer communities. It works to rehabilitate and resettle offenders by tackling the root causes of offending behaviour. There are a number of values which underpin all of the work carried out by probation staff. They are:

- Respect for Human Dignity
- Respecting People's capacity to change
- Victim Awareness
- Integrity and Professionalism
- Collaborative Working
- Equality and Diversity

These values demonstrate PBNI's commitment to a human rights based approach to all elements of our work.

Strategic Priorities

PBNI agrees with the Commission's vision, mission and principles and welcome working with the commission to develop a culture of human rights across society.

PBNI also agrees with the strategic priorities and wishes to make comment in particular about strategic priority, 3 and 5.

Strategic Priority 1

PBNI agree with the strategic priorities and actions under Strategic Priority 1 – 'Building a culture of Rights' PBNI fully supports the concept of the Commission working with government, public authorities, private sector and others on training and other initiatives to develop human rights based approaches to delivering services. PBNI would be keen to use the training with its own staff. In particular PBNI welcomes the use of creative methods of educating and training staff, for example through the use of film and animation.

Strategic Priority 3

The priority of 'Poverty, health and well-being' and related action of 'Undertaking specific initiatives in an area of social and economic rights encompassing one or more areas, namely, the impact of working age poverty, housing need and homelessness and looked after children and tackling the multiple disadvantages they face', is welcomed by PBNI.

Many of the people supervised by probation have difficulty finding employment, education and suitable accommodation. Research shows that having access to education, employment and accommodation are important factors in preventing people reoffending. The disadvantages faced by many looked after children is also well documented. PBNI believes that in order to create a society which is safer and inclusive there is need for statutory organisations, community and voluntary organisations and government to work in partnership to tackle poverty, housing need and social exclusion.

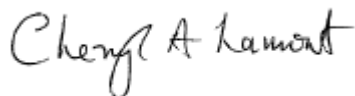
Strategic Priority 5

PBNI has a particular interest in strategic priority 5 – 'Protecting human rights in a digital age' and the related action, 'Developing awareness raising initiatives around the issues around competing rights engaged between freedom of speech and cyber bullying, intolerance, hate speech and crime'. The changing trend in crime in NI which includes an increase in online and cyber-crime has been noted by the PSNI and PBNI. An increase in crimes such as these means that staff are dealing with more complex caseloads which have more intensive demands. Therefore PBNI would welcome more awareness raising and educational programmes about the nature and impact of cyber bullying, intolerance and hate speech.

Conclusion

PBNI value the work of the NIHRC and look forward to working in partnership in the future to help build a society which is safer, peaceful, inclusive and prosperous.

Yours faithfully



Cheryl Lamont
Chief Executive
Probation Board for Northern Ireland