

## Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031 Consultation Response Document

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Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?	Yes/ <del>No</del> (delete as applicable)
Organisation (if applicable)	<b>British Association of Social Workers Northern Ireland (BASW NI)</b>
<b>Vision and Founding Principles</b>	
Do you agree the vision set out will improve outcomes and quality of life for individuals with mental health needs in Northern Ireland?	
<del>Fully Agree / Mostly Agree / Neither Agree nor Disagree / Mostly Disagree / Fully Disagree</del> (delete as applicable)	
Please add any further comments you may have	
<p>BASW NI welcomes the vision set out in the Draft Mental Health Strategy which reflects the values and ethical principles on which the Social Work profession is based. BASW NI recognises this as an ambitious Strategy and believes it will go a long way to meet a wide range of needs for individuals, families and carers dealing with mental health needs across the whole lifespan. As the professional membership organisation for social work, BASW NI is keen to support full implementation of the Strategy over the next decade, taking account of all comments made throughout this Consultation Response Document.</p> <p>Social work has a distinctive contribution to make in relation to promoting and maintaining good mental health throughout the whole population, as highlighted in the 2019 Department of Health REFLECTIONS document (<i>Morrison, A., &amp; Davidson, G. (2019). Social work and mental health in Northern Ireland. Department of Health</i>) and BASW NI would welcome the opportunity to ensure that this distinctive social work perspective is reflected through all stages of the Strategy implementation. This includes incorporating specific and measurable targets and outcomes, as essential elements of monitoring progress and ensuring accountability. Without knowledge of these, it is difficult to envisage</p>	

how the vision for the future, as stated in the draft Strategy, will be realised. BASW NI is keen, therefore, to be fully involved in the development of the detailed plans needed to progress the implementation of the Strategy effectively.

BASW NI also recognises the Mental Health Funding Plan is a vital aspect of the planning process, and acknowledges this will be indicative as per the Consultation Document (paragraphs 17 and 18). However, without specific commitments to short, medium and long term funding, the Strategy remains entirely aspirational and it is difficult to see how the vision can be realised. BASW NI has a unique perspective on the current state of crisis within mental health service provision throughout Northern Ireland, across all sectors, within families and communities, and on behalf of the workforce. The draft Strategy highlights the 'significant under investment' in Northern Ireland when compared to other UK jurisdictions and to Ireland (paragraph 11). This is set in the context of the disturbing prevalence rates of mental health problems already existing in Northern Ireland, across all ages (paragraphs 1 – 5). With this as the current situation, BASW NI strongly advocates for a specific commitment to significant additional resources which are urgently needed to address the existing gaps as well as to support the vision set out in the draft Strategy.

BASW NI would, therefore, welcome the opportunity to contribute directly to the Funding Plan that will accompany the Strategy, from the perspective of the social work profession.

Do you agree the founding principles set out provide a solid foundation upon which to progress change?

~~Fully Agree / Mostly Agree / Neither Agree nor Disagree / Mostly Disagree / Fully Disagree~~  
(delete as applicable)

Please add any further comments you may have

BASW NI mostly agrees with the founding principles set out in the Draft Strategy, which are consistent with the fundamentally human rights based approach underpinning the Social Work profession, as defined in the international definition of social work:

*"Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing."*  
(International Federation of Social Workers and International Association of Schools of Social Work, 2014)

BASW NI, therefore, broadly welcomes the founding principles, as set out in the draft Strategy, but with the following caveats.

BASW NI would like to see more explicit mention of families and carers as part of the founding principles, to ensure their vital role in prevention, resilience building, providing support, and finding new ways of working is recognised across all three themes. Without being explicitly mentioned, there is the risk family members and carers will not be routinely consulted or included appropriately, which has implications for their own mental health and wellbeing. It is also worth noting the term 'carers' would not be universally welcomed as an appropriate term for someone in a close relationship with another who is dealing with mental illness or mental health concerns and who is not related, even though the close nature of the relationship for many is likely to involve a critical support element, so BASW NI recommends that this be given further consideration.

BASW NI would also recommend further consideration be given to the terminology currently used within the draft Strategy, both in setting out the founding principles and reflected throughout the overarching themes and actions, which often implies a primarily clinical and medical model approach to mental health.

While this perspective is essential, BASW NI would recommend the Strategy needs to be more explicit about a counterbalance in terms of strengths based approaches and a greater acknowledgment of the need to address the social and economic determinants of poor mental health.

In this respect, the 2019 Department of Health REFLECTIONS Mental Health document (2019) details the distinctive set of knowledge, skills and values the social work profession brings, integral to all aspects of practice, noting ten key points in the social work approach that contribute to the promotion of good mental health:

1. Relationship based approaches
2. Systemic practice
3. Social wellbeing
4. Additional and alternative perspectives
5. Social justice
6. Human rights
7. Anti-oppressive practice
8. Community development
9. Legal expertise
10. Safeguarding

*(Morrison, A., & Davidson, G. (2019). Social work and mental health in Northern Ireland. Department of Health),*

BASW NI would welcome the opportunity to help raise awareness, confidence and competence across other sectors and communities in terms of engaging with broader biopsychosocial approaches for promoting good mental health and responding to poor mental health (addressed further in Theme 3 responses).

As a final point, BASW NI fully acknowledges and appreciates the inclusive approach to the development of the draft Strategy to date, and the stated intention for a meaningful and effective co-production and co-design at every stage (founding principle I). However, BASW NI would ask that this be expanded to explicitly reflect the inclusion of people across the lifespan who, for whatever reason, are unable to access or engage with the virtual means of co-production.

While the move to virtual means was necessary and understandable as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, BASW NI would argue that the lack of opportunity for face to face meetings, focus groups and engagement events (Consultation document, paragraph 9), will have excluded many stakeholders who would have important and necessary perspectives to contribute. This equally applies to the Strategic Advisory Panel (SAP), the Virtual Stakeholder Engagement Events and the Virtual Reference Group. It is vital that those who are unable to engage in this way, or choose not to, are fully and explicitly included in the principle of co-production and co-design throughout implementation of the Strategy. While there will be individual, organisational and professional advocates who can helpfully speak on behalf of others, with their consent, there will be many other people who would like to contribute on their own terms and to know they are fully included.

BASW NI would welcome, therefore, the opportunity to support the development of a more equitable and fully inclusive approach to meaningful and effective co-production and co-design during all aspects and phases of implementation.

**Theme 1: Promoting wellbeing and resilience through prevention and early intervention**

Do you agree with the ethos and direction of travel set out under this theme?

~~Fully Agree / Mostly Agree / Neither Agree nor Disagree / Mostly Disagree / Fully Disagree~~  
(delete as applicable)

Please add any further comments you may have

BASW NI welcomes the ethos and overall direction of travel set out under this theme, which is already embedded in social work practice, with particular reference to the social determinants of health and enabling people to achieve their potential. BASW NI supports and embraces the concept of a whole life approach and developing services to respond in ways that reduces artificial boundaries, although fully acknowledging the very real challenges of this approach.

The commitment to joint working across the Northern Ireland executive with the establishment of the Executive Working Group on Mental Wellbeing, Resilience and Suicide Prevention, and the appointment of the interim NI Mental Health Champion, is recognised as a constructive development. The four new Department of Communities social inclusion strategies, currently being developed (Draft Strategy document, paragraph 35), are also recognised as constructive and pertinent developments and BASW NI would recommend these strategies are referenced directly within the planning phases for implementation of the Mental Health Strategy.

BASW NI would reinforce the need for alternative methods of support, care and education to be developed. This might include, for example using a planned community development approach, to ensure robust and effective community supports are readily accessible for those experiencing poor mental health but who do not meet the threshold for more formal mental health services or are considered pre-diagnosis for specific conditions related to mental ill-health or mental illness. This would encourage less dependence on more formal health and social care services, which would alleviate the excessive pressures being experienced by the current health and social care workforce (address further in Theme 3 responses). At this same time, this approach would help reinforce the value of increased engagement and collaboration with community and voluntary sector organisations.

This more holistic approach is embedded in social work training and practice, drawing on wide ranging systemic knowledge, understanding and interventions and using strengths based approaches. BASW NI would welcome the opportunity to be involved in planning for the Strategy to ensure these holistic approaches are well understood and incorporated throughout all stages of implementation. In addition, BASW NI would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the co-production and co-designing of related training programmes that can support awareness raising and skills development in relation to prevention and early intervention approaches.

BASW NI also welcomes the recognition that the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have adversely affected future generations in a number of ways, and that the draft Strategy is 'fully cognisant of this changed landscape' (Consultation document, paragraph 5). This is evidenced through the issues raised throughout Theme 1 and supported by the various Case Studies. However, BASW NI would suggest the development of this Strategy provides a very timely opportunity to include more explicit and proactive statements in terms of reducing potential medium and longer term adverse impacts of the pandemic and

producing better outcomes for the mental health needs of individuals, families and communities. A strengths based, relationship based, and trauma informed approach to community engagement, implemented at the earliest possible opportunity, would contribute directly to the implementation of Theme 1, promoting resilience through prevention and early intervention activities.

BASW NI welcomes the specific references to reducing stigma, supporting people throughout the whole lifespan, prevention of adverse childhood experiences, mental health in workplaces, the impact of unemployment and the mental health needs within rural and farming communities, among students and among groups more likely to be adversely affected by mental ill health (draft Strategy, paragraph 45).

However, BASW NI would also encourage more explicit mention in relation to several other key areas of practice which appear to have only limited reference points within the draft Strategy. These include, for example, acknowledging the specific mental health and wellbeing needs of:

- Parents of adult children, carers, and those providing all forms of informal support to people with mental health needs
- Children living with a parent or parents who are experiencing mental health difficulties
- 'Looked after' children and young people
- Children and young people in contact with the Youth Justice systems
- Adult prisoners
- Adults who lack capacity under the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016
- People of all ages impacted by the legacy of the troubles in a post conflict society, including those impacted by collective and/or intergenerational trauma

BASW NI recognises some of these areas are noted in the draft Strategy and some are also addressed in documents produced by other Departments and/or in additional Department of Health documents. However, BASW NI believes it is important to reference them explicitly in the context of the Mental Health Strategy, given its wide ranging scope and complexity. This is to ensure the planning stages for the Strategy, including the spending plan, takes account of the needs of the whole population to fully support the overall vision for the future.

Do you agree with the actions and outcomes set out under this theme?

~~Fully Agree / Mostly Agree / Neither Agree nor Disagree / Mostly Disagree / Fully Disagree~~  
(delete as applicable)

Please add any further comments you may have

BASW NI welcomes and mostly agrees with all five specific outcomes and four actions set out under Theme 1.

However, BASW NI would recommend greater detail be provided in respect of community and voluntary sector involvement in developing and implement plans in this area. While BASW NI recognises the need to place a focus on the restructuring and development of existing health and social care structures, it also recognises that many people prefer to deal with mental and wellbeing difficulties without recourse to formal services. Community and voluntary organisations are therefore essential in the implementation of the vision and must be invested in accordingly. BASW NI would also highlight the reduction in community based children and youth services in recent years, which in turn reinforces the real challenges of implementing this ambitious strategy without access to significant additional

resources that can both address current shortfalls and future plans. BASW NI would highlight the need for a funding commitment that will adequately support these essential investments in the context of the outcomes proposed under this Theme.

BASW NI would further highlight that without specific figures for improved GHQ12 scores, or measurable indicators for better interagency cooperation, improvements in wider awareness of mental health within the health and social care sector outside the mental health profession and of how mental health can be impacted by every day decisions and strategic policy directions outside the health and social care sector, it is not possible to assess the appropriateness of these outcomes. The outcome in relation to improved mental health among children and young people aims to use key indicators from the 2020 Youth Wellbeing Child and Adolescent Prevalence Study, but BASW NI would argue that targets for improvement for this outcome should also be included in the Strategy.

With specific reference to Action 2, BASW NI would recommend a revision of the terminology used in reference to talking therapies and talking therapy hubs to accommodate more inclusive terminology a broader range of services and interventions that can be offered through such hubs, including but not restricted to the delivery of psychological therapies. BASW NI eagerly awaits the completed evaluation of the effectiveness of the existing multidisciplinary teams which will help inform the development of this approach based on sound evidence of effectiveness. While BASW NI recognises the value of hubs becoming part of primary care services, it would also recommend this should be approached with a level of caution to reduce the potential for services to have a heavy reliance on clinical and medical model approaches. BASW NI would note that in current social work experience, existing hubs are often used as a step-down service from primary care, which in turn limits their availability as to deliver early intervention services. Managing the service from a primary care perspective has the potential to consolidate this pattern of use without an appropriate balance and emphasis on approaches informed by biopsychosocial models. The social work profession has a significant amount to contribute to the roll out of a more holistic multidisciplinary approach, which is inherently embedded in all social work practice. In relation to funding, Action 2 notes the expansion of hubs will be 'resourced sustainably', however BASW NI would argue this needs significantly more detail in order to ensure the proposal will succeed in its stated aim 'to improve the mental wellbeing of the population and prevent the establishment of mental disorders'. This includes detail about what 'resourced sustainably' means, how many hubs are planned, how many people will be supported via the hubs annually and whether any additional funding will be provided for these services.

With these points in mind, BASW NI would therefore welcome the opportunity to inform future developments related to Action 2 from the outset, including the development of related spending and implementation plans.

With reference to Action 4, BASW NI fully supports the development of services that embed anti-discriminatory policies and empowering attitudes for those needing specialist services including children and young people with disabilities. BASW NI would recommend that the same approach to anti-discriminatory policies and principles should be reflected in the help and support provided for parents and families as well as across all actions in the proposed strategy and in the development of all future mental health services.

The principles of promoting wellbeing and resilience through prevention and early intervention, using a relationship based, strengths based and community development approach, are embedded into the social work profession, as is the principle of promoting children and their families' positive mental health at all life stages. BASW NI is keen, therefore, to draw on these distinctive perspectives and experiences to help develop

appropriate and realistic outcome measures throughout the planning and implementation stages and to contribute directly to the spending plan that will accompany the proposed Strategy.

**Theme 2: Providing the right support at the right time**

Do you agree with the ethos and direction of travel set out under this theme?

~~Fully Agree / Mostly Agree / Neither Agree nor Disagree / Mostly Disagree / Fully Disagree~~  
(delete as applicable)

Please add any further comments you may have

BASW NI welcomes and fully supports the ethos and direction of travel set out under this theme. The person centred and whole life approach is consistent with and embedded within the social work profession, and BASW NI looks forward to contributing the development of this holistic approach within more targeted mental health support services.

In addition, BASW NI would recommend more explicit recognition of the role of those informal supporters, carers and family members of people of all ages who are experiencing difficulties at any level on the spectrum of mental health needs. The challenges, stresses and adverse impacts on physical and mental health that often accompany their respective roles, require specific attention. BASW NI would recommend additional supports, such as the 'Think Family NI' approach, need to be further enhanced and developed in response to the needs of all informal carers.

BASW NI fully embraces the 'no wrong door' approach noted under this theme and recommends this principle should be reflected and embedded into all actions set out under the theme, rather than being explicitly highlighted only under Action 6.

Do you agree with the actions and outcomes set out under this theme?

~~Fully Agree / Mostly Agree / Neither Agree nor Disagree / Mostly Disagree / Fully Disagree~~  
(delete as applicable)

Please add any further comments you may have

BASW NI welcomes and mostly agrees with the 26 outcomes and 20 actions under this theme. Many of the comments noted under Theme 1 are equally applicable to Theme 2, including, primarily, the absence of measurable targets needed to allow monitoring of progress and measuring of success with effective accountability, and the absence of a funding plan at this stage to indicate how realistic the proposals might be as opposed to mainly aspirational.

Examples of these gaps related to outcomes, include benchmarks, criteria and targets to measure progress for the reduction of waiting lists and reductions in difficult transitions for children and young people, increase of service user satisfaction for community mental health, reduction in waiting times to access psychological services.

In addition, examples of gaps in terms of specific commitments to clearly defined financial sums, include funding to increase CAHMS services (ie based on the needs identified rather than a percentage of adult mental health funding, which itself lacks clarity), additional funding to cater for older adults with mental ill health by removing the 'artificial

cut off ... at the age of 65', and funding to be allocated for the procurement of services from community and voluntary sector.

BASW NI would highlight the disturbing statistics presented in the draft Strategy under this theme and across all areas of service. These illustrate the urgent need to develop and progress the proposals in the draft Strategy, along with a robust and clearly defined funding and implementation plan, to ensure the large numbers of people in Northern Ireland who are currently unable to access appropriate services in a timely way will be afforded 'the right support at the right time' as soon as is practicably possible.

As stated previously, BASW NI is committed to supporting the full implementation of the Strategy over the next decade and therefore welcomes the opportunity to contribute from the outset to the development of the associated funding and implementation plans to help deliver the ambitious proposals set out in the draft Strategy. Additional comments relating to some specific Actions are detailed below.

With reference to Action 5, BASW NI welcomes any increase in funding that will lead to greatly improved services for children, young people and families. BASW NI fully recognises that CAMHS need resourced properly to help create better flexibility and support improved transition between CAMHS and adult services. However, BASW NI also acknowledges that by increasing CAMHS using a higher percentage of adult mental health funding raises concerns about the reduced availability of resources for adult mental health and therefore reduced adult services. BASW NI would argue for an additional spend on CAMHS services, taking account of the need to support improved transitions but without impacting on adult services. As noted above, BASW NI strongly advocates for a specific commitment to a clearly defined financial sum for CAMHS based on the need identified earlier in the document.

With reference to Action 6, as noted previously, BASW NI welcomes and fully supports the principle of a 'no wrong door' approach to CAMHS services and also strongly advocates for this principle to be reflected and embedded throughout all actions in the draft strategy.

BASW NI fully supports the creation of regionally consistent urgent, emergency and crisis services as a matter of urgency.

BASW NI also fully supports Action 8, which removes the discriminatory approach of current practices based on ages and allows for people to be provided with services based on need instead. However, given the evidence presented in the strategy suggesting older adults receive proportionally less help than other age groups, and in particular the estimate that 85% of older adults with depression receive no help at all from statutory services, BASW NI would suggest implementing this action will require significant additional resources which need to meet identified need and be explicitly included in the funding plan for the proposed Strategy. In addition, BASW NI would also like to highlight there may be many reasons why older adults may not wish to access more formal mental health services and may wish instead to avail of more creative and personalised approaches to help address mental health needs and improve outcomes. With their relationship based and community development perspective, social workers are ideally placed to offer alternative solutions as part of a co-production and co-design approach, and BASW NI would advocate this approach should be incorporated more explicitly into this Action to counter the more clinically oriented terminology as set out in the current draft Strategy.

With reference to Action 9, BASW NI would highlight the lack of clarity around funding for 'to improve access mental health in the primary care multidisciplinary team' (strategy document, paragraph 92), and would ask for clarity about whether the stated 'spend of



over £1m per year' is additional spending, whether it includes the 44 existing practitioners and what 'over the next few years' means in relation to a ten-year strategy. Social workers are currently performing a central role in the primary care multidisciplinary teams and BASW NI would suggest, therefore, that it is vital to have further detail and measurable targets provided in relation to this Action to ensure accountability on progress.

Also in relation to Action 9, BASW NI would like to acknowledge that GP Federations could be very helpful to minimise variance in availability and access to the range of mental health supports, once fully rolled out. However, BASW NI would also want to acknowledge that there is already a huge burden on GP's of having to know everything and to recognise the challenges of this approach on GP's of having to also keep up to date with the rapidly changing face of community services. BASW NI would recommend that communication to and from these federations must be developed and formalised with appropriate structures that ensure full collaboration based on the principles of co-production and co-design, not just towards the higher tiers of secondary care, but also in the direction of stepped down and less formal supports in the community. The social work profession is ideally placed to contribute to the development of this multidisciplinary model and BASW NI would therefore welcome full involvement from the outset to the planning for this approach.

BASW NI notes that psychological services are currently uniquely divided into 2 different strata; those who are 'psychologists' and provide professional therapy for those with complex needs and 'psychotherapists' some of whom are equally well qualified but who followed a different academic pathway. Although the efficacy of each therapeutic approach is equally recognised, there is a variance in their professional regulation. One is professionally regulated to HSC standards and the other's regulation is a voluntary professional choice on the part of the individual therapist. This lack of regulation is one major reason that the trusts have not availed of this potential workforce.

In the interests of improved MDT working, it is important that the various professional identities are recognised and understood in order to attain high regard and respect for the contributions of each professional. This knowledge is currently assumed but has led to misunderstandings and strife between different disciplines. Induction for all new staff should include inputs on the roles of each of the MDT professional role, their professional identity as well as their practitioner role within the team. These professional identities should be regionally agreed statements of purpose.

BASW NI would also advocate that the concept of the mental health and wellbeing hubs as primarily talking therapy hubs needs to be expanded to include additional modalities of trauma informed practice, awareness of social determinants and community based approaches to interventions, with development of robust training of all multidisciplinary team members to support this. The social work profession brings a unique breadth and depth of knowledge and competencies that would be well placed to contribute to the roll out of this approach, which is already embedded in SW practices. This includes for example the development of digital mental health models and effective trauma informed biopsychosocial interventions, essential for the mental health of population.

As noted previously, BASW NI would welcome the opportunity to contribute to all levels and stages of the funding planning and implementation stages that will accompany the proposed Strategy after this consultation period

### **Theme 3: New Ways of Working**

Do you agree with the ethos and direction of travel set out under this theme?

~~Fully Agree / Mostly Agree / Neither Agree nor Disagree / Mostly Disagree / Fully Disagree~~  
(delete as applicable)

Please add any further comments you may have

BASW NI welcomes and mostly agrees with the ethos and direction of travel set out under this theme and recognises this as an integral part of delivering such an ambitious Strategy that envisions one mental health service. However, BASW NI also recognises the need for a robust framework with appropriate structures, training and support to enable Trusts to progress in this direction and ensure changes can happen to improve outcomes. BASW NI would also reiterate that while it is encouraging to see so many common operational issues in mental health being addressed, there is a general lack of recognition of the contribution of informal carers, as opposed to professional roles, at each level of care. In the experience of the social work profession, it is often family members and informal carers/supporters who provide most support and BASW NI therefore recommends that each action should be reworded to reflect the role that families and carers play.

BASW NI would also highlight some areas of uncertainty that might have an impact on the ability to deliver under this theme, including existing cuts in funding, the ongoing impact of Brexit on the workforce, the uncertainties around workforce planning during and post pandemic, and on continued access to EU funding supporting community and voluntary projects (Case Study, page 17).

The importance and significant contributions that the social work profession can bring in terms of skills and competencies cannot be overestimated, as referenced previously in the Department of Health REFLECTIONS document (*Morrison, A., & Davidson, G. (2019)*). BASW NI recommends inclusion of the social work profession at all stages of workforce development to help support and implement all other actions detailed in the consultation document.

Do you agree with the actions and outcomes set out under this theme?

~~Fully Agree / Mostly Agree / Neither Agree nor Disagree / Mostly Disagree / Fully Disagree~~  
(delete as applicable)

Please add any further comments you may have

BASW NI welcomes and mostly supports the actions and outcomes set out under this theme. BASW NI fully supports the creation of a regional approach to mental health services as it will ensure there is a framework to build best practice across the region and to improve services for individuals who move between Trust areas.

BASW NI fully supports Action 25 and would highlight the importance of the robust structures needed to support this regional approach and the equally vital importance of not diverting staff and experience away from existing services to undertake retraining and leave other areas of the workforce understaffed or without adequate experience.

With reference to Action 26, BASW NI welcomes that the shortage of ASW's has been recognised, although would suggest that the figure of an additional required 25% may be found to be too conservative when weighed against the draft ASW standards being worked out at the DoH. Some communication with DoH & OSS will be required to ensure that availability of ASW's can be released from other core duties to meet the growing range of responsibilities in the MHO & MCA ASW roles. BASW NI would also note that the draft strategy does not comment on whether the number of non-ASW mental health social

workers in adequate and recommends that Action 26 also considers the total number of mental health social workers request to safely support the delivery of the strategy's proposals.

BASW NI would fully support a comprehensive review of the current workforce with the aim to deliver a well supported workforce fit for the future, while fully cognisant again of the real challenges in delivering this, including the very real funding challenges. BASW NI would therefore welcome the opportunity to contribute from the outset to the essential planning and implementation stages the will follow on from this consultation phase for the proposed Strategy.

### **Prioritisation**

If you had to prioritise the actions set out above, which top 5 actions would you take forward (with 1 being the most important to you, and 5 being the 5th most important to you)?

1	<b>1</b>
2	<b>26</b>
3	<b>19</b>
4	<b>7</b>
5	<b>8</b>

Finally, is there any one key action which you feel is missing from the draft Strategy?

Specific actions in relation to setting measurable targets and specifying funding requirements.

### **Impact Assessments/Screenings**

Do you agree with the outcome of the Impact Assessment screening?

Fully Agree / ~~Mostly Agree~~ / ~~Neither Agree nor Disagree~~ / ~~Mostly Disagree~~ / Fully Disagree  
(delete as applicable)

Please add any further comments you may have

BASW NI comments relating to Impact Assessments/Screenings will be submitted separately in response to the Department's publication of the full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the draft Strategy. This additional submission will be made by 5pm on Monday 12 April 2021 as per Department guidance.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to the consultation.

Please submit your completed response by **5pm on 26 March 2021** using the details below:

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