Secondary Care Directorate  
Room 1, Annexe 1  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont  
Belfast BT4 3SQ  

13th March 2009

**Strategy for Health and Social Care Bereavement Services in Northern Ireland**

As the largest voluntary children’s organisation in NI, Barnardo’s works with over 10,000 children, young people and their families here every year, providing a range of services including for children and young people who are bereaved, children in care and families in need of support.

Barnardo’s would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Strategy for Health and Social Care Bereavement Services in Northern Ireland but we would prefer to highlight a few key issues which we would like to bring to your attention, rather then responding to the individual questions in the consultation questionnaire. Barnardo’s runs a Child Bereavement service which works with 4 – 18 year olds, their carers and professionals, providing information to them and individual and group work counselling and we have consulted with them before responding to this consultation document.

Barnardo’s would like to emphasise that this Strategy does not include any real evidence of developing services for children and young people who are bereaved.

We know from the work that takes place within our child bereavement service that children and young people have specific needs following a bereavement and they often find it difficult to talk to family members and benefit from the opportunity to meet with specialist bereavement workers and other bereaved children.

Barnardo’s are in the process of developing their work with children and young people bereaved by suicide. This is a group who are particularly vulnerable due to the nature of the death and also the stigma that still surrounds death by suicide. We would like to see more services being developed to meet the needs of these children and young people and their families.
We would like to endorse the good practice highlighted in the three year Grief Matters for Children campaign which is ran by the Childhood Bereavement Network. This campaign calls for more information and support to be made available to bereaved children, young people and their families and we would like to see a similar campaign being ran in Northern Ireland.

We would also welcome a meeting with your consultation team so please contact Nicki Darnbrook, email nicola.darnbrook@barnardos.org.uk or tel 028 9067 4459 if you would be available to meet with us to discuss the Strategy further.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Kelly
Assistant Director, Policy