



Guidelines for Policy Making

Promoting good governance in policy development

working together



North Bord
Eastern Sláinte
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Guidelines for Policy Making

Promoting good governance
in policy development

**“We will develop policy, procedures and protocols
to guide decision-making and service delivery.”**

A Health Strategy for the People of the North-East, 2003, Action 4.4



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Introduction and purpose



Introduction and purpose

One of the key challenges for policy makers within the new health system will be to balance the need for governance and overseeing policy at a central level with the flexibility that managers need in order to innovate and adapt policies to local needs and contexts in a dynamic way.

Responsibility for policy making and implementation must be evident at a number of different levels. In line with our commitment to public accountability and high performance, we must ensure that our policy-making processes focus on protecting public interest and drive the delivery of service priorities.

A Health Strategy for the People of the North-East is the overarching strategic framework that guides the development of services for the people of this region. Action 4.4 of the Strategy specifically commits us to:

- ▶ Developing policy, procedures and protocols to guide decision-making and service delivery.
- ▶ Developing our capacity to ensure that policy making is based on good analysis and evidence.
- ▶ Strengthening the capacity for policy development, implementation, monitoring and review throughout the system.

The Strategy and Policy Advisory Forum (SPAF) was established by the NEHB as part of its governance arrangements for policy making and ratification. The main purpose of SPAF is to formalise and standardise the approach to the development and ratification of organisation-level strategies

and policies in an integrated manner throughout this region.

Purpose of Guidelines for Policy Making

These *Guidelines for Policy Making* have been developed as part of a governance framework. Their core purpose is to assist people involved in organisation-level policy development and implementation to ensure that policy making is consistent, developed to a high standard, based on good analysis and informed by best practice.

The emphasis in these guidelines is on the process of policy development. Reference to the main features of policy making is also included. These guidelines will shape all future policy development and associated training, education and development programmes across the region.

Note: These guidelines are written to assist policy making at organisation level. However, the guidance is based on good practice and can be applied to policy making at all levels:

- ▶ **System-wide level – Health Services Executive/Department of Health and Children.**
- ▶ **Regional level – Dublin/North-East region.**
- ▶ **Local level – Local Health Offices/Hospital Networks.**

Throughout this document the main reference is to policy development. However, the guidance provided can also apply to guidelines, procedures and protocols.



Adopting a whole-system approach to policy making

The approach to policy development outlined in this document is based on organisation development (OD) principles. An OD approach supports a whole-system/whole-organisation perspective.

By adopting a whole-system approach to policy development, it is possible to take into account the inter-dependencies between different parts of the organisation or wider system.

It is important to take into account that a change in policy in one part of the system can have a knock-on effect or an impact on another part of the system/organisation. An OD approach therefore encourages collaboration between different parts of the organisation in policy development and the reduction of inappropriate competition.

The approach to policy development outlined in this document also strongly advocates the involvement of all relevant people in policy development at the appropriate stages. People will support what they help create.

It is important therefore that relevant people are given the opportunity to consider the issues that impact on them. By enabling people to learn through a collaborative, participative approach to policy development, it is possible to build the capacity to support and sustain long-term change and development.

It is vital therefore that the whole system is mapped out to ensure that all those that have a contribution to make to the policy-development process are included and acknowledged at the appropriate stages.





Policy framework and definitions

Policy framework and definitions

Definitions and process continuum

The terms strategies, policies, guidelines, procedures and protocols are often used interchangeably. There may be some degree of overlap, and the distinctions between them are sometimes not evident. The purpose of all of the above is to guide staff in providing best outcomes for service users and high-quality services.

International, European and national policies and strategies influence and shape the development of organisation-level strategies and policies as outlined in Figure 1 below.

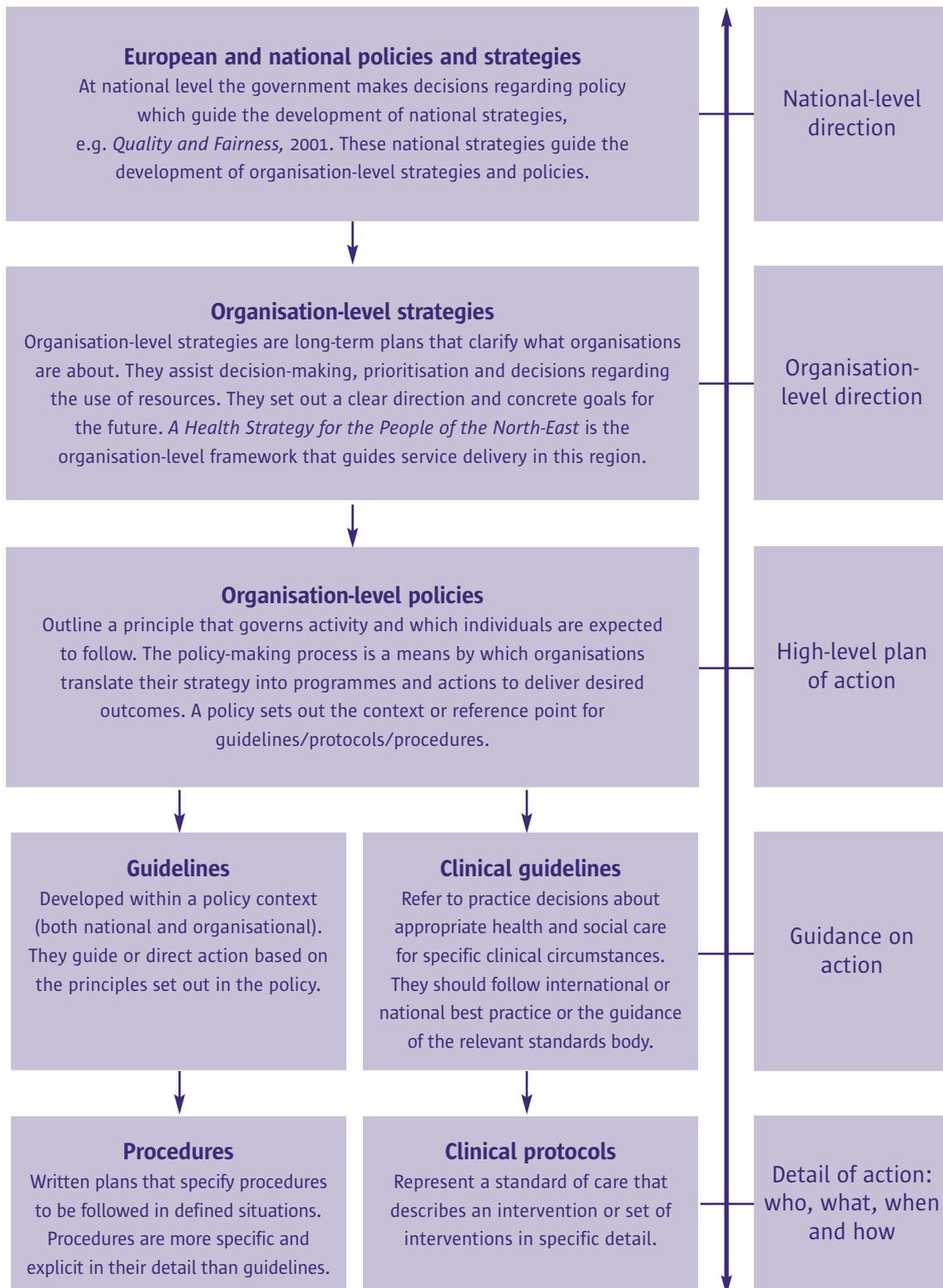
Organisation-level strategy is the key overarching framework that guides the development of policies, guidelines, procedures and protocols at organisation level.

Within this region, *A Health Strategy for the People of the North-East, 2003*, which was developed based on national strategies, is the framework which will guide future policy development.

Broad definitions, with a distinction between clinical and non-clinical applications, and the continuum associated with the process are outlined in Figure 2 on page 7.



Figure 1: Policy framework



Note: Depending on the complexity, policy may be developed with associated guidelines/protocols/procedures in the one document.

Figure 2: Definitions and process continuum

Features of good policy making

An effective policy-making process needs to encompass three key themes:

1. Vision: Forward and outward looking, creative and innovative.
2. Effectiveness: Evidence-based, inclusive and integrated.
3. Continuous improvement: Commitment to review, evaluation and ongoing learning.

Therefore, a policy-making process which is effective has the features outlined below:

Table 1: Features of good policy making

Forward looking:	Clearly defines purpose and outcomes. It takes a long-term view, taking into account the likely effect and impact of the policy in the next five to ten years and beyond.
Outward looking:	Takes full account of international, European, national and regional considerations and experiences.
Innovative and creative:	Is flexible and innovative, willing to question established ways of dealing with things and encourages new and creative ideas.
Evidence-based:	Uses the best available evidence from a wide range of appropriate sources.
Inclusive:	Takes account of the impact on and/or meets the needs of all people directly or indirectly affected by the policy. It involves key stakeholders directly in the policy-development process at appropriate stages.
Joined up:	Takes a holistic, whole-system perspective, looking beyond organisational boundaries while at the same time taking into account national and organisational strategic objectives.
Review:	Constantly reviews existing policy to ensure it is really dealing with the issues it was designed to address without having negative effects elsewhere.
Evaluation:	Systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of policy is built into the policy-making process.
Learns lessons:	Learns from experience what works and what does not through systematic evaluation and a learning approach to policy development.

Adapted from: Bullock, H., Mountford, J., Stanley, R., Centre for Management and Policy Studies, *Better Policy-Making* (2001:14)

Note: The features of policy making outlined in Table 1 are presented in more detail in Appendix 1.

Policy-making cycle

The following diagram of the policy-making cycle sets out the six key stages of policy making, including agenda setting, analysis, writing policy, ratification, implementation and monitoring. The learning from monitoring and evaluation is used to change existing policies or shape new ones.

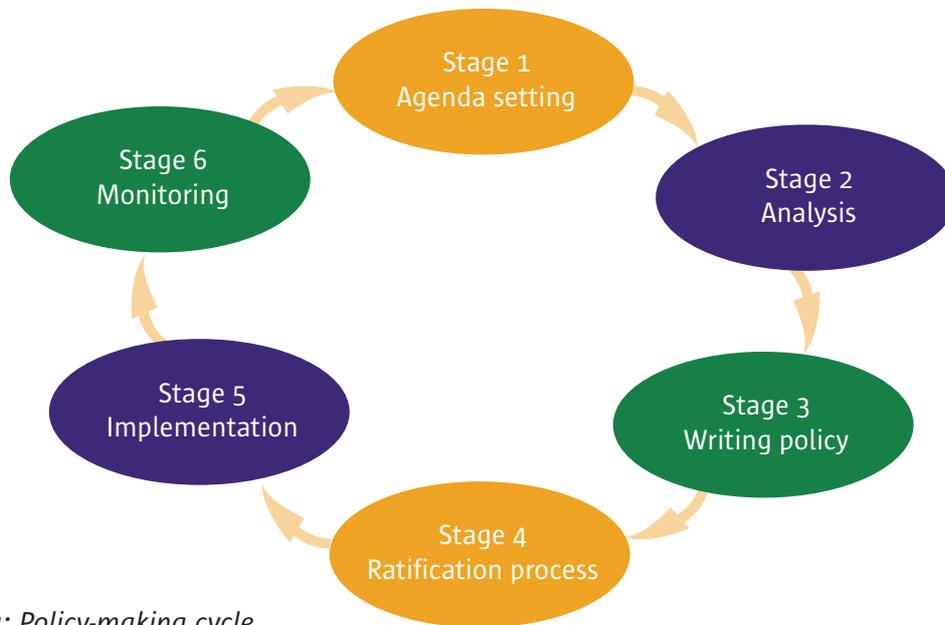


Figure 3: Policy-making cycle

Policy making, however, rarely proceeds as neatly as the above model suggests and no two policies will need exactly the same development process.

The reasons why policy making gets under way will vary from case to case. These reasons will range from organisational commitments, court decisions and responses to external and internal events.

A different sequence in the approach to policy development may therefore be required based on these factors and on the existing state of the policy, its complexity and its range.

Approaching policy making as a series of sequential steps also tempts policy makers to leave thinking about some stages, such as implementation and evaluation, until late in the process. Policy making must therefore be approached as a continuous process in which all of the activities in the cycle are interrelated and influence each other. Policy development also needs to take into account the context of how it will be delivered.

The approach to policy development outlined in the policy-making cycle above places a strong emphasis on encouraging a process of continuous improvement and review. Through a process of reflection, review, evaluation and learning, it is possible to support policy development that is based on real experiences of how things work. The approach also places a significant emphasis on promoting open, transparent communication at all stages of policy development in order to build mutual trust and confidence in the process and between different parts of the system.

Table 2: Key elements of the policy-making cycle

Stage 1 Agenda setting	Stage 2 Analysis	Stage 3 Writing policy
<p>1.1 The need for the policy or a change in policy should be identified.</p> <p>1.2 The mandate to proceed with the development of an organisation-level policy needs to be agreed.</p> <p>1.3 The context for the development of the policy should be outlined.</p> <p>1.4 The overall purpose and objectives of the policy need to be described.</p> <p>1.5 The scope of the policy should be outlined, i.e. the people and services to which the policy applies are identified.</p> <p>1.6 The involvement of key stakeholders at all stages needs to be scoped out.</p> <p>1.7 The resources required to develop the policy should be determined.</p> <p>1.8 The communications process to support the early stages of policy development needs to be outlined.</p>	<p>2.1 The legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements relating to the policy area need to be identified.</p> <p>2.2 The evidence/information required to support the development of the policy should be identified/ described.</p> <p>2.3 The process of analysis that has been carried out based on the evidence/ information gathered needs to be outlined.</p> <p>2.4 The impact of the policy on other parts of the organisation or service areas should be considered and appropriately addressed.</p> <p>2.5 Having analysed the evidence/information available, options can now be suggested in relation to the policy area.</p> <p>2.6 The relevant people should be given an opportunity to consider the options generated at this stage.</p> <p>2.7 The broad policy content must be aligned to <i>A Health Strategy for the People of the North-East</i> and other relevant national, organisational and service strategies and policies.</p>	<p>3.1 The main elements to be included in the draft policy document and the sequence that should be followed are outlined.</p> <p>3.2 Consideration needs to be given to the supports required to write the policy document.</p> <p>3.3 Consideration should be given to access and clarity of presentation in the policy document.</p>



Stage 4 Ratification process	Stage 5 Implementation	Stage 6 Monitoring
<p>4.1 The draft policy document should be reviewed by the development group to ensure that there is an explicit link between the policy and the supporting evidence and analysis.</p> <p>4.2 The final draft needs to be reviewed and signed off by the development group and other key stakeholders, including the policy sponsor.</p> <p>4.3 A Governance Template should be completed in order to commence the formal ratification process.</p>	<p>5.1 An implementation plan that includes clearly defined resource requirements should form part of the policy-development process.</p> <p>5.2 Levels of accountability and responsibility for implementation need to be identified and assigned.</p> <p>5.3 Supporting guidelines or procedures may be required to assist with the implementation of the policy.</p> <p>5.4 A communications plan for staff, service users and other key stakeholders must be developed.</p> <p>5.5 Supports need to be put in place to assist staff in implementing the policy.</p>	<p>6.1 Mechanisms should be in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy in meeting its defined purpose and objectives.</p> <p>6.2 Action that needs to be taken based on the learning from the evaluation to improve policy effectiveness should be identified.</p> <p>6.3 Processes need to be put in place to ensure that the learning from the policy development and implementation process is shared appropriately.</p>





Guidance to take you through the policy-making cycle

Guidance to take you through the policy-making cycle

Developing good policies that deliver desired outcomes depends on competent performance at each interrelated step in the policy-making cycle. The following pages take you through the policy-making cycle and prompt the actions required at each stage.

Stage One: Agenda setting

- 1.1 The need for the policy or a change in policy should be identified.
- 1.2 The mandate to proceed with the development of an organisation-level policy needs to be agreed.
- 1.3 The context for the development of the policy should be outlined.
- 1.4 The overall purpose and objectives of the policy need to be described.
- 1.5 The scope of the policy should be outlined, i.e. the people and services to which the policy applies are identified.
- 1.6 The involvement of key stakeholders at all stages needs to be scoped out.
- 1.7 The resources required to develop the policy should be determined.
- 1.8 The communications process to support the early stages of policy development needs to be outlined.



Stage One: Agenda setting

Understanding the issues – scope and purpose

1.1 The need for the policy or a change in policy should be identified.

There should be a clear description of how the need for the policy was initiated/identified, i.e.:

- ▶ Need recognised based on requirement to align services and policies to *A Health Strategy for the People of the North-East*.
- ▶ Identification by management team or other senior directors/managers/clinicians.
- ▶ Gap identified by front-line staff or service managers.
- ▶ Legislation, national policy, EU directive, court decisions.
- ▶ Service plan requirements.
- ▶ New service or continuous quality improvement developments.
- ▶ Incidents/near misses identified through risk, health & safety, etc.
- ▶ Local initiatives.

1.2 The mandate to proceed with the development of an organisation-level policy needs to be agreed.

Having identified the need for the development of an organisation-level policy, it is important that the mandate to proceed is agreed at the appropriate level, i.e. national, regional or local. Within the context of the experiences in the north-east, the following process has applied and should form the basis for ongoing best practice:

- ▶ Discussion at the level of directors of governance, general managers, directors of organisation functions and/or regional managers should take place with the individual(s) who have identified the need for an organisation-level policy.
- ▶ Responsibility for progressing the policy-development process will need leadership at a senior level. Therefore, policy sponsors for organisation-level policy will come from this group, i.e. directors of governance, general managers, directors of organisation functions and/or regional managers or, in some cases, members of the management team.
- ▶ The mandate to proceed with policy development will require discussion and agreement between the policy sponsor and the appropriate management team member in order to formally commission the work and ensure organisational alignment.

1.3 The context for the development of the policy should be outlined.

The contextual factors should be outlined, i.e.:

- ▶ Legislative, regulatory or organisational.
- ▶ National, regional or local influencing factors, including the strategic context, i.e. *A Health Strategy for the People of the North-East*.
- ▶ The principles underpinning the policy should be specified.

1.4 The overall purpose and objectives of the policy need to be described.

The overall purpose of the policy should be described, i.e. why this policy is required. The objectives of the policy should also be outlined with an indication of what outcomes the policy is intended to achieve.

1.5 The scope of the policy should be outlined, i.e. the people and services to which the policy applies are identified.

The remit/scope of the policy should be described, i.e.:

- ▶ Service users to whom the policy will apply.
- ▶ Areas/services to which the policy will apply.
- ▶ Staff who will be affected by the policy.
- ▶ External agencies which will be affected by the policy.

It is important therefore that the whole system is mapped out to ensure that all those that have a contribution to make are included or acknowledged in the policy-development process at appropriate stages. All of the relevant connections should be identified and an assessment of impact in different areas should be taken into account.



1.6 The involvement of key stakeholders at all stages needs to be scoped out.

The involvement of key stakeholders at all stages should be scoped out. This will include relevant:

- ▶ Service users.
- ▶ Staff at all levels.
- ▶ Representatives from other agencies, if appropriate.
- ▶ Cross-service representation.

It is important that all key players are engaged in the policy-development process. It is also important to ensure that they interact with each other in a meaningful way. The development of the policy may require specialist expertise that may be accessed both within and outside the organisation. Potential involvement should be identified at this early stage. (Reference to involvement and participation in policy making on page 32 should be helpful at this stage.)

1.7 The resources required to develop the policy should be determined.

Policy development takes time and money. It is important that the costs involved in the process are identified at the outset and planned for within the service planning process for the appropriate year.

1.8 The communications process to support the early stages of policy development needs to be outlined.

It is important that a communications plan is put in place from the early stages to inform the appropriate people that the policy is being developed. This communications plan should be regularly reviewed, with clear lines of responsibility for ensuring that regular communication is maintained. It is also important that the intention to develop a policy is reflected in the relevant service plans.

Stage Two: Analysis

- 2.1 The legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements relating to the policy area need to be identified.
- 2.2 The evidence/information required to support the development of the policy should be identified/described.
- 2.3 The process of analysis that has been carried out based on the evidence/information gathered needs to be outlined.
- 2.4 The impact of the policy on other parts of the organisation or service area should be considered and appropriately addressed.
- 2.5 Having analysed the evidence/information available, options can now be suggested in relation to the policy area.
- 2.6 The relevant people should be given an opportunity to consider the options generated at this stage.
- 2.7 The broad policy content must be aligned to *A Health Strategy for the People of the North-East* and other relevant organisational strategies and policies.



Stage Two: Analysis

Generating options, evidence and analysis

2.1 The legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements relating to the policy area need to be identified.

It needs to be established whether there are givens/absolutes relating to the policy area that must be addressed. It is important to identify at an early stage the implications of any legislation or regulations that impact upon the policy area being addressed. These may include national and international implications and standards set down by professional bodies. It is also essential that organisational requirements and implications are fully explored at a regional and local level, i.e. the strategic context, other related strategies and policies. The continued relevance of these legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements must be assessed within the context of the policy being developed in order to make sure the policy meets and exceeds the minimum requirements.

2.2 The evidence/information required to support the development of the policy should be identified/described.

At this point, it may be necessary to gather evidence/information in a number of different ways to support the development of the policy, i.e.:

- ▶ Carry out literature reviews.
- ▶ Commission research.
- ▶ Build upon existing evidence/research including evidence of best practice, etc.

It may be necessary to access expert or specialist help in relation to the policy area under consideration. People who can bring expertise to the development process based on research and best practice, i.e. needs assessment, issue identification, literature reviews, data collection and analysis and legal and ethical considerations, should be accessed at this early stage. Resources may be available within the organisation or may need to be sourced externally.

It is also important that the full range of stakeholder perspectives has been taken into account in gathering this evidence, i.e.:

- ▶ Service users.
- ▶ Staff at all levels, particularly those who will be implementing the policy.
- ▶ Other relevant organisations and agencies.
- ▶ People with relevant expertise or experience, where necessary.

The involvement of front-line staff is one of the most important sources of expert evidence that can contribute to evidence-based policy making (see Appendix 2: Guidance on front-line staff involvement; Guidance on service user and community involvement).

It is also important to assess how the policy has been addressed elsewhere, i.e. in other organisations and services, in order to determine what has worked well. The analysis and learning from evaluations of previous related policies should also be taken into account at this early stage.

In gathering information, it is critical to forecast future trends and requirements in relation to the policy area in order to ensure the relevance of the policy for the future.

2.3 The process of analysis that has been carried out based on the evidence/information gathered needs to be outlined.

It is important to assess the current situation in relation to the policy area in order to determine what is working well, what needs to improve and what key areas the policy must address in order to achieve the objectives outlined.

The factors emerging from the information gathering phase above must now be assessed and interpreted in order to inform the policy-development process and ensure a sound analytical basis for the work being undertaken. This must include taking a future focus to safeguard the future relevance of the policy. All the appropriate people must be involved in the analysis phase. The conclusions from the analysis should be validated by the relevant people, both within the organisation and appropriate external sources.



2.4 The impact of the policy on other parts of the organisation or service areas should be considered and appropriately addressed.

It is important to take into account that a change in policy in one part of the organisation can have a knock-on effect or impact on another part. It is vital therefore to encourage collaboration between different parts of the organisation in developing policy.

There is a need to describe and address the linkages and potential impact of the policy in relation to other services or parts of the organisation. It is also important to identify if the policy will require changes in other areas and, if so, have the relevant people been consulted.

2.5 Having analysed the evidence/information available, options can now be suggested in relation to the policy area.

Following the analysis phase, certain givens will become apparent based on the contextual and organisational requirements of the policy area. Choices will then need to be made with regard to prioritising the options available and levels of emphasis on certain areas. Options will also include choices with regard to implementation.

The policy options should now be presented to those who will be affected by the policy to enable them to contribute to its development. Opportunities to generate multiple solutions to the issues raised should be part of this consultation phase. The different solutions need to be assessed to determine their appropriateness. Carrying out an assessment of risk at this stage will help to provide assurance regarding the safeguarding of the policy. It is also necessary at this point to consider the resource implications of the policy area.

2.6 The relevant people should be given an opportunity to consider the options generated at this stage.

It is important throughout the whole analysis process to involve all the relevant people. It is particularly essential to consider cross-service and cross-agency involvement in order to ensure all perspectives are included and the assessment of options is well founded. At this point, the implications of the policy for other service areas will become apparent and need to be communicated and factored into the process. Key groups include:

- ▶ Service users.
- ▶ Staff at all levels, particularly those who will be implementing the policy.
- ▶ Staff with particular responsibility for aspects of the policy.
- ▶ Other relevant organisations and agencies, including those with statutory or regulatory responsibilities or interests.
- ▶ People with relevant expertise or experience.

2.7 The broad policy content must be aligned to *A Health Strategy for the People of the North-East* and other relevant national, organisational or service strategies and policies.

Having reached broad consensus on the policy content, it is now necessary to proof the policy and ensure it is aligned to *A Health Strategy for the People of the North-East*. This will ensure alignment with the national health strategy *Quality and Fairness*. Alignment to other key organisational plans such as the *Human Resources Management Plan* and relevant service strategies and policies should also be ensured.

As many organisation-level policies will be guided by Department of Health and Children and other government policies and strategies, it is important at this stage to ensure that the policy under consideration meets appropriate national requirements.

In writing up the policy, the specific linkages to national documents should be clearly outlined. The alignment to the appropriate strategic objectives and high-level actions in *A Health Strategy for the People of the North-East* should also be evident in the writing of the policy.



Stage Three: Writing policy

- 3.1 The main elements to be included in the draft policy document and the sequence that should be followed are outlined.**
- 3.2 Consideration needs to be given to the supports required to write the policy document.**
- 3.3 Consideration should be given to access and clarity of presentation in the policy document.**

A draft policy document should now be produced based on the evidence, analysis and consultation to date. As noted earlier, policy development is not a linear process and, therefore, prior to moving to the stage of ratification as outlined in stage four and to implementation outlined in stage five, it will be necessary to outline in the written policy the plans for implementation, communication and evaluation.

Stage Three: Writing policy

Ensuring the policy will be accessible and appropriate

A draft policy document should now be produced based on the evidence, analysis and consultation to date.

3.1 The main elements to be included in the draft policy document and the sequence that should be followed are outlined.

The main elements that should be included in the draft policy document with a recommended sequence to be followed are outlined below.

- ▶ Introduction and context (Stage 1.3, page 16).
- ▶ Definitions, if appropriate.
- ▶ Principles underpinning the policy (Stage 1.3, page 16).
- ▶ Purpose of the policy (Stage 1.4, page 16).
- ▶ Objectives of the policy and expected outcomes (Stage 1.4, page 16).
- ▶ Scope and organisational alignment (Stage 1.5, page 16).
- ▶ Plan of action to achieve objectives and outcome.

- ▶ Implementation plan (Stage 5.1, page 27).
- ▶ Levels of accountability and responsibility for action (Stage 5.2, page 27).
- ▶ Communications plan to support policy implementation (Stage 5.4, page 28)

3.2 Consideration needs to be given to the supports required to write the policy document.

In writing the policy, it may be helpful to consider the following:

- ▶ Who should be involved in the drafting process?
- ▶ Who will take the lead in writing the draft policy?
- ▶ What is the time frame?
- ▶ What is the process for agreeing the draft policy?

3.3 Consideration should be given to access and clarity of presentation in the policy document.

It is important that the draft policy is accessible to readers and users in terms of layout and use of language. The language and style of writing should be precise in order to ensure that those reading and using the policy are clear about exactly what is intended and how it will be achieved.

The policy document should be available in a format that meets the access needs of all key stakeholders. Obligations under the Official Languages Act, 2003 also need to be considered at this stage.



Stage Four: Ratification process

- 4.1** The draft policy document should be reviewed by the development group to ensure that there is an explicit link between the policy and the supporting evidence and analysis.
- 4.2** The final draft document needs to be reviewed and signed off by the development group and other key stakeholders, including the policy sponsor.
- 4.3** A Governance Template should be completed in order to commence the formal ratification process.

Stage Four: Ratification process

Meeting the organisational requirements for ratification

A formal process is required to ensure that appropriate governance arrangements are in place to ratify a policy.

- 4.1** The draft policy document should be reviewed by the development group to ensure that there is an explicit link between the policy and the supporting evidence and analysis.

When the final draft of the policy document is complete, it will be necessary for the development group to review it and to ensure that there is an explicit link between the policy and the supporting evidence and analysis.

- 4.2** The final draft document needs to be reviewed and signed off by the development group and other key stakeholders, including the policy sponsor.

The final draft will need to be signed off by the development group and other key stakeholders, including the policy sponsor, to ensure that it meets organisational requirements and follows the organisational guidelines for policy development.

4.3 A Governance Template should be completed in order to commence the formal ratification process

When an organisation-level policy has been developed, it is then necessary to go through a governance process to proof and ensure the alignment of the policy to the goals and objectives of the organisation and the service to which it applies.

Within the context of the NEHB, the Strategy and Policy Advisory Forum (SPAF) was established to formalise and standardise the approach to the development and ratification of organisation-level strategies and policies in an integrated manner throughout the region.

SPAF plays a key role in connecting and aligning policy formulation and implementation across the region. Policy sponsors submit organisation-level policies to SPAF at this stage in the policy-making cycle to commence the formal ratification process. This includes completing the Governance Template and submitting the final draft of the policy document. Additional information on this process is outlined in Appendix 3: Governance model for policy ratification - Strategy and Policy Advisory Forum (SPAF).



Stage Five: Implementation

- 5.1 An implementation plan that includes clearly defined resource requirements should form part of the policy-development process.**
- 5.2 Levels of accountability and responsibility for implementation need to be identified and assigned.**
- 5.3 Supporting guidelines or procedures may be required to assist with the implementation of the policy.**
- 5.4 A communications plan for staff, service users and other key stakeholders must be developed.**
- 5.5 Supports need to be put in place to assist staff in implementing the policy.**

Stage Five: Implementation Accountability and responsibility

- 5.1 An implementation plan that includes clearly defined resource requirements should form part of the policy-development process.**

An implementation plan will be required that outlines how the policy will be put into action and resourced, i.e. human, financial and infrastructural resources, etc.

- 5.2 Levels of accountability and responsibility for implementation need to be identified and assigned.**

It is important that there is a clear statement regarding levels of accountability and responsibility for implementation. This will include being clear about the balance between central and local decision-making, i.e. who is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the policy at strategic and operational levels.

5.3 Supporting guidelines or procedures may be required to assist with the implementation of the policy.

Supporting guidelines and procedures may be required to outline more specific detail regarding the policy area (see Figure 2: Definitions and process continuum on page 7).

5.4 A communications plan for staff, service users and other key stakeholders must be developed.

There will be a need for a communications plan to support policy implementation. The communications process should be planned and inclusive. It should target all key stakeholders, both internal and external. The early stages of the communications plan will include the practicalities of distribution and awareness raising, as outlined below.

- ▶ Distribution to all key stakeholders
 - Ensure all relevant staff receive a copy of the policy.
 - Ensure that out-of-date policies are removed.
- ▶ Awareness and information sharing
 - Facilitate all relevant staff to attend information sessions.
 - Ensure ongoing awareness through induction processes.
 - Monitor the process to ensure staff have the information needed to implement the policy.

5.5 Supports need to be put in place to assist staff in implementing the policy.

During the policy-development process, key issues will emerge which highlight possible factors that enable or impede policy implementation. It is important that these factors are taken on board in terms of planning the implementation phase. Some of these issues may require leadership and organisational action at a number of levels. Staff must, however, be fully supported in implementing a new or revised policy. This may involve learning and development initiatives and/or integration of the policy content into existing programmes/events.

Developing capacity to implement a new policy may require additional skills and competencies. A planned, consultative approach to meeting these requirements will therefore be needed. Refocusing of existing teams may be required to ensure the appropriate skill mix to implement the policy.



Stage Six: Monitoring

- 6.1 Mechanisms should be in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy in meeting its defined purpose and objectives.**
- 6.2 Action that needs to be taken based on the learning from the evaluation to improve policy effectiveness should be identified.**
- 6.3 Processes need to be put in place to ensure that the learning from the policy-development and implementation process is shared appropriately.**

Stage Six: Monitoring

Policy evaluation and continuous learning

- 6.1 Mechanisms should be in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy in meeting its defined purpose and objectives.**

Evaluation and review of the policy in action is essential to test its success and to ensure it is meeting its intended objectives. This process of review and evaluation needs to take place on a consistent, planned and ongoing basis. The purpose of the evaluation should be clearly defined and set out at the outset, i.e. policy makers should clearly define what they want to learn.

As was noted earlier, policy making does not follow a linear sequence. Within the context of evaluation, it is important that the means of evaluation is built into the policy-making process from the outset. A commitment should also be made to share the findings of the evaluation and to follow up on the outcome of the evaluation to improve policy effectiveness.

It is important therefore to describe as early as possible the performance measures that will be put in place to determine if the policy is meeting its purpose, objectives and intended outcomes. A mechanism will also need to be put in place for staff who are responsible for delivering the policy, i.e. front-line staff to feedback directly to policy makers on the effectiveness of the policy at operational level.

6.2 Action that needs to be taken based on the learning from the evaluation to improve policy effectiveness should be identified.

The feedback from the evaluation of policy effectiveness needs to be communicated to the relevant people and parts of the organisation in order to promote learning and continuous improvement. This will facilitate sharing of best practice and learning from our experiences and knowledge of what works best in the organisation.

6.3 Processes need to be put in place to ensure that the learning from the policy development and implementation process is shared appropriately.

An analysis of the factors impacting upon policy implementation should be carried out. Based on this analysis, it is important that appropriate action is taken to influence and shape refinement of the policy, address barriers to implementation and shape future policy development. If a policy is no longer relevant or appropriate, it is important that corrective action is taken to address the situation.



Involvement and participation in policy making



Involvement and participation in policy making

Guidance on setting up development groups for policy making

Once the need to develop a policy has been identified, consideration needs to be given as to how best to engage with the primary stakeholders. This will include those who have an organisational responsibility in relation to the policy area under development and those who are impacted upon by the policy.

One of the requirements for organisation-level policy development is that it is sponsored at management team/director/general manager level. This discussion should take place at the stage when the need for policy development is identified. (See Stage 1.2, page 15 for guidance in this regard.)

In setting up a policy-development working group, there are a number of key questions that will guide you:

- ▶ Who has lead responsibility and will be accountable for ensuring that this policy is in place?
- ▶ What service/function areas have a key responsibility in respect of this policy?
- ▶ Are there any service/function areas that may require specific modification or adoption of this policy?
- ▶ Are there any specific areas that have a legislative responsibility in relation to this policy?
- ▶ What service areas will be expected to drive the implementation of this policy?

- ▶ What group(s) of service users will this policy impact on?
- ▶ What clinical/technical/organisational expertise is required to develop this policy?
- ▶ Where is this expertise available within the organisation?
- ▶ Is external expertise required?
- ▶ What service/organisational spread is needed?
- ▶ In order to ensure that the diversity of stakeholder perspectives is taken into account, is there a need to consider any particular groups of staff/service users that may need to be included?

These questions should help identify the range of service/function areas that need to be either represented directly or linked to the development of the policy. In addition, they should identify the specific expertise required to set the agenda and develop the policy. They should also help to identify the core working group to scope and/or develop the policy.

- ▶ Once the core service/function areas to be represented in the group are identified, it will then be necessary to make contact with appropriate senior managers to request them to agree a nominee to join the group.
- ▶ Part of the nomination process should include identification of the core competencies required of the group member and also the responsibilities for



carrying an organisation-level mandate. A discussion should then take place between the senior manager and the nominee to agree on role and responsibility. This would include consideration of the need to maintain links back into the service area and share information as appropriate.

- ▶ It may be necessary to access expert or specialist help in relation to the policy area under consideration. These resources may be available within the organisation or may need to be sourced externally.

Stakeholder involvement

It is also important that the full range of interests and views created through the involvement of stakeholders is taken into account in the development of policy.

A holistic approach to policy development is required in order to ensure that all these stakeholders are appropriately and effectively involved. This means looking beyond service/organisational boundaries.

It will require analysis of the policy environment and of the activities, processes and interactions that relate to it. This will also give a complete picture of the context within which changes might be considered and where unintended consequences might take place.

Policy making must take account of the impact on and/or meet the needs of all people directly or indirectly affected by the policy. It is therefore essential that all key

stakeholders are involved in the policy process. This will involve consulting with those responsible for service delivery/implementation and those who are at the receiving end or otherwise affected by the policy (staff and service users). In addressing involvement and participation of staff, service users or representatives of other agencies in policy development, it is important to consider the following questions:

- ▶ Who should be involved?
- ▶ When to involve them and at what stage?
- ▶ How to involve them?
- ▶ What may hinder involvement and how can these issues be overcome?
- ▶ How does their involvement relate to the development process of the policy itself?
- ▶ How do you encourage the best contribution from those involved?
- ▶ What supports are needed to enable people to contribute fully to the process?

It may be possible to use existing fora within or outside the organisation to assist in the development/consultation process. Part of the process will involve assessing the impact of the policy on existing practices and the changes that will be required. Staff with front-line operational experience will be in the best position to comment on the realities of implementing the policy (see Appendix 2: Guidance on front-line staff involvement).



Service user involvement

Service user involvement may be appropriate at all stages of policy development. It is important to ensure that this involvement is both appropriate and meaningful (see Appendix 2: Guidance on service user and community involvement).

Conflict of interest

There may be circumstances when members of a working group have a conflict of interest in relation to the policy being developed. All group members should declare if they have a conflict of interest or whether there are moral or ethical considerations that would impede/prevent them from making an objective contribution.



APPENDICES



Appendix 1 – Features of good policy making

The table below is based on the features of good policy making presented on page 8 of this document. It outlines more specific defining details and suggests evidence to support each of the features.

Table 3: Features of good policy making: Definitions and supporting evidence

Theme	Features	Definition and evidence
Vision	1. Forward looking	<p>Definition: Policy makers clearly define the purpose of the policy (why do we need this policy?) and the outcomes the policy is designed to achieve. Where appropriate, policy makers should take a long-term view based on information and analysis available to them. This analysis should identify the future impact which external and internal factors are likely to have on the policy.</p> <p>Evidence: Within the policy-making process, a statement of intended outcomes was prepared at an early stage. Contingency planning, where appropriate, was evident. Evidence of taking the national or regional longer-term strategy was apparent. Evidence that the policy had taken into account lessons from evaluations of previous related policies was also explicit.</p>
Vision	2. Outward looking	<p>Definition: Policy makers take account of influencing factors in the regional and national situation. Draw on experience in other services and consider how policy will be communicated with staff and, where appropriate, the public.</p> <p>Evidence: Worked closely with national or regional agencies or structures. Looked at how other services/agencies dealt with the issue. Worked closely with colleagues in the organisation and other organisations, as appropriate. Carried out benchmarking and recognised national or regional variation. Communications/presentation plan prepared and implemented.</p>

Theme	Features	Definition and evidence
Vision	3. Innovative and creative	<p>Definition: Policy makers are flexible and innovative, questioning established ways of dealing with things. Encourage new and creative ideas and, where appropriate, make established ways work better. Wherever possible, open to comments and suggestions from others. Risks are identified and actively managed. Experimentation and diversity are encouraged through use of pilots/trials.</p> <p>Evidence: Used alternatives to the usual ways of working (brainstorming sessions, etc.). Took the issue back to the beginning. Examined evidence to get a better idea of the problem itself, including why previous policy solutions failed, and defined success in terms of outcomes already identified. Effective use of pilots/trials. Consciously assessed and managed risk. Took steps to create management structures which promoted new ideas and effective team-working. Appropriate use made of IT systems. People brought into policy team from outside.</p>
Effectiveness	4. Evidence-based	<p>Definition: Policy makers' advice/decisions are based on the best available evidence from a wide range of sources. All key stakeholders are involved at an early stage and throughout the policy's development. All relevant evidence, including that from specialists, is available in an accessible and meaningful form to policy makers.</p> <p>Evidence: Commissioned new research where appropriate and considered existing research. Consulted relevant reports and/or used internal and external supports appropriately. Considered range of properly costed and appraised options.</p>

Theme	Features	Definition and evidence
Effectiveness	5. Inclusive	<p>Definition: Policy makers take account of the impact on and/or meet the needs of all people directly or indirectly affected by the policy. Involve key stakeholders directly in the policy process.</p> <p>Evidence: Consulted those responsible for service delivery/implementation and those at the receiving end or otherwise affected by the policy. Used existing consultation fora within or outside the organisation to assist in the development process. Range of impact assessments made and included in evidence leading to decisions. Feedback on operation of policy sought from recipients and front-line deliverers.</p>
Effectiveness	6. Joined up	<p>Definition: Policy makers take a holistic view, looking beyond service/organisational boundaries. Ensure the policy is in line with national and regional strategic objectives. Seek to establish the ethical, moral and legal base for policy. Consider appropriate management/organisational structures needed to deliver cross-cutting objectives. Develop systems that encourage and maintain cross-cutting working. Promote models that support integrated working. (For further information on integration, see Integration Model for Decision-Making, <i>A Health Strategy for the People of the North-East</i>, 2003:38, or contact the Organisation Development Unit for further assistance.)</p> <p>Evidence: Cross-cutting objectives clearly defined at the outset. Joint working groups or other arrangements with other departments clearly defined and well understood. Barriers to effective joined-up working clearly identified with a strategy to overcome them. Information shared at every stage of the policy process with those who need to know. Implementation considered part of the policy-making process and developed in close</p>

Theme	Features	Definition and evidence
		collaboration with operational staff. Meaningful discussions with others who may have had competing priorities occurred during policy development.
Continuous Improvement	7. Review	<p>Definition: Existing/established policy is constantly reviewed to ensure it is dealing with the issues it was designed to address, taking into account associated effects elsewhere.</p> <p>Evidence: Ongoing review programme in place with a range of meaningful performance measures. Mechanisms set up to allow service deliverers to provide feedback directly to policy makers. Redundant policies withdrawn.</p>
Continuous Improvement	8. Evaluation	<p>Definition: Systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of policy is built into the policy-making process.</p> <p>Evidence: Clearly defined purpose of evaluation outlined at the outset, i.e. policy makers know what they want to learn. Success criteria defined. Means of evaluation built into the policy-making process from the outset. Commitment to publish outcomes of evaluation. Pilots used to influence final outcomes, where appropriate. Evaluation reports tailored to their audience to enable lessons to be learned.</p>
Continuous Improvement	9. Learns lessons	<p>Definition: Learns from experience what works and what doesn't.</p> <p>Evidence: Information on lessons learned and good practice disseminated. Account available of what was done by policy makers as a result of lessons learned. Clear distinction drawn between failure of the policy to impact on the issue it was intended to address and managerial/operational failures of implementation.</p>

Adapted from: Bullock, H., Mountford, J., Stanley, R., Centre for Management and Policy Studies, *Better Policy-Making*, (2001:14)



Appendix 2 – Guidance on front-line staff involvement

Front-line staff are one of the most important sources of expert evidence. Their involvement in evidence-based policy making is therefore essential. It is important that the full breadth of interests and views created through the involvement of a full range of stakeholders is taken into account in the development of a policy.

Identify front-line staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ It is important to recognise the different front-line staff that could be involved or relevant to the policy.▶ Involve the right people and go to those people who need to be involved.▶ Get out to people at local front-line service delivery level to ensure understanding of who the right people are or should be.▶ Expect to involve more than one group of front-line people.▶ Ensure there is an appropriate mix of disciplines and grades.
Optimise the front-line contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Take people out of their normal environment. Be informal. Allow for flexibility taking into account constraints.▶ Provide different opportunities to get feedback at different stages and take this on board.▶ Develop staff ownership of the issues and potential solutions.▶ Build working relationships. Involve creative and energetic people who will champion the policy.▶ Test the contribution and views of those who may appear uninterested as well.



<p>Create synergy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Front-line staff and policy developers must spend time working together on the policy and its issues. ▶ Develop or create networks between front-line staff and policy developers to allow more effective information dissemination and feedback.
<p>Build in time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Clearly state the expected involvement of front-line contributors. ▶ Ensure there is an opportunity and necessary time for feedback in the process of refining the policy. ▶ An allowance should be made for reflection and for the policy to be tested as it develops.

Adapted from: Cabinet Office, *Involving the Front-Line in Policy-Making* (2002: 13)



Guidance on service user and community involvement

A *Health Strategy for the People of the North-East* commits us to the ongoing development of models of service user and community involvement as outlined below:

“We will engage with service users, agencies and the wider community to achieve better health and well-being.” – Strategic Objective Eight, A Health Strategy for the People of the North-East (2003:64)

The following principles should be adhered to in order to support and inform service user and community involvement in policy-development processes:

- ▶ A rights-based approach to public and patient partnership.
- ▶ A commitment to creating an atmosphere where building trust is supported and encouraged.
- ▶ A flexible and accessible communication process that is honest and open about the implications of health care decisions.
- ▶ Motivation and commitment to partnership on the part of both service users and service providers.
- ▶ Flexibility and willingness to adapt to changing circumstances.
- ▶ An ethos of fairness and accountability which includes inbuilt monitoring and evaluation systems.
- ▶ Mutual cooperation and support in times of difficulty.
- ▶ A concern for process as well as outcome – respecting how things are done as well as the end result.
- ▶ A commitment to share power across all parties in a partnership.
- ▶ A commitment to embedding partnership within the structure of the health system and across all sectors at all levels within the system.
- ▶ A commitment to financial support.

Principles adapted from Office for Health Management (2002), *Public and Patient Participation in Healthcare: A Discussion Paper for the Irish Health Services* and presented in *A Health Strategy for the People of the North-East* (2003: 66).

Further information and assistance can be obtained by referencing the following documents on service user and community participation:

- ▶ Health Boards Executive (2002). *Community Participation Guidelines: Health Strategy Implementation Project*. Offaly: The Health Boards Executive.
- ▶ Office for Health Management (2002). *Public and Patient Participation in Healthcare: A Discussion Paper for the Irish Health Services*. Dublin: Office for Health Management.

Appendix 3 – Governance model for policy ratification Strategy and Policy Advisory Forum (SPAF)

The NEHB developed a model for policy ratification as part of its overall governance framework. This governance model may be adapted to apply to policy making at the appropriate levels within the new health system, i.e. national, regional or local. A core element of this framework is the Strategy and Policy Advisory Forum (SPAF) which was established to formalise and standardise the approach to the development and ratification of organisation-level strategies and policies in an integrated manner throughout the region. SPAF has a key role to play in connecting and aligning policy formulation and implementation.

Role of SPAF

- ▶ To ensure that strategies and policies are developed within a framework of governance and accountability.
- ▶ To ensure that the development of strategies and policies are in line with *A Health Strategy for the People of the North-East* and are in line with national and regional health and social care policies.
- ▶ To provide a filtering and proofing mechanism that challenges and audits strategies and policies based on the core guiding principles and values of the organisation.
- ▶ To ensure that strategies and policies meet and promote evidence-based standards of decision-making and quality practice.
- ▶ To ensure that strategies and policies promote the integration of services.

- ▶ To promote evaluation and review of policies and strategies.

Specific responsibilities

- ▶ To consider newly-developed strategies and policies and make recommendations to the CEO and management team.
- ▶ To advise the CEO and management team on requirements for new strategy and policy development.
- ▶ To take on the role of policy sponsor where appropriate (individual members of SPAF may take on this role related to their core areas of responsibility).
- ▶ To make recommendations on terms of reference and membership of strategy and policy development and implementation groups.
- ▶ To provide advice and guidance on the strategy and policy-development process.
- ▶ To provide high-level guidance and monitoring of implementation and communications processes in relation to strategies and policies.

Membership of SPAF

Deputy CEO, Governance and Strategic Planning (Chairperson).
Director of Organisation Development (Vice-Chairperson).
Corporate Risk Manager.
Director of Governance, Planning and Evaluation, Children and Families.
Director of Governance, Planning and Evaluation, Disability Services.

Director of Governance, Planning and Evaluation, Older People.
 Director of Human Resources.
 Director of Nursing and Midwifery, Planning and Development Unit.
 Director of Primary Care.
 Director of Public Health and Planning.
 General Manager, Community Services.*
 Group Manager, Acute Hospital Services.*
 Health Promotion Officer.
 Representative, Mental Health Services.*
 Senior Administrative Officer, Organisation Development Unit.

**The general manager/group manager representatives from Community Services and the Acute Hospital sectors and the representative from Mental Health Services rotate annually.*

Process of policy ratification

When an organisation-level policy has been developed, it is necessary to go through a governance process to proof and ensure the alignment of the policy to the goals and objectives of the organisation and the services to which it applies. This is the primary role of SPAF. SPAF makes recommendations on the appropriateness of the policy for ratification to the CEO and management team.

Organisation-level policy therefore needs to be submitted to SPAF by the policy sponsor to commence the formal ratification process.

This includes completing the Governance Template and submitting it with the final draft policy document. At this point, the policy is formally considered at a SPAF meeting at which the policy sponsor and other key developers attend to present an outline of the policy and assist with the discussion.

Following the recommendation(s) of SPAF, a policy is formally considered and ratified by the CEO and the management team. The role of the CEO and the management team is therefore to:

- ▶ Ratify strategy and policy that have been recommended by SPAF.
- ▶ Mandate the development of strategies and policies in consultation with policy sponsors/developers.
- ▶ Take up the role of policy sponsor for appropriate organisation-level strategy or policy, where necessary.
- ▶ Advise on the membership of development and implementation groups.

Guidance for submitting policy to SPAF for consideration

Organisation-level policy can be submitted to SPAF at various stages of development:

- ▶ The very early stage of development for advice and guidance.
- ▶ At final draft stage to progress to ratification by the CEO and management team.
- ▶ Resubmission following referral back to the policy sponsor and developers.
- ▶ Referral back by CEO and management team for clarification/modification/reshaping.

The work of SPAF is focused on organisation-level policy which is defined as follows:

“Organisation-level policies outline a principle that governs activity and which individuals are expected to follow. The policy-making process is a means by which organisations translate their strategy into programmes and actions to deliver desired outcomes. A policy sets out the context or reference point for guidelines/protocols/procedures.”

(Guidelines for Policy Making, 2004:7)

Early stage of development

Seeking advice and guidance from SPAF at the early stages of policy development is encouraged. This will assist SPAF to be aware of policy developments and alert the policy developers to the whole organisation connections and cohesion required when policy is being developed. Policy development also needs to be clearly linked to the ongoing cycle of planning, both

strategic and operational. Therefore links with *A Health Strategy for the People of the North-East* and appropriate service/care group strategies must be evident. Intended plans for policy development should also form part of the service planning process.

A policy sponsor who wants to seek advice or guidance from SPAF can put down a policy outline for discussion at a SPAF meeting by contacting the Organisation Development Unit. While acknowledging that guidance is being sought at the early stage of development, the key stages of policy making as outlined in the policy-making cycle should be considered.

Submitting policy to SPAF for final consideration and ratification

The ratification process is outlined in stage four of the policy-making cycle. The appropriate policy sponsor puts forward the policy to SPAF to commence the ratification process.

- ▶ The final draft policy document should be submitted. The policy sponsor is responsible for ensuring that the *Guidelines for Policy Making* have been followed.
- ▶ The Governance Template must accompany the policy.

The policy sponsor attends the appropriate SPAF meeting and may be accompanied by other key people who were involved in the development process. The policy sponsor should be in a position to expand on the

information provided in the Governance Template and provide clarity regarding the formulation process in line with the key steps of policy making as outlined in the policy-making cycle.

Resubmission to SPAF following referral back to developers

If a policy submitted for ratification is referred back by the developers to SPAF through the policy sponsor, it must be accompanied by specific identification of the issue(s) of concern to SPAF with guidance on how to progress the matter. A revised policy can then be resubmitted to SPAF for further consideration.

Policy being referred back to SPAF from CEO and management team

If a policy that is recommended by SPAF for ratification is not accepted or referred for significant modification or reshaping by the CEO and management team, it is appropriate for SPAF to reconsider its

original recommendation. This may result in the policy being referred back by SPAF with guidance to the developers through the policy sponsor.

In the event that SPAF requires clarity from the CEO and management team or continues to recommend the policy, the policy sponsor and/or the SPAF Chairperson will discuss the policy with the CEO and appropriate management team member.

Overseeing SPAF

The Organisation Development Unit provides support for SPAF. Guidance on submitting policies to SPAF at the stages outlined above can be obtained by contacting Sharon or Tara in the Organisation Development Unit at 046 9280533 or by e-mail sharon.murtagh@nehb.ie or tara.o'rourke@nehb.ie

Advice and guidance on policy development can be obtained by contacting any member of SPAF.

Governance Template

Strategy and Policy Advisory Forum

Description of policy*
<p>Title:</p> <hr/>
<p>Final draft: <input type="checkbox"/> Tick as appropriate</p>
<p>Resubmission: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <hr/>
<p>Policy sponsor:</p> <hr/>
<p>Lead service:</p> <hr/>
Scope and purpose
<p>How was the need for the policy identified?</p> <hr/> <p><i>Reference: Stage 1.1, page 15**</i></p>
<p>Describe the context for the development of the policy:</p> <hr/> <p><i>Reference: Stage 1.3, page 16</i></p>
<p>Purpose of the policy:</p> <hr/> <p><i>Reference: Stage 1.4, page 16</i></p>
<p>Key objectives of the policy and intended outcomes:</p> <hr/> <p><i>Reference: Stage 1.4, page 16</i></p>
<p>Scope of policy, i.e. the people and services to which the policy applies:</p> <hr/> <p><i>Reference: Stage 1.5, page 16</i></p>

* This Governance Template may also be used for submitting strategies, guidelines or protocols.

** The references noted above apply to the stages in the policy-making cycle outlined in *Guidelines for Policy Making*. Reference to these guidelines will assist in completing this Governance Template.

Analysis and evidence to support policy development

Outline the legislative, regulatory (including standards set by professional bodies) and organisational requirements in relation to the policy area:

Reference: Stage 2.1, page 19

Outline the evidence/information gathered to support the development of the policy, i.e. research, literature reviews, etc.:

Reference: Stage 2.2, page 19

Describe the process of analysis that was carried out based on the evidence/information gathered:

Reference: Stage 2.3, page 20

Organisational alignment and proofing

What is the level of impact of the policy on other parts of the organisation or service areas?

Reference: Stage 2.4, page 21

How has the policy been aligned to *A Health Strategy for the People of the North-East* or other relevant organisational or service strategies or policies? (Please identify the specific strategic objectives/high-level actions that are appropriate.)

Reference: Stage 2.7, page 22



Policy-development process

Describe who was involved in the policy-development process at different stages, i.e. development groups/steering groups/staff consulted/service user or public involvement/other agencies, both internal and external to the organisation:

Reference: Stage 1.5, page 16, Stage 1.6, page 17

Describe how the consultation process was carried out, i.e. written submissions, focus groups, interviews, surveys, public meetings:

What specific cross-service consultation was undertaken?

Please specify the time frame for the development of the policy:

Was an external consultant involved? If yes, please name person(s)/company:

Please outline the approximate cost of developing the policy (Pay/non-pay/consultancy fees):

Ratification process

Describe the sign-off procedure by the development group, the policy sponsor and other relevant organisational members:

Reference: Stage 4.1, page 25, Stage 4.2, page 25

Implementation

Describe the implementation plan including resource requirements:

Reference: 1.7, page 17, Stage 5.1, page 27

Outline levels of accountability and responsibility for implementation and how these have been assigned:

Reference: Stage 5.2, page 27

Outline any supporting guidelines, procedures or protocols that are required to support the implementation of the policy and/or plans to develop these:

Reference: Stage 5.3, page 28

Describe the supports planned for staff to assist them in implementing the policy:

Reference: Stage 5.4, page 28, Stage 5.5, page 28



Monitoring and continuous learning

Describe the mechanisms that are in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy in meeting its defined purpose and objectives:

Reference: Stage 6.1, page 29

Describe the processes that are in place to ensure that the learning from the policy-development process is shared appropriately:

- ▶ **What challenges were encountered as part of the policy-development process?**
- ▶ **What is the impact of the challenges for implementation? Can you identify possible barriers to implementation?**
- ▶ **How could these issues and barriers be dealt with in the future?**
- ▶ **How can the learning from the policy-development process be shared across the system?**

Reference: Stage 6.2, page 30, Stage 6.3, page 30

Communications and distribution

Describe the communications plan for staff, service users and other key stakeholders that will be required to assist in the implementation of this policy, including distribution and creating awareness:

Reference: Stage 5.4, page 28

What consideration has been given to ensure that the policy, in terms of presentation and format, is accessible and user-friendly? Is the document in a format that meets the access needs of all key stakeholders? (Please specify formats available: printed, language usage, large print, audio, etc.)

Reference: Stage 3.3, page 24

What date/time frame has been agreed for the policy to be reviewed?



Please attach a copy of the final draft of the relevant strategy/policy, etc.

Formal sign-off process

This policy has been developed in line with the organisational guidance set out in *Guidelines for Policy Making* and I recommend it for consideration by SPAF:

Signed: _____

Policy sponsor: _____

Date: _____

This policy has been considered by SPAF and I am recommending it for formal ratification by the CEO and the management team:

Signed: _____

SPAF Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson: _____

Date: _____

Having considered the recommendations of SPAF and having reviewed this policy, I formally ratify it as organisation-level policy:

Signed: _____

CEO: _____

Date: _____

Return to:

Organisation Development Unit
Strategy and Policy Advisory Forum
NEHB Head Office, Navan Road
Kells, Co. Meath



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Acknowledgements

Guidelines for Policy Making

These *Guidelines for Policy Making* were recommended by SPAF and ratified by the Chief Executive Officer and management team of the NEHB in November 2004. They are approved and mandated as organisation-level guidelines for the development of organisation-level policy.

The guidelines were developed with the support and guidance of the members of the Strategy and Policy Advisory Forum. Within the Organisation Development Unit, Noreen Kearns provided research support and Sharon Murtagh and Tara O'Rourke provided administrative support.



These *Guidelines for Policy Making* were developed by Caitríona Heslin and Anne Ryan. They are part of a series of resource materials under development by the Organisation Development Unit.

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