

*These notes refer to the Children (Leaving Care) Act (Northern Ireland)
2002 (c.11) which received Royal Assent on 22 November 2002*

Children (Leaving Care) Act (Northern Ireland) 2002

EXPLANATORY NOTES

CONSULTATION

13. A consultation document, entitled “Proposals for a Children Leaving Care Bill” was issued to a wide range of interested parties in March 2001 with a 3-month consultation period. Over 50 responses were received from individuals and organisations working with children and young people. A number of respondents sought the views of young care leavers and included these in their replies. Responses indicated a broad welcome for the proposals, particularly since they would enhance the responsibilities of HSS Trusts to provide improved leaving and after care services.
14. The main area of concern was in relation to the proposed new arrangements for the financial support of 16 and 17 year old care leavers (see paragraph 11 above). While some respondents were attracted by the idea of a single system of financial support for 16-17 year old care leavers, others did not support such an approach. In proceeding with this proposal, it was considered important to ensure that the financial and other support for care leavers was co-ordinated through Trusts and that young care leavers should not lose contact with Trusts after they leave care. In addition, the Minister for Social Development agreed that the social security benefits system should be amended to support the new proposals as outlined in the consultation document. This agreement supports the long-standing principle of parity across the social security field.