



2015 CHAPTER 2

PART 3

ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

Assistance and support for exiting prostitution

19.—(1) The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety must, in conjunction with the other Northern Ireland departments, prepare and publish a strategy in relation to actions to be taken by Northern Ireland departments in the exercise of their respective functions to ensure that a programme of assistance and support is made available to persons who wish to leave prostitution.

(2) The strategy must—

- (a) be published no later than 10 months after the coming into operation of this section; and
- (b) provide for a programme of support and assistance to be made available in accordance with the strategy no later than 1 April 2016.

(3) The strategy must ensure that assistance and support provided to a person—

- (a) is not conditional on the person acting as a witness in any criminal proceedings;
- (b) is provided only with the agreement of that person; and
- (c) is provided in a manner which takes due account of the needs of that person as regards safety and protection from harm.

(4) The strategy must ensure that assistance and support is offered from a person who is of the same gender as the person receiving it.

(5) The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety must, in conjunction with the other Northern Ireland departments—

- (a) review the strategy (or revised strategy) for the time being published under this section at intervals of not more than 3 years; and
- (b) if appropriate, revise the strategy and publish the revised strategy.

(6) Nothing in this section affects the entitlement of any person to assistance and support under any other statutory provision.

(7) For the purposes of this section “prostitution” has the same meaning as in Article 58 of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008.