

DEC 2008

*Nov. 28th 2008
Met (w/ D. Bryman)*

FROM THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH,
SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY
Michael McGimpsey MLA



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

AN ROINN
Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí
AN MINISTÉIR
Do
Páistí, Resyónter Heisin
an Poblac Sicear

Department of Culture, Media and Sport	
DATE RECEIVED	5/12/08
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Margaret Hodge MP
Minister for Culture
Department for Culture, Media and Sport

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Our Ref: [Redacted]

Dear Margaret,

28th November 2008

I welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation as Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety within Northern Ireland. Given the rapid advances in technology, processing power and graphics, and the increasing number of online games, the video games classification consultation is very timely and welcomed.

In considering the options put forward in the consultation document, I prefer Option 1, the Hybrid Classification System. By using both the BBFC and PEGI symbols and having consistency of classification for DVDs, videos and video games will be a better way of providing parents/carers with the appropriate information to enable them to make informed decisions about the suitability of the content of video games for the children under their care.

In choosing Option 1 I have taken account of the fact that Northern Ireland, unlike the rest of the UK, shares a land border with the Republic of Ireland. The Republic of Ireland, like the majority of EU Member States, relies primarily on the PEGI rating system for the classification of video games. Northern Ireland & the Republic of Ireland move between and shop in each other's jurisdiction; because of this it would be desirable that the classification video games is clearly understood and easily identifiable in this jurisdiction.

I have also taken into account that online gaming is increasing and if both sets of symbols could be used for online games, this would provide the consistency of approach that is required.

Michael McGimpsey

**Michael McGimpsey MLA
Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety**

