

GBA News - December 2019



## Westminster Inquiry - Education Funding

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The UK Government and the Department of Education have responded to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee (NIAC) report into education funding.

The Secretary of State, on behalf of the UK Government, responded to eight key issues in the absence of an NI Minister for Education. The overriding response is that the UK Government will continue to work with political parties in NI to restore the NI Executive as soon as possible; education remains a devolved matter and the Secretary of State does not have the authority to make decisions regarding legislation or distribution of funding.

The Department of Education responded to 13 of the NIAC recommendations. The summarised responses are as follows:

- The Department of Education and the Education Authority (EA) have welcomed the opportunity to provide updates to the NIAC on education funding, at least annually.
- The EA will continue to be reviewed in accordance with the business needs of the Department.
- Review of procurement (i.e. the delivery of maintenance and minor works) has been established on a project basis alongside the establishment of a Principals' Reference Group.
- The Department of Education has published information about the Confidence and Supply Agreement funding and how it was spent on its website, and schools have been informed.
- The Review of the Common Funding Scheme project has been commissioned. Any proposals are expected to be completed by the end of this financial year.
- Continuation of work on Area Planning and improvements to the process.
- Acceptance that stakeholder engagement and co-design will be central in the delivery of the projects within the Education Transformation Programme.
- Regarding capital projects, it is currently expected that a list of the highest scoring projects should be possible in the final quarter of this financial year.
- Acknowledgement that future budget allocations should take account of the increasing number of children with Special Education Needs and Disability in the NI school system.
- The Department has highlighted the key factors considered by the EA when allocating budgets for special schools.

- Also highlighted were some of the current provisions for training and supply cover. A number of EA programmes were mentioned.
- Acceptance that support is required for the health and wellbeing of education sector staff.

The full NIAC report, UK Government and DE responses can be accessed [here](#).

## Transfer 2020/2021 - Additional Places

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The Department of Education recently sent a letter to all post primary schools explaining that oversubscription has been projected for 2020/21 for some school sectors in the following geographic areas:

- Belfast;
- Lagan Valley;
- Newtownards and North Down;
- Dungannon;
- South County Londonderry;
- Antrim Town; and
- Newry.

The DE has outlined a four-stage process for the selection of a school for a temporary increase in admission number.

Stage one involves a number of "Gateway Checks". Stage two encompasses criteria for scoring schools. Following scoring, stage three will result in "prioritised lists". Finally, stage four involves a review of the prioritised lists and a subsequent recommendation for temporary increases.

**The closing date for applications is 5pm Wednesday 8 January 2020.**

If members have any feedback on the process, please email [Helen@gbani.org](mailto:Helen@gbani.org)



## Privacy Policy Guidance

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New data protection regulations came into effect from the 25th of May 2018. It is the responsibility of each school to ensure they have an up to date privacy policy. It may be appropriate for schools to update their privacy policy or create a new one. The Education Authority offers a template which Voluntary Grammar schools may use as the basis of their policy. The EA policy has the approval of the Information Commissioner. If you wish to avail of current guidelines, they can be accessed [here](#).

## GBA Appoints Schools' Support Officer

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The GBA would like to welcome our new staff member, Helen McNally.

Helen previously worked as a project manager and researcher for the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment and a researcher for the Public Health Agency. Helen gained her PhD from Queen's University Belfast in 2013 and has experience in designing a range of research projects, including primary

and evaluative models. She also completed a professional development training certificate with the Consultation Institute and has experience in consulting with a wide range of educational stakeholders.

Helen is currently working on aspects of Area Planning and School Improvement to further support the work of the GBA and its schools.

## GBA Executive

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The next GBA Executive meeting will be held on 22nd January 2020. If you would like any items to be added to the agenda for discussion at the meeting, please contact: [Administrator@gbani.org](mailto:Administrator@gbani.org)

## GBA Christmas Office Hours

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Please note that our office will be closed from 12.30 on Monday 23rd December until the 2nd January.

The office will also close on the 3rd January and re-open as normal on Monday 6th January.

## Advertising a Teaching/Non-Teaching Vacancy

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Did you know that the GBA has advertised over 750 job posts for our member schools?

The GBA can host teaching and non-teaching vacancies on its website [www.gbani.org](http://www.gbani.org) and the information is also shared on our Twitter account. This service is free of charge for all member schools.

Details of vacancies should be sent to [Administrator@gbani.org](mailto:Administrator@gbani.org).

Please allow one working day for the vacancy to be updated and include full time/ part time status, length of contract, and any external web links to the vacancy.

## Upcoming Events

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**SAVE THE DATE** - The GBA Annual General Meeting will be held on **24th March 2020 @ Riddel Hall, Queen's University Belfast.**

We are delighted to be joined by our special guest, Professor Siobhan O'Neill, from the University of Ulster. Professor O'Neill will be presenting on the topic of mental health and well-being in schools.

A full agenda for the day will be distributed when finalised.

## Website and Twitter

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