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## Independent Review of Education - GBA Response to Interim Report

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The GBA has submitted a response to the Panel for the Independent Review of Education following the recent publication of their interim report, "[Excellent Education for all: Interim Report of Independent Review](#)".

The submission to the Panel offers our perspective on some of the issues highlighted in the report and draws attention to other areas where we feel there is scope to place greater emphasis and analysis in the final output from the review. Areas include:

1. Enhancement and extension of the provision of support to children and their parents up to the point of entry into primary school.
2. Support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN).
3. Supporting the work of management and governance at the level of individual schools.
4. Funding – Sufficiency, Efficiency and Impact

To view of full copy of the response, please visit [our website](#).

The Panel's final report is expected during April 2023, with scope for an extension of up to 6 months. The GBA will continue to engage with the Independent Review of Education and welcomes feedback from our schools.



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## SoS Statement on Northern Ireland Finances 2022/23

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Northern Ireland Secretary of State, Chris Heaton-Harris set the Northern Ireland Budget 2022/2023 on the 24th November and also announced his intention to bring forward legislation for the Budget. While the Secretary of State announced protection for Free School Meals, Extended School and Sure Start funding, the Budget will be an extremely challenging one for the provision of Education.

According to the Secretary of State:

*"For Education, this Budget provides £2.6bn in funding...this level of increase will require significant reductions in current spending trajectory levels to live within budgetary control totals. This will affect funding for high spend areas such as the Education Authority's Block Grant and the Aggregated Schools Budget..."*

The GBA recognises and shares the grave concerns of our schools. Having faced over a decade of cuts in real terms, and already operating on overstretched budgets, it is difficult to see how expenditure can be curtailed without affecting the education of children and young people.

We will continue to advocate for a fair funding base which is in line with the rest of the UK with an emphasis on ensuring that priority is given to the reallocation of available funding to support the front-line delivery of education and associated support services to children and young people in schools and colleges.

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## Area Planning Update

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### **Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools (SPiMS)**

Last week, the GBA attended Area Planning Local Group (APLG) workshops to assist in the planning and identification of locations for SPiMS to meet demand for September 2023.

In establishing Specialist Provision classes in mainstream schools, the EA has developed specific criteria and indicators, as detailed in the Framework for Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools. These are used to identify the gaps in the existing Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools and to identify mainstream schools in which to establish suitable provision to meet the needs of an area.

Over the coming weeks, the GBA will be contacting Voluntary Grammar schools deemed as eligible for potential Specialist Provision. You may also [contact us](#) if you wish to discuss any Area Planning matters or gaps in specialist provision in your area.

### **Normalisation Pilot**

Following the issue of a [Circular](#) regarding Normalisation of school enrolment numbers, the Department of Education has now contacted Planning and sectoral organisations and the schools that meet the criteria for the process, to provide information, evidence and reasons as to why an increase to the approved enrolment number and/or admissions number should be facilitated or not, and if being facilitated, to establish what size of an increase would be manageable.

After the identified schools respond, the Department will then seek feedback from schools that may be impacted by a normalisation proposal. Following this stage, the Department will determine if a proposal is not significant and can progress through the Normalisation process.

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## Consultations Update

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## **Public Consultation on EA's Draft Interim Language Policies**

The Education Authority has drafted Interim Language Policies for the Irish and Ulster-Scots Languages (Draft Interim Language Policies) and is seeking views. More information is available [here](#).

The public consultation runs from:

**Monday 14 November 2022 until Monday 27 February 2023 at 6pm.**



The poster features the Education Authority logo at the top, followed by the title 'Public Consultation' in large bold letters. Below this, the two policy titles are listed: 'Interim Policy for the Provision of Services and Information in Irish' and 'Interim Policy for the Provision of Services and Information in Ulster-Scots'. A section titled 'Open Stakeholder Engagement Sessions' lists four dates and times for MS Teams sessions. At the bottom, there is a registration link.

**ea** Education Authority

# Public Consultation

**Interim Policy for the Provision of Services and Information in Irish**

**Interim Policy for the Provision of Services and Information in Ulster-Scots**

**Open Stakeholder Engagement Sessions**

Thursday 8th December 2022, 10:00 am -11:00 am - MS Teams  
Tuesday 13th December 2022, 10:00 am -11:00 am - MS Teams  
Tuesday 17th January 2023, 10:00 am -11:00 am - MS Teams  
Tuesday 24th January 2023, 10:00am -11:00 am - MS Teams

Register for an engagement session by using the link below  
[forms.office.com/r/xSFdg57NSn](https://forms.office.com/r/xSFdg57NSn)

## **Consultation on the Functions currently delivered by the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland - Analysis of Consultation Responses**

The consultation on the Functions currently delivered by GTCNI has now closed. The '[Analysis of Consultation Responses](#)' contains a breakdown of responses to consultation questions. In total, 50 responses were received from a range of stakeholders including the GBA.



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## Shared Education Updates

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### T:Buc Camps Application Process Now Open

The [Together Building A United Community \(T:Buc\) Camps](#) Application Process, for 2023/24, is now open. The T:Buc Programme provides opportunities, for Shared Education Partnerships, to apply for further resourcing which can enhance their current Shared Education Programmes. The programme has now been expanded to include children and young people attending schools from 9 – 19 years old. This means the programme is open to Primary, Post-Primary & Special School Partnerships.

Completed applications must be returned to the Education Authority no later than 4pm on Tuesday 31st January 2023.

### Upcoming Teacher Training Webinars

Please see below for a selection of upcoming Teacher Professional Learning Shared Education webinars.

- **17.01.23**, 15.30-16.30: *Exploring the Pupil Voice within a Shared Education Partnership.*
- **31.01.23**, 15.30-16.30: *Building Positive Relations Through Sport.*
- **07.02.23**, 15.30-16.30: *Teaching Sensitive &Controversial Issues.*

For more information about these courses and others, and to register for a webinar(s), please see the [TPL Bitesize booklet](#).

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## Employ a Language Assistant | British Council

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Requests to host Modern Language Assistants will open in mid-February 2023. In the meantime, if you are new to the programme, please look at the various links on [this page](#) which explain how the programme works and its benefits. Please bear in mind that some information may change before the mid-February launch.

Modern Language Assistants are speakers of French, German, Irish, Italian, Mandarin Chinese and Spanish who can help students in the UK build their cultural capital by developing their linguistic and cross-cultural skills.

Requests for hosting a Modern Language Assistant will open in mid-February 2023.

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## Teaching & Non-Teaching Vacancies

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The GBA provides a free advertising service for our member schools. Job vacancies are posted on our website and Twitter page.

If you would like us to host a vacancy for your school, please [contact us](#), using our [job template](#) and allow one working day for posts to be uploaded. This does not include bank holidays and weekends.

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## Policy Forum For NI - Next Steps for Education

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The Policy Forum for Northern Ireland is hosting an online conference on Thursday 12th January 2023 (9am-1pm).

This conference will look at the next steps for the shape and design of the education system in Northern Ireland, as the wide-ranging Independent Review of Education in Northern Ireland moves into the final phase of its proceedings.

Delegates will examine key findings from the Review's Interim Report which identified the key focus areas for the final phase, including SEN, funding, curriculum, assessment and pedagogy, and early years - with indication of a 20 year time frame for implementation of changes.

For further details and to book a place, please click [here](#).

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