

GBA News - 31st March 2023



GBA AGM 2023

The GBA hosted its Annual General Meeting at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Belfast on 22nd March and was delighted to welcome Governors and Principals from our member schools. This year we invited the Chief Executive of the Education Authority, Sara Long, who provided a presentation on current education matters including funding and industrial action, workforce supply and the increasing number of pupils with additional needs.

Among the challenges is the long-standing concern of operating within an increasingly constrained and uncertain budget while still providing a quality education to children and young people. GBA Chairperson, Leo O'Reilly said:

"We can only hope that the prospect of a, hopefully early, restoration of devolved government will offer some immediate respite from the immediate challenges facing the education system here. However whatever immediate solutions might be forthcoming, it is also apparent that further work on the funding framework for schools will be required to restore stability to the system and allow schools to focus on their core responsibilities."

Northern Ireland's public service funding to be examined by Committee

The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee has launched an inquiry into the funding of public services in Northern Ireland.

The inquiry will look at the financial situation facing Northern Ireland's public services, including health, education and the police, and how the lack of a functioning Executive has impacted on budgetary management. The Committee will also take the opportunity to explore the effectiveness of the Barnett formula and examine the viability of other options for increasing revenue to put Northern Ireland's finances on a more sustainable footing.

Further information including the Terms of Reference and how to respond is available [here](#). If you are interested in contributing to the GBA response please contact nuala@qbani.org.

Evidence can be submitted until **Friday 21 April 2023**.



Surveys & Consultations - March 2023

Period Dignity - Pupil and Teacher Surveys

CCEA has launched two surveys to gain insight into the ongoing implementation and impact of the Period Dignity Pilot Scheme.

Feedback from the two surveys, one for teachers and one for pupils, will help inform the Department of Education and CCEA on the effectiveness of the

scheme so far and support further improvements for pupils and schools.

Further information and a link to the surveys is available [here](#).

The survey closes on Friday 7th April 2023.

Education Welfare Service - Transformation Project Report

The Education Authority's Education Welfare Service (EWS) is consulting on its transformation project report to enable the views of all stakeholders to be considered and to inform the implementation of the recommendations.

The report covers a number of areas including:

- A new service delivery model based on prevention and early intervention based on research and stakeholder engagement.
- An Outcome Based Accountability framework to allow the service to monitor and improve performance.
- An Implementation Plan to help deliver on the recommendations from the Transformation Project.

A copy of the report and a link to the consultation survey can be found [here](#).

The survey will close at 6pm on Monday 10th April 2023.

Area Planning Update

Normalising of School Enrolment Numbers

The deadline for submission of responses from potentially affected schools, has now been extended to 28 April 2023.

The Department of Education recently published a [list](#) of schools currently being considered for normalisation. This is a voluntary process and some schools have elected not to participate and are also included in the list on the website marked as 'No Action'.

As described in [Circular 2022/08](#), the purpose of this step in the process is to advise of the proposed increase, to identify any implications arising from it and to give an opportunity to potentially affected schools to express their views

which will then be used to inform the Minister's/Permanent Secretary's decision. Schools submitting their views must ensure that evidence is provided to substantiate the views and comments being expressed.

Views, comments and evidence should be included in this [proforma](#) and e-mailed to normalising@education-ni.gov.uk.

Specialist Provision and Operational Plan 1

The Education Authority continues to work to identify pressures for Specialist School places and demand for Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools (SPiMs) for September 2023 and beyond. Workstreams within Operational Plan 1 are also progressing - pre-publication consultations can be found [here](#). For current Development Proposals, please click [here](#).

If you are considering a proposal or if wish to have an initial conversation regarding any aspect of Area Planning, please [contact us](#).



Shared Education News

The 10th April 2023 marks the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement. Ahead of that date, and the anniversary of the referenda that gave effect to the Agreement on 22 May, the National Archives are launching a package of educational materials to inform post-primary pupils in Northern Ireland and across the UK of the journey to the Agreement and its continuing role today. The free, impartial and optional resources have been

developed independently and in collaboration with academics, teachers and other experts, with consultation of curriculum and school bodies in Northern Ireland as well as Scotland, Wales and England.

The new resources support post primary school teachers in Northern Ireland to give an assembly on the Agreement and lead a follow-up discussion in classrooms. These resources are suitable for Shared Education partnerships to support conversations and shared learning about the Agreement and provide opportunities for discussions and exploration of differing views and opinions.

The resources can be accessed via the National Archives website at the link below:

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/belfast-good-friday-agreement/>

NISTR Update

The NISTR project team recently issued a joint communication to highlight the risks associated with sourcing teachers outside of NISTR, the impact of untimely creation of bookings and the important role of all users. A copy of the letter is available [here](#).

The NISTR team continues to work in collaboration with the solution developers and key stakeholders, to bring Supply Teachers and School Users additional features, including reporting features. The team is keen to hear feedback throughout the stages of development on what is working well and what could be improved. Feedback can be provided via the [NISTR Contact Form](#) or by [contacting us](#).

GBA Easter Closure Dates

Please note that the GBA office will be closed from Friday 7th April to Tuesday 11th April (inclusive) and will reopen as normal on Wednesday 12th April.

Teaching & Non-Teaching Vacancies

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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