



Area Planning Update - Important Notice

Operational Plan 2: 2024-26 and Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools

The Area Planning Local Groups reconvened last week to analyse future need and develop workstreams for Operational Plan 2: 2024-26 (click [here](#) for more information on Operational Plans).

If you are considering a significant change to your school that may require a Development Proposal, it is essential for conversations to take place about this during the planning year through the Area Planning Governance structures, please [contact us](#) if this is the case for your school.

Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools

Additional workshops are also taking place over the coming months to identify pressure areas for places for pupils with Special Educational Needs and identify sustainable schools, with available places, that can accommodate Specialist Provision classes. If your school is interested in

this type of provision, or would like more information, please [contact us](#)

Background

[Specialist provision in a mainstream school](#) provides a modified learning environment with an enhanced Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) suited to a pupil's learning profile. Pupils, where appropriate, also benefit from experiencing a level of inclusion, commensurate with their level of need, within mainstream classes.

Development Proposals and Decisions

The Permanent Secretary of Education recently announced decisions on a number of Development Proposals including proposals in the post-primary sector for the Causeway area, and a closure, amalgamation and transformation in the primary sector. For a full list of decisions and proposals awaiting a decision, please click [here](#).



Live Consultations

- [Relationships and Sexuality Education \(RSE\) Consultation: 1st September 2023 - 24th November 2023](#)

The Department of Education has launched a consultation on the circumstances and arrangements which would enable a parent/carer to excuse

their child from receiving age-appropriate, comprehensive and scientifically accurate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, covering prevention of early pregnancy and access to abortion.

Following an analysis of the consultation findings, the Department will publish its overall response to the consultation and develop guidance on the arrangements to have a child excused from specific classes by 1 January 2024.

- [Statutory Guidance on the Reduction and Management of Restrictive Practices in Educational Settings in Northern Ireland: 5th September 2023 - 3rd November 2023](#)

The Department has launched a consultation seeking views on its Statutory Guidance on the Reduction and Management of Restrictive Practices in Educational Settings in Northern Ireland.

The Statutory Guidance aims to provide clarity on the use of restrictive and supportive practices in educational settings, with a view to reducing and minimising the use of restrictive practices, wherever possible. The Statutory Guidance makes clear that restrictive practices should only ever be used when it is necessary and proportionate to do so, in order to keep children, young people, and others from coming to harm.

- [Consultation on Northern Ireland School Leavers Statistics: 15th September 2023 - 13th October 2023](#)

The Department of Education publishes annual National Statistics on school leavers in Northern Ireland. The data are collected via the School Leavers Survey. The Statistics & Research Team in the Department is reviewing the School Leavers Survey statistical outputs and would welcome users' feedback.

- [Integrated Education Act Action Plan: 31st August 2023 - 31st October 2023](#)

The Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 became law on the 26th October 2022, placing a duty on the Department of Education (DE) to prepare, publish and maintain a strategy for integrated education, including an Action Plan to deliver on the strategy.

The GBA has submitted views to the Integrated Education Act Steering Group on the Action Plan and intends to submit a response to this consultation. We would welcome your views on the future direction of the plan.



Board of Governor Training Regional Stakeholder Meeting

The Board of Governor Training Regional Stakeholder Meeting will reconvene this week to look at the current training programme and future areas of need. If you would like any agenda items added or have any training topics for exploration by the group, please [contact us](#).

GBA Meeting Updates

QUB PGCE Student Induction

The GBA was recently invited to an induction session at Queen's University Belfast to provide an overview of the voluntary grammar sector to a group of 125 post-primary PGCE students.

Students were informed of the unique position of voluntary grammar schools as the managing and employing authority of their own school, with delegated responsibilities to Boards of Governors, and the benefits this brings to the running of a school and the education of children and young people.

Also present were speakers representing the various other sectors in the Northern Ireland Education System who provided an overview of their respective sectors. The panel members then answered questions on areas such as collaboration between the various representative bodies and their day to day work in supporting the schools they represent.

Newly Appointed Deputy Permanent Secretaries

The GBA met with Ronnie Armour and Heather Cousins, the newly appointed DE Deputy Permanent secretaries, to discuss issues impacting voluntary grammar schools and the wider education sector. Issues have included the classification of voluntary grammar schools as NDPBs.

Equality Commission Engagement

We are engaging with the Equality Commission Northern Ireland along with other colleagues from across the education system to discuss the removal of the teacher exemption legislated for in the Fair Employment (School Teachers) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. Work is underway to provide the necessary support for schools in advance of the implementation date in 2024.

School Improvement Advisory Group

The Department of Education has invited the GBA to participate on the End To End Review of School Improvement Advisory Group. The Department considers this to be an opportunity to fundamentally consider their policy in relation to school improvement, an opportunity to refresh the focus on raising standards and most critically ensure alignment of a range of key policy areas to ensure positive outcomes for children and young people.

GBA Learning Exchange Visits

The GBA has been invited to participate in two learning exchange visits:

North West Migrants' Forum - Black Heritage in NI

Schools' Support Officer, Dr Helen McNally, will be representing the GBA on a learning exchange to Wales on the 28th and 29th of September 2023, organised by the [North West Migrants' Forum](#) as part of their "Black Heritage in NI: Hidden History" project.

The primary objective of the learning exchange includes meeting with key individuals and experts responsible for the implementation the Black History Curriculum in Wales, and learning from their experiences.

If you wish to provide your views on Black History and the Northern Ireland Curriculum, please [contact us](#).

Goethe-Institut London - German as a Foreign Language

The [Goethe-Institut London](#), funded by the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, has invited the GBA on a study visit to Berlin.

The GBA's Chief Executive, Nuala O'Neill, will join policy makers from across the UK and Ireland to visit Berlin in November. The aim of the visit is to strengthen the status of German as a foreign language in the UK by providing an insight into the German education system, foreign language teachings as well as German Culture.

We would welcome the opportunity to speak to member schools with German language Departments as to ways we can use the visit to help support them.

We will share our experiences from the visits with you in future newsletter editions.

Malpractice Guidance for 2023/24 now available

Joint Council for Qualifications ^{c1c}

JCQ Update

21 September 2023

The JCQ Suspected Malpractice: [Policies and Procedures booklet for 2023/24](#) is now available.

Further updates

Any colleague who would like to receive JCQ updates, can subscribe using this [sign-up form](#).

Applications sought for members to the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment

Public Appointments Competition

Appoint members to the Council for the Curriculum Examinations & Assessment (CCEA)



The Department of Education has launched a public appointments competition to appoint members to the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA).

Details on the selection criteria, the role responsibilities and time commitment are set out in the Information Booklet which is part of the application pack. Further information is available on the DE website – <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/public-appointment-opportunities>.

The closing date for receipt of applications is 4.00pm on Thursday 19 October 2023.

Shared Education

Shared Education Stakeholder Forum

The Shared Education Stakeholder Forum is led by the Department of

Education and the Education Authority, with representation from various education bodies including the GBA. The group is due to meet on 12th October 2023 - if you have any issues or feedback you would like us to take forward, please [contact us](#).

Shared Education Hub

The Education Authority's Shared Education Hub is available [here](#). The purpose of the site includes developing an understanding of Shared Education, building the capacity of the school system to deliver effective Shared Education and to provide a platform for sharing best practice and exploration of new approaches.

The site is also home to a number of TPL modules and various other resources that can be used by schools to deliver Shared Education.

CCEA also provides various Shared Education resources for schools, aligned with the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Please click [here](#) for more information.

Study Published on Student Mobility

[The Economic and Social Research Institute](#) recently published a report to begin to address the following questions:

- What is the level of student mobility between Ireland and Northern Ireland (and between NI and the other countries of the UK)? How has this changed over time, <https://www.esri.ie/> in particular during the pandemic?
- What factors are associated with student mobility?
- To what extent is there potential to increase student mobility across the island? And is this seen as a desirable objective by stakeholders?

Some of the main findings included:

- In 2020/21, 1,170 students from Ireland went to study in Northern Ireland while 1,255 students from Northern Ireland attended a higher education institution (HEI) in Ireland. Students from Ireland made up 2.4 per cent of

students in Northern Ireland while students from Northern Ireland made up only 0.6 per students in Ireland.

- More students from Ireland go to study in the rest of the UK than in Northern Ireland, with numbers staying stable over time at just over 4,000 each year.
- There is a relatively large outflow of students from Northern Ireland to the rest of the UK (RUK) (13,685 in 2020/21), reflecting at least in part high levels of competition for places, with very little mobility in the opposite direction.

A full copy of the report is available [here](#).

Applications Sought for NI Assembly Youth Forum

The Northern Ireland Youth Assembly is seeking young people in Years 9-12 to apply to become members of the 2023 -2025 Youth Assembly.

The Youth Assembly, which was founded in 2021, is an opportunity for young people to share their views on issues of importance to them and to directly influence decisions taken by the Northern Ireland Assembly and other key policy makers.

Additional information on the Youth Forum and details on how to apply are available [here](#).

Advertising of Teaching & Non-Teaching Vacancies on the GBA Website

The GBA provides a free advertising service for our member schools. Job vacancies are posted on our website and Twitter page. The Education Authority website also links to the GBA jobs section.

If you would like us to host a vacancy for your school, **please [contact us](#)**,

using our [job template](#) and allow at least one working day for posts to be uploaded.

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