

GBA News - Friday 31st May



Area Planning Updates

Operational Plan 2: 2024-2026 - Final Call

As you will be aware, the planning year for Operational Plan 2: 2024-2026 (OP2) is now concluding and the plan will be published imminently. If you are planning on taking forward a formal Development Proposal within the lifespan of OP2, please [contact us](#) as soon as possible.

Guidance on changes requiring a Development Proposal is available [here](#).



Specialist Provision in Voluntary Grammar Schools

The GBA continues to engage with the Education Authority and Department of Education regarding specialist provision in voluntary grammar schools.

If you wish to express an interest in establishing formalised specialist classes or wish to have a general discussion please [contact us](#).

More information is also available [here](#).

GBA Political Engagement

The GBA recently met with the Vice Chairperson of the Northern Ireland Assembly Education Committee, Pat Sheehan MLA to discuss matters pertinent to voluntary grammar schools and the wider education system. This included:

- School Funding
 - System wide concerns
 - Issues specific to voluntary grammar schools (e.g. funding for the pay award, classification of voluntary grammar schools as non-

departmental public bodies as well as difficulties in operating canteens in the context of rising costs)

- Workforce issues
 - Staffing – difficulties with recruitment of teaching and support staff
 - Action Short of Strike/Industrial Action

- Integrated Education Act
- Admissions criteria
- Independent Review of Education
- Area Planning

This meeting is part of a series of engagement with Education spokespeople and we will provide updates in due course.

Finance Minister Announces Interim Fiscal Framework

Finance Minister, Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA recently signed an Interim Fiscal Framework on behalf of the Executive, securing a commitment from the UK Treasury to review how the Executive is funded going forward.

Below is a summary of the agreed block grant funding arrangements:

- The UK Government and Northern Ireland Executive have agreed that a new needs-based factor will be included in the Barnett formula for Northern Ireland to determine changes to the Northern Ireland Executive's block grant funding.
- The needs-based factor of 24%, based on a range suggested by the independent Northern Ireland Fiscal Council, will apply from 2024-25 to new Barnett consequentials arising since the Executive was restored in February 2024
- The UK Government will consider a review of Northern Ireland's relative need if multiple independent and credible sources provide evidence that relative need is different to 124%.
- If the Northern Ireland Executive's funding relative to UK Government spending in England falls below its relative need of 124%, the needs-based factor in the Barnett formula will be set at 24%.
- If the Northern Ireland Executive's funding is above its relative need of 124%, there will be a transitional needs-based factor of 5%, mirroring the approach in the Welsh Government's Fiscal framework. For this purpose, funding from the restoration financial package is excluded from the relative funding calculation.
- At the relevant Spending Review, HM Treasury agrees to review and discuss the Northern Ireland Executive's funding approach, including concerns about 2026-27 funding.

Commenting on the framework, the Finance Minister said:

"Treasury has agreed to the 124% needs-based adjustment factor from Barnett consequentials being applied from the date of restoration of the Executive. This means a further £24 million from the Spring Budget will now be available for allocation as part of June monitoring.

Any future Barnett in 2024/25 will be at this increased level meaning additional funding for public services here. Nevertheless, the budgetary position facing the Executive remains incredibly challenging. I have been and will continue making the case for increased levels of funding in public services."

Northern Ireland Assembly Updates

Legislation

The NI Assembly has passed the budget bill which approves the programme of expenditure proposals for 2024-25 as announced by the Minister of Finance on 25 April 2024 and set out in the Budget document laid before the Assembly on 20 May 2024. The budget passed on Tuesday following a vote which was carried by 61 votes to 21, with cross-community support.

Education Committee

This week at the Assembly, the Education Committee held a concurrent meeting with the Committee for the Economy to hear briefings on careers guidance and advice. Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE, author of the Independent Review of Careers Guidance, led the briefings, drawing members attention to the disparity in funding of careers services in NI as compared to other UK jurisdictions, as well as international best practice.

The Education Committee held a separate session with panel members of the Independent Review of Education, for a "systemic overview", discussing various aspects of the report such as curriculum and assessment, underachievement, early years, SEN, and the entitlement framework. It was also indicated that the Department of Education is in the process of developing an implementation plan. The committee will meet with panel members again in the coming weeks to discuss areas of the report in more detail.

The GBA issues a weekly political update to schools. If you would like to receive this, please [contact us](#).

GBA Welcomes New Staff Member



Debbie Broadhurst, GBA Administrative Officer

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you our colleague, Debbie Broadhurst, who has recently joined the GBA team as Administrative Officer.

Debbie joins us from Belfast Metropolitan College where she worked as the Centre for Excellence Administrator.

Equality Commission NI - Employer Training Programme

The Equality Commission is now providing a number of free online employer training sessions, focusing on a number of important equality issues and will expand to cover additional topics over the coming months.

The webinars are based on Northern Ireland equality law and are therefore of relevance, primarily, to employers and service-providers who employ staff in Northern Ireland.

Further details on the training sessions and how to register is available [here](#).

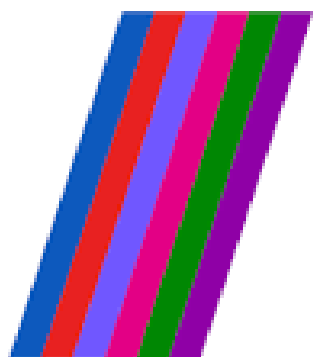
Shared Education News

A fourth report on Advancing Shared Education has been laid to the Northern Ireland Assembly, providing an overview of progress made and highlighting some of the challenges facing Shared Education delivery.

The report outlines the Department's commitment to achieving the ultimate goal of ensuring all children and young people have the opportunity to participate and benefit from shared learning.

[PEACEPLUS](#) is a significant programme which will be a key driver in advancing Shared Education over the next five years.

The roll out of this €1.14billion Programme continues to gather pace with the recent announcements of €20m for Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing services. The funding has been awarded to two projects, "Our Generation", led by Action Mental Health and "Peace of Mind" led by Verbal.



PEACEPLUS
Northern Ireland - Ireland

Co-funded by the



European Union



UK Government

Further updates and information on PEACEPLUS is available on the Shared EU Programmes Body [website](#).

NI Affairs Committee Concludes Inquiry into Integrated Education

Northern Ireland Affairs Committee Chair, Sir Robert Buckland, has written to Northern Ireland Secretary Chris Heaton-Harris with the Committee's findings after its examination of integrated education in Northern Ireland.

- [Read the correspondence with the Secretary of State, relating to Integrated Education in Northern Ireland, 23 May 2024](#)
- [Read the correspondence with the Northern Ireland Department of Education, relating to Integrated Education in Northern Ireland, 23 May 2024](#)
- [Northern Ireland Affairs Committee](#)

The Committee began the inquiry while the Northern Ireland political institutions were in abeyance, but the inquiry continued due the high engagement from stakeholders before Stormont's restoration.

Overall, the committee received and published 54 written submissions and held three oral evidence sessions, which included both written and oral evidence from the GBA.

Advertising of Teaching and Support roles 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.

PLEASE NOTE THAT OUR JOB TEMPLATE HAS BEEN UPDATED AND IS AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD [HERE](#)

If you would like us to host a vacancy for your school, **please contact us, using the **job template** and allow at least **TWO WORKING DAYS** for posts to be **uploaded**.** Thank you for your cooperation with this.

Copyright © Governing Bodies Association (NI) All rights reserved.