



Department of  
**Education**

## **Department of Education Consultation Response Form for 2023-24 Resource Budget Policy**

**The closing date for responses is 13 August 2023**

Your Details:

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If you are the official respondent for a group or organisation please state its name:

Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC)

\_\_\_\_\_



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## **Submission from the Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC) to the EQIA Consultation Report on the 2023-24 Resource Budget**

### **Background**

- The Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC) is the sectoral support body for almost half of the schools in Northern Ireland.
- The controlled sector is the largest education sector in Northern Ireland, representing 49% of all schools. CSSC supports controlled schools in Northern Ireland (NI) which include Nursery Schools, Special Schools, Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Grammar Schools, Integrated Schools, and Irish Medium Schools.

### **Data and impacts**

- CSSC understands the unprecedented funding challenges and difficult decisions that the Department of Education has no choice in making as a result of the continuing shortfall in funding being made available to Education in NI.
- However, CSSC continues to be concerned that major negative impacts from the budget reductions will be experienced by the most vulnerable in our education system as outlined in the Consultation on the Department of Education Budget 2023-24 Equality Impact Assessment.
- The current position is steadily deteriorating with more schools expected to report funding deficits as a result. As the funding authority this directly contributes to the Education Authority deficit.
- The significant backlog in support for school infrastructure, maintenance and minor capital works will exacerbate identified impacts on the education of our children and young people, a generation of children already adversely affected as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- CSSC has consistently highlighted the critical financial pressures facing education in Northern Ireland, which are starker than elsewhere in the United Kingdom. With

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other education bodies, CSSC has publicly called for an answer as to why this lack of equality continues between the important funding commitments given to pupils elsewhere in the UK and children and young people in NI.

- The 'Consequences of the cuts to education for children and young people in Northern Ireland' report reinforces the impact of the deficit and the budget decisions being taken that are outlined in the Consultation on the Department of Education Budget 2023-24 Equality Impact Assessment. It explains further how lack of funding will disproportionately affect the most vulnerable children and young people highlighting a breach of educational rights contained in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- As stated above, CSSC supports the largest education sector including 38 special schools. The Education Authority (EA) reported a significant increase in the number of children with Special Educational Needs and an increase of 26.44% in the number of pupils accessing a placement in a special school and in the same period, a 24.1% increase in the number of pupils accessing a placement in specialist provision in mainstream with this trend expected to continue. As forecast by DE, total expenditure for Special Educational Needs is projected to be £500 million in 2022/23, an increase of 100% over the previous 8 years and accounts for nearly 25% of the budget. CSSC is extremely concerned with the major negative impacts from budget reductions to Special Educational Needs (SEN) reported by school leaders and highlighted by the EQIA Consultation Report on the 2023-24 Resource Budget.

#### **General comments**

- The amount provided to schools to deliver education is simply not enough.
- Schools and education service providers need consistent and sufficient core funding that is not dependent on in year allocations or one-off payment.
- Education in Northern should continue to be provided with sufficient funding that provides equity to our children and young people. Schools need stable budgets with a clear pay and price commitment.
- The impact of the underfunding on the lives of all children and young people is lived each day by school leaders and staff.

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- There is a need for greater recognition of the significantly important role education plays in shaping, investing and protecting the future of our children and young people.