



ASPIRATIONS & ACHIEVEMENT



Department of
Education
www.education-ni.gov.uk

Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Rathgill
BANGOR
BT19 7PR

Email: raise@education-ni.gov.uk

15 December 2025

Dear Stakeholder,

RAISE PROGRAMME UPDATE – JUDICIAL REVIEW AND PROJECT PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

I previously wrote to stakeholders in June 2025 to highlight that two legal challenges had been brought against the Department of Education in respect of the RAISE Programme. I can now confirm that the judgment, which was delivered on Friday 12 December 2025, dismissed legal challenges to the Department's methodology for allocating funding under the RAISE programme. The Court found that the Department acted lawfully and rationally in developing a Northern Ireland-wide, place-based approach to funding, using objective indicators of educational need.

I also want to provide you with an update in respect of the recent call for Locality Led Project proposals in relation to the RAISE Programme. Over 170 project proposals were received by the Department during the call process. The proposals have all now been reviewed and assessed by an Assessment Panel made up of officials from the Department of Education, including staff from the Education and Training Inspectorate, and at least one external member with experience of education or locality-based programmes.

Today the Minister of Education, Paul Givan MLA, announced an investment of over £3.7million in 61 Locality Led Projects. The £3.7 million funding will support projects that promote educational excellence, raise standards, increase pupil attendance, and improve pathways for learners which motivate and support learners at risk of underachievement. Details of the projects can be found on the Department's website - <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/topics/raise-programme>.

We will now move to agree Letters of Offer with the relevant organisations in the coming weeks.

If you have any questions, please contact myself or Michael McGinley (RAISE Programme Manager) via the RAISE mailbox (raise@education-ni.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,

CLAIRE MCCLELLAND
DIRECTOR OF RAISING ASPIRATIONS AND SUPPORTING LEARNING