

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY SCREENING**

**FOR**

**ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW ORGANISATION TO  
SUPPORT CONTROLLED SCHOOLS**

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# Equality Screening: ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW AUTHORITY FOR CONTROLLED SCHOOLS

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# Equality Screening: ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW AUTHORITY FOR CONTROLLED SCHOOLS

## PART ONE BACKGROUND

1.1 Title: ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW ORGANISATION TO SUPPORT CONTROLLED SCHOOLS

1.2 Type of policy review/revised policy/pilot/project.

New legislation to establish a new organisation to support the controlled schools sector.

1.3 **Description**

This work relates to recommendation 19 of the Independent Review of Education (IRE) and in particular reform of school management arrangements which indicated immediate review of the management and support for controlled schools. In September 2024, based on the findings of the Independent Review, the Minister for Education, Paul Givan, established a Controlled Schools' Taskforce to develop proposals addressing the shortcomings in current support arrangements. The Taskforce recommended a two-phase approach with Phase 2 being the establishment of a dedicated body to support Controlled schools which would have responsibilities to provide focused governance and strategic leadership for Controlled schools. This model requires legislative change to transfer identified duties and functions from Education Authority (EA).

The functions of the new organisation for Controlled schools would broadly mirror that of Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) for Catholic Maintained schools, as set out in Articles 142 and 143 of the Education Reform Order, bringing equality in the management of the two sectors.

1.4 What factors could contribute to, or detract from the intended aim/outcome?

- Executive agreement
- Timescale of the legislative process
- Feedback from public consultation
- Available finance for a new body

1.5 Main stakeholders affected (Please delete as appropriate)

- Controlled schools- leadership, governors and staff
- The Education Authority (EA)
- Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC)
- Trade unions
- Parents
- Pupils
- Sectoral Support Bodies and other Arm's Length Bodies of the Department

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### 1.6 Who is responsible for?

#### (a) Devising the policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project

- DE is responsible for taking forward the legislation
- DE will collaborate closely with EA and CSSC in the creation of the new organisation, identifying what functions the body should assume and the organisational structure.

#### (b) Implementing it

DE will be responsible for taking forward the legislation through the various Ministerial, Executive and Assembly processes to establish the new body.

#### (c) Explain the relationship?

- ✓ The proposed legislation aims to create a new body that will assume specific roles, responsibilities and statutory functions for the Controlled sector

### 1.7 Other policies or objectives with a bearing on this policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project

This supports the Programme for Government: *Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most*. It is aimed at better supporting schools to improve educational outcomes for all pupils and thereby contribute to Executive's objectives to:

- ✓ Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy
- ✓ Deliver high-quality accessible early learning
- ✓ Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and
- ✓ Reform and Transformation of Public Services

It also supports key Department policies and strategies

- ✓ School Improvement Policy in seeking to raise standards and close the gap between the most and least disadvantaged.
- ✓ The Department's TransformED Strategy for Teaching and Learning Excellence which sets out 10 high-level priorities including curriculum development, professional development, tackling educational disadvantage, school improvement, securing system accountability.
- ✓ SEN Reform Agenda ensuring schools are supported to give children with SEN the right support, in the right place, at the right time, by the right people.

It will also build on Phase 1 recommendation of the Taskforce report, which is already underway with the establishment of a Controlled Schools Unit in the Education Authority, where there will be key learning in preparation for the setup of the new organisation.

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### EVIDENCE

1.8 What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project in respect of each of the categories?

#### Religious Belief

Recent Department data of the Controlled school estate shows that 54.3% of pupils are Protestant, 11% Catholic, and 34.6% from other or no religious backgrounds. The Department does not hold data in relation to the religious affiliation of teaching staff in Controlled schools. Controlled schools have a non-denominational Christian ethos and values whilst welcoming children of all faiths and none. In addition, there are 33 Controlled Integrated schools and 2 Controlled Irish medium schools.

#### Political Opinion

Not applicable.

#### Racial Group

The Racial profile of the Controlled sector is not statistically different than that across all school sectors.

School Type	Management Type	White	Chinese	Irish Traveller	Indian	Pakistani	Black	Mixed Ethnic Group	Other Ethnic Group	Total
Total	Controlled	127344	521	161	1427	372	2282	2754	2883	137744
	Voluntary	49229	577	19	861	112	435	1110	709	53052
	Catholic Maintained	112930	280	853	1874	168	2047	2305	2275	122732
	Other Maintained	5506	6	17	23	*	#	101	27	5696
	Controlled Integrated	9292	51	14	119	29	223	277	273	10278
	GMI	16678	55	16	149	42	290	578	325	18133

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### Age

Where a child reaches the age of four on or between 1 September and 1 July, the child will usually start school at the beginning of the next school year. Education is compulsory until a pupil reaches the age of 16. Pupils who are 16 between 1 September and 1 July (inclusive) in the school year, can leave school on 30 June of that year. Pupils may continue education for a further two years, after they become 16, although this is not compulsory. This applies to all pupils in Northern Ireland regardless of the school type they attend.

The age profile of teachers in the controlled sector is not statistically different than that across the schools' estate.

#### Teachers in Northern Ireland by age band, 2024/25

Age group	Controlled Sector		All teachers	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
24 and under	220	2.3%	498	2.3%
25-29	957	9.9%	2,109	9.7%
30-34	1,347	14.0%	2,893	13.3%
35-39	1,485	15.4%	3,243	14.9%
40-44	1,671	17.3%	3,680	16.9%
45-49	1,537	15.9%	3,488	16.0%
50-54	1,362	14.1%	3,218	14.8%
55-59	831	8.6%	2,052	9.4%
60 and above	243	2.5%	622	2.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,653</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21,803</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Marital Status

N/A The marital status of staff within the Controlled sector or across schools is not known/collected.

### Sexual Orientation

N/A The sexual orientation of staff or pupils within Controlled schools is not known/collected.

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### Men And Women Generally

Over the whole of the Controlled sector, 49% of the pupils are female with 51% being male. This is the same percentage difference as all the other school sectors combined. There is not statistically different than that across all schools.

#### Sex Breakdown in NI Schools by Management Type, 2024/25

School Type	Management Type	Female	Male	Total
Nursery	Controlled	1915	1980	3895
	Catholic Maintained	891	846	1737
	Controlled Integrated	46	63	109
Primary and Prep (N-Y7)	Controlled	3906	4060	7967
	Controlled	9	3	2
	Voluntary	594	623	1217
	Voluntary	3898	4053	7951
	Catholic Maintained	0	0	0
	Other Maintained	2119	2121	4240
	Controlled Integrated	2724	2995	5719
Post-primary	GMI	3576	3609	7185
	Controlled	2404	2317	4722
	Controlled	6	4	0
	Voluntary	2484	2699	5183
	Voluntary	1	4	5
	Catholic Maintained	2179	1927	4107
	Other Maintained	7	3	0
Special	Other Maintained	707	659	1366
	Controlled Integrated	2143	2307	4450
	Controlled Integrated			1094
	GMI	5397	5551	8
	Controlled	2070	4887	6957
	Catholic Maintained	111	304	415
Total	Other Maintained	39	51	90
	Controlled	6710	7064	1377
	Controlled	0	4	44
	Voluntary	2543	2761	5305
	Voluntary	5	7	2
	Catholic Maintained	6177	6095	1227
	Other Maintained	9	3	32
	Controlled Integrated	2865	2831	5696
Total	Controlled Integrated			1027
	Controlled Integrated	4913	5365	8
	Controlled Integrated			1813
Total	GMI	8973	9160	3
	GMI			

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Similar results can be found in the teaching staff where there is no real significant statistical difference to that across the schools' estate.

Sex	Controlled Sector		All teachers	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Male	1,954	20.2%	5,010	23.0%
Female	7,699	79.8%	16,793	77.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,653</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21,803</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Disability

Disability is not a factor within this proposed legislation.

### Dependents

N/A The Department does not hold any relevant information.

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### **NEEDS, EXPERIENCES AND PRIORITIES**

- 1.9 Taking into account the evidence gathered at 1.8 what are the needs, experiences and priorities of each category in relation to this proposed legislation?

#### **Religious Belief**

Whilst there are a higher proportion of pupils from a Protestant background currently attending Controlled schools, the proposed approach will not be to the detriment of pupils from other religious backgrounds and will support all pupils within the Controlled sector. A similar organisation is already in place for the Catholic Maintained sector.

**Political Opinion:** None

**Racial Group:** None

**Age:** None

**Marital Status:** None

**Sexual Orientation:** None

**Men And Women Generally:** None

**Disability:** None

**Dependants:** None

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### **PART TWO – SCREENING QUESTIONS** **LIKELY IMPACT**

2.1 What is the likely impact of this proposed legislation on equality of opportunity for each of the Section 75 equality categories?

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**: None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**: None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**: None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Age**: None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Marital Status**: None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Sexual Orientation**: None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Men and Women**: None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Disability**: None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Dependants**: None

**OPPORTUNITIES TO BETTER PROMOTE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY**

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2.2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?

**Religious Belief - No**

**Political Opinion - No**

**Racial Group - No**

**Age - No**

**Marital Status - No**

**Sexual Orientation - No**

**Men and Women generally - No**

**Disability - No**

**Dependants - No**

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### **LIKELY IMPACT ON GOOD RELATIONS**

- 2.3 To what extent is the proposed legislation likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious beliefs, political opinion or racial group?

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**: None

Whilst Controlled schools are attended by more Protestant pupils than other religious groups, the sector is religiously and culturally diverse. It is not expected that support arrangements for the sector will impact negatively on good relations between people of different religious beliefs.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**: None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**: None

- 2.4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Detail opportunities of how this policy could better promote good relations for people within each of the Section 75 Categories below:

#### **Religious Belief – Yes**

The proposed legislation creates a further vehicle for collaboration between the different school sectors (for example between the new body and CCMS).

#### **Political Opinion – None**

#### **Racial Group – None**

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**MULTIPLE IDENTITIES**

2.5 Please provide details of data on the impact of the policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project on people with multiple identities and specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

None

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## **PART THREE SCREENING DECISION**

3.1 The decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment.

### Reasons

As detailed in this assessment, there are no Section 75 groups identified as being impacted by the change in legislation.

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### **MITIGATION**

- 3.2 The proposed legislation will go through the required legislative process which will include consultation which will be an opportunity for the public to review the reasoning for this proposal and understand that there is no religious/political bias to taking this forward.

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### **PART FOUR MONITORING**

4.1 The department will monitor the feedback and views from future consultations on this proposal and will take into account the views of all school sectors.

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### **PART FIVE** **DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION**

- 5.1 Will the proposed legislation in any way discourage persons with disabilities from participating in public life or fail to promote positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities?

No

- 5.2 Is there an opportunity to better promote positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities or encourage participation in public life by making changes to the proposed legislation or introducing additional measures?

No

- 5.3 Please detail what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the effect of the proposed legislation with reference to the disability duties.

Not applicable

## **Equality Screening:** ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW AUTHORITY FOR CONTROLLED SCHOOLS

### **PART SIX** **HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES**

6.1 Does the proposed legislation affect anyone's Human Rights?

Particularly consider:

- [The Human Rights Act \(1998\)](#)
- [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women \(CEDAW\)](#)

No

6.2 If you have identified a negative impact; what Human Right is impacted, what is the nature of the impact and who is affected and how?

Not applicable

9.3 Outline any actions which could be taken to promote or raise awareness of human rights or to ensure compliance with the legislation in relation to the proposed legislation.

Not applicable

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### **PART SEVEN RURAL NEEDS**

The undertaking of a [Rural Needs Impact Assessment \(RNIA\)](#) is an integral part of the development, adoption, implementation or review of a policy, strategy or plan or the design or delivery of a public service.

No.

Reason for non-completion:

The establishment of a new organisation to better support the Controlled school sector should not have a greater relevance nor more of a potential impact for people in Rural Areas.

