



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

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on Curriculum Framework

9 June 2026

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact the Team as follows:



E mail: CurriculumConsultation@education-ni.gov.uk

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1. Introduction

About the Department of Education

- 1.1 The Department of Education is responsible for the central administration of all aspects of education and related services in Northern Ireland - except the higher and further education sector, responsibility for which is within the remit of the Department for the Economy.
- 1.2 The Department's main areas of responsibility are in pre-school, primary, post-primary, and special education; the youth service; the promotion of community relations within and between schools; and teacher education and salaries. Its primary statutory duty is to promote the education of the people of Northern Ireland and to ensure the effective implementation of education policy. Its key functions include:
 - advising ministers on the determination of education policy;
 - framing legislation;
 - accounting for the effectiveness of the education system;
 - allocating, monitoring, and accounting for resources;
 - through the Education and Training Inspectorate, evaluating, and reporting on the quality of teaching and learning and teacher education.
- 1.3 The Department also aims to ensure that children, through participation at schools, reach the highest possible standards of educational achievement. In pre-school settings, schools and through the Youth Service, the Department also promotes personal well-being and social development, so that children gain the knowledge, skills, and experience to reach their full potential as valued individuals.

Section 75 and the statutory duties

- 1.4 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities, including the Department of Education when conducting their functions to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between nine categories of persons, namely:
 - between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, or sexual orientation;
 - between men and women generally;
 - between persons with a disability and persons without; and
 - between persons with dependants and persons without.

- 1.5 Without prejudice to the above obligations, the Department must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, or racial group.
- 1.6 The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland approved the Department of Education's Equality Scheme in September 2013. The Scheme outlines how the Department proposes to fulfil its statutory duties under Section 75.
- 1.7 Under the statutory duties contained within Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Department undertakes to conduct an equality impact assessment (EQIA) on each policy or group of co-joined policies where screening has indicated that there may be significant implications in relation to one or more of the nine Section 75 categories. Part of the EQIA Process is consultation.
- 1.8 Given the system-wide nature of curriculum reform and its application to all children and young people, the Department has undertaken a full Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that equality considerations are fully integrated into policy development from the outset.
- 1.9 This EQIA is published alongside the public consultation on the draft curriculum framework to support transparent consideration of equality impacts and to inform policy development through stakeholder engagement.
- 1.10 The Department of Education (DE) would welcome any comments you may have in terms of this EQIA and our preliminary recommendations about measures to mitigate adverse impact and alternative policies.
- 1.11 Further copies of this EQIA are available on our website at www.education-ni.gov.uk
- 1.12 If you have any queries about this document, and its availability in alternative formats then please contact the Curriculum Reform Programme Management Team by:

E-mail: CurriculumConsultation@education-ni.gov.uk

Write to: Curriculum Reform Programme Management Team
Department of Education
Rathgael House
Ground Floor
43 Balloo Road
Rathgill
BANGOR
BT19 7PR

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The purpose of this Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is to assess the potential impact of proposals for a new Northern Ireland curriculum framework on equality of opportunity, in line with the Department of Education's obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.
- 2.2 The proposed curriculum framework forms a central part of the TransformED Reform Programme and responds to the findings of the Strategic Review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum (2025), which identified significant weaknesses in the current curriculum, including inconsistency in provision, lack of coherence and progression, and evidence of inequitable outcomes for certain groups of children and young people.
- 2.3 The new curriculum framework is intended to establish a clear, coherent and knowledge-rich entitlement for all learners. Its central aim is to promote both excellence and equity by ensuring that every child and young person, regardless of background or circumstance, has access to a shared body of knowledge that supports progression, attainment and full participation in society.
- 2.4 At the policy design stage, no evidence of direct adverse impact on any of the nine Section 75 categories has been identified. The framework applies equally to all children and young people and does not differentiate on the basis of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.
- 2.5 However, the Department recognises that this is a system-wide reform with the potential to significantly influence equality outcomes over time. While no direct adverse impacts have been identified, there is clear evidence that the current curriculum does not serve all learners equally, particularly those with Special Educational Needs, those in Irish-medium education, and those experiencing disadvantage.
- 2.6 In this context, the proposed curriculum framework has the potential to promote equality of opportunity positively, by providing greater clarity and consistency in what is taught across all schools thus;
 - reducing reliance on school-level interpretation, which can lead to variation in provision;
 - supporting improved progression and coherence in learning; and
 - strengthening access to knowledge for groups who are most reliant on school-based provision.

- 2.7 The Department also acknowledges that the overall equality impact of the policy will depend on effective implementation, including the development of supporting guidance, resources, and professional learning. While these operational aspects sit beyond the scope of this policy-stage EQIA, they will be addressed through subsequent implementation planning.
- 2.8 Additional targeted workstreams are already underway including those focusing on Special Educational Needs and Irish-medium education (IME). Specifically, a Special Schools Curriculum will be developed in order to provide a needs-led framework that reflects the diverse developmental profile of pupils in special schools, supporting accessible and meaningful learning matched to each pupil's needs. In relation to IME, bespoke curriculum strands will be developed for Irish-medium schools, that provide a necessary extension to ensure that progression is articulated in ways that reflect immersion contexts. These workstreams will provide further opportunities to enhance equality of opportunity as implementation progresses.
- 2.9 Data limitations exist in relation to some Section 75 categories, including sexual orientation, political opinion and dependants. This assessment therefore draws on the best available evidence and will be informed through consultation responses and ongoing monitoring.
- 2.10 This EQIA is being published alongside the public consultation on the draft statutory curriculum framework. The Department is committed to engaging with a wide range of stakeholders and welcomes feedback on any potential equality impacts, data gaps, or mitigating actions that should be considered.
- 2.11 The Department will continue to monitor equality outcomes throughout the consultation, design and implementation phases, ensuring that any emerging impacts are identified and addressed appropriately.
- 2.12 Your comments and feedback on the decisions required and the potential impacts is sought through this EQIA and as part of the formal public consultation on the new curriculum framework. Any comments you wish to provide on this EQIA will help to inform decision-making, and all responses received by the deadline will be considered.

3. The aim of the new curriculum framework

- 3.1 For context, the Independent Review of Education (IRE) report¹ (published December 2023) provided a thorough, evidence-based consideration of fundamental

¹ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/independent-review-education-final-report>

issues impacting education in Northern Ireland. The review made a range of proposals for progressive reform of the education system over the next 20 years, including several conclusions supporting the need for review of the current Northern Ireland curriculum, ensuring it remains aligned with international best practices while providing a knowledge rich and well-structured approach.

- 3.2 The IRE Review examined every aspect of the system but identified curriculum design as one of the most powerful levers for improving attainment, equity and long-term outcomes.
- 3.3 In responding to the IRE recommendations for review of the curriculum, the Minister of Education commissioned a Strategic Review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum which commenced in November 2024. The Strategic Review was tasked with making a series of policy recommendations regarding the purpose, design, specification, and implementation of the curriculum.
- 3.4 The Strategic Review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum² was published in June 2025 and contained 21 recommendations to inform the development, design, and implementation of a new curriculum framework. The proposals for a new curriculum framework are part of the TransformED Strategy, which is focused on whole systems transformation with other key areas of focus including; teacher professional learning; assessment and qualifications; school improvement and tackling disadvantage.
- 3.5 The Strategic Review assessed evidence from a range of sources including previous related reports on the Northern Ireland education system, data on the local system, international research as well as drawing from significant stakeholder engagement.
- 3.6 In summary, the Review found that the current curriculum is too high-level leading to inconsistency across schools, with teachers often left to make disproportionate decisions about content. Instead of setting a clear and ambitious benchmark for all learners, the existing curriculum has allowed gaps to emerge. While the Review acknowledged the existing curriculum has many strengths it identified several core weaknesses which must be addressed. These include:
 - A lack of specificity leading to inequality and variation in curriculum implementation, as well as contributing to curriculum overload.

² <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/ni-curriculum-review>

- A lack of coherence over time, inhibiting progression and leading to difficulties at transitions. The importance of prior knowledge is not sufficiently recognised, and the framework does not facilitate the gradual building of knowledge over time.
- A lack of articulation about the role of subject-specific knowledge and skill and its relationship with broader skills and the ultimate aims of the curriculum.
- A lack of appropriateness for some young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN), learners in Irish-immersion contexts and some disadvantaged young people.

3.7 The review recommended that Department should design a new national curriculum framework, which is purpose led, knowledge rich, continuous and coherent, specific and focused, flexible and inclusive.

Department of Education response to the Review

3.8 The Department of Education's full response³ to the review is published on the department's website.

3.9 In response to the specific recommendations recorded above, the Minister of Education appointed the Taskforce Advisory Committee (TAC) to design a new statutory curriculum framework.

3.10 The TAC is composed of international and local educationalists with expertise in curriculum design, reform and implementation including individuals with expertise across the core subject areas.

3.11 The TAC's work commenced in October 2025 and concluded with the submission of the new draft framework to the Minister on 5 June 2026.

3.12 While the draft curriculum framework has been completed the department is currently taking forward additional workstreams focusing on the more specific needs of children with Special Educational Needs and for children learning via Irish-Medium Education, the findings emerging from these focused workstreams will be considered and integrated as we progress with implementation of the new curriculum framework from September 2028. Work will also be taken forward on a new syllabus for Religious Education and a KS4 / post 16 enrichment curriculum.

3.13 This Equality Impact Assessment has been produced to support the accompanying public consultation on the proposals for the new Curriculum Framework. The

³ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/response-department-education-strategic-review-northern-ireland-curriculum>

Department considers that clearer specification of curriculum content represents a key mechanism for improving equity, by reducing variation in provision and strengthening access to knowledge for all learners.

- 3.14 At this stage, the policy relates to the design of the statutory curriculum framework. Detailed implementation arrangements, including supporting guidance and resources, will be developed separately.

4. Consideration of available data and research

Background information

- 4.1 TransformED sets out the importance of evidence-based policy making using the best available research, data and evidence to shape the policies, practices and decisions that govern our education system.
- 4.2 The Strategic Review examined a range of international and local data sets, related reports including the IRE and Fair Start reports, as well as undertaking a literature review on curriculum frameworks in England, Scotland, Republic of Ireland, Singapore, New Zealand and Estonia. This review included information on curricula frameworks, reforms since 2001 and the effects of such reforms.
- 4.3 The Department recognises that there are limitations in available data across a number of Section 75 categories, including sexual orientation, political opinion and dependants. This assessment therefore draws on the best available data and research evidence and will be supplemented through consultation responses and ongoing monitoring.
- 4.4 The available evidence suggests that clearer curriculum specification and structured progression are particularly beneficial for learners who are most reliant on school-based provision, including those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, those with additional learning needs, and newcomer pupils.

Basis for the new curriculum framework and potential for promoting equity.

- 4.5 It is clear that the proposed knowledge-rich curriculum can respond to the diverse needs of learners, schools and communities and will promote equity of opportunity for all children and young people.
- 4.6 The Terms of Reference for the Taskforce Advisory Committee required that in designing the new curriculum they: *Secure inclusion and equity by giving all learners access to a common body of knowledge that gives them the wide, secure vocabulary and reference points to participate constructively and meaningfully in society. Embed*

principles of inclusion, diversity and equality in the curriculum, so that the needs of all learners, including those with additional learning needs and from diverse backgrounds, can be met. Include guidance on adaptation for some SEN and for Irish-medium learners.

- 4.7 In assessing the impact of the new curriculum framework against the Department's obligations under Section 75 of the 1998 Act, the Department has recognised that there is already evidence (identified in the Strategic Review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum) of differential impacts in respect of some Section 75 categories. The department believes that the proposed new curriculum framework will provide positive opportunities for addressing the weaknesses in the current curriculum for the benefit of all children and young people. This work is and will remain ongoing over coming months.
- 4.8 Potential impacts from the newly proposed framework have been considered against the backdrop of available data taking account of:
- Independent Review of Education Report.
 - Strategic Review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.
 - Statistics and relevant public information.
 - International educational studies (Programme for International Student Assessment, TIMMS etc)
- 4.9 The Department has considered the potential impacts of the proposed policy change via the new curriculum framework on the various Section 75 groups and how any impacts could be mitigated. The Department will seek to gather further information on potential impacts through this EQIA.

5. Assessment of impacts

- 5.1 The proposed policy has been considered and the following assessments made as to whether there will be an adverse impact on any of the nine Section 75 categories or any of the multiple identity groups:

| Group | Potential to promote equality of opportunity |
|------------------|--|
| Religious Belief | <p>No direct adverse impacts relating to religion have been identified. The proposed curriculum framework will apply equally to all children and young people regardless of religious identity. The new curriculum framework will promote equity of opportunity for all learners.</p> |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| | The consultation does not include a syllabus for RE – this work is underway but was not the responsibility of the TAC. A separate public consultation on the RE syllabus will be undertaken in the coming months. |
| Political Opinion | No direct adverse impacts relating to political opinion have been identified. The proposed curriculum framework will apply equally to all children and young people and will not differentiate based on political opinion. The new curriculum framework is expected to promote equity of opportunity for all learners. |
| Racial Group | No direct adverse impacts relating to Race have been identified. The proposed curriculum framework will apply equally to all children and young people regardless of their race. The proposed curriculum framework will promote equity of opportunity for all learners. The development of appropriate high-quality resources supporting all learners is recognised as a critical part of successful implementation. |
| Age | No direct adverse impacts relating to age have been identified. The proposed curriculum framework will apply equally to all children and young people from Foundation Stage through to Key Stage 4. It is expected to promote equity of opportunity for all learners. |
| Marital Status | No direct adverse impacts relating to marital status have been identified. The proposed curriculum framework will apply equally to all children and young people including, if appropriate, those who may be married. The new curriculum will promote equity of opportunity for all learners. |
| Sexual Orientation | No direct adverse impacts relating to sexual orientation have been identified. The proposed curriculum framework will apply equally to all children and young people. The new curriculum will promote equity of opportunity for all learners. |
| Men and Women generally | No direct adverse impacts relating to men and women have been identified. The proposed curriculum framework will apply equally to all children and young people. |
| Disability | No additional direct adverse impacts relating to disability have been identified. It is recognised that there are opportunities to improve outcomes for children and young people with <u>Special Educational Needs</u> . While the draft curriculum framework has been completed the |

| | |
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| | department is currently taking forward an additional workstream focusing on the more specific needs of children with Special Educational Needs. The findings emerging from this will be considered and integrated as we progress with implementation of the new curriculum framework from September 2028. |
| Dependants | No direct adverse impacts relating to dependants have been identified through the available data. Recent information in this area is limited. Officials are aware that work in respect of young carers is in progress. This work will be monitored as appropriate. |
| Multiple identities | No direct adverse impacts relating to multiple identities have been identified. While the draft curriculum framework has been completed the department is currently taking forward additional workstreams focusing on the more specific needs of children with Special Educational Needs and for children learning via Irish-Medium Education, the findings emerging from these focused workstreams will be considered and integrated as we progress with implementation of the new curriculum framework from September 2028. |

Religious Belief

5.2 At schools' level information from the school census for 2025/26⁴ (published 12 March 2026) records the religion of pupils by school type and management type. In summary the total number of pupils from *All Funded Pre-school, Nursery, Primary, Post-Primary, Special Schools, And EOTAS Centres* are:

- Protestant 98071
- Catholic 174115
- Other 79052
- **Total 351238**

⁴ www.education-ni.gov.uk/2026-03/Pupil%20religion%20by%20school%20management%20type%20000-01%20to%202025-26.xlsx

- 5.3 The proposed curriculum framework will apply equally to all children and young people regardless of religious belief. The new curriculum framework will promote equity of opportunity for all learners.
- 5.4 The consultation does not include a syllabus for RE – this work is underway but was not the responsibility of the TAC. A separate public consultation on the RE syllabus will be undertaken in the coming months.
- 5.5 **No direct adverse impacts relating to religious belief have been identified.**

Political Opinion

- 5.6 The political opinion of pupils is not available.
- 5.7 Religion is often taken as a proxy for political opinion. Therefore, the data referred to above for religious belief is considered in informing the impact on political opinion.
- 5.8 The proposed curriculum framework will apply equally to all children and young people and will not differentiate based on political opinion. The new curriculum framework is expected to promote equity of opportunity for all learners. **No direct adverse impacts relating to political opinion have been identified.**

Race

- 5.9 Information from the latest summary data from the school census for 2025/26 - *School enrolments - Northern Ireland summary data* (published 12 March 2026) ⁵ confirms there are 20,971 newcomer pupils registered in schools in Northern Ireland, accounting for 6.0% of the school population. (A newcomer pupil is one who has enrolled in a school, but who does not have the satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum.)
- 5.10 The Strategic Review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum recognised that newcomer / English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils could be better supported by the proposed curriculum framework confirming that: *A curriculum framework that supports learners with EAL has the same features as one which benefits all pupils; it embeds explicit vocabulary and oral language development across all subjects. Rather than treating language learning as a separate concern, the curriculum should identify key academic and subject-specific vocabulary within each strand, to be used orally within lessons through opportunities for structured talk, discussion and oral*

⁵ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-03/Newcomer%20pupils%202001-02%20to%202025-26.xlsx>

rehearsal. These features benefit EAL learners by making content more accessible, while also strengthening comprehension, subject-specific reasoning and verbal and written expression for all pupils. To support both EAL and SEN pupils, appropriate curriculum resources related to the statutory content in the curriculum and teacher professional development in how to best support these pupils are also crucial.

5.11 The proposed curriculum framework will apply equally to all children and young people regardless of their race. The proposed curriculum framework will promote equity of opportunity for all learners. The development of appropriate high-quality resources supporting all learners is recognised as a critical part of successful implementation. **No direct adverse impacts relating to Race have been identified.**

Age

5.12 The Annual enrolments 2025/26 in Northern Ireland at schools⁶ provides the number of children and young people across year groups as follows;

- There are 21,898 funded pupils in the Pre-School Education Programme and reception.
- There are 164,713 pupils in primary schools and preparatory departments (years 1-7)
- There are 156,766 pupils enrolled in post-primary schools.
- Over 7,700 pupils (10.9% of all SEN pupils in schools and pre-school settings) were enrolled in 40 dedicated special schools.
- There are approximately 29,900 pupils in sixth forms in schools, 57% of all 16–17-year-olds in Northern Ireland.

5.13 The proposed curriculum framework will apply equally to all children and young people from Foundation Stage through to Key Stage 4. It is expected to promote equity of opportunity for all learners. **No direct adverse impacts relating to age have been identified.**

Marital Status

5.14 In 2024, there were 7,251 marriages in Northern Ireland⁷; in the age band 16-19 there were 46 males and 71 females. Available demographic data indicates that very few individuals aged 16–19 in Northern Ireland are married.

⁶ <https://datavis.nisra.gov.uk/DEstatistics/annual-enrolments-schools-and-funded-pre-school-education-northern-ireland-202526.html>

⁷ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/2025-11/RG%20Annual%20Report%202024.pdf>

- 5.15 The marital status of pupils is not part of the data collected in respect of post primary school pupils within the school census.
- 5.16 The proposed curriculum framework will apply equally to all children and young people including, if appropriate, those who may be married. The new curriculum will promote equity of opportunity for all learners. **No direct adverse impacts relating to marital status have been identified.**

Sexual Orientation

- 5.17 Data is not collected or available that could provide a break-down of sexual orientation of all children and young people.
- 5.18 The proposed curriculum framework will apply equally to all children and young people. The new curriculum will promote equity of opportunity for all learners. **No direct adverse impacts relating to sexual orientation have been identified.**

Men and Women Generally

- 5.19 Information drawn from the 2024-25 annual school census shows that there is an even distribution of males and females within the school population, with 50.8% male pupils and 49.2% female.
- 5.20 The new curriculum will promote equity of opportunity for all learners. **No direct adverse impacts relating to Men and Women generally have been identified.**

Disability

- 5.21 The Strategic Review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum identified weaknesses in the existing curriculum which included “*A lack of appropriateness for some young people with **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**, learners in Irish-immersion contexts and some disadvantaged young people.*”
- 5.22 In recognition of this, as part of the review of the curriculum the department is taking forward a separate workstream considering children and young people with Special Educational Needs.

- 5.23 In 2025/26 over 70,700⁸ pupils in schools have some form of special educational need; this is 20.1% of the entire school population. Nearly 32,000, or 9.1% of pupils, have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils in SEN stages 1-2 is 11.0%.
- 5.24 In 2025/26, 81.6% of pupils with any special educational needs were educated in a mainstream class in a mainstream school; 7.5% in Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools; and 10.9% in special schools.
- 5.25 The proposed curriculum framework will apply equally to all children and young people. The new curriculum will promote equity of opportunity for all learners. **No additional direct adverse impacts relating to disability have been identified.**

Dependants

- 5.26 There is limited data available regarding dependants among children and young people.
- 5.27 In the 2015 YLT Survey (of 16-year-old young people), 9% of respondents stated they had caring responsibilities. The December 2017 report by Barnardo's "Still Hidden Still Ignored¹³¹⁴", identified that the average age of a young carer was 12.
- 5.28 **No adverse impacts relating to dependency have been identified through the available data.**

Multiple Identities

- 5.29 The Strategic Review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum identified weaknesses in the existing curriculum which included "A lack of appropriateness for some young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN), learners in Irish-immersion contexts and some disadvantaged young people.
- 5.30 It is recognised that the proposed curriculum framework will apply equally to all children and young people promoting equity of opportunity for all learners. The policy intention is for all children and young people to benefit from the implementation of the new statutory curriculum framework.

⁸ <https://datavis.nisra.gov.uk/DEstatistics/annual-enrolments-schools-and-funded-pre-school-education-northern-ireland-202526.html>

5.31 The new curriculum framework will positively impact on children across multiple Section 75 characteristics including children facing disadvantage. As additional work on Special Educational Needs and Irish Medium Education is taken forward this will provide the opportunity for further consideration and for identifying measures to promote equality.

5.32 **No direct adverse impacts relating to multiple identities have been identified.**

6. Mitigation measures to address adverse impacts.

6.1 While no direct adverse impacts have been identified at the policy design stage, the Department recognises existing inequalities in educational experience and outcomes. The following measures are intended to ensure that the curriculum framework actively promotes equality of opportunity and that any potential differential impacts are identified and addressed as implementation progresses.

6.2 The proposed curriculum framework has been developed to support equity from the outset. Key features include:

- a clear and consistent entitlement to knowledge for all learners;
- a knowledge-rich and structured approach, supporting coherent progression over time; and
- improved clarity and specificity, reducing variability in interpretation and delivery consistency across schools.

6.3 The Department is progressing additional workstreams to ensure that the needs of specific groups are appropriately addressed, including:

- a dedicated curriculum for special schools;
- a framework for Irish-medium education; and
- the development of supporting guidance and resources to assist schools in implementing the curriculum (including adaptations).

These workstreams will be integrated into implementation planning to strengthen equality outcomes.

6.4 The Department will ensure that schools are supported through;

- the development of accessible, high quality curriculum resources
- guidance on inclusive teaching approaches and adaptations of curriculum content; and

- targeted professional learning for teachers, including support for meeting the needs of diverse learners.
- 6.5 The curriculum framework will be introduced through a phased implementation approach enabling ongoing refinement, timely adjustment of supporting measures and identification of any emerging differential impacts.
- 6.6 The Department will establish monitoring arrangements to assess equality impacts across each Section 75 groups including the development of appropriate indicators to assess outcomes for key groups (including SEN, Irish-medium learners and those experiencing disadvantage, ongoing engagement with representative stakeholders and periodic review of the impact of the curriculum framework on equality of opportunity.

7. Formal consultation

- 7.1 The Department wishes to engage with as wide an audience as possible on its findings and proposals to date as described in this EQIA. We are committed to seeking the views of those who are affected by this proposed legislation.
- 7.2 We are keen to hear from anyone about the equality implications of the new Curriculum Framework. We are keen to hear your thoughts on any mitigations that the Department could put in place to reduce any adverse impacts.
- 7.3 Responses to this EQIA will form part of the Department's public consultation on the new Curriculum Framework. Responses received during the consultation will be used to consider further mitigating measures, to be reflected potentially in the legislation, related policies and / or programmes.
- 7.4 The Department welcomes comment on any aspect of this document. Interested parties are encouraged to make responses by completing the on-line consultation survey.
- 7.5 The main consultation document, hosted on Citizen Space, can be found here: <https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/de/northern-ireland-curriculum-consultation/>
- 7.6 The closing date for responses is **30 SEPTEMBER 2026**
- 7.7 Any enquiries about this EQIA or the wider policy consultation should be sent to Curriculum Reform Programme Management Team whose contact details appear on Page 22.

8. Publication

- 8.1 The outcomes of the consultation including this EQIA will be published on the Department website or can be obtained in other formats from DE's Curriculum Reform Programme Management Team.

9. Monitoring

- 9.1 In keeping with this Department's commitments under its Equality Scheme, any adverse differential impact on equality of opportunity or good relations that may be identified through this assessment process will be considered in informing the Department's proposals regarding the new curriculum framework.
- 9.2 The new curriculum framework is subject to a robust implementation plan. It is intended the new framework will be introduced on a phased basis over three years commencing in September 2028. Development of appropriate monitoring arrangements including areas where opportunities to promote equality of opportunity will be a key part of the planning process.

10. Annex A – Response Form



Department of Education EQIA Response Form for the proposed Curriculum Framework

The closing date for responses is 30 September 2026

Your Details:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____

Contact Phone number: _____

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

If you require this document in an alternative format (such as in large print, in Braille, or paper) and/or language, please contact the Team as follows:



E mail: CurriculumConsultation@education-ni.gov.uk

EQIA Response Form Questions:

Your views are welcomed on the following:

1. Are there any data issues in relation to Section 75 categories that the Department needs to consider?

2. Are there any adverse impacts in relation to Section 75 equality groups that the Department needs to consider?

3. What action do you think could be taken to reduce or eliminate any adverse impacts.

4. Are there any other comments you would like to make about this EQIA?

The Department welcomes comment on any aspects of this document. Interested parties are encouraged to make responses by the deadline, which will be used to inform further mitigation measures.

Please return the completed document preferably by E-mail to:

CurriculumConsultation@education-ni.gov.uk

or alternatively, by posting it to:

Curriculum Reform Programme Management Team
Department of Education
Rathgael House
Ground Floor
43 Balloo Road
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BANGOR
BT19 7PR