

**DE/2026-048 – Freedom of Information Request**

**Request:**

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I request the following information relating to pupils classified as “newcomer pupils” in Northern Ireland schools.

**1. Number of newcomer pupils**

Please provide the total number of pupils recorded as newcomer pupils for each academic year from 2018/19 to the most recent available year.

**2. Breakdown by school type**

For each year, please provide a breakdown of newcomer pupil numbers by:

- Nursery / Pre-school
- Primary
- Post-primary
- Special schools (if applicable)

**3. Total funding cost**

Please provide the total annual amount of funding allocated to schools in respect of newcomer pupils for each year from 2018/19 to the most recent available year.

**4. Average cost per pupil**

For each year, please provide:

- The average funding amount per newcomer pupil  
or
- The method used to calculate this figure

**5. Most recent figures**

Please confirm the latest available total number of newcomer pupils and the total associated funding cost.

**Department Response:**

Thank you for your request for information relating to Newcomer pupils. The request was received on 22 March 2026.

I can confirm that the Department holds the information requested.

The attached pdf document titled 'Newcomer pupils' shows the total number and breakdown of the number of Newcomer pupils at schools in Northern Ireland from 2001/02 to the latest figures in 2025/26.

The term 'Newcomer' is used to refer to a pupil who has enrolled in a school, but who does not have satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum and does not have a language in common with the teacher.

In terms of financial support, all schools with Newcomer children receive an additional funding premium of  $\frac{1}{2}$  Average Weighed Pupil Unit (AWPU) per annum per child to allow schools to support any additional needs such children may have, such as language needs. This funding is allocated to schools through the Department's Common Funding Formula (CFF) into their Local Management of Schools (LMS) budget. For 2025/26, the premium for primary aged school children is £1,547.05 and £1,556.42 for post-primary aged school children.

Under the legislation the Department is not required to provide information that is already available in a form accessible by the public. Every year, the Department publishes the amount of funding that is allocated to each of the funding factors under the CFF. The total annual funding allocated to Newcomers for each year you have requested, can be viewed by clicking on the following weblink: [Common Funding Scheme](#). If you do not have access to the internet at home, you may be able to use facilities at your local public library, or you can request a paper copy by contacting me.

The Department also secured additional funding from a number of central government funding streams to support asylum seekers and refugees. These funding streams are generally provided by Home Office with the allocation of the funds in Northern Ireland administered by The Executive Office. The funding is then allocated by the Department to the Education Authority or directly to schools. It should be noted that these funding streams are non-recurrent and previous funding secured by the Department provides no guarantee of securing future funding. There is also no guarantee in relation to how long these funds will continue to be available for. A summary of the funding secured by the Department over recent years from these funding sources is summarised in an attached pdf titled 'Newcomer Budgets'.