

DE/2026-057– Freedom of Information Request

Request:

Please send me the following information:

1. All internal documentation - including correspondence, briefing papers and 'lines to take' - held by the department relating to the steps taken by the department to identify, assess, monitor and meet the current and future demand for Integrated School places created since the Integrated Education Act 2022 became law in October 2022.
2. How much has been spent on supporting the implementation of the Act, a breakdown of how this has been spent and planned future spend.
3. How much the legal bill was for the judicial review in relation to the application from two Bangor schools to transform to integrated status.

Department Response:

Thank you for your request for information relating to the demand for Integrated school places and the implementation of the Integrated Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

I wish to confirm that the Department has now completed its search for the information which you requested on 31 March 2026.

Responses to your queries are set out below.

1. All internal documentation - including correspondence, briefing papers and 'lines to take' - held by the department relating to the steps taken by the department to identify, assess, monitor and meet the current and future demand for Integrated School places created since the Integrated Education Act 2022 became law in October 2022.

Response: I would advise that the Department has completed a search of its records and can confirm that we hold information which is relevant to your request.

However, it has become apparent that the collection of this information would involve a significant diversion of staff resources and we have estimated that the costs involved in identifying, locating and extracting the documentation involved would exceed the FOI limit for central government of £600. As a result, the Department is not obliged to comply with your request under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Annex A provides further information regarding this exemption.

We have identified a minimum of 3,259 documents that would need to be reviewed to provide a response to this question. Allowing a minimum of 5 minutes on average to review each document it would take at least 271 hours to complete the review. At £25 per hour that equates to a likely cost in excess of £6,775.

Based on allowing around 5 minutes to review a typical document, we would be able to review 288 documents within the £600 limit so would ask if there is something you would wish to prioritise. Should you wish to narrow the scope of your request, for example limiting it to documents and advice provided to Minister or covering a more limited time period, the Department will of course give this full consideration.

If you wish to redefine your request or discuss our decision not to proceed with your request, please contact integratededucationteam@education-ni.gov.uk. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications. Please note, submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request, and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions

2. How much has been spent on supporting the implementation of the Act, a breakdown of how this has been spent and planned future spend.

Response: The following costs have been incurred supporting the implementation of the Act:

DE Staff Costs for IE Implementation Team (above and beyond the normal role of the sponsorship team).

July 22 - March 23	£162,977
April 23 - March 24	£165,966
April 24 – March 25	£187,990
April 25 – March 26	£181,330

2022/23 NICIE funding - £650,000

2023/24 NICIE funding - £650,000

2024/25 NICIE funding - £653,000

2025/26 NICIE funding - £678,000

2024 Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey - £22,850

2025 Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey - £25,000

2026 Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey - £25,000 (Planned)

(Inclusion of questions relating to public attitudes to Integrated Education within the NI Life and Times survey managed by ARK)

Other internal expenditure relating to implementation includes:

2023/24 Purchase of Mentimeter license to facilitate online public consultation events to seek views on the Integrated Education Strategy - £300

2024 Business Consultancy Services (BCS) facilitation of OBA workshops in support of Integrated Education Strategy - £8,287.50

2026 Innovation Consultancy Services (ICS) – ALB review of NICIE in support of Integrated Education Strategy - £30,000 (planned)

2022/23 Transformation ballots costs - £7,997.21

2023/24 Transformation ballots costs - £17,522.99

2024/25 Transformation ballots costs - £13,089.08

DE reimburses schools who hold a Transformation ballot for the costs incurred. This is therefore lead by the demand for such ballots.

The Department also provide £23,000 annually to EA to support schools following Transformation and, will meet the costs associated with a planned Integrated Education Support Programme from September 2026 onwards.

Integrated Education Implementation Costs

Financial year	DE staff costs	NICIE funding	NI Life and Times survey	Other costs	Annual total
	£	£	£	£	£
2022/23	162,977	650,000	0	30,997.21	843,974.21
2023/24	165,966	650,000	0	40,822.99	856,788.99
2024/25	187,990	653,000	22,850	44,376.58	908,216.58
2025/26	181,330	678,000	25,000	23,000	907,330
2026/27	0	650,000	25,000	53,000	78,000

Notes

Other costs include transformation ballot costs, EA annual support of £23,000, consultation tools, and consultancy support. Transformation ballot costs are demand led. 2026/27 figures reflect planned expenditure only.

3. How much the legal bill was for the judicial review in relation to the application from two Bangor schools to transform to integrated status.

Response: We are unable to disclose the total costs incurred at this stage as not all costs incurred in relation to the matter have been invoiced yet, and the matter is now subject to appeal. We can however confirm that, to date, the Department has incurred £26,715.50, inclusive of VAT, in counsel fees arising from the successful defence of Judicial Review proceedings relating to two Development Proposals: DP 727, Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College, and DP 728, Rathmore Primary School. Appeals have been lodged in both cases and were heard on 1 and 11 March with judgements expected May/June, therefore costs will likely increase further. Costs can only be finalised at the conclusion of this process.