

Extended Schools Programme 2018/19

Background

Extended Schools funding is targeted at those schools serving the most disadvantaged communities. To qualify for Extended Schools funding, schools must meet set criteria (which are indicators of socio-economic disadvantage) in order to ensure those in the greatest need receive additional support.

Each year, the Department determines which schools are eligible for the Extended School programme by identifying the most disadvantaged schools according to the proportion of their pupils which are entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) or live in an area classified as disadvantaged. This is worked out using FSM and pupil residence data gathered as part of the annual School Census exercise.

Multiple Deprivation Measure

To help establish whether the children attending each school are drawn from a disadvantaged area, the Department uses the official measure of deprivation developed by the Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency (NISRA) entitled the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) which is updated periodically.

Sometimes referred to as the “Noble Index”, the NIMDM is made up of 7 areas or “domains” which help to illustrate the level of deprivation in any given area; these are income; employment; health & disability; education, skills and training; proximity/access to services; living environment; and crime and disorder. These domains then combine into the overall MDM. The Measure ranks areas according to their level of deprivation in comparison to each other, from most to least deprived (both for the overall MDM and each of the domains).

In November 2017, NISRA introduced an updated version of the NIMDM. The NIMDM 2017 has been adopted as the measure for determining (area-based) eligibility for the Extended Schools (ES) programme, and replaces the previous 2010 version of the NIMDM (which had been used for ES purposes over the last number of years).

In simple terms, this means that, under the NIMDM 2017, some areas will now be ranked (relative to one another) as less deprived than under the previous NIMDM 2010 and others more so. This is due to demographic changes in the interim seven years. In addition, the NIMDM 2017 has only provided data on smaller ‘*Super Output Areas*’ (or SOAs) to date and not electoral wards as was the case under the earlier NIMDM 2010. More detail on the specific eligibility criteria currently in place is set out below.

2018/19 Eligibility Criteria

For the 2018/19 financial year, the eligibility criteria which applied **across all school sectors on an equal basis**, stated that a school must have the following to access full ES resources:-

- 51% or more of their pupils living in either a Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA) **or** the 30% most deprived Super Output Areas (using both the MDM (2017) and Education Domain) **and/or**;
- 37% or more of pupils with a Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME). In the case of Nursery Schools, 37% or more of pupils with a FSME or parents in receipt of Income Support or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance.

The above qualifying thresholds have remained unchanged from previous years. The only difference in 2018/19 is with regards to the methodology employed for the area based element of the criteria (i.e. use of the updated NIMDM 2017 as highlighted above).

Impact on Schools

Due to the introduction of the updated NIMDM 2017, some schools which met the criteria for ES funding in 2017/18 do not meet the updated criteria this year and will therefore have to exit the programme in 2018/19. In contrast, some schools not previously eligible for ES funding in 2017/18 will enter the programme in 2018/19.

Whilst the outcome of the 2018/19 ES eligibility process will be disappointing for many schools which have been adversely affected, the NIMDM 2017 represents a more up to date and accurate picture of deprivation across Northern Ireland and its adoption helps to ensure a continuing focus of available ES resources on those schools who can demonstrate the greatest degree of need.

Calculation of Funding for Eligible Schools

Extended Schools funding for individual eligible schools is calculated on the basis of a formula as follows:

A 'Core' allocation made up of -

a. A block allocation to each school of £3,000; and a

b. Sliding scale whereby:

- the first 100 pupils are funded at £100 each
- the next 100 at £75 each
- the next 100 at £50 each
- the next 150 at £25 each
- the next 100 at £20 each
- all remaining pupils at £10 each

** Note that the core allocation due to each school based on above formula is re-calculated in accordance with the overall level of resources available for the programme in any given financial year.

Plus

- c. A further allocation of 15% for schools choosing to Cluster.
- d. An additional 15% uplift for clustering schools provided specifically for parenting programmes (see '**Clustering**' section below for further detail).

Clustering

A key feature of Extended Schools policy to date has been to encourage 3 or more schools in the same geographical area to collaborate and work together in partnership, otherwise known as "Clustering". Clustering has many benefits such as the sharing of resources and expertise or being able to offer joint programmes for pupils and the local community. Schools choosing to work in a cluster receive a standard additional 15% funding on top of their core allocation to encourage partnership working between schools.

A further allowance of 15% continues to be provided for clustering schools specifically aimed at providing programmes which involve parents in the life of the school and which can help them to support their child's learning, in particular the development of literacy and numeracy skills.

Therefore, for those schools choosing to cluster, they currently each receive a total of **30%** of additional funding on top of their core allocation.

Buffer Zone

When applying the eligibility criteria, it is possible that some schools can slip below the qualifying threshold one year and then qualify the next. This is likely to happen in smaller schools where one or two pupils can make a big difference. Therefore, the Department continues to operate a "buffer zone" which allows previously funded schools that fall a few percentage points below the relevant thresholds (currently 51% of pupils from the most disadvantaged areas or 37% in receipt of Free School Meals/equivalent for Nursery schools), to be partially funded for a period of 1 year (receiving 50% of what the school would have received had it remained eligible).

If eligibility has not been re-established after that year, schools will exit the programme.

Buffer zone for:

- Disadvantaged areas: 45 - 50%;
- FSME: 34 - 36%.

Exiting Schools

Some previously funded schools that fail to meet the eligibility criteria (and the 'buffer zone' outlined above does not apply) will unfortunately have to exit the 2018/19 programme. In recognition of the plans that such schools may have already made up to the end of the academic year, resources are currently provided to cover the period April-June 2018 (i.e receiving 25% of core allocation).