

Draft Equality Impact Assessment

on the

**Proposed Framework of Future Provision for Children in
the Early Years with Special Educational Needs**

MARCH 2018

CONSULTATION ANNOUNCEMENT

This document is being presented for public consultation. It reports the outcome of the draft Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) by the Education Authority on the Proposed Framework of Future Provision for Children in the Early Years of SEN.

A copy of the full report is also available on the organisation's website at: www.eani.org.uk/SENearlyyears Consultation on the EQIA will end on Thursday 24th May 2018.

It is intended that other consultation methods will be used to seek views and it may be that you will receive further communication from us in due course.

We hope that you will find time to comment on this document.

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Accessibility statement

Any request for the document in another format or language will be considered.

For these formats please contact us using the methods mentioned above.

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1. Executive Summary

The Organisation

The Education Authority (the Authority) was established under the Education Act Northern Ireland 2014 and became operational on 1 April 2015. It is a non-departmental body sponsored by the Department of Education.

The Authority is responsible for ensuring that efficient and effective primary and secondary education services are available to meet the needs of children and young people, and support for the provision of efficient and effective youth services.

The Authority is also responsible for ancillary, supplementary and often complementary functions such as:

- Maintenance of Maintained schools;
- School attendance;
- Suspension and expulsion of pupils;
- Student support;
- School transport;
- School meals and related facilities;
- Employment of teachers in Controlled schools and peripatetic teachers;
- Employment of non-teaching staff in Controlled and Maintained schools;
- School Improvement;
- Open enrolment and transfer;
- Financing of Controlled and Maintained schools;
- Governor training;
- Behavioural support;
- Exceptional provision.

Proposed framework of future provision for children in the early years with SEN

The Policy outlines a proposed Framework of Future Provision for Children in the Early Years with special educational needs (SEN). The key aim of the proposed Framework is to implement a high quality early years special education service across EA which is focused on children with the most complex needs, for whom a more intensive form of support is required. The aim is to provide enhanced consistency across all special school early years settings, which facilitates progressive steps towards equal access and provides targeted support, in line with the needs of the individual child.

The Framework embraces the needs of children, not just in relation to early years placements in special schools, but the wider needs of children and parents as they commence a journey from early assessment to support and targeted intervention.

Ultimately, the framework for future provision aims to:

- be child centred;
- redress the inequities that exist across the EA in relation to access and consistency in respect of early years special school provision;
- facilitate the strategic management of issues that relate to capacity in special schools early years places year on year; and
- assist with future planning so that a planned approach in relation to future need can be provided.

The proposed Framework has been influenced by, and is consistent with, findings and consideration of a number of key areas/factors as examined in the Review of Nursery Provision in Special Schools Report, as well as desk research commissioned from the National Children's Bureau.

Data Collection

Data was gathered for, namely the general population, with a targeted focus on young people with Special Educational Needs.

In preparing the draft EQIA, the findings from a range of data and research sources were taken into account. Statistical information was available from Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency (including Census information from 2011), the Department of Education and the Education Authority.

Targeted engagement was also undertaken with:

Parents, Boards of Governors, Special School Nursery Staff and Therapists, Key Education Partners, Key Advocacy Groups, Young People, Health Agencies, Equality Commission and both teaching and non-teaching Unions. This policy is intended to improve the experiences of, and therefore primarily impacts young people with special educational needs. It also seeks to engage and support families of children with SEN. Therefore, **age, disability** and **dependants** are the three section 75 groups identified as primarily facing potential impacts to using and accessing some of the provisions of the Proposed Framework for the Future Provision for Children in the Early Years with SEN. However it is acknowledged that there may be some minor potential impact for other groups which can be addressed going forward. The decision to carry out a full EQIA to explore issues for these groups was taken.

The needs of the wider general population, outside of the aforementioned groups, were also taken into account.

Key Findings

Age

The proposals in their totality are considered as positively impacting on young people aged 0-4 years old with special educational needs. In addition to reform of provision for 3 and 4 year olds, more focus is being paid and additional support also given to young people aged 0-3 years and their parents.

These measures should have a positive impact on children and young people with SEN and their parents.

Under a number of the proposals, EA is seeking to provide parent and child sessions across a range of early years SEN settings.

Under proposal 5, EA is seeking to establish Early Years SEN Centres linked to mainstream settings. These centres should give children and young people with SEN enhanced opportunities to be educated in mainstream settings, in line with best international human rights standards. EA proposes a classroom capacity of twelve pupils to ensure each pupil gets the required level of support and educational development required.

Under proposal 6, EA is proposing to establish consistent access arrangements and provision for children in the early years who require a special school place to ensure that the programme of offer across these settings is equitable and will meet the needs of children in their pre-school year. It is proposed that these provisions will be available for 'a minimum of 15 hours per week with flexibility to meet the individual needs of the child'.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the establishment of Early Years SEN centres and the enhanced consistency in special school provision are both positive outcomes for children and young people with SEN, the 'minimum of 15 hours per week' provision may be considered a reduction for some, and thus considered a negative impact. This will be explored further as part of the public consultation.

Disability

The proposals in their totality are considered as positively impacting on young people aged 0-4 years old with special educational needs. In addition to reform of provision for children in their pre-school year, more focus is being paid and additional support also given to young people aged 0-3 years and their parents.

The principles and associated proposals underpinning the Framework are based on a developmental model of service delivery and provision for children in the early years with SEN.

The framework will aim to implement high quality early years supports across EA which is focused on children with the most complex needs, for whom a more intensive form of support is required.

- The framework will benefit **pre-school** age children (in their immediate pre-school year), including those with a recognised disability, who have been assessed as requiring a special school placement.
- The framework will also benefit children who are not yet of pre-school age (**0-3 years**), as arrangements to enable these children to access EA Early Years SEN support services, as well as other identified support, will provide earlier intervention for children and their families.
- The framework will also benefit **parents** through provision of support and advice in relation to their child's needs as well as clarity, transparency and confidence in relation to the EA's planning framework.

Whilst focusing on consistency and equal access, the proposed framework is also about creating a context where there is the facility to provide differentiated support in line with the individual and changing needs of the child.

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Whilst it is acknowledged that the establishment of Early Years SEN centres and the enhanced consistency in special school provision are both positive outcomes for children and young people with SEN, the 'minimum of 15 hours per week' provision may be considered a reduction for some, and thus considered a negative impact. This will be explored further as part of the public consultation.

Dependents (Carers)

A programme of offer is proposed to provide advice and support to parents at the earliest opportunity so they are supported and well equipped to determine the best support for their child. The programme will also provide home based support and an intervention service, which will seek to ultimately enhance the opportunities for children and young people with SEN. The proposals are considered to have a positive impact for parents and carers.

2. Background

Organisational Background

The Education Authority (the Authority) was established under the Education Act Northern Ireland 2014 and became operational on 1 April 2015. It is a non-departmental body sponsored by the Department of Education.

The Authority is responsible for ensuring that efficient and effective primary and secondary education services are available to meet the needs of children and young people, and support for the provision of efficient and effective youth services. These services were previously delivered by the five Education and Library Boards/Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards:

- Belfast Education and Library Board
- North Eastern Education and Library Board
- South Eastern Education and Library Board
- Southern Education and Library Board
- Western Education and Library Board
- Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards

The Authority employs in the region of 39,000 staff across Northern Ireland in a wide variety of roles. This includes teachers in controlled schools, school-based support staff and staff in administrative sub regional offices.

The Authority's central activities support the provision of:

- Pre-school, primary and secondary education;
- Special education; and
- Youth services

throughout the geographical area encompassed by the Authority.

The Authority is also responsible for ancillary, supplementary and often complementary functions such as:

- Maintenance of Maintained schools;
- School attendance;
- Suspension and expulsion of pupils;
- Student support;
- School transport;
- School meals and related facilities;
- Employment of teachers in Controlled schools and peripatetic teachers;
- Employment of non-teaching staff in Controlled and Maintained schools;
- School Improvement;
- Open enrolment and transfer;
- Financing of Controlled and Maintained schools;
- Governor training;

- Behavioural support;
- Exceptional provision.

To give effect to its functions the Authority engages in a range of corporate activities including the recruitment of staff, the maintenance of the Authority's estate, the delivery and development of services and the procurement of services, goods and equipment.

Comprehensive information on the Authority's Services is available on our website, in our Annual Accounts Reports and our Annual Equality Progress Reports which are available at: www.eani.org.uk

Equality Impact Assessments

Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 provides for a comprehensive consideration by public authorities of the need to promote equality of opportunity, giving effect to Section 75 of the Act, between:

- people of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- people with a disability and people without one; and
- people with dependants and people without dependants.

These are called 'Section 75 groups' because the relevant law is section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. In addition, without affecting the above duty, public authorities must have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between people of different religious beliefs, political opinions and racial groups.

Equality Schemes must be prepared, which among other things must set out arrangements for assessing the likely impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity of the policies adopted or proposed.

Where equality impacts are likely to be major, a public authority needs to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). This is "a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether the policy is written or unwritten, formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of the policy or the size of the public authority."

As part of the assessment consideration must be given of anything that could reduce any adverse impact on equality of opportunity of the policies proposed. Thinking through what opportunities exist to better promote equality must also be a part of the assessment. Consideration to alternative policies that might better promote equality of opportunity must also be given.

The policy subjected to an Equality Impact Assessment

The proposed EA framework of future provision for children in the early years with SEN is based on ten key principles that have emerged from the review process. These principles will guide our future planning and transformation of services in this area. If agreed, they will help to support our children and parents as they access the provision options that can best meet the needs of their child. These principles should set the foundations for working with parents to develop the skills and support that they may need to enable their child to optimise their learning opportunities and skills. These principles should also guide our co-operation and future working with other statutory organisations as well as the voluntary and community sectors. The ten key principles are identified below:

- **Child-centred** - Children with SEN have different and individual needs. It is expected that different types and levels of support will be required by different children. This will be reflected in the early years programme of support that they access as part of a child-centred approach.
- **Developmental** – Children’s needs change over time. The services and support provided should also change as the child’s needs change. Some children will make significant progress and may need less support, while others may need more.
- **Parent focussed** – Parents are the first educators of their children. A child with special educational needs is a child first. Interactions with parents and family are important as part of the child’s social and emotional development. We will work with parents to enable them to enjoy their children’s achievements and to support them in relation to the challenges they face and the skills that they require.
- **Inclusive** - We want to ensure that children with SEN can have enhanced and extended opportunities for inclusion in a range of mainstream settings, as children have a right to these experiences.
- **Flexible provision to meet pupil need** – There is a need to create more options in terms of the type of placements that can be accessed to meet need.
- **Outcomes focussed** – As we want the best outcomes for our children, there is a need for clear local evidence in terms of what is working to meet need, based on how our children are responding to interventions. This should also continue to be informed by robust research on effective practice in the early years.
- **Equity of access in relation to the programme of support in special schools** - As the EA moves forward, the need to bring consistency to the nature and type of special school provision for children in the early years is essential.
- **Partnership working** – Interventions for children often requires input from a range of professionals in education, health and social care and through

programmes delivered through the voluntary and community sectors. The framework for future provision should provide opportunities for inter-agency working so that support is more integrated and seamless. This will facilitate better outcomes for children and young people with SEN.

- **Effective Communication** - The EA needs to bring clarity and transparency in terms of how parents and professionals access information, so that they know what is available. The 'local offer' in relation to early years support should be easily accessed through our website.
- **Effective Transition** – While early years services mark the beginning of a child's educational journey, the EA will want to ensure the effective transition of children from home to pre-school and school, based on the advice of those professionals who know them.

Proposed Framework of Future Provision for Children in the Early Years with SEN

We have identified six enabling proposals which we believe will transform how the EA provides support to meet the needs of children in the early years with special educational needs. The EA proposes to take forward these six measures. They will bring clarity in relation to children's access to special schools places in the early years. They will also provide earlier and more extended forms of support that are appropriate for children with SEN. We want our children to get the best start in life; these proposals are part of our transformational journey to make this happen.

Proposal 1 Communication: To develop clear and easily accessible information on EA early years provision and support for children with SEN.

We propose to:

Improve access to information for parents, through:

- developing a single point of information on the EA website which provides a signposting service on provisions and options in respect of EA early years SEN provision;
- establishing a single point of contact in EA to deal with queries relating to EA early years SEN provision;
- liaising with other early years providers, including health and social care and the voluntary and community sector, to develop links to improve communications and integrated support in relation to early years SEN information; and
- developing a variety of methods for liaising and communicating with parents, such as: cluster meetings, information seminars, step by step guides.

Provide clarity in relation to the **Programme of Offer**, through:

- clarifying and communicating detail on available early years SEN provisions across EA special schools and EA managed early years settings;
- clarifying and communicating detail on the range of available EA early years SEN professional and advice and support services;
- making available up to date information and data on EA early years SEN provision, which will be reviewed annually; and

- establishing an Early Years Panel for all early years SEN referrals from health and social care and educational psychology, with input from EA Special Education administration.

Proposal 2 - Partnerships: To strengthen partnerships with health and social care as well as statutory, voluntary and other early years providers to develop more integrated provision and support.

We propose to:

- engage directly with health and social care partners to identify the most appropriate mechanisms to work collaboratively to enhance integrated support, therapy and provision for children in the early years with SEN, as well as sharing of data and information;
- establish a Joint Education/Health Working Group for Early Years SEN Provision. The purpose of the Group will be to develop and strengthen our duty to co-operate through education/health and social care partnerships in the delivery of high quality, integrated early years SEN provision and support across Northern Ireland;
- establish an Early Years SEN Forum, comprised of representatives from relevant statutory, voluntary and community organisations, aimed at enhancing partnership working in relation to delivery of the Early Years SEN framework; and
- further enhance working relationships between staff who support children in mainstream pre-school settings and in special school nursery settings to facilitate continuous professional development through the sharing of information and experience as evidenced in relation to good practice.

Proposal 3 - Support which precedes the pre-school year: To provide earlier support for children aged 0-3 with SEN who are not yet in their pre-school year. This will be delivered by the EA Early Years SEN Inclusion Service and will be provided to children and their parents. This will provide opportunities for children with SEN, and their parents, to access intervention and support in the period prior to a child's pre-school year. This will represent the first phase of early years support.

We propose to:

- through the EA Early Years Panel, work in partnership with parents to determine the appropriate support for each child;
- liaise with health and social care and other voluntary and community providers in relation to the complementary delivery of support to children with SEN aged 0 to 3 years, and their parents; and
- enhance the skills of early years practitioners to identify, assess and meet the needs of children facing barriers to learning.

As part of the **programme of offer**, the EA Early Years SEN Inclusion Service would:

- provide advice and support to parents at the earliest opportunity to ensure they are well informed in relation to their child's assessed needs;
- provide a home-based advice, support and intervention service;
- assist in identifying future suitable provision for children in order to provide continuity on transition to pre-school and primary education;

- provide parent and child sessions across a range of early years SEN settings for children aged 0 to 3 years;
- establish and facilitate parent cluster groups throughout the EA, supported by health and social care and voluntary and community providers; and
- offer training to parents through targeted programmes of support, to improve their capacity to deliver interventions to meet their child's needs.

Proposal 4 - Additional Support to Mainstream Pre-school Settings: Through an agreed framework, enable mainstream pre-school settings to access **additional** EA professional and practical in-school support to meet the needs of children with SEN. This will enable children with SEN to access a mainstream pre-school experience, with more appropriate support in line with assessed need. This will represent the second phase of early years support.

We propose to:

- provide in-school support from the Early Years SEN Inclusion Service and other EA Pupil Support Services, including: Autism, Behaviour, Sensory, and Language and Communication. This support would be accessed in preparation for the beginning of the academic year, or during the year in relation to children who present with more significant needs. This will enable mainstream pre-school settings to meet the increased demand of children who have a diverse range of special educational needs;
- recruit Early Years Practitioners to the EA Early Years SEN Inclusion Service. These Early Years Practitioners would have appropriate training to provide additional support, on the basis of assessed need, across mainstream pre-school settings;
- collaborate with health and social care and voluntary and community providers, as well as other delivery partners, in relation to the complementary delivery of in-school and parental support to mainstream pre-school settings.

As part of the **programme of offer**, for children with identified SEN in mainstream pre-school settings, the Early Years SEN Inclusion Service will work with the settings and with other providers, as appropriate, to:

- provide in-school pupil support, on the basis of assessed need, from the Early Years SEN Inclusion Service and other EA Pupil Support Services, including: Autism, Behaviour, Sensory, and Language and Communication in relation to children who present with more significant needs;
- support and develop links between home and school;
- establish and facilitate parent cluster groups; and
- support children's transition from pre-school into an appropriate Year 1 placement.

Proposal 5 - Extension of the Continuum of Mainstream Pre-school Provision: To extend the continuum of mainstream provision for children in their pre-school year with SEN. This is in line with a more inclusive framework of support for those children for whom this is appropriate, whilst still ensuring access to specialist interventions. This will represent the second phase of early years support.

We propose to:

- provide access to a wider range of provision options by exploring potential for establishing Early Years SEN Centres attached to mainstream pre-school settings across the EA. This will include:
 - a pilot of Early Years SEN Centres in up to six mainstream early years settings across the EA, with evaluation of the child’s needs in this context informing their transition to an appropriate Year 1 placement. Evaluation of the pilot will be informed by pupil outcomes and professional, educational and parental feedback; and
 - collaboration with health and social care and voluntary and community providers, as well as other delivery partners, in relation to the complementary delivery of support to children in Early Years SEN Centres, and their parents.

As part of a consistent **programme of offer**, Early Years SEN Centres would:

- establish capacity at around 12 children per class, for a minimum of 15 hours per week, with flexibility to meet the individual needs of the child. The delivery model will depend on the assessed needs and size of the group, and will be managed by the Principal of the school/setting in collaboration with the EA;
- support and develop links between home and the Early Years SEN Centres; and
- establish and facilitate parent cluster groups supported by the EA Early Years SEN Inclusion Service, and other providers, as appropriate; and
- support children’s transition from Early Years SEN Centres into an appropriate Year 1 placement.

Proposal 6 - Special School Provision: To establish consistent access arrangements and provision for children in their pre-school year who require a special school nursery place to ensure that the programme of offer across these settings is equitable and will meet the needs of children with the most complex needs. This will represent the second phase of early years support.

We propose to:

- annually monitor the demand for special school nursery provision across the EA in order to plan for and meet future need;
- make provision for children who are in their pre-school year and who have relevant, up to date professional advice regarding the complexity of their needs;
- through an annual audit of staffing and pupils across special school nursery settings, make relevant and appropriate adjustments to the special school early years workforce in line with changing need and demand;
- bring consistency to the programme of offer across all special school nursery settings; and
- collaborate with health and social care and voluntary and community providers in relation to the complementary delivery of support to children in special schools, and their parents.

As part of the consistent **programme of offer**, each EA special school nursery would:

- establish capacity at around 8 children per class, for a minimum of 15 hours per week, with flexibility to meet the individual needs of the child. The delivery model

will depend on the assessed needs and size of the group, and will be managed by the Principal of the school; and

- support and develop links between home and school; and
- establish and facilitate parent cluster groups supported by the EA Early Years SEN Inclusion Service, and other providers, as appropriate; and
- support children's transition from nursery into an appropriate Year 1 placement.

Scope of the Equality Impact Assessment

The EA Early Years SEN Framework is underpinned by the central principle of providing a high quality, equitable service for every child which ensures the best possible outcomes for children to improve their life chances and wellbeing. The Framework is child centred and advocates preventative work and early intervention to support children, young people and their families. It is about responding in a meaningful, supportive way, working with parents wherever possible. It takes into account that everyone involved with the family has an important part to play and puts the wellbeing of children and families at the heart of any support.

3. Data Collection

In line with the Equality Commission (NI) Guide to the Statutory Duties and EQIA Guidelines, data was drawn from a number of sources to help us prepare this draft EQIA.

Data was gathered for a range of communities, namely the general population, with a targeted focus on children with a special educational need.

The needs of the wider general population, outside of the aforementioned groups, were also taken into account.

In preparing the draft EQIA, the findings from a range of data and research sources were taken into account. Statistical information was available from Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency (including Census information from 2011), the Department of Education and the Education Authority.

Targeted engagement was also undertaken with:

Parents: Parents of children who currently attend a special school, have attended in the past, or may attend in the future, were targeted to attend a range of engagement sessions.

Boards of Governors: Representatives from special schools' Boards of Governors were invited to accompany principals.

Special School Nursery Staff and Therapists/Health Visitors/Community Paediatricians: Special school Nursery Staff and Therapists were targeted to attend one of the six engagement sessions which were convened in the identified host schools across the EA area.

Key Education Partners: Engagement meetings took place with the Chief Executives and senior officers of the Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC) and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS).

Key Advocacy Groups: Individual engagement meetings took place with the Directors/ Chief Executives and senior officers of a range of key advocacy groups, including: Human Rights Commission (HRC); Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY); Children's Law Centre (CLC); Special Educational Needs Advice Centre (SENAC); Early Years Organisation (EYO).

Young People: Two age appropriate engagement focus groups were convened with children of an older age (8 to 10 years) who currently attend a special school.

Health: Meetings were convened with Health officials, including: Director of Social Care and Children (HSCB); Directors of Children's Services from across the five Trusts; Chief Executives of the five Trusts.

Equality Commission: The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland was engaged on a regular basis.

Unions: Engagement meetings took place with both teaching and non-teaching Union.

During the consultation period for this draft EQIA, the Education Authority will undertake extensive engagement with a range of groups, service users, carers and staff representing the section 75 categories most likely to be impacted. We will also engage with wider section 75 groups and individuals as appropriate as well as the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to produce the final equality impact assessment, post consultation.

Key findings

This section outlines our key findings across the nine equality groups outlined in Section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act. This analysis has been produced following a desktop review of available local, National and International literature and an extensive engagement programme.

As far as the availability of data allows, across the nine equality categories each section looks at (1) profile, (2) impact of SEN proposals and (3) any other needs identified.

Gender

Profile

The population of Northern Ireland on Census Day 2011 was 1,810,900

Males 887,300 (49%)

Females 923,500 (51%)

Accurate figures on the number of transgender people are not currently available. McBride (2011) 'Healthcare Issues for Transgender People Living in Northern Ireland' estimates that the number of people who say they are transgender in Northern Ireland is 8 per 100,000 (120) people (aged 16 and over). There is a higher proportion of male to female transitions.

Negative attitudes are displayed towards transgender people, according to the 2011 Equality Awareness Survey by the Equality Commission. This found that 35% of respondents would mind (a little or a lot) having a transgender person as a work colleague, while 40% would mind having one as a neighbour and 53% would mind having one as an in-law.

Negative attitudes were stronger among people over 65 years old. They were more likely to mind having a transgender person as a work colleague (52%), as a neighbour (54%), or in a relationship with a close relative (69%) compared with the younger age groups aged 16–29 years old (29%, 33% and 46%, respectively) or 30 to 44 years old (28%, 34% and 48%, respectively).

NI School Census data 2015/16 indicates that:

90,667 Males / 87,555 Females in primary schools

70,052 Males/ 71,060 Females in post primary schools

Overall totals 160,719 males / 158,615 females - broadly equitable.

EA Workforce Statistics

Gender (total staff 31,367 Fair Employment Monitoring Return 1 Jan 2016)

82.7% female (25,946)

17.3% male (5,421)

Teaching Workforce Statistics

Male – 4,610 (23%) Female – 15,234 (77%)

The proportion of teachers working in schools, who are male, has been declining over the past five years. Most notable is the absence of male teachers in nursery schools.

57.2% of all principals are female and 42.8% are male. The number of principals in all school phases, who are male, has declined since 2014/15.

Table 01: Special School enrolments by gender by postcode

School Postcode	Total Number of Boys	Total Number of Girls	Total Number of Boys and Girls
BT15	180	42	222
BT9	462	204	666
BT4	97	56	153
BT6	59	39	98
BT5	26	0	26
BT10	168	64	232
BT82	79	37	116
BT79	92	43	135
BT49	83	29	112
BT74	94	45	139
BT48	209	91	300
BT37	235	106	341
BT36	118	39	157
BT52	134	57	191
BT40	61	43	104
BT45	73	37	110
BT41	38	20	58
BT43	193	83	276
BT26	139	61	200
BT21	154	46	200
BT67	116	34	150
BT16	258	100	358
BT28	124	51	175
BT30	90	45	135
BT19	108	51	159
BT35	122	54	176
BT32	65	32	97
BT66	87	50	137
BT71	72	33	105
BT61	47	32	79

Impact of SEN proposals

The proposals generally will have no differential impact on the grounds of gender, however proposal 6 proposes an annual audit of staffing and pupils in special school early years provision, with a view to ensure the workforce is meeting the needs and demands of SEN young people. The majority of the teaching workforce in EA is female and any changes will therefore likely impact women more than men. However any adjustments will also be with a view to ensuring the best outcomes for children and young people with SEN and therefore considered legitimate. During the annual audit and any associated action, the specific needs of those impacted will be considered as part of the process.

Age

Profile

Compared with the England, Scotland and Wales, Northern Ireland had the fastest-growing and youngest population between 2001 and 2011, with an estimated increase of 7.5%. It is projected to have the youngest population during 2011-2021.

This equates to 24% or 432,814 children and young people aged less than 18 years. (Source: NISRA 2009 Mid-year Population Estimates)

The population of Northern Ireland is getting older. Between the 2001 and 2011 censuses the median age increased from 34 years to 37 years. According to NISRA, the population aged 85 and over has increased by 9,000 people (38 per cent) in the 10 year period between June 2002 and June 2012. This is five times faster than the overall population growth of just over seven per cent over this same period. Within Northern Ireland this population is projected to grow from the 31,800 at the 2011 census to 100,000 by 2041.

There are 171,615 pupils in primary schools (years 1-7), and this continues to increase even though there are fewer primary schools year on year. This equates to 55% of the overall pupils.

In total 140,417 pupils are enrolled in post-primary schools. This equates to 45% of the overall pupils. (Total 312032)

EA workforce profile 5 May 2016 (total staff 34,713 - The total EA workforce can fluctuate due to seasonal variations).

25 and under = 3013 (8.7%)

26 – 35 = 5505 (15.9%)

36 – 45 = 7779 (22.4%)

46 – 55 = 10779 (31.1%)

56 – 65 = 6262 (18.0%)

66 and above = 1375 (4.0%)

There are currently 18 members of staff employed by the Education Authority working in the Early Years pre-School services, all of whom are female.

Teaching Workforce statistics

Figures by age range for 2015/2016:

24 and under = 365 (1.8%)

25 to 29 = 1943 (9.8%)

30 to 34 = 3185 (16.1%)

35 to 39 = 3562 (18.0%)

40 to 44 = 3367 (17.0%)

45 to 49 = 2963 (14.9%)

50 to 54 = 2188 (11.0%)

55 to 59 = 1766 (8.9%)

60 and above = 505 (2.5%)

Total = 19,844

(DE stats: Teacher Workforce Statistics in Grant-Aided Schools in Northern Ireland)

Impact of SEN proposals

The proposals in their totality are considered as positively impacting on young people aged 0-4 years old with special educational needs. In addition to reform of provision for 3 and 4 year olds, more focus is being paid and additional support also given to young people aged 0-3 years and their parents.

Proposal 1 seeks to establish a panel of relevant professionals which will work in partnership with parents to determine the appropriate support for each child.

A programme of offer is proposed to provide advice and support to parents at the earliest opportunity so they are supported and well equipped to determine the best support for their child. The programme will also provide home based support and an intervention service, which will seek to ultimately enhance the opportunities for children and young people with SEN.

Proposal 1 also seeks to provide parent and child sessions across a range of early years SEN settings.

These measures should all have a positive impact on children and young people with SEN and their parents.

Under proposal 5 EA is seeking to establish Early Years SEN Centres linked to mainstream settings. These centres should give children and young people with SEN enhanced opportunities to be educated in mainstream settings, in line with best international human rights standards. EA proposes a classroom capacity of twelve pupils to ensure each pupil gets the required level of support and educational development required.

Under proposal 6, EA is proposing to establish consistent access arrangements and provision for children in the early years who require a special school place to ensure that the programme of offer across these settings is equitable and will meet the needs of children in their pre-school year. It is proposed that these provisions will be available for 'a minimum of 15 hours per week' which represents an increase in provision for the majority. Whilst it is acknowledged that the establishment of Early Years SEN Centres and the enhanced consistency in special school provision are

both positive outcomes for children and young people with SEN, the ‘minimum of 15 hours per week’ provision may be considered a reduction for some, and thus considered a negative impact. This is addressed in the disability section of the report below.

Marital Status

Profile

Table 02: Marital Status of Northern Ireland residents aged 16+ years, Census 2011

<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Married</i>	680,831	47.6
<i>Single</i>	517,393	36.1
<i>Same-sex civil partnership</i>	1,243	0.1
<i>Separated</i>	56,911	4.0
<i>Divorced</i>	78,074	5.5
<i>Widowed or surviving partner</i>	97,088	6.8

(Source: NISRA (2012) Table KS103)

The table shows that almost half (48%) of people aged 16 years and over on Census Day 2011 were married, and over a third (36%) were single. Just over 1,200 people (0.1%) were in registered same-sex civil partnerships. A further 9.4% of residents were separated, divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership, while the remaining 6.8% were either widowed or a surviving partner (Source: NISRA (2012) Table KS103).

The urban areas of Belfast and Derry/Londonderry had the largest proportions of single people (47% and 42% respectively), while Ards and Banbridge (both 54%) had the highest proportion of married people.

EA workforce profile 5 May 2016 (total staff 34,713 - The total EA workforce can fluctuate due to seasonal variations).

Civil partner	0.01%
Divorced	1.69%
Married	46.09%
No record	28.29% (did not record marital status on declaration form)
Separated	0.66%
Single	18.44%
Unknown	4.29% (did not complete a declaration form)
Widowed	0.53%

Whilst the marital status of the families of current or future children with SEN is not known, the proposals to establish parent cluster groups (proposals 3, 4, 5 and 6) and training for parents (proposal 3) will consider the needs of the parents or carers accessing this, including the specific needs of single parents. We will ensure these provisions are accessible for all parents / carers.

Religion

In Northern Ireland most people are of Christian faith, as shown in the table below. There are gaps in the information about those of non-Christian faiths and those with no faith.

On Census Day 2011, the usual population of Northern Ireland was 1,810,863. The table shows the change in the religious make-up of Northern Ireland between the 2001 and the 2011 Census.

Table 03: Changes in religious make up of Northern Ireland between 2001 and 2011 censuses

Religion/ religion brought up in	Census 2001		Census 2011		Percentage change (%)
	Count	Percentage (%)	Count	Percentage (%)	
Protestant/ other Christian	895,377	53.1	875,717	48.4	-2.2
Roman Catholic	737,412	43.8	817,385	45.1	10.8
Other religions	6,569	0.4	16,592	0.9	152.6
None	45,909	2.7	101,169	5.6	120.4

(Source: NISRA, Table KS07b (2003); KS212 (2012))

NI School Census data indicates that in 2015/16:

The NI Schools' Census for 2015-16 revealed that out of a total school population of 324,255: Catholic pupils account for 51% of places while Protestants make up 37%. The other 12% are pupils of other Christian denominations, non-Christian, no religion and whose religion has not been disclosed.

Table 04: Special School by Religious Breakdown.

<i>School Postcode</i>	Overall Protestant	Overall Catholic	Overall Other Religious Denomination	Enrolment
<i>BT15</i>	80	101	41	222
<i>BT9</i>	229	307	130	666
<i>BT4</i>	74	27	52	153
<i>BT6</i>	64	22	12	98
<i>BT5</i>	11	13	2	26
<i>BT10</i>	5	218	9	232
<i>BT82</i>	20	84	12	116
<i>BT79</i>	33	72	30	135
<i>BT49</i>	45	57	10	112
<i>BT74</i>	36	91	12	139
<i>BT48</i>	28	248	24	300
<i>BT37</i>	183	76	76	335
<i>BT36</i>	58	30	69	157
<i>BT52</i>	96	50	45	191
<i>BT40</i>	65	12	27	104
<i>BT45</i>	31	68	11	110
<i>BT41</i>	24	16	18	58
<i>BT43</i>	121	92	63	276
<i>BT26</i>	100	76	24	200
<i>BT21</i>	111	26	63	200
<i>BT67</i>	58	50	42	150
<i>BT16</i>	174	53	131	358
<i>BT28</i>	52	86	37	175
<i>BT30</i>	14	90	29	133
<i>BT19</i>	88	9	60	157
<i>BT35</i>	18	144	14	176
<i>BT32</i>	42	39	16	97
<i>BT66</i>	52	66	19	137
<i>BT71</i>	22	75	8	105
<i>BT61</i>	31	42	6	79

EA Workforce statistics

Community Background (total staff 31,367 Fair Employment Monitoring Return 1 Jan 2016)

47.4% Protestant (14,872),

47.1% Roman Catholic (14,775)

5.5% whose community background cannot be determined (1,720)

Teaching workforce statistics

Data not available for Teaching Staff as Article 71 of the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 makes schools exempt from the requirement to monitor the community background of their teaching staff.

These proportions are largely reflective of Special Schools.

Proposal 5 proposes the establishment of Early Years SEN Centres, linked to mainstream settings, which will seek to extend provision and opportunities for children and young people with SEN. A number of criteria will be identified when determining these locations and consideration will also be given to the community and religious background of pupils and families, as appropriate, during this process.

Similarly proposals 3, 4 5 and 6 propose the establishment of parental cluster groups; the religious and community background of attendees will be a considered when hosting meetings. A welcoming environment for all parents will be a key consideration for EA.

At this stage there is therefore no evidence of any differential impact on the grounds of religion, this will however be kept under review.

Ethnicity

Since the 2001 Census, there has been a marked change in Northern Ireland's ethnic diversity. On Census Day 2011, 1.8% (32,400) of the resident population belonged to minority ethnic groups, more than double the proportion in 2001 (0.8%). The main minority ethnic groups were Chinese (6,300 people), Indian (6,200), Mixed (6,000) and Other Asian (5,000), each accounting for around 0.3% of the population.

Ethnic group	Census 2001		Census 2011		Difference
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count
White	1,670,988	99.2	1,778,449	98.2	107,461
Chinese	4,145	0.2	6,303	0.4	2,158
Indian	1,567	0.1	6,198	0.3	4,631
Mixed	3,319	0.2	6,014	0.3	2,695
Other Asian	194	0	4,998	0.3	4,804
Other	1,290	0.1	2,353	0.1	1,063
Black African	494	0	2,345	0.1	1,851
Irish Traveller	1,710	0.1	1,301	0.1	- 409
Pakistani	666	0	1,091	0.1	425
Black other	387	0	899	0.1	512
Bangladeshi	252	0	540	0	288
Black Caribbean	255	0	372	0	117

Table 05: Changes in ethnic makeup of Northern Ireland between 2001 and 2011 censuses

(Source: NISRA, Table KS06 (2003); KS201 (2012))

Irish Travellers comprised 0.1% of the population. Since 2001, the minority ethnic count rose from 14,300 to 32,400. Increases were recorded for all groups with the exception of Irish Travellers, whose number fell from 1,700 in 2001 to 1,300 in 2011. Belfast (3.6%), Castlereagh (2.9%), Dungannon (2.5%) and Craigavon (2.1%) had the highest proportions of residents from minority ethnic groups.

Residents born outside Northern Ireland in March 2011 accounted for 11% (202,000) of the population, compared with 9% (151,000) in April 2001. This change resulted largely from inward migration by people born in the 12 countries that have joined the European Union since 2004 (EU 12). These accounted for 2% (35,700) of Northern Ireland residents on Census Day 2011, compared with 0.1% in 2001.

The rest of the population born outside Northern Ireland consisted of 4.6% born in Great Britain, 2.1% born in the Republic of Ireland, 0.5% born in countries that were EU members before 2004, and 2% born elsewhere.

Table 06: Breakdown of country of birth for the population of Northern Ireland

Country of birth	Count	Percentage
Northern Ireland	1,608,853	88.8
Outside Northern Ireland	202,000	11.2
England	64,717	3.6
Scotland	15,455	0.9
Wales	2,552	0.1
Republic of Ireland	37,833	2.1
EU before 2004	9,703	0.5
EU 12	35,704	2.0
Other	36,046	2.0

(Source: NISRA (2012) Table KS204)

13,943 Newcomer pupils were enrolled in schools during 2016-17, an increase of 4.1% since the previous year (NI School Census data October 2016).

Most interpreting requests came from the primary school sector and the languages most requested for interpreting were Polish, Lithuanian and Mandarin.

According to the “All-Ireland Traveller Health Study” (AITHS), the Traveller population in Northern Ireland is estimated at 3,905, with 1,562 families. The age profile of this community is markedly different from that of the general population. Some 70% of Travellers are aged 30 or under, and only 1% are aged 65 and over. This partly reflects a higher birth rate, a higher death rate and inward migration.

NI School Census data indicates that:

There is also a rise year-on-year in the number of pupils whose first language is not English. In 2015/16, there are more than 80 first languages spoken by pupils, with Polish and Lithuanian being the most common behind English.

As such, there has been an increase in the number and proportion of newcomer pupils in schools in Northern Ireland. 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. In 2015/16, there are approximately almost 13,000 newcomer pupils accounting for 3.8% of the school population.

Table 07: Ethnicity of pupils with SEN

<i>Ethnicity</i>	Primary		Post Primary		Special	
	Statemented pupils	SEN (stages 1-4)	Statemented pupils	SEN (stages 1-4)	Statemented pupils	SEN (stages 1-4)
<i>White</i>	5456	31135	6019	23243	4877	298
<i>Irish traveller</i>	52	300	58	114	41	*
<i>Roma</i>	0	32	*	25	7	0
<i>Chinese/Hong Kong</i>	6	73	10	60	21	0
<i>Indian/Sri Lankan</i>	8	73	6	38	19	*
<i>Pakistani</i>	*	26	5	17	6	0
<i>Bangladeshi</i>	*	39	*	13	8	0
<i>Black Caribbean</i>	0	5	*	*	*	*
<i>Black African</i>	10	79	5	57	10	*
<i>Black other</i>	7	55	6	38	*	*
<i>Korean</i>	0	*	0	0	*	0
<i>Mixed Ethnic Group</i>	67	419	58	223	65	8
<i>Other Ethnic Group</i>	35	#	19	#	#	*
<i>Pupil Count</i>	5648	32455	6194	23964	5089	318

* denotes fewer than 5 pupils

denotes figure ≥ 5 suppressed due to potential identification of individual pupils

Impact of SEN proposals

There is no evidence of any major differential impact on the grounds of ethnicity.

Proposal 5 proposes the establishment of Early Years SEN Centres, linked to mainstream settings, which will seek to extend provision and opportunities for children and young people with SEN. A number of criteria will be identified when determining these locations and consideration will also be given to the community background of pupils and families, including ethnicity as appropriate, during this process.

Similarly proposals 3, 4 5 and 6 propose the establishment of parental cluster groups; the religious and community background of attendees, as well as ethnicity, will be a consideration when hosting meetings. A welcoming environment for all parents will be a key consideration for EA.

Proposal 1 seeks to develop clear and easily accessible information on EA early years provision and support for children with SEN. The communication needs of

people for whom English is not a first language will be considered when information is being produced. All information will be accessible.

Political Opinion

There is limited data available; however the Electoral Commission’s data on the first-preference votes per party in the Northern Ireland Assembly Elections 2017 gives a good guide to political preferences in the province as a whole.

Table 08: First preference votes per party in Northern Ireland Assembly Elections 2017

<i>Political party</i>	<i>Votes</i>
<i>Democratic Unionist Party</i>	<i>225,245</i>
<i>Sinn Fein</i>	<i>224,245</i>
<i>Ulster Unionist Party</i>	<i>103,314</i>
<i>Social Democratic and Labour Party</i>	<i>95,958</i>
<i>Alliance</i>	<i>72,717</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>81,668</i>

(Source: Electoral Office NI, 2017)

Impact of SEN proposals

Proposal 5 proposes the establishment of Early Years SEN Centres, linked to mainstream settings, which will seek to extend provision and opportunities for young people with SEN. A number of criteria have been identified when determining these locations, including location. Consideration will also be given to the community background of pupils and families as appropriate during this process.

Similarly proposal 3 4 5 and 6 propose the establishment of parental cluster groups. The religious and community background of attendees will be a consideration when hosting meetings. A welcoming environment for all parents will be a key consideration for EA.

At this stage there is therefore no evidence of any differential impact on the grounds of political opinion, this will however be kept under review.

Disability

Census figures show that in 2011 just over one in five of the resident population (21%) had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities, similar to the proportion in 2001 (20%). Strabane and Belfast (both 24%) had the highest proportions of residents with a long-term health problem or disability.

Table 09: Long-term health problem or disability of Northern Ireland Population

Disability	Count	Percent %
Long-term health problem or disability: day-to-day activities limited a lot	215,232	11.9
Long-term health problem or disability: day-to-day activities limited a little	159,414	8.8
Long-term health problem or disability: day-to-day activities not limited	1,436,217	79.3

(Source: NISRA (2012) Table KS301 – Health and unpaid care)

According to a NISRA survey carried out in 2006; some 37% of households include at least one person with a disability and 20% of these include more than one disabled person.

For both men and women, the rate of disability increases with age. Women on average live longer than men therefore disability tends to be more common among women. The rate is particularly high for women aged 75 and above (at 62%). It is only among the youngest adults aged 16 to 25 that the rate for men (at 6%) is higher than for women (4%) (Northern Ireland Survey of Activity Limitation and Disability (2006/07)).

Some 32% of the 1,860 people receiving direct payments from their local Health and Social Care Trust have a physical or sensory disability (January 2011).

In Northern Ireland there are about 16,500 people with a learning disability. McConkey et al (2006) predict this will increase by 20.5% by 2021. Any change to older people’s services must take account of the needs of older people with learning disabilities as well as other forms of disability. (McConkey et al, ‘Accessibility of healthcare information for people with a learning disability. A Review and Discussion Paper’ (2006)

Table 10: Percentage of People in Northern Ireland population by type of long term condition or disability

Type of long – term condition	Percentage of population with condition %
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Deafness or partial hearing loss	5.14
Blindness or partial sight loss	1.7
Communication Difficulty	1.65
Mobility of Dexterity Difficulty	11.44
Learning, intellectual, social or behavioural difficulty.	2.22
Emotional, psychological or mental health condition	5.83
Long – term pain or discomfort	10.10
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	8.72
Frequent confusion or memory loss	1.97
A chronic illness (such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, heart disease or epilepsy.	6.55
Other condition	5.22
No Condition	68.57

(Census 2011)

NI School Census data indicates that, 22% of pupils in schools have some form of special educational needs. In total, 74,760 pupils in schools have some form of special educational needs. Of this, more than 16,500, or 4.9% of pupils, have a statement of special educational needs

Approximately 5,200 pupils are enrolled in 39 dedicated special schools. In addition to this, more than 1,700 are educated in learning support centres in primary and post-primary schools across 88 schools.

Pupils with special educational needs are increasingly being educated in mainstream schools rather than special schools. In 2015/16 the corresponding figures equate to 29.9% and 7.2% respectively.

Need Type	Total
Attention deficit disorder (ADD) / Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	3253
Anaphylaxis	587
Aspergers	2282
Asthma	1738
Autism	5690

Blind	68
Cognitive and Learning (SEN stages 1-2)	15291
Communication and Interaction (SEN stages 1-2)	1033
Cerebral Palsy	456
Dyspraxia/ Developmental coordination disorder (DCD)	699
Diabetes	469
Down's Syndrome	585
Dyscalculia	253
Dyslexia/Specific learning difficulties (SpLD)	9590
Epilepsy	918
Interaction of complex medical needs	610
Muscular dystrophy	51
Medical Conditions/Syndromes (SEN stages 1-2)	1035
Mental Health Issues	145
Mild Learning Difficulties	15178
Moderate Learning Difficulties	6126
Mild/moderate hearing loss	744
Multi-sensory impairment	198
Other medical conditions/syndromes	2263
Other (Physical)	976
Other	2378
Physical (SEN stages 1-2)	137
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties	215
Partially sighted	574
Significant accidental injury	25
Spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus	172
Social, Emotional and Behavioural (SEN stages 1-2)	1720
Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)	10619
Speech and Language Difficulties	10366
Severe Learning Difficulties	2422
Severe/profound hearing loss	286
Sensory (SEN stages 1-2)	153
Unspecified (cognitive and learning)	1403

Table 11: Number of pupils based on needs

EA Workforce Statistics

EA workforce profile 5 May 2016 (total staff 34,713 - The total EA workforce can fluctuate due to seasonal variations).

Total people with a disability 1.96%

No declaration (did not complete a declaration form) 3.61%

No record (did not record a disability on the declaration form) 66.93%

No disability (declared no disability on the declaration form) 27.50%

The proposals in their totality are considered as positively impacting on young people aged 0-4 years old with special educational needs. In addition to reform of provision for 3 and 4 year olds, more focus is being paid and additional support also given to young people aged 0-3 years and their parents.

Proposal 3 seeks to establish a panel of relevant professionals which will work in partnership with parents to determine the appropriate support for each child.

A programme of offer is proposed to provide advice and support to parents at the earliest opportunity so they are supported and well equipped to determine the best support for their child. The programme will also provide home based support and an intervention service, which will seek to ultimately enhance the opportunities for children and young people with SEN.

Proposal 3 also seeks to provide parent and child sessions across a range of early years SEN settings.

These measures should all have a positive impact on children and young people with SEN and their parents.

Under proposal 5 EA is seeking to establish Early Years SEN Centres linked to mainstream settings. These centres should give children and young people with SEN enhanced opportunities to be educated in mainstream settings, in line with best international human rights standards. EA proposes a classroom capacity of twelve pupils to ensure each pupil gets the required level of support and educational development required.

Under proposal 6, EA is proposing to establish consistent access arrangements and provision for children in the early years who require a special school place to ensure that the programme of offer across these settings is equitable and will meet the needs of children in their pre-school year. It is proposed that these provisions will be available for 'a minimum of 15 hours per week' which represents an increase in provision for the majority. Whilst it is acknowledged that the establishment of Early Years SEN Centres and the enhanced consistency in special school provision are both positive outcomes for children and young people with SEN, the 'minimum of 15 hours per week' provision may be considered a reduction for some, and thus considered a negative impact. This is addressed in the disability section of the report below.

Whilst the initial impetus for the Strategic Review was as a result of concerns raised by parents and the then Minister for Education (Mr John O'Dowd MLA) about decisions which the EA had taken in relation to nursery provision for children in special schools, the scope of the Review extend beyond nursery provision to consideration of early years support for children with SEN (0-4 years).

The proposed Framework of Future Provision for Children in the Early Years with SEN is based on a two phase programme of provision for children aged 0 to 4 years, and their families. The proposed framework embraces the needs of children, not just in relation to early years placements in special schools, but the wider needs of children and parents as they commence a journey from early assessment to support and targeted intervention. The principles and associated proposals underpinning the

Framework are based on a developmental model of service delivery and provision for children in the early years with SEN.

The framework will aim to implement a high quality early years' special education service across EA which is focused on children with the most complex needs, for whom a more intensive form of support is required.

- The framework will benefit **pre-school** age children (in their immediate pre-school year), including those with a recognised disability, who have been assessed as requiring a special school placement.
- The framework will also benefit children who are not yet of pre-school age (**0-3 years**), as arrangements to enable these children to access EA Early Years SEN support services, as well as other identified support, will provide earlier intervention for children and their families.
- The framework will also benefit **parents** through provision of support and advice in relation to their child's needs as well as clarity, transparency and confidence in relation to the EA's planning framework.

Whilst focusing on consistency and equal access, the proposed framework is also about creating a context where there is the facility to provide differentiated support in line with the individual and changing needs of the child. The proposals outline measures that will provide more opportunities for early intervention (through the Early Years Inclusion Service - Proposal 3) and extend the continuum of options available (through creation of Early Years SEN Centre's and additional support to mainstream early years settings - Proposals 4 and 5).

Dependants

In the 2011 Census respondents were asked whether they provided any unpaid help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long-term physical or mental ill-health/disabilities, or problems related to old age. Twelve per cent of the population (213,980) provided such unpaid care, around a quarter (26%) of whom did so for 50 or more hours a week, a total of 56,000 people.

Between the 2001 and the 2011 Censuses there was an increase in the number of people providing unpaid care.

Table 12: Changes in the provision of unpaid care in Northern Ireland between 2001 and 2011 censuses

	2001 Census	2011 Census
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Care provided	Count	Percentage %	Count	Percentage %
Provides no unpaid care	1,500,201	89.0	1,596,883	88.2
Provides 1-19 hours unpaid care per week	110,407	6.6	122,301	6.8
Provides 20-49 hours unpaid care per week	28,000	1.7	35,369	2.0
Provides 50+ hours unpaid care per week	46,659	2.8	56,310	3.1
Total	1,685,267	100	1,810,863	100

(Sources: NISRA Univariate table UV021(2001 numbers) and NISRA (2012) Table KS301 – Health and unpaid care (2011 numbers))

Based on the most recent information from Carers Northern Ireland (June 2011), the following facts relate to carers:

- 1 in every 8 adults is a carer;
- There are about 207,000 carers in Northern Ireland;
- One quarter of all carers provide over 50 hours of care per week;
- People providing high levels of care are twice as likely to be permanently sick or disabled as the average person;
- About 30,000 people in Northern Ireland care for more than one person; and
- 64% of carers are women; 36% are men.

In 2006 the DHSSPS published a *Survey of Carers of Older People in Northern Ireland*. Of which providing this care over three-quarters (77%) were female and almost a quarter were male. Fifteen per cent were aged 75 or over, 48% were aged 55-74, 35% were aged 35-54 and only 2% were aged under 35. Just over three-quarters of the male carers (76%) were aged 55 or more, compared with three-fifths (60%) of female carers. Almost a quarter (24%) of the male carers and 12% of the female carers were aged 75 or more.

The majority of informal care is provided by family members, usually spouses or adult children.

Impact of SEN proposals

The proposals to establish parent cluster groups (proposal 3, 4 5 and 6) and training for parents (proposal 3) are considered to have positive impacts. EA will consider the

needs of the parents or carers accessing these, including the specific needs of single parents. We will ensure these provisions are accessible for all parents / carers.

Sexual Orientation

Accurate figures are not available on the sexual orientation of the general population, and estimates vary considerably. The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), along with other UK census offices, concluded that the census was not suitable for obtaining such information. The 2011 Census does provide some information, based on same-sex civil partnerships.

Research by HM Treasury shows that from 5%–7% of the UK population say they are gay, lesbian, bisexual or ‘trans’ (transsexual, transgendered and transvestites).

The 2010 Northern Ireland Life and Times survey (1,205 adults) reported the figure as only 1%. The Office for National Statistics 2010 report (450,000 respondents) found that in Northern Ireland 92.5% said they were heterosexual and 0.9% of respondents said they were LGB, although 0.4% reported as ‘other’ and 6.2% said they didn’t know or refused to respond.

Between 2006 and 2012, there were 715 recorded Civil Partnerships regionally. However, this is not indicative of the LGB population. There are no accurate statistics on sexual orientation in the community as a whole, it is however estimated that between 5% and 10% of the population would identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Impact of SEN proposals

There is no evidence of a differential impact on the grounds of sexual orientation.

4. Good Relations

Following a review of the proposals a number of minor issues that may result in good relations impacts have been identified and will be monitored. These are referred to in Section 3 of the report, under the 'Political Opinion,' 'Ethnicity' and 'Religion' sections.

There are a number of proposals which seeks to provide enhanced support for parents with children with SEN, including more home based support, parents cluster groups and the establishment of SEN Early Years Centres linked to mainstream schools.

Location and geography will be a key consideration in the development of SEN Early Years Centres and where parent cluster groups are hosted and ensuring a welcoming environment for all users will be a priority for the Education Authority.

These issues will be monitored as part of the delivery of these proposals.

5. Disability Duties

Through the development of the Proposed Framework of Future Provision for Children in the Early Years with SEN we have consistently considered our obligations under both the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). We have engaged with disabled people directly through the drafting of the Framework and the draft Equality Impact Assessment.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

We acknowledge General Comment No. 4 (2016) of the Fourteenth Session of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, namely *"Inclusive education is central to achieving high quality education for all learners, including those with a disabilities... Inclusive education is to be understood as: (a) a fundamental human right for all learners. Notable, education is the right of the individual learner and not, in the case of children, the right of a parent or caregiver. Parental responsibilities in this regard are subordinate to the rights of the child"*.

The development and implementation of this Framework will contribute to meeting EA's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), namely:

Article 7 Children with Disabilities

2. In all actions concerning children with disabilities, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

Article 8 Awareness Raising

1. State Parties undertake to adopt immediate, effective and appropriate measures:
 - (a) To raise awareness throughout society, including at the family level, regarding persons with disabilities, and to foster respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities; and
 - (c) To promote awareness of the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities.

Article 25 Education

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to:

- (a) The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;
- (b) The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;
- (c) Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.

2. In realising this right, States Parties shall ensure that:

- (a) Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability;
- (c) Reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided;
- (d) Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education;
- (e) Effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

The implementation and out workings of the Framework can significantly contribute to the two duties of the EA of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Disability Discrimination Order 2007).

1. Encouraging disabled people to participate in public life

The proposed framework embraces the needs of children, not just in relation to early years placements in special schools, but the wider needs of children and parents as they commence a journey from early assessment to support and targeted intervention. The principles and associated proposals underpinning the Framework are based on a developmental model of service delivery and provision for children in the early years with SEN.

The framework will aim to implement a high quality early years' special education service across EA which is focused on children with the most complex needs, for whom a more intensive form of support is required. This will support and encourage young people with SEN to better participate in education.

2. Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people

The proposals in their totality are considered as positively impacting on young people aged 0-4 years old with special educational needs. In addition to reform of provision for 3 and 4 year olds, more focus is being paid and additional support also given to young people aged 0-3 years and their parents. Training sessions with parents, earlier support and intervention to ensure the correct pathway is determined for the young people and the implementation of a high quality early years' special education service across EA, which is focused on children with the most complex needs all contributes to the wider promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people.

6. Human Rights

The proposals acknowledge the importance of Human Rights, specifically the Human Rights Act (1998) including the Treaty on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Treaty on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and Protocol 1, Article 2 - the right to education. The EA is committed to working towards an inclusive society where all children can participate, are valued, have their rights respected and guaranteed without discrimination, and where every child can achieve their full potential. The proposals aim to widen the continuum of provision to children and young people with SEN (proposals 4 and 5) to provide more access to education in a mainstream environment. The proposals also outline plans to explore, with senior Health and Social Care personnel, how therapies can be effectively facilitated for SEN children attending a mainstream setting (proposals 2 + 5).

7. Rural Issues

Rural Needs Act 2016 places a Statutory obligation on the Education Authority to give due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans and when designing and delivering public services.

Whilst this duty does not apply to EA until June 2018, we are conscious of the need to actively consider the needs of people in rural areas particularly where our work is regional in nature.

The Inter-Departmental Urban-Rural Definition Group have defined rural as being settlements with fewer than 5000 residents together with open countryside.

The Framework outlines proposals seeking to establish Early Years SEN Centres linked to mainstream settings as well as establishing parental cluster groups. The location of these facilities will be particularly important to ensure their accessibility to people living in rural areas. This will be actively considered as part of the criteria in determining location.

8. Conclusions

Summary and Assessment of Key Findings

The draft Equality Impact Assessment assesses the proposals contained in the Framework against a wide range of data and experiential evidence outlined during the extensive engagement process.

The proposed Framework of Future Provision for Children in the Early Years with SEN is based on a two stage programme of provision for children aged 0 to 4 years, and their families. The proposed framework embraces the needs of children, not just in relation to early years placements in special schools, but the wider needs of children and parents as they commence a journey from early assessment to support and targeted intervention. The principles and associated proposals underpinning the Framework are based on a developmental model of service delivery and provision for children in the early years with SEN.

The framework will aim to implement a high quality early years' special education service across EA which is focused on children with the most complex needs, for whom a more intensive form of support is required.

- The framework will benefit **pre-school** age children (in their immediate pre-school year), including those with a recognised disability, who have been assessed as requiring a special school placement.
- The framework will also benefit children who are not yet of pre-school age (**0-3 years**), as arrangements to enable these children to access EA Early Years SEN support services, as well as other identified support, will provide earlier intervention for children and their families.

- The framework will also benefit **parents** through provision of support and advice in relation to their child's needs as well as clarity, transparency and confidence in relation to the EA's planning framework.

Whilst focusing on consistency and equal access, the proposed framework is also about creating a context where there is the facility to provide differentiated support in line with the individual and changing needs of the child. The proposals outline measures that will provide more opportunities for early intervention (through the Early Years Inclusion Service - Proposal 3) and extend the continuum of options available (through creation of Early Years SEN Centre's and additional support to mainstream early years settings – Proposals 4 and 5).

The proposals in their totality are considered as positively impacting on young people aged 0-4 years old with special educational needs. In addition to reform of provision for 3 and 4 year olds, more focus is being paid and additional support also given to young people aged 0-3 years and their parents.

Proposal 3 seeks to establish a panel of relevant professionals which will work in partnership with parents to determine the appropriate support for each child.

A programme of offer is proposed to provide advice and support to parents at the earliest opportunity so they are supported and well equipped to determine the best support for their child. The programme will also provide home based support and an intervention service, which will seek to ultimately enhance the opportunities for children and young people with SEN.

Proposal 3 also seeks to provide parent and child sessions across a range of early years SEN settings.

These measures should all have a positive impact on children and young people with SEN and their parents.

Under proposal 5 EA is seeking to establish Early Years SEN Centres linked to mainstream settings. These centres should give children and young people with SEN enhanced opportunities to be educated in mainstream settings, in line with best international human rights standards. EA proposes a classroom capacity of twelve pupils to ensure each pupil gets the required level of support and educational development required.

Under proposal 6, EA is proposing to establish consistent access arrangements and provision for children in the early years who require a special school place to ensure that the programme of offer across these settings is equitable and will meet the needs of children in their pre-school year. It is proposed that these provisions will be available for 'a minimum of 15 hours per week' which represents an increase in provision for the majority. Whilst it is acknowledged that the establishment of Early Years SEN centres and the enhanced consistency in special school provision are both positive outcomes for children and young people with SEN, the 'minimum of 15 hours per week' provision may be considered a reduction for some, and thus considered a negative impact. This will be explored as part of the public consultation.

Proposed Action

Issue	Section 75 Category	Action
<p>Proposal 6 proposes an annual audit of staffing and pupils in special school early years provision, with a view to ensure the workforce is meeting the needs and demands of SEN young people. The majority of the teaching workforce in EA is female and any changes will therefore likely impact women more than men.</p>	Gender	<p>During the annual audit of staffing in special schools early years, the particular needs of female staff will be considered during the formation of any resultant proposals.</p> <p>Some needs may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • part-time workers (primarily female) can experience adverse impacts due to increased travel times and costs • females make more use of public transport than men
<p>There may be accessibility /child care issues for parents / carers of young people with SEN, affecting their ability to avail of the support offered though the Framework, namely the parent cluster groups and the training for parents.</p>	Marital Status Dependants	<p>We will take into account the specific needs of parents and carers when arranging / facilitating or supporting the parent cluster groups and training for parents, including single parents / carers, to ensure they are accessible for all parents / carers.</p>
<p>The location of Early Years SEN Centres, linked to mainstream settings, which seek to extend provision and opportunities for children and young people with SEN, will be important to ensure they are accessible to all regardless of ethnicity, political opinion or religion.</p> <p>Similarly the location of parental cluster groups could present barriers to people who may wish to attend.</p>	Religion Political Opinion Ethnicity	<p>A number of criteria will be identified when determining these locations and consideration will also be given to the community background of pupils and families, including ethnicity as appropriate, during this process.</p> <p>A welcoming environment for all parents will be a key consideration for EA.</p>

<p>The Framework seeks to develop clear and easily accessible information on EA early years provision and support for children with SEN. This could present a barrier to people for whom English is not a first language.</p>	<p>Ethnicity</p>	<p>The communication needs of people for whom English is not a first language will be considered when information is being produced. All information will be accessible.</p>
<p>Whilst the establishment of Early Years SEN centres and the enhanced consistency in special school provision are both positive outcomes for children and young people with SEN, the 'minimum of 15 hours per week' provision may be considered a reduction for some, and thus considered a negative impact</p>	<p>Disability</p>	<p>In the majority of cases a 'minimum of 15 hours per week' represents an increase in duration. Furthermore, the two stage framework of provision expands the duration of provision from a single pre-school year to 0 to 4 years. This issue will be explored further during the consultation phase of the Equality Impact Assessment Process.</p>

Proposed Monitoring

Area	Proposed Monitoring
<p>Accessibility of communications to parents for whom English is not a first language</p>	<p>The number of requests for accessible formats, and the nature of the request, will be monitored</p>
<p>Consistency / equality in the Programme of Offer.</p>	<p>The Programme of Offer across EA Special School Nursery settings.</p> <p>Early Years SEN Inclusion Service support data.</p> <p>No. and age of children accessing the range of provision.</p> <p>SEN of children accessing provision.</p>
<p>Increased access to support.</p>	<p>No. of parents accessing support.</p> <p>No. of EY SEN Centres.</p>

	EY SEN Centre evaluations. Long term outcomes for Children.
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Appendix 1 – The Steps of an EQIA

What is an Equality Impact Assessment? (EQIA)

An EQIA is “a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether the policy is written or unwritten, formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of the policy or the size of the public authority.”

The Steps of an EQIA

What is it we are actually looking at? ('Aims of Policy')

The first part of an EQIA involves thoroughly understanding the policy to be assessed; what context it is set in; who is responsible for what; what links there are with other organisations or individuals in implementing the policy etc.

How can we tell what is happening on the ground? ('Consideration of Data')

This involves reviewing what data is available in-house or elsewhere and identifying what data needs to be newly collected. 'Data' means statistics and the views, experiences and suggestions of those affected by the policy. 'Collecting new data' means going out and doing a survey and also talking to people who are affected by a policy or those who are involved in implementing the policy, for example in delivering a service.

So are there any problems for any of the groups? ('Assessment of Impacts')

All relevant data that has been identified (whether collected from available sources or newly gathered) is brought together and analysed. Conclusions are drawn as to the impact of the policy on the nine groups.

What can be done to make things fairer? ('Consideration of Measures')

Now the findings are related back to action: proposals are what can be done to address any inequalities/ unfairness that the analysis of the data has revealed.

Are we getting the right picture and are we thinking of doing the right thing? ('Formal Consultation')

The findings and the proposed actions are brought back to the public at this stage, usually on the basis of a draft report. Now it's time to find out what people think about the analysis and proposals!

With what people have told us – what are we going to do? ('Decision by Public Authority')

After the wider public has had a chance to comment on the analysis and proposals it's time for the organisation to take final decisions and commit themselves to action points.

This is what we have found out and this is what we will do ('Publication of Results of EQIA')

These decisions and commitments are published in a final report alongside the findings from the analysis of collected data and the comments raised by the wider public during formal consultation.

Keeping a close eye on what is happening ('Monitoring of Adverse Impacts')

An EQIA is not a one off. It's important to keep a close eye on what difference the changes to the policy actually make.