



Department of
Education

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7 January 2010

Dear Consultee

DRAFT EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESMENT (EQIA) ON THE PROPOSAL TO WITHDRAW FUNDING FROM THE PREPARATORY DEPARTMENTS OF GRAMMAR SCHOOLS

Please see attached draft EQIA on the proposal to withdraw funding from the preparatory departments of grammar schools.

The Independent Strategic Review of Education (Bain Report), published in December 2006, highlighted the issue of the funding of preparatory schools. In respect of the allocation of the education budget, it indicated:

“Equity must continue to be at the heart of this distribution. For this reason, the part-funding of fee-charging preparatory departments in grammar schools is anomalous. This aspect of delegation subsidises provision that can only be accessed by children whose parents can pay the requisite fee. This would seem to be an inequitable use of public funds and counterintuitive in a funding system simultaneously managing the pressures of a high level of surplus capacity. The rationale for this aspect of schools-related current expenditure should be reviewed and its continuation considered with regard to equity and in the context of the significant pressures on the education budget”.

One of the key recommendations of the Bain Report (recommendation 5) was that:

“The rationale for funding preparatory departments in grammar schools should be reviewed”.

In line with this recommendation, the Department commissioned a review of funding to preparatory departments of grammar schools. The report produced as a result of that review concludes that the Department should consider the withdrawal of funding

to preparatory departments on the basis of equality of access. This Report can be viewed at the following Internet site:

http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/85-about-the-dept/85-about_dept_consultations.htm

The Minister has accepted the main findings in the report and has indicated that the recommendation to withdraw funding from preparatory school should be subject to an EQIA before a final decision on implementation is taken.

Please note that responses to the EQIA should be received by the Department by **Thursday 4 March 2010**.

If you require the draft EQIA in any other format please let us know by contacting us at:

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Textphone: 028 91 279472 – a dedicated line for those persons who have hearing and/or speech impairment

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Duffy', enclosed within a circular scribble.

PAUL DUFFY

cc Roisin Lilley