



Department of  
**Education**

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AN ROINN  
**Oideachais**

MÄNNYSTRIE O  
**Lear**

Peter McCallion  
Clerk to the Committee for Education  
Room 375a  
Parliament Buildings  
Ballymiscaw  
Stormont  
BELFAST  
BT4 3XX

Tel No: (028) 9127 9849  
Fax No: (028) 9127 9100

Email: [veronica.bintley@deni.gov.uk](mailto:veronica.bintley@deni.gov.uk)

Your ref: PMcC/KM/1752

28 January 2014

Dear Peter

## **DISSOLVING BOUNDARIES PROGRAMME / CENTRE FOR SHARED EDUCATION**

Thank you for your letter of 28 November 2014 seeking clarification on the reasons for the discontinuation of funding for Dissolving Boundaries Programme; you have also sought details of the interaction between the Department and the University of Ulster and the Centre for Shared Education in developing the new Shared Education policy.

### **Dissolving Boundaries**

The Department of Education had funded the Dissolving Boundaries programme since 1999. A jointly funded programme by this Department and DES in the south, both Departments agreed that funding should cease at the end of October 2014 as the benefits of the programme had been largely realised and good principles and learning have been embedded over the duration of the programme.

### **Interaction between DE / University of Ulster and the Centre for Shared Education**

In the development of the Shared Education policy, the Department has drawn on a wide range of research evidence and pilot projects, including those undertaken by the University of Ulster and Queens University's Centre for Shared Education.

Professor Paul Connolly, Head of the School of Education Queen's University, was chair of the Ministerial Advisory Group on advancing Shared Education. The MAG undertook a wide ranging consultation and research programme including experience from the Centre for Shared Education and the University of Ulster.

The recommendation of the Ministerial Advisory Group has heavily influenced the development of the Department's Shared Education policy.

As managing agent for the International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme, the Department had regular and on-going contact with both Universities in relation to shared education projects they were delivering.

The University of Ulster's Creative Change Project was subject to a review by the Education and Training Inspectorate, while QUB's Sharing In Education project was subject to an independent evaluation.

Departmental officials responsible for developing the Shared Education Policy had a close working knowledge of both projects, together with a further twenty other shared education projects that received IFI funding. The Department has drawn on both evaluation reports and a series of related research reports in developing the Shared Education policy.

In developing the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Project, representative from QUB's Centre for Shared Education and the University of Ulster (together with the Fermanagh Trust) were involved in a design workshop to draw on their experience.

An Expert Advisory Group is being established as part of the DSC Shared Education Signature Project and this includes representatives with experience in shared education from QUB and the University of Ulster. The input of the Expert Advisory Group will assist in further refining implementation of the policy.

Yours sincerely

*Veronica*

**VERONICA BINTLEY**  
**Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer**



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

**Committee for Education**

Veronica Bintley  
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer  
Department of Education  
Rathgael House  
Balloo Road  
Bangor  
BT19 7PR  
[veronica.bintley@deni.gov.uk](mailto:veronica.bintley@deni.gov.uk)

28 November 2014

**Our Ref: PMcC/KM/1752**

Dear Veronica

**Dissolving Boundaries Programme / Centre for Shared Education**

At its meeting on Wednesday 26 November 2014, the Committee received briefings from the University of Ulster on the Dissolving Boundaries programme and from the Centre for Shared Education at Queen's University of Belfast.

Following these briefings, the Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek clarification on the reasons for the discontinuation of funding for the Dissolving Boundaries programme.

The Committee also agreed to write to the Department to seek details of the interaction between the Department and the University of Ulster and the Centre for Shared Education in the development of the Department's new Shared Education policy.

A response by 12 December 2014 would be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

*Committee for Education*

*Room 375, Parliament Buildings, Ballymiscaw, Stormont, Belfast, BT4 3XX*

*Tel: (028) 9052 1201 Fax: (028) 9052 21974*

*E-mail: [peter.mccallion@niassembly.gov.uk](mailto:peter.mccallion@niassembly.gov.uk)*

*Signed Peter McCallion*

**Peter McCallion  
Clerk  
Committee for Education**

***Committee for Education***

***Room 375, Parliament Buildings, Ballymiscaw, Stormont, Belfast, BT4 3XX***

***Tel: (028) 9052 1201 Fax: (028) 9052 21974***

***E-mail: [peter.mccallion@niassembly.gov.uk](mailto:peter.mccallion@niassembly.gov.uk)***