



Department of  
**Education**

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AN ROINN

**Oideachais**

MÁNNYSTRIE O

**Lear**

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Your ref: 2393

1 December 2015

Dear Peter

## **SHARED EDUCATION BILL**

The Department currently use different established measures to identify socio-economic deprivation in each of the following areas:

- School Sector - Free School Meals is the accepted measure of socio-economic deprivation.
- Pre-school providers - While admissions criteria are set by pre-school providers, legislation requires that the top criterion prioritises children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. In this setting children from socially disadvantaged circumstances are defined as a child whose parent is in receipt of income support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, or Employment Support Allowance where an award of income-based Jobseekers Allowance has been converted and the amount of the award remains unchanged.
- Youth Sector - There are a range of different measures used to identify socio-economic deprivation, including the most deprived Super Output Areas as defined by the NI Multiple Deprivation measure, population, rurality, minority groups and historical evidence. The Department is working to agree a composite and regional measure that will be used in respect of Priorities for Youth. It would be appropriate that the same measure is used for Shared Education.

With regard to “reasonable numbers” qualification to the socio-economic aspect of the Shared Education definition is not included in the Bill. The reference to reasonable numbers relates only to the two main communities, which is a subject of religious belief.

Individual funding streams will specify the criteria by which socio-economic deprivation will be considered. Currently schools applying to the DSC Shared Education Signature Project are required to include % of Free School Meals as part of their application. Each application is examined on a case by case basis

Yours sincerely

*Russell*

**RUSSELL WELSH**  
**Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer**



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

**Committee for Education**

Russell Welsh  
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27 November 2015

**Our Ref:2393**

Dear Russell

**Shared Education Bill**

At its meeting on 25 November 2015, the Committee for Education heard oral evidence from the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education; the Integrated Education Fund and the Centre for Shared Education at Queen's University, Belfast as part of the Committee Stage of the Shared Education Bill.

The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek clarification as to how it intends to define and measure socio-economic deprivation in the context of the Shared Education Bill. The Committee also agreed to seek an explanation as to why a "reasonable numbers" qualification to the socio-economic aspects of the Shared Education definition is not included in the Bill.

A response at your earliest convenience and prior to the Departmental oral briefing on 9 December 2015 would be greatly appreciated.

*Committee for Education*

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Yours sincerely

*Signed Peter McCallion*

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