



**Response to Department of Education Consultation:**

**Consultation on Putting Pupils First -  
Reforming the Common Funding Scheme**

**18<sup>th</sup> October 2013**

## About NISMP

1. The Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP) aims to work across the spheres of government in Northern Ireland and with other key stakeholders to ensure that Northern Ireland is a welcoming place for new migrants. It seeks to support the retention and integration of people in a way that helps meet skills and labour needs to support future economic growth. It provides a regional advisory, developmental and consultative function, enabling our partners and stakeholders to develop an appropriate Northern Ireland migration policy structure. This will ensure that Northern Ireland's needs and concerns in respect of immigration are recognised within the constraints of UK wide strategy.
2. NISMP welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on the reform of the Common Funding Scheme. In this response we will consider those proposals outlined in the consultation which have particular consequence for newcomer pupils and their successful integration into the life of the school.
4. The response has been organized using the following proposals outlined in the consultation paper: Targeting Social Need – Educational Attainment (Question 3d); Increased Accountability for TSN Funding (Question 3e); Further Comments (Question 7).
5. **This response has been approved by representatives on the Partnership. However this does not necessarily reflect the views of Partner Organisations, some of whom have not been canvassed.**

## Background

6. The percentage of persons born outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland living in Northern Ireland remains low compared with many regions of the UK, but the rate of migration to Northern Ireland has increased significantly since the early 2000s. Figures from the 2011 census reveal that 80,621 Northern Ireland residents were born outside the UK or RoI, representing 4.45% of the total population<sup>1</sup>.
7. In schools a total of 9417 newcomer pupils were registered in Northern Ireland nursery, primary and post-primary schools in 2012/13, an increase of 458% from 2004/2005 when the number was 2056<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/pivotgrid.aspx?dataSetVars=ds-2776-lh-37-yn-2011-sk-136-sn-Census%202011-yearfilter-->

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/facts-and-figures-new/education-statistics/32\\_statistics\\_and\\_research-numbersofschoolsandpupils\\_pg/32\\_statistics\\_and\\_research-northernirelandsummarydata\\_pg.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/facts-and-figures-new/education-statistics/32_statistics_and_research-numbersofschoolsandpupils_pg/32_statistics_and_research-northernirelandsummarydata_pg.htm)

## RESPONSE

### Targeting Social Need - TSN

**Question 3d: Do you agree with the proposal that, given the very strong link between social deprivation and educational attainment, funding previously allocated to primary schools under the Educational Attainment element of TSN will in future be allocated using only FSME as an indicator under the social deprivation element of TSN?**

While NISMP recognizes the strong link between social deprivation and educational attainment, we also support the principle of the Educational Attainment strand within the Targeting Social Need element of the Common Funding Scheme which acknowledges that extra support is required for pupils performing below the expected level for their age, regardless of social background. We would caution that a sole focus on social deprivation may result in a lack of resources for children for whom under-attainment is related to factors other than social deprivation or for whom social deprivation is only one of the contributing factors. For newcomer children this may relate to language or cultural issues or to differing prior experiences of formal education.

**Question 3e: Do you agree that the Department should link availability of additional TSN funding to accountability at school level for the outcomes achieved by the group of pupils who will attract the additional social deprivation monies?**

NISMP supports the requirement for TSN funding to be linked to the outcomes achieved by the target group of pupils. We would recommend however that accountability is not limited to educational under-attainment resulting from social deprivation but also to those children who qualify for TSN funding due to educational under-attainment regardless of social background. This would include newcomer children who are under-attaining for reasons relating to their newcomer status which may be additional to or separate from social deprivation.

### Other Comments

**Question 7: Do you have any further comments on the proposed changes to the Common Funding Scheme?**

NISMP believes that it is important to recognize the needs that newcomer children have in accessing the curriculum which may extend beyond language difficulties. For example, for certain groups of refugee or Roma children, limited or no prior experience of formal education presents a significant obstacle to successful integration into school life. While the

Common Funding Scheme currently recognizes the linguistic needs of newcomer children, it does not overtly recognize the additional complex needs that some may have which relate to their newcomer status. **NISMP recommends that funding support for newcomer children should, where necessary, reflect these additional challenges for the pupil and the school, with outcomes monitored.**

Newcomer children will frequently seek to enrol in a school at times other than at the beginning of the school year. Currently funding for additional pupils who arrive in-year is received only for children who take school enrolment numbers beyond a given threshold of growth. Funding allocated is normally based solely on AWPU with other factors such as the support for newcomer children and social deprivation funding stated as being given 'consideration'. This may result in a school being less able to cater for the needs of a newcomer child if s/he enrolls mid-year. **NISMP recommends that the Common Funding Scheme has the requisite flexibility which allows schools to receive the full quota of funding for each additional newcomer child who enrolls within the school year.**