



Sharing Works: A Policy for Shared Education

CONSULTATION RESPONSE BOOKLET

If you require this document in an alternative format (such as in large print, in Braille, or electronic) and/or language, please contact the Shared Education and Community Relations Team by any of the following methods:

Direct line: 028 9185 8162
Email: secr.Team@deni.gov.uk

(If completing this booklet in Word, please use “Print Layout” view)



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January 2015

Name: Julie Williams-Nash, Political Liaison Officer

Your organisation
(if applicable): University and College Union

Address: 94 Malone Road, Belfast BT9 5HP

I am responding: As an individual
 On behalf of an organisation

Date: _____

Please complete and return this form by 6 March 2015 to:

Shared Education and Community Relations Team
Department of Education
Rathgael House
Balloo Road
Bangor
Co Down
BT19 7PR

Telephone number: 028 9185 8162

Or by email: secr.Team@deni.gov.uk

About this Focused Consultation

This focused consultation provides an important opportunity for you to provide views on the proposed policy and legislation for the development of Shared Education. This document should be read alongside the Sharing Works: A Policy for Shared Education document and the Shared Education Bill. You should note that whilst this document provides a summary description of each of the Key Actions, full details are set out in the policy document.

The Department would encourage organisations/groups which work on behalf of or with children and young people to seek the views of the children and young people they work with, as well as workers and parents. Where organisations do this, it would be helpful if they would clearly distinguish whether the views represent the organisation, an individual or groups of people or organisations.

How to Respond

This response booklet refers to comments on the proposed actions set out in *Sharing Works: A Policy for Shared Education* and on the draft Shared Education Bill. Both of these documents are available electronically at www.deni.gov.uk or on request by emailing secr.Team@deni.gov.uk.

Consultation responses can be made by email to secr.Team@deni.gov.uk, or in writing to the address above.

To enable responses to be analysed effectively, please only use this form.

The consultation period will conclude on 6 March 2015.

Confidentiality and Freedom of Information

The Department will publish a summary of responses following completion of the focused consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the focused consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information

in exceptional circumstances. The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely the Department in this case. The right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential, any

information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, the Department does have the responsibility to decide whether any information about your identity, should be made public or treated as confidential.

Further Copies

The consultation document and this response booklet are available electronically at www.deni.gov.uk or on request by emailing secr.Team@deni.gov.uk or by telephone on 0289185 8162.

Background

The Programme for Government (2011-15) contains three commitments to advance Shared Education, namely:

- to establish a Ministerial Advisory Group to explore and bring forward recommendations to the Minister of Education to advance Shared Education;
- ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in Shared Education programmes by 2015; and
- to substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities by

2015. Following their appointment, the Ministerial Advisory Group engaged in a widespread consultation exercise with key stakeholders across the region and visited a number of schools, colleges and institutions across the north of Ireland, including those involved in Shared Education. They sought directly the views of parents, children and young people as well as reviewing evidence locally and also nationally and internationally regarding different models of Shared Education and their effectiveness.

The Advisory Group report, which contained twenty recommendations, was published in April 2013 and the Minister encouraged a period of civic reflection and public discourse on the report.

In his statement to the Assembly of 22 October, the Minister set out his response to the Ministerial Advisory Group's recommendations and his intentions in advancing Shared Education. The Minister also set out the education, good relations and equality case for shared education. (You can access the statement at http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/schools-and-infrastructure-2/shared_education/shared-education-ministerial-advisory-group.htm)

The Shared Education policy has been shaped by the evidence based work and recommendations of the Advisory Group and their significant engagement with key stakeholders. The policy and the key actions it sets out will be supported with resources to meet the additional costs required to implement Shared Education over the coming years.

This focused consultation provides an important opportunity for you to consider if any of the actions proposed need further refinement.

In his statement to the Assembly, the Minister indicated his intention to bring forward legislation to provide a statutory definition of, and provisions to encourage and facilitate Shared Education. The Minister intends to introduce a Shared Education Bill to the Assembly in the near future. This consultation also provides an important opportunity to consider the proposed Bill. You should note that the proposed statutory definition is supported by a detailed policy description of how Shared Education operates in practice.

SECTION 1: SHARED EDUCATION

POLICY

Area 1: Defining, Encouraging and Facilitating Shared Education

Shared Education is described as the organisation and delivery of education so that it:

- Meets the needs of, and provides for the education together of learners from all Section 75 categories and socio-economic status;
- Involves schools and other education providers of differing ownership, sectoral identity and ethos, management type or governance arrangements; and
- Delivers educational benefits to learners, promotes the efficient and effective use of resources, and promotes equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.

Specifically, Shared Education involves the provision of opportunities for children and young people from different community backgrounds to learn together.

Does the policy description of Shared Education require further refinement?

Yes

No

No strong view

Please use this space to set out the refinements you consider need to be made.

This definition of shared education is too narrow as it marginalises the further education sector as ‘other’. Long and extensive links and collaboration exist between further education colleges, post primary schools, both maintained and controlled. The development of policy in respect of shared education must acknowledge that and draw upon the experience gained in the curriculum management of cross-sector relations. It must recognise the significance of diverse social interactions which result in school pupils engaging with others from different and diverse backgrounds.

To talk about shared education among young people and collaborations with youth training providers without mentioning FE and the further education colleges is flawed. DE has cut the entitlement framework by £2m which reduces the capacity for young people to access vocational training learning experiences in an integrated learning environment – that is within the further education sector.

Key Action 1: Bring forward Legislation

DE will bring forward a Shared Education Bill which will provide a statutory definition of Shared Education and provide a power to encourage and facilitate Shared Education.

Does Key Action 1 require any further refinement?

Yes

No

No strong view

Please use this space to set out the refinements you consider need to be made.

Yes. UCU would be in support of a Shared Education Bill, however as above, the FE sector and other training providers need to be clearly included in the Bill.

Ideally, in the proposed re-structuring of the Assembly, which could see DEL dismantled, UCU's preferred option, would be to see FE, HE and training organisations placed under the remit of the Department of Education.

UCU believes that schools and colleges should be working in partnership – not competition – to maximize shared education opportunities for young people.

UCU would welcome this being enshrined in statute. This would provide the possibility of creating a fully inclusive Department of Education. We believe sharing resources and incentivising collaborative working between education providers will be simpler to administer when all institutions delivering academic and vocational training are placed under the jurisdiction of just one ministerial department.

A Shared Education Bill would significantly advance and consolidate shared education provision – which would be strengthened further by widening the policy and resulting Bill to ensure that further education and training providers are also fully embraced and perceived as equal providers of shared education provision and opportunities.

Key Action 2: Provide Co-ordinated and Effective Support for Practitioners

In order to support effectively the further development of Shared Education, dedicated officers will be appointed in each Education and Library Board (or within the Education Authority) with responsibility to encourage, facilitate and support Shared Education.

Does Key Action 2 require any further refinement?

Yes

No

No strong view

Please use this space to set out the refinements you consider need to be made.

UCU supports the proposal to provide co-ordinated and effective support for practitioners by appointing dedicated officers for each Education and Library Board.

However, as already stated – and to reinforce our position – support for practitioners must extend to education practitioners employed in the further education sector and those working for other training providers. It is important that the remit of the dedicated officers is extended to recognise and include their potential for an extended role in FE colleges.

Key Action 3: Develop self-assessment tools for practitioners

The Education and Training Inspectorate will develop a Shared Education Continuum model, which can be used by schools and other non-formal educational settings, to self-assess their position in relation to the delivery of Shared Education.

Does Key Action 3 require any further refinement?

Yes

No

No strong view

Please use this space to set out the refinements you consider need to be made.

A self-assessment tool for practitioners would be beneficial, as long as it is meaningful and not just a 'tick box' exercise. It would be interesting to know how the Inspectorate will draw on existing learning and work carried out by other stakeholders who have sought to develop a Shared Education Continuum model and how this will be implemented.

In principle, however, UCU would support the development of a self-assessment tool for practitioners that identifies baselines, self-reflection, goal setting and evaluation.

Area 2: Future funding of Shared Education

Key Action 4: Provide funding support 2014-18

DE is, in conjunction with funding from the Delivering Social Change project and Atlantic Philanthropies, providing a funding stream to support Shared Education in schools over the next four years.

DE will also work with the Special EU Programmes body to advise on how best Peace IV funding can be used to support further the development of Shared Education.

Does Key Action 4 require any further refinement?

Yes

No

No strong view

Please use this space to set out the refinements you consider need to be made.

It is important that this funding stream is also available to shared education efforts in the FE sector and for training organisations.

Funding of £25m over four years is to be made available - a portion of that should be ring fenced towards delivering social change via the FE sector and training organisations.

It is not enough to just target funding towards those schools who have already demonstrated a commitment to collaborative working, or to entice those schools not yet engaged in shared education with Peace IV funding.

Cognisance needs to be made of the reality that many young people in this society leave secondary education to attend an FE college without having ever had direct contact with young people from another community. Despite this being difficult to imagine in 2015, for many that is reality and they bring with them a set of preconceptions and misconceptions around identity.

While this funding stream looks to the future of shared education, there is a need to address the past and those young people 'failed' to some extent by lack of policy and shared education provision. The FE sector could potentially play a vital role in addressing that deficit if this policy and proposed Bill takes this into consideration.

Key Action 5: Develop Sustainable Long-Term Delivery Arrangements

DE will use the learning from both the Delivering Social Change and Peace IV projects to determine how best to support educational establishments in offering Shared Education in the longer term from 2018 onwards.

Does Key Action 5 require any further refinement?

Yes

No

No strong view

Please use this space to set out the refinements you consider need to be made.

DE has carried out various pilot projects in the schools sector – using external funding.

It may be pertinent to consider how some of this funding could be ring fenced for Shared Education projects and developments with the FE sector and within training organisations and how some of the objectives could be achieved in collaboration and in association with the further education sector.

It would be remiss not to consider the FE sector in respect of developing long term sustainable delivery arrangements. Opportunities should be explored and examined in tandem with the schools sector.

Area 3: Structures for Shared Education

Key Action 6: Develop Advice and Guidance on Options for Sharing

DE will develop and publish guidance on options for sharing to provide practical advice and support to schools and their communities

Does Key Action 6 require any further refinement?

Yes

No

No strong view

Please use this space to set out the refinements you consider need to be made.

When the Department of Education cut the 'entitlement framework' by £2m it reduced the capacity for young people to access vocational training and learning experiences in an integrated learning environment – that is within the FE sector. That was a mistake. Long and extensive links and collaboration existed between FE colleges and post primary schools, both maintained and controlled. That has been overlooked to some extent in this consultation document. The entire emphasis for shared education is on the schools sector.

We would ask that as and when the DE develops and publishes guidance on options for sharing to provide practical advice and support to schools and their communities, that it embraces and explores potential shared education opportunities linked to and including the FE sector.

Key Action 7: Provide Capital Investment to Support Schools Sharing Educational Facilities

The Executive's *'Together: Building a United Community'* strategy includes a target to commence 10 new Shared Education Campuses in the next five years. DE is responsible for delivering this programme.

Does Key Action 7 require any further refinement?

Yes

No

No strong view

Please use this space to set out the refinements you consider need to be made.

FE Colleges already provide excellent 'shared education' campuses – yet under the 2015-2016 budget, there will be sweeping financial penalties – while schools are being rewarded with capital development of 10 proposed new shared education campuses.

UCU would want to see some recognition and reward for the fact that the FE sector has effectively been providing shared education for decades in Northern Ireland, albeit at times in difficult and terse circumstances. The FE sector is not without tensions in terms of sectarian division at times and depending on location – therefore there is a requirement that some funding is set aside for projects and good relations work within the FE sector and other training organisations.

Area 4: Embedding sharing throughout the education system

Key Action 8: Develop Effective Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements

Effective monitoring and evaluation arrangements for Shared Education will be put in place.

Does Key Action 8 require any further refinement?

Yes

No

No strong view

Please use this space to set out the refinements you consider need to be made.

Evaluating and monitoring in this context will be challenging, and more information is required as to what the effective monitoring and evaluation arrangements will actually look like and how they will be put in place.

Based on the information available, it is difficult to make an informed response to this question, other than to say, it is imperative that the evaluation and monitoring arrangements are clearly defined in both quantitative and qualitative terms. However, clearly to evaluate and monitor under the headings suggested seems the most beneficial route – that is:

- added value of shared education activities;
- value for money and
- sustainability of the initiatives

Key Action 9: Develop the Workforce

DE will, as part of its work to finalise a new teacher professional development strategy, ensure that this includes steps to provide teachers, from initial teacher education through to the most experienced teachers, with opportunities to learn together, including preparation for teaching through Shared Education.

Does Key Action 9 require any further refinement?

Yes

No

No strong view

Please use this space to set out the refinements you consider need to be made.

Again there is not enough detail in the consultation document to provide a fully informed response. In principle, UCU would support a teacher development strategy in respect of shared education, but what professional development strategy will be in place for the trainers of teachers – who are largely UCU members?

The two paragraph section in the consultation document only refers to the training of teachers with respect to shared education, but not to the trainers of teachers per se.

UCU would require detail on what this would entail for our members in Stranmillis, St Mary's and other HE institutions, and how it will be taken forward.

Key Action 10: Align Educational Policies

The Education & Training Inspectorate will undertake independent reviews of current practice in relation to the delivery of:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Pre-School Education);
- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2);
- Local and Global Citizenship (Key Stages 3 and 4);
- The Curriculum Framework for Youth Work (Youth Service); and
- The Community Relations Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy (including consideration of the opportunities that are provided for children and young people to discuss and explore issues associated with divisions, conflict and inequalities).

Work will be undertaken with CCEA, which has statutory responsibility for advising the Department on matters concerned with the curriculum and the development and production of teaching support materials for use in schools, in order to address recommendations regarding the content of these areas of learning and in supporting teachers and other educationalists in their delivery.

Does Key Action 10 require any further refinement?

Yes

No

No strong view

Please use this space to set out the refinements you consider need to be made.

In principle, this approach seems fair and logical. The key stage curricula is not within the UCU remit and therefore we are not qualified to comment further on CCEA specifics.

The proposal that the Education & Training Inspectorate will undertake independent reviews of current practice in relation to the delivery of shared education across the Key Stages would obviously need to be extended to ongoing and independent reviews of future practice in this respect.

Key Action 11: Support Special Schools and Learning Support Centres

DE will keep under consideration how Shared Education and the enhanced collaboration between mainstream schools, learning support centres attached to mainstream and special schools can most effectively meet the needs of children and young people with disabilities, those with emotional and behavioural difficulties and those with special educational needs.

Does Key Action 11 require any further refinement?

Yes

No

No strong view

Please use this space to set out the refinements you consider need to be made.

Yes. There is no reference in the Consultation regarding the ongoing, cross-departmental Special Education Needs (SEN) Review. In developing policy, and ultimately the Shared Education Bill, DE will need to consider in detail the outcome of that review, and ensure its recommendations are reflected in this aspect of shared education provision for children and young people with special education needs.

This will need to be reflected in shared education training and professional development of teachers, and the trainers of teachers.

Key Action 12: Promote engagement with Parents & Carers

The Department and its Arm's Length Bodies will encourage schools and other educational establishments to ensure Shared Education programmes provide opportunities to develop meaningful relationships with and between parents and caregivers.

Does Key Action 12 require any further refinement?

Yes

No

No strong view

Please use this space to set out the refinements you consider need to be made.

Yes. The reality is that some schools, principals and teachers will encounter resistance to shared education provision from a minority of parents and caregivers. Clear guidance, advice and support structures will need to be designed for those that encounter direct or indirect opposition, and/or in some instances, the refusal by parents/caregivers to allow children and young people to engage in shared education.

This could become more apparent as the policy moves towards statute and the development of the Shared Education Bill.

While the majority of parents and caregivers are likely to be supportive of shared education provision, the Department and Arm's Length Bodies will need to be mindful of the potential for challenges and obstacles. The development of meaningful engagement with parents and caregivers will need to be more clearly defined.

Key Action 13: Promote engagement with Children and Young People

The Department and its Arm's Length Bodies will encourage schools and other educational establishments to ensure Shared Education programmes find meaningful ways of giving children and young people a voice and of listening and responding to their views.

Does Key Action 13 require any further refinement?

Yes

No

No strong view

Please use this space to set out the refinements you consider need to be made.

While some of the examples outlined in the shared education policy document have merit, children and young people will need more creative, imaginative and engaging opportunities for learning in a shared education environment than is currently outlined. It is in the 16-18 age group whereby it could become more difficult to develop meaningful engagement within the school sector.

It could be that exploring opportunities in tandem with the further education sector would have merit. UCU would recommend exploring opportunities and pilot projects that embrace this approach, and (as outlined in the earlier part of this response), consider how some of that funding could be ring-fenced to cross the school-FE sector divide, which has been widened by the removal of the £2m entitlement framework by DE.

Key Action 14: Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations

DE recognises that schools and other educational institutions have an important role in promoting equality of opportunity and good relations. The Department will, in conjunction with OFMdfM (which has responsibility for equality legislation), consider the case for schools and other educational institutions to be designated as ‘public authorities’ under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and thus to be required to comply with the statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

Does Key Action 14 require any further refinement?

Yes

No

No strong view

Please use this space to set out the refinements you consider need to be made.

UCU agrees that it would be in the best interests of civic society if schools are designated as ‘public authorities’ under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998.

This requirement will, in our view, enable schools to comply with statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

SECTION 2: SHARED

EDUCATION BILL

The Shared Education Bill provides a legal definition of Shared Education. This proposed statutory definition is supported by a detailed policy description of how Shared Education operates in practice. This legislation also places a power on the Department and relevant Arms-length bodies to encourage and facilitate Shared Education and makes provision to enact requirements placed on the new Education Authority (which will replace the existing five Education and Library Boards) relating to Shared Education.

Do you consider that the Shared Education Bill requires further refinement?

Yes

No

No strong view

Please use this space to set out the refinements you consider need to be made.

The draft legal definition in the Shared Education Bill is in principle sound. However UCU would advocate recognition of the FE sector in providing shared education opportunities and its unique position in being able to provide a shared environment. For many young people in Northern Ireland, even now in 2015, the post-16 education environment is often their first experience of a shared experience, which can and does occasionally result in tension.

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