



Independent Review of Education – February update

The Independent Panel reviewing the education system is continuing to gather views on the current design and delivery of education in Northern Ireland. It is clear from work to date that there is great interest in the work of the Review and a wide range of opinion on the priorities for reform.

The online initial request for views closed on Friday 4th February. This elicited over **1,200** responses from a wide range of stakeholders, with the majority of respondents being parents / carers; and teachers, lecturers, researchers and other education professionals such as youth workers / practitioners, early years practitioners etc. Additionally, over **90** responses were received to the survey aimed at Primary School children. The responses are currently being analysed.

The Panel has taken evidence from a range of stakeholders including political parties, trade unions, sectoral bodies, managing authorities, Children's Commissioner, Mental Health Champion and many others. The Panel is grateful for the submission of a high number of detailed written papers, with more on their way. The Panel is also looking at other regions of the UK, ROI and further afield, as well as carrying out analysis of education funding in Northern Ireland.

At the Panel's request, Parenting NI has carried out some initial engagement with parents and carers on key issues linked to the Review. In addition, the Education Authority Youth Service has been commissioned to lead engagement with children and young people. The Chairperson has also had the pleasure of visiting some local schools and meeting with school leaders and students. The Panel plans to have direct engagement with children and young people and parents / carers in future months. They also wish to prioritise meetings with leaders across every sector and stage of education.

The Panel's remit, as established by the Executive, covers all aspects of education from early years to higher education. The Panel will address all the issues set out in the Terms of Reference and new matters brought forward in the evidence gathering process. The Panel has been delighted with the level of engagement and enthusiasm of all stakeholders and the volume and quality of submissions.

An interim report will be published by October 2022.

The Panel can be contacted at independentreview@education-ni.gov.uk