Response to the Call for Evidence on the Review of the Common Funding Scheme for Schools
12 October 2012

1.0 Introduction

The office of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) was created in accordance with The Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 to safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people in Northern Ireland.

The age remit of the office is children and young people up to 18 years, or 21 years of age where a young person is care experienced or has a disability.

Under article 7(2) of the 2003 Order, NICCY has a duty to keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice relating to the rights and welfare of children. Under article 7(3), we have a duty to keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided for children by relevant authorities.

In carrying out our function, NICCY’s paramount consideration is the rights of the child and our work is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The Commissioner valued the opportunity to meet with the Review Panel in August 2012 to discuss some of the office’s key interests and concerns regarding the Common Funding Scheme. The Commissioner’s office also contributed to a roundtable meeting with the Panel in August 2012 to further input to the Review. This submission complements the views already expressed by NICCY to the Panel.

2.0 Children’s Rights

NICCY recommends that the guiding principles of the UNCRC, set out in the articles below, are incorporated as underlying principles in the Review:

- Article 2: Children should not be discriminated against in the exercise of their rights under the UNCRC.
- Article 3: All decisions taken which affect children’s lives should be taken in the child’s best interests.
- Article 6: All children have the right to life and to the fullest level of development.
• Article 12: Children have the right to have their voices heard in all matters concerning them, and to have their views given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.

We also recommend that the following articles require special consideration:

• Article 4: Governments should take all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures to implement the rights in the UNCRC. Governments should undertake measures to the maximum extent of their available resources in order to implement economic, social and cultural rights, such as the right to education.

• Article 28: Children have a right of access to education. This includes making primary education compulsory and available free to all, and making different forms of secondary education available and accessible to every child.

• Article 29: Education should be directed towards developing children to their fullest potential; developing respect for human rights; respect for their parents, their identity and values, and those of others.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has provided some commentary in relation to the general responsibilities of States Parties in terms of the implementation of Article 4 of the Convention:

“[T]he approach, of legally incorporating budgetary allocations for children in domestic legislation, so that public authorities are accountable for the use of resources for children is one that the Committee supports”\(^1\).

The Committee has further advised:

“Recognizing that having an adequate legislative framework is an essential pre-condition for an equitable and effective allocation of resources to children, the Committee encourages all States to consider legislating a specific proportion of the public expenditure to be allocated to children. Such legislation should be accompanied by a mechanism that allows for a systematic independent evaluation of the public expenditure on children”\(^2\).

Budget spend on children is of particular concern to the Children’s Commissioner’s Office. In 2007, NICCY published ‘An Analysis of Public


\(^2\) As above, paragraph 23.
Expenditure on Children in Northern Ireland\(^3\) which the office commissioned in cooperation with OFMDFM and DFP. Some of the report findings in relation to education spend are highlighted below.

### 3.0 Research

NICCY’s Public Expenditure Report, produced by the Economic Research Institute for Northern Ireland and the Institute of Fiscal Studies, highlighted a number of issues, drawing from statistics published by the Department of Education (DE), including those highlighted in the Bain report\(^4\), including:

- In 2004/05, Northern Ireland’s primary pupils received less expenditure per head (17.2% less) relative to counterparts in Wales. However, at the secondary level Northern Ireland had 0.5% more spent on them relative to Welsh counterparts (£2,271 per primary school pupil and £3,424 per postprimary pupil).
- Relatively more Targeting Social Need (TSN) Funding was targeted towards the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB), reflecting greater overall levels of need.
- In 2006/07, the BELB received approximately 27% more per pupil for social deprivation when compared to the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) schools. The higher allocation reflected the greater overall levels of need and the proportion of schools with high levels of pupils identified as requiring support within these schools.
- While TSN needs are only one of a variety of influences on overall funding levels, it was clear that in relative terms, funding was skewed to those boards with schools in areas with higher levels of social deprivation, resulting in a higher overall level of funding per pupil for these boards.
- Although relatively more educational resources were being skewed towards those children most in need, there remained a problem with respect to attainment levels. In particular, although BELB received approximately 27% more per pupil for social deprivation when compared to the NEELB board, there remained a problem for a large number of secondary school pupils in the Belfast area.
- While Northern Ireland statistics portrayed a picture of high achievement at GCSE level relative to other regions, in 2005/06, 3.5% of all pupils

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in their last year of compulsory education NI left school with no formal qualifications, which was higher than the UK equivalent of 3%.

Within the report’s conclusions, the authors noted the following:

“There are inherent difficulties associated with making ‘like for like’ comparisons between different types of schools whether at primary or secondary levels. Nevertheless, within a given budget, choices have to be made on resource allocation. The issue then is whether at the margin, a shift of resource from one sector to another, would lead to a net improvement to the output of the school system as a whole”.

4.0 Consultation with Children and Young People

NICCY has regularly expressed through a broad range of policy and consultation work our concern that Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 is not being adequately enforced in respect of the age criterion and that public authorities are consistently failing in their duty to meaningfully consult with children and young people on issues that have direct relevance to their lives.

Article 12 of the UNCRC also provides that children have the right to express their opinion in matters directly impacting upon them and have those views given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. NICCY strongly advocates that this article be upheld in the implementation of all government policies, practices and services.

NICCY is keen to hear how the views of children and young people are being sought and taken into account within the Review of the Common Funding Scheme.

5.0 Comments for the Review

NICCY understands that the Review Panel particularly welcomes comments regarding whether changes to the current Common Funding Scheme would deliver benefits to pupils, and how large these benefits would be.

The comments below do not cover all aspects of the Review Panel’s Call for Evidence. However, we have sought to present our comments according to the two areas of the Call for Evidence paper: ‘The Education Funding System’ and ‘Delegated Schools Funding: Formula Content’.

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5 Economic Research Institute for Northern Ireland and the Institute of Fiscal Studies, see note 3 above, page 74.
Section A: The Education Funding System

Accountability:

With the emphasis on delegation of funding to schools, NICCY believes that strengthened accountability mechanisms should be put in place in order to hold schools to account for budget spend. This should particularly be the case in schools where appropriate outcomes are not being achieved, and in terms of overcoming the barriers for specific groups of children and young people where additional monies are targeted. Close monitoring of schools is vital, along with openness and transparency around budget spend.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) has an important role to play in terms of collating and examining evidence of the outcomes achieved at an individual school level, highlighting broader challenges which schools are facing, and determining whether additional targeted funding is having a positive impact. The Review Panel may wish to consider how the inspection process could be strengthened in order to assist in supporting a policy of promoting greater accountability on schools.

NICCY encourages the Review Panel to recommend strengthened accountability mechanisms for monitoring school spend, outcomes achieved and standards put in place to meet the needs of specific pupils for whom additional funding is targeted via the funding formula.

Section B: Delegated Schools Funding: Formula Content

Funding of different sectors:

NICCY has called on the Executive to address the under-spend in early years services and primary school education in Northern Ireland. Reforming education spend on children and young people should begin with children in the earliest years of development, right through from transition from primary to post-primary schools and beyond.

In a 2010 Policy Briefing on ‘Children and Education’ as part of the Children’s Commissioner’s ‘Make it Right’ campaign⁶, NICCY highlighted the highly problematic nature of funding for early years services in NI. Research by Save

the Children confirms that early years’ spending per child is much lower in NI than in England, Scotland and Wales.

NICCY’s 2007 Public Expenditure report also raised concerns about the very different level of early years provision in NI compared to other parts of the UK, highlighting that:

“Regional funding deviations... appear to have stifled the development of Sure Start in NI, particularly in relation to Children’s Centres and this may well hinder progress with regard to tackling child poverty.”

Save the Children’s analysis compared the amount spent on early years services across the UK, finding that, in NI, the expenditure per child in the early years category (£630 pa) was less than a third of that for children in Great Britain (around £2,000). In part, this was a reflection of lower expenditure on pre-school education, but also on Sure Start – with the Save the Children report finding that the spend on Sure Start in NI was £80 per child of that age, compared with £600 in England. This may reflect the more limited roll out of Sure Start in NI compared to England.

**Given the evidence that a child’s early years are key to their future educational outcomes, the under-spend in early years services, as well as in primary school education, must be redressed in order to support the improvement of educational outcomes.**

**Targeting Social Need:**

NICCY understands that a key part objective of the CFS Review is to ensure that the Scheme adequately targets social need.

**NICCY firmly believes that education expenditure should be targeted towards addressing inequality of educational experience and outcomes. Resource allocation should be based on objective need in redressing such inequalities.**

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8 Economic Research Institute for Northern Ireland and the Institute of Fiscal Studies, see note 3 above.
9 Save the Children (2009), see note 7 above.
The authors of NICCY’s 2007 Public Expenditure report argued that, in addition to funding targeted at addressing social need, a variety of other factors, such as school leadership, effective planning and parental contribution, all play an important role in improving outcomes\textsuperscript{10}.

The importance of school leadership, in particular, has been emphasised in a number of reports examining educational disadvantage in Northern Ireland, including, for example, the March 2011 report of the Working Group on Educational disadvantage and the Protestant working class\textsuperscript{11} and the the Committee for Education Inquiry into Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities\textsuperscript{12}, the first three recommendations of which focused on the need for effective school leadership.

NICCY’s 2007 Public Expenditure report highlighted that the task of eliminating the impact of socio-economic inequalities on educational outcomes was not being achieved even with relatively more TSN funding directed at schools with children and young people affected by economic disadvantage. The report’s authors highlighted that, in addition to extra resources being required in order to tackle underachievement, Department of Education policy was in need of review.

Since the 2007 publication of NICCY’s Public Expenditure report, NICCY recognises the work of the Literacy and Numeracy Taskforce and the development of the Department’s revised Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, ‘Count Read: Succeed’.

We also note the commitment published in the 2011-15 Programme for Government for the Department of Education to “increase the proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who achieve at least 5 GCSEs at A*-C or equivalent including GCSEs in Maths and English” with milestones set at 42% in 2012/13, 45% in 2013/14 and 49% in 2014/15.

The Department, in its most recent update to the Committee for Education on Literacy and Numeracy, noted that while there has been a constant increase in performance since the development of ‘Count Read: Succeed’, there has also

\textsuperscript{10} Economic Research Institute for Northern Ireland and the Institute of Fiscal Studies, see note 3 above, page 72.
\textsuperscript{11} Working Group on Educational disadvantage and the Protestant working class (2011) Educational disadvantage and the Protestant working Class: A Call to Action.
\textsuperscript{12} NI Assembly Committee for Education (2011) Report NIA 57/10/11R: Inquiry into Successful Post-Primary Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities (Session 2010/11).
been a “slowing” in progress\textsuperscript{13}. The Department also acknowledges that while progress has been achieved across many areas, progress has not been achieved in terms of increasing achievement of Protestant boys entitled to free school meals\textsuperscript{14}. In its May 2012 briefing to the Education Committee on Literacy and Numeracy, the Department highlighted that the overall figure for 2010-11 for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, as measured by the free school meal entitlement (FSME), stood at 31\textperthousand 7\textperthousand. However, as the Department official explained to the Committee:

“Beneath that total [that is, the 2010-11 figure of 31\textperthousand 7\textperthousand for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds], Protestant male school leavers achieving five or more GCSEs, including English and maths, fell by 1\textperthousand 7\textperthousand to 18\textperthousand 6\textperthousand\textsuperscript{15}. NICCY would therefore encourage the Review Panel to consider how the Department has taken on board the findings and recommendations of relevant reports, such as the March 2011 Report of the Working Group on Educational disadvantage and the Protestant working class\textsuperscript{16}.

It is of note that the May 2012 Departmental briefing to the Education Committee also highlighted that, in addition to the drop of 1\textperthousand 7\textperthousand in the attainment levels of Protestant male school leavers from disadvantaged backgrounds, the percentage of Catholic girls from disadvantaged backgrounds achieving the same fell by 0\textperthousand 7\textperthousand. Meanwhile, Protestant girls increased their performance by 1\textperthousand 3\textperthousand and the performance of Catholic boys from disadvantaged backgrounds increased by 3\textperthousand 1\textperthousand\textsuperscript{17}.

NICCY’s 2008 Children’s Rights Review highlighted a number of groups of children and young people at greater risk of experiencing educational disadvantage and/or lower educational attainment than others, including working class pupils (particularly Protestant males), children living in poverty, Traveller children, children with English as an Additional language, children within the justice system, looked after children, children with disabilities and/or special educational needs\textsuperscript{18}.

\textsuperscript{13} NI Assembly Committee for Education Official Report (Hansard), ‘Literacy and Numeracy: DE briefing, 30 May 2012.
\textsuperscript{14} NI Assembly Committee for Education Official Report (Hansard), as above.
\textsuperscript{15} NI Assembly Committee for Education Official Report (Hansard), see note 13 above.
\textsuperscript{16} Working Group on Educational disadvantage and the Protestant working class (2011), see note 11 above.
\textsuperscript{17} As above.
The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland has also identified major areas of concern in relation to educational underachievement by the following groups: Protestant boys in lower socio-economic groups; children and young people from the Irish Traveller community; gay, lesbian and bisexual young people; looked after children; black and minority ethnic children for whom English is an additional language; disabled children and young people; and young people with caring responsibilities.\(^{19}\)

Further to the 2011-15 Programme for Government commitment highlighted above, NICCY welcomed the complementary DE commitment to “improve literacy and numeracy levels among all school leavers, with additional support targeted at underachieving pupils”. NICCY also welcomes the recent announcement by the First and Deputy First Ministers of investment in posts for 230 recently qualified teachers to improve literacy and numeracy in schools, in pursuance of these PfG commitments.\(^{20}\)

**NICCY believes that it is essential that funding continues to be targeted at effectively addressing inequality of outcomes. In addition, given the Department of Education’s acknowledgement of a “slowing” in the rate of progress on achievement levels by some pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, NICCY would welcome recommendations from the Review Panel regarding further appropriate measures to address TSN.**

**Special Educational Needs:**

NICCY has had a particular interest in the development of the Department’s new Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion Policy.

We note that the Terms of Reference for the Review of the Common Funding Scheme state that the Review should include “an analysis of whether those aspects of Special Educational Needs currently funded in the CFS should remain as is, or be augmented”.

In light of a meeting between NICCY and Department officials in February 2012 and also in light of the Minister for Education’s 16 May 2012 presentation to the Education Committee on the SEN and Inclusion Review, we

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understand that the Department wishes the Review Panel to consider “whether or not a SEN factor should form part of the funding allocated to schools under LMS [Local Management of Schools] budgets”\textsuperscript{21}.

During the 2009 consultation on the SEN and Inclusion proposals and on a number of occasions during 2012, the Children’s Commissioner communicated concerns about several aspects of the proposed SEN policy framework to the Minister, the Department, the Committee for Education and others\textsuperscript{22}. We understand that the Minister’s Policy Memorandum Paper on a Revised SEN and Inclusion Framework was agreed by the Executive in July 2012.

Financial provision for children and young people with statements of SEN is currently distributed by education and library boards to mainstream schools through the block grant.

Under the new framework, NICCY’s understanding is that there would be a substantial decrease in the number of children expected to gain a coordinated support plan (CSP) (which will be the replacement for statements of SEN) in mainstream schools; and therefore, a substantial increase in the proportion of children with SEN for whom the school will be the responsible body, by virtue of a personal learning plan (PLP).

In theory, it should not matter what proportion of children with SEN will be entitled to a CSP (statement), as long as their needs are met. However, the Commissioner has yet to be satisfied that the new framework, as a whole, will provide the safeguards necessary in order to meet the needs of all children and young people with SEN, and specifically, those who would fall within the ‘PLP category’\textsuperscript{23}.

\textsuperscript{21} Department of Education (2012) Review of SEN and Inclusion: Minister’s Presentation to the Committee for Education. 16\textsuperscript{th} May 2012 (Bangor: DE), page 39.

\textsuperscript{22} An Advice Paper produced by NICCY for the Department in February 2012 can be viewed at the following link: \url{http://www.niccy.org/uploaded_docs/2012/Consultations/Ian-Mar/Advice%20paper%20on%20updated%20SEN%20proposals%20FINAL%20word%20version.pdf}. Two NICCY evidence papers provided to the Education Committee can be viewed at: \url{http://www.niccy.org/uploaded_docs/2012/Consultations/Apr-July/NICCY%20Submission%20to%20the%20NI%20Assembly%20Education%20Committee%20on%20SEN%20and%20Inclusion%202012%20FOR%20CIRCULATION.pdf} and \url{http://www.niccy.org/uploaded_docs/2012/Consultations/Apr-July/NICCY%20Submission%20to%20Education%20Committee%20on%20policy%20proposals%20on%20SEN%202012%20FINAL.pdf}.

\textsuperscript{23} Further details of NICCY’s concerns can be read in the papers referenced at footnote 22 above.
Given NICCY’s understanding that the majority of children in mainstream schools will not have the security of a statement of SEN, there remains a question mark in terms of how such funding for children and young people would be allocated. The Department’s original 2009 proposals favoured greater delegation of SEN monies to mainstream schools.

NICCY has strong concerns about funding for SEN being delegated to individual schools. The delegation of SEN funding to schools risks ‘draining’ the school’s available SEN budget, given the cost of providing specific assistance to children who would fall under the ‘PLP category’. The difficulty will be in how schools would be able to provide for every child with SEN.

In terms of the Department’s question on whether a SEN factor should be included in the Common Funding Formula, NICCY cannot support such a mechanism while we are yet to be satisfied that the proposed framework, as a whole, will provide the safeguards necessary in order to meet the needs of all children and young people with SEN, and specifically, those who would fall under the ‘non-statemented’ category.

**SEN funding should be ring-fenced and strongly linked to outcomes for pupils.**

**NICCY also particularly recommends that adequate resourcing is allocated to the transitions process for all children and young people with a learning disability, particularly the transition of young people to adult services.**

The Commissioner recently published a report reviewing transitions to adult services for young people with learning disabilities, completed for NICCY by Queen’s University Belfast²⁴. The report found inconsistencies, weaknesses and gaps in existing arrangements for children with learning disabilities moving from child to adult services across education, training, emloyment, health and social care.

Before the question of greater delegation of responsibility for SEN monies to schools can be considered, there must also be evidence of a consistent commitment at school leadership level to meeting the needs of pupils with SEN – for example, a requirement for school Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) to be part of school senior management teams. NICCY has concerns that the new SEN and Inclusion policy framework will not require

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school SENCO (or ‘Learning Support Coordinators’, as SENCOs will be termed under the new SEN and Inclusion Policy) to have a position on the school senior management team.

Further detail should also be provided as to how ETI’s role would be strengthened in respect of monitoring the standard of SEN provision in schools.

**Pupil funding:**

The Age Weighted Pupils Unit (AWPU) is the main factor used to distribute the Common Funding Formula. Indeed, the Review Panel’s Call for Evidence paper notes that approximately 80% of the budget was distributed under this factor in 2011/12. Needs-based factors, including TSN and others, are also included in school funding formula.

The Review Panel’s Call for evidence paper succinctly explains the current process for awarding funding based on pupil numbers:

“Pupil numbers are calculated using the enrolment at each individual school, as shown on the school census immediately preceding the financial year to which funding relates”.

Difficulties with this method of calculating per pupil budget allocations arise where a child or young person moves from one school to another during the school year, or indeed, moves from a school to another education, training or health or social care setting. A particular difficulty may also arise where a pupil who requires English as an additional language support enrolls at a school after the October school census\(^25\).

Children and young people from some of the most disadvantaged groups may be more likely than others to move from their school to another setting. This includes, for example, looked after children; Traveller children; children who have contact with the justice system; children with special educational needs or a disability; children excluded or suspended from their school; or children living in poverty.

**NICCY believes that pupil funding allocations should ‘follow’ the child or young person when they move from school to school during the school year, or indeed, from school to another setting, such as education other than at school (including alternative education provision), health and social care or justice settings.**

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\(^{25}\) NICCY (2008), see note 18 above.
NICCY strongly encourages the Review Panel to consider this issue in further detail and make recommendations to DE as appropriate.

NICCY is also particularly concerned that funding allocations for children and young people with learning disabilities ‘follow’ the child or young person when they transition from school to another setting.

Shared education and area-based planning:

The Bain report noted in the context of schools funding and the largely pupil-weighted nature of the CFS that the funding formula should “be complemented by funding and incentives that lead schools to work in partnership and gain access to and share one another’s resources”\(^\text{26}\).

The advancement of shared education has now been prioritised in the NI Programme for Government, and in parallel to this, the Department is also moving forward with area-based planning. Indeed, the Education and Library Boards are currently consulting on area-based plans for post-primary provision.

A ‘Ministerial Advisory Group on Advancing Shared Education’ has been established by the Department of Education following the publication of the 2011-15 PfG. The Group has set a timescale for reporting to the Minister by 1 February 2013. This PfG commitment is complemented by further commitments for the Department to ensure that 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.

In terms of area-based planning, the Department has stated that it would “welcome realistic, innovative solutions where people can work together and in different ways, but they must meet the terms of reference on sustainability and viability in the longer term”\(^\text{27}\).

The matter of advancing of shared education should be fully considered within the context of the Review of the Common Funding Scheme. A planned approach must be taken in order to move forward shared education, including initiatives such as sharing of classes, teachers and facilities, across schools.

\(\text{26}\) Bain (2006), see note 4 above, page 66.

Cost-effective approaches towards issues such as transportation should be considered. In this regard, NICCY’s 2007 Public Expenditure report found that education and library boards’ transport responsibilities was an important factor in terms of accounting for budgets at board level, particularly for those boards with lower population densities\(^{28}\).

**NICCY believes that it is essential that the Department’s Shared Education and Area-Based Planning Teams fully engage with the CFS Review Panel. The Review Panel’s report to the Minister for Education, and that of the ‘Ministerial Advisory Group on Advancing Shared Education’, should also link as and where appropriate.**

**Post-primary transfer:**

**The post-primary transfer arrangements in Northern Ireland should be taken into account by the Review Panel as an issue of relevance to schools’ funding.**

In 2010, NICCY published a report of a consultation with P7 pupils about the transfer process during 2009/10\(^{29}\). The consultation was initiated to record the experience and views of pupils during the first year of operation of unregulated entrance tests, following the withdrawal of the Department of Education transfer tests (‘11 plus’).

NICCY remains opposed to the use of academic selection in the admissions process for pupils transferring from primary to post-primary school.

We also remain concerned about the changes to the post-primary transfer arrangements in 2009/10, and the lack of agreement on a way forward, despite concerns highlighted by the Commissioner and many others. NICCY is of the view that children continue to be disadvantaged within the current transfer arrangements.

While the Department of Education no longer sponsors entrance examinations, academic selection at post-primary transfer is still ongoing and should be acknowledged by the Department. Academic selection remains relevant to the issue of schools’ financial viability, as Bain highlighted:

\(^{28}\) Economic Research Institute for Northern Ireland and the Institute of Fiscal Studies, see note 3 above.

“Under the policy of open enrolment, it is likely that popular schools will continue to fill to capacity. At a time of falling numbers, therefore, the result will be a greater number of small schools, some of increasingly questionable viability. The Costello Report considered that grammar schools would continue to fill to capacity, resulting in reduced enrolments in other post-primary schools. Statistics on admissions show that the grammar school sector, though not necessarily each school, by admitting pupils from an increasingly wide range of transfer grades is maintaining the level of enrolment within the sector.”

From a question which NICCY commissioned from ARK in the 2009/10 Kids’ Life and Times Survey, selecting from a list of five options, 83% of pupils who responded to a question asking why they had sat post-primary entrance tests said they did so “in order to get into a good school”, which NICCY interpreted as implying that, “good schools”, according to the pupils’ perspectives, were likely to be grammar schools.

NICCY remains opposed to the use of academic selection in the post-primary school transfer admission process. NICCY also remains concerned about the lack of resolution to post-primary transfer. In the absence of agreement on a way forward, the entrance tests continue to operate without regulation by the Department of Education. NICCY recommends that the Review Panel consider the impact of the lack of resolution in relation to post-primary transfer. We also recommend that the Review Panel consider the link between parental/pupil preferences and enrolment trends in post-primary schools, including any subsequent impact on the level of funding delegated to individual schools.

6.0 Concluding comments

NICCY appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Review of the Common Funding Scheme. We believe the Review has the potential to redress current imbalances, disadvantages and inequalities, and thereby contribute to ensuring an effective education service for all children and young people.

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30 Bain (2006), see note 4 above.
31 5,192 pupils across 321 primary schools completed the Kids Life and Times Survey in 2009/10. 62% indicated they sat entrance tests.
If the Review Panel or the Department wish to discuss the issues with NICCY in further detail, in first instance please contact Caroline Cunningham, Policy and Research Officer, on 90316384 or caroline@niccy.org.