Advice on

the Department of Education

Draft Budget EQIA 2023-24

9 August 2023

Introduction

The Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) was established 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 (NI). Under Articles 7(2) and (3) of this legislation, NICCY has a mandate to keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law, practice and services relating to the rights and best interests of children and young people by relevant authorities. Under Article 7(4), NICCY has a statutory duty to advise any relevant authority on matters concerning the rights or best interests of children and young persons. The Commissioner’s remit includes children and young people up to 18 years, or 21 years, if the young person has a disability or experience of being in the care of social services. In carrying out their functions, the Commissioner’s paramount consideration is the rights of the child or young person, having particular regard to their wishes and feelings. The Commissioner is also to have regard to all relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

NICCY is extremely concerned at the cuts to the Northern Ireland budget and how these affect services and provision for children and young people. We recognise the extremely difficult position of Permanent Secretaries having to administer these budget cuts, and have already written to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee,[[1]](#footnote-2) to the Secretary of State and to the Head of NICS, to highlight a range of concerns. We have also held relevant meetings to address concerns on the direct and indirect impacts of these on children’s rights and access to services.

It is important to note that these cuts come on the back of the worst cost of living crisis in 45 years, the absence of an Assembly and Executive Ministers, challenges associated with Brexit and the ongoing impact of Covid, all of which have had an extremely detrimental impact on, and delivery for, children and young people in Northern Ireland, and their families. We are therefore very mindful, as the statutory body providing advice to government on children’s rights and best interests, of our responsibility to advise on these budget decisions, and to monitor their impact on children and young people.

In the conclusion of our report on the statutory response to the Covid emergency, ‘*A New and Better Normal’*,[[2]](#footnote-3) we wrote:

‘*It is the case that, when a public emergency occurs, the degree to which the processes in implementing children’s rights are effective and embedded in government policies and service delivery processes, will determine the degree to which children’s rights are prioritised during the emergency response. (…) We must learn the lesson that, alongside the vital actions required to support recovery, there must be a focus on embedding a child rights culture within the fundamental workings of government and its agencies.’* (p151)

In recognition of this, NICCY has worked with colleagues across Europe to develop the ENOC statement on undertaking Child Rights Impact Assessments (CRIAs) recognising their vital role in ensuring children’s rights are fully considered in government decision-making. [[3]](#footnote-4) NICCY has met with key staff from each government department to deliver capacity building workshops, has developed Northern Ireland specific CRIA templates and guidance, in addition to an online training module NICCY has developed to support government officials to undertake CRIAs.[[4]](#footnote-5)

Given the potential impact of the cuts to the 2023-24 budget, it is essential that all departments and agencies undertake CRIAs, in addition to EQIAs, to ensure that they have given due consideration as to how they will affect children and young people. This was emphasised very recently at the UNCRC Committee’s periodic examination of the UK State Party’s implementation of the UNCRC on 19 May 2023, where concerns about the impact of budget cuts on vital children’s services in Northern Ireland were raised more than once and assurances sought from government representatives that CRIAs would be carried out on budget decisions. (NICCY had also provided an additional paper in advance to the Committee on NI’s Budget Cuts). Subsequently the Committee issued its Concluding Observations and Recommendations on 2 June 2023 calling on the UK State Party to:

“*Withdraw the 2023/24 budget for Northern Ireland and fully consider the*

*Equality and human rights implications of a new budget, taking all possible*

*Steps to mitigate any adverse impact on children’s rights before issuing a*

*Revised budget.”*

**UN Committee on the Rights of the Child**

**02 June 2023**

Context for the EQIA

NICCY is deeply concerned about the current crisis in the funding of education in Northern Ireland and the hugely detrimental impact this will have on children and young people, particularly our most vulnerable children.[[5]](#footnote-6) While it may be argued that our education system works for many children in Northern Ireland, it has consistently failed to fulfil the educational rights of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those with special educational needs and disability (SEND). This latest crisis in education funding will undoubtedly exacerbate long-standing educational inequalities and have enduring impacts on the life chances of the most disadvantaged children in Northern Ireland.

We welcome that DE has now undertaken an EQIA on its draft budget and we appreciate that the Department is projecting a non ring-fenced resource funding gap of £382m (equivalent to 14.8% of the final budget allocation) required for 2023-24. As stated in the EQIA, managing a shortfall of this magnitude will undoubtedly have a significant and adverse impact on the Department’s ability to deliver educational services in 2023-24.

The current budget process is particularly abnormal, and we understand that the budget allocations delivered by the Secretary of State are not only highly restrictive but put undue pressure on officials to make decisions they should not have to. The abnormality of this budget cycle also means that planning procedures that occur during a typical budget process have not taken place. Without the full application of these procedures, the equality screening and impact assessment consultation comes too late in the process and is inadequate for full consideration of the impact of these spending decisions on children and young people.

In this difficult financial context we have been disappointed that, despite the duties placed by the Children’s Services Co-operation Act (CSCA) 2015 on all relevant departments and agencies to co-operate in the planning, commissioning and delivery of children’s services, and the enabling power it provides to allow departments to pool resources to address crosscutting children’s issues, co-operation in the delivery of services for children remains the exception rather than the rule. Clearly the pooling of resources is critical in ensuring that budgets are used most effectively to deliver positive outcomes for children.

In the following section we provide comment on the Department’s EQIA, framed in the context of the UNCRC, in ensuring that systems and processes are rights compliant, and remove the barriers to ensuring children’s and young people’s right to an effective and appropriate education.

Comments on the EQIA of the draft DE Budget

Overall, NICCY considers that the lack of information and data provided at sections 5 and 6 of the EQIA makes it difficult to fully evaluate the Department’s assessment of the impact of budget cuts on children from section 75 groups and multiple identity groups. The inclusion of relevant data, both qualitative and quantitative, is crucial to enabling an informed assessment of potential differential and cumulative impacts of proposed and actual funding cuts on children, and to ensuring transparency in the Department’s decision-making processes. Without relevant data, it is also difficult to assess the proposed mitigating measures detailed at 7.9 or to suggest alternative measures. Where NI data is not available, comparative data from other jurisdictions could have been used to highlight significant issues for particular categories and sub-groups within those categories.[[6]](#footnote-7)

Equality Commission guidance outlines that the purpose of an EQIA is ‘*not merely about the identification of either direct or indirect discrimination’,* but rather is *‘about promoting equality of opportunity in relation to the nine equality categories and to all groups within those categories’*. It is NICCY’s view that the EQIA fails to demonstrate that equality of opportunity has been given due consideration. We also consider that differential impacts on groups *within* S75 categories (e.g. boys, girls and transgender within ‘gender’; different age bands within ‘age’ etc) has not been given insufficient attention.[[7]](#footnote-8)

Section 4.8 of the EQIA specifies that DE has so far made cuts to expenditure that include:

* significant Departmental staff vacancy control;
* reducing expenditure on day-to-day administrative costs;
* Ending ‘Engage’, ‘Healthy Happy Minds’ and ‘School Holiday Food Grant’ schemes from 31 March 2023;
* reducing the Aggregate Schools Budget (ASB); and
* reducing the Education Authority Block Grant.

However, we are aware that a much wider range of cuts have been made to-date that will potentially have adverse, and in some cases, differential impacts on children, including but not limited to:

* Pausing the Digital Devices scheme
* Ending the Baby Book scheme
* Pausing capital development
* Pausing 28 new school projects
* Cutting the Free Period Products budget by 40%
* Cutting the Shared Education budget by 50%
* Reducing Nurture funding from £70 million to £62 million
* Ending the schools coaching programme run by Irish Football Association (IFA) and Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)
* Ending funding available to Young Enterprise NI
* Ending a cashless scheme for schools
* Depleting funding available to Extended Schools (ES)
* Significantly reducing resource for pupils with SEN
* Pausing the recruitment of school crossing patrols
* Reducing Sure Start funding by 20% in 2023/24[[8]](#footnote-9)
* Reducing A Fair Start funding from an expected £21m for 2023/24 to an allocated £2.5m.[[9]](#footnote-10)

For clarity and transparency, the EQIA should have included a summary of all cuts made at the time of publication, including specific figures where possible to quantify the reduction or withdrawal of funding.

Assessment of Impacts

***‘Disability’***

NICCY is immensely concerned about potential adverse impacts of budget cuts to NI’s already struggling SEND system. The EQIA acknowledges that there will be major adverse impacts of budget cuts to SEND and other programmes for children with disabilities but fails to include any specific data detailing programmes that have been or will be cut, precluding an informed assessment of the implications of cuts for children with SEND.

The EQIA specifies at footnote 14 that ‘SEN includes SEN Block Grant, LSC and Implementation of SEND ACT 2016, SEND Transformation Programme, SEND Implementation Team SEND ACT (NI) 2016, Enhanced Autism Training Framework, SEN Early Years Inclusion Service’. No specific detail is given on proposed or actual cuts to each of these, or indeed SEN funding overall, although we are aware that the Department has already made significant cuts to SEN funding. For example, funding to schools to support Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) in fulfilling their role has already been reduced, from £22m last year to £11m in 2023/24 .[[10]](#footnote-11) We know from our work that prior to this reduction in funding, SENCOs faced a range of barriers to providing effective in-school support to children with SEND, including a lack of training, funding, resources and time for SENCO duties.[[11]](#footnote-12) This substantial reduction in funding will place further constraints on the capacity of SENCOs to effectively undertake their role and will likely have considerable adverse impacts on children’s participation and experience in education.

Additionally, there is no recognition in the EQIA of the 50% reduction to the SEND Transformation Programme Budget, from £3.8m requested by EA to £1.9m in 2023/24­. This substantial reduction in funding will undoubtedly adversely impact urgently needed transformation programme/projects, meaning that improvements for children and young people will be further delayed. As the number of pupils with statements continues to increase, and many children with SEND remain without specialist school placements, including nursery placements, for the forthcoming year, it is unacceptable that the EQIA does not acknowledge the impacts of this budget reduction for children with SEND or indeed the potential ‘displacement’ of other services to facilitate same.[[12]](#footnote-13)

We note that the Department acknowledges that children with SEND will experience major adverse impacts from budget reductions to Healthy Happy Minds and School Holiday Food Grants. We do not agree with its assessment that children with SEND will experience minor impacts as a result of discontinuation of the Engage programme. Research indicates that children with SEND were disproportionately and negatively impacted by the implementation of measures such as school closures and online learning during the Covid pandemic.[[13]](#footnote-14) Furthermore, DE statistics show that a higher proportion of children with SEND (30.6%, compared to 26.3% of the school population overall) received support under the Engage II Programme.[[14]](#footnote-15) NICCY is also aware that a failure to meet children’s SEN needs has played a role in increased rates of absence among children with SEN, as well as a growing number of de-registrations post-pandemic. Given the wider context of inadequate provision of, and access to, SEN supports and services, we expect that withdrawal of the Engage programme will have significant and disproportionate impacts on children with SEND.

Furthermore, it is our view that cumulatively, funding cuts to SEN and other programmes, including those relating to tackling educational disadvantage and emotional health and wellbeing, will have a differential, adverse and enduring impact on children with disabilities. Evidence demonstrates strong links between poverty and SEND, and that children with SEND are more likely to experience a range of adversities including lower educational attainment; poor mental health and emotional wellbeing; and, in the long term, poorer labour market outcomes.[[15]](#footnote-16) While we anticipate that the current budget will have hugely detrimental impacts for children with SEND, the EQIA fails to adequately consider or suggest mitigating measures specifically targeted for this group of children who are recognised, by law, to be particularly vulnerable to discrimination.[[16]](#footnote-17) We remind the Department that a key element of the EQIA is to determine any adverse impact, and in such cases, consider whether it is or is not unlawfully discriminatory, and in both cases then consider mitigation and alternative policies.[[17]](#footnote-18)

***Gender***

NICCY considers that the EQIA fails to demonstrate sufficient analysis of the potential gendered impacts of budget cuts and related policy changes. The EQIA states that ‘*whilst the Department has no specific data to determine the impact of the overall budget on this group, information drawn from the 2022-23 annual school census shows that there is a fairly even distribution of males and females within the school population, with 50.8% male pupils and 49.2% female’.*  It is simplistic to assume that because there is a fairly even distribution of males and females in the school population, males and females will not be differentially impacted by policy changes. We know from research that gender is a significant factor in educational underachievement, with studies showing lower achievement among boys than girls.[[18]](#footnote-19) It is feasible, therefore, that cuts to polices, including those targeted at reducing educational underachievement, will have differential impacts on boys and girls.

Additionally, we note that under ‘gender’ at 6.1 there is no reference to, or consideration of, potential impacts on transgender pupils, although research clearly shows that LGBT young people are at higher risk of experiencing mental health problems due to bullying, prejudice, discrimination and other factors.[[19]](#footnote-20) A recent evaluation published by ETI reported that pupils who identified as ‘other’ in terms of gender are much less likely to report that they feel safe in school, while they are more likely to report that they don’t know how to manage or talk about their feelings, or deal with peer pressure.[[20]](#footnote-21) While transgender pupils make up a small proportion of the school population, withdrawal of programmes such as Healthy Happy Minds will potentially have a significant impact on pupils who identify as transgender.

***Race***

The EQIA determines that children within this category will face ‘major negative impacts’ from budget reductions to School Holiday Food Grants and ‘minor negative impacts’ from budget reductions to Healthy Happy Minds, Engage Programme, Extended Schools, and North Belfast Principals Support Programme. We note with concern that limited data is included to justify the finding of ‘minor negative impacts’. Evidence shows that children from Traveller, Roma and newcomer backgrounds experienced particularly significant learning loss as a result of measures implemented during the pandemic, indicating that children from these groups may be disproportionately impacted by withdrawal of the Engage programme.

We also note the lack of consideration of potential differential impacts for sub-categories within the wider category of ‘race’. While the EQIA does acknowledge that children from particular ethnic groups, including children from the Traveller community and Roma children, have some of the lowest levels of education attainment, there is no analysis of potential differential impacts of policy changes on these, or other, minority ethnic groups. We draw attention to ECNI guidance which highlights the importance of analysing data relating to groups contained *within* each the nine equality categories and advise that a more nuanced and comprehensive approach is required.[[21]](#footnote-22)

***Age***Overall, NICCY considers that a cut to the education budget is discriminatory on the basis that it is targeted at services provided to children and young people. It is important to note that this recent cut to the education budget takes place following years of chronic under-investment in NI’s education system, which has had hugely detrimental impacts on children’s access to high quality education, particularly those who experience most disadvantage.

Under ‘age’, the EQIA states that ‘this category will experience **major negative impacts** from budget reductions to School Holiday Food Grant, EA Block Grant, Engage Programme and Healthy Happy Minds and **minor negative impacts** from budget reductions to Playboard NI Play Policy, Aggregated Schools Budget, Extended Schools, North Belfast Principals Support Programme and BookStart Programme’. We do not agree with the finding of ‘minor negative impacts’ in relation to the listed programmes and note the exclusion of data to justify this finding. Additionally, we note that the EQIA does not include data that indicates any analysis has been undertaken of differential impacts for children within different age bands.[[22]](#footnote-23) For example, withdrawal of the BookStart programme will disproportionately affect infants in NI, who, as pointed out in a recently published report on the consequences of the cuts, ‘will be the only children in the UK who will be prevented from accessing these important, evidence-based resources’.[[23]](#footnote-24)

***Multiple Identities***

Inclusion of the category ‘multiple identity groups’ at 6.1 recognises that with people with multiple identities may be subject to discrimination or disadvantage on the basis of more than one ground and therefore at risk of cumulative disadvantage.[[24]](#footnote-25) For example, a child from an ethnic minority group with special educational needs may be adversely and cumulatively impacted by the withdrawal or reduction of multiple policies, including but not limited to the School Holiday Food Grants, Engage programme, Extended Schools, Health Happy Minds and SEN budget reductions.

Overall, it is our view that the EQIA includes insufficient detail on, and analysis of, how this budget will impact children with multiple identities and that the analysis that is provided at 6.1 lacks clarity. Furthermore, the analysis does not consider the full range of policy changes that have been undertaken to-date (for example, no specific reference at 6.1 to digital devices scheme; reduction to Education Authority Block Grant; reduction to nurture programmes etc). An example is the ‘pausing’ of the provision of additional digital devices to disadvantaged schools and families, as part of A Fair Start Action Plan, reported on the 25th April.[[25]](#footnote-26) We know that children with multiple identities are more likely to be impacted by socio-economic disadvantage and therefore face a higher risk of digital poverty. This is recognised within the Department’s own equality screening for the provision of digital devices which acknowledges that ‘children with multiple Section 75 characteristics are more likely to be selected for the programme as these groups have higher levels of educational underachievement and are more likely to require support to engage’.[[26]](#footnote-27) Yet, the pausing of this scheme is not specifically referenced within the department’s EQIA, either under ‘multiple identities’ or elsewhere.

We are also very concerned about the recently reported substantial shortfall in funding to address educational underachievement, through the implementation of the ‘A Fair Start Action Plan’, and the impact of this for the most vulnerable pupils, including children with multiple identities. The reported shortfall in funding - an allocated £2.5m compared to an expected £21m for 2023/24 so far - will undoubtedly have considerable adverse impacts on children with multiple identities who are more likely to be disadvantaged by multiple barriers, including socio-economic disadvantage. [[27]](#footnote-28)

NICCY advises that a more robust and informed analysis must be undertaken which clearly sets out the cumulative adverse impacts of all policy changes, proposed and undertaken so far, for children with multiple identities.

Mitigating Actions

NICCY does not consider that any alternative policies or mitigating measures have been proposed in this EQIA in response to the considerable adverse impacts that the most vulnerable children in Northern Ireland will face as a result of identified cuts.

We remind the Department that a core element of the EQIA process is the proposal of measures and alternative policies to mitigate against the risk of identified adverse impacts. It must go beyond simply determining potential adverse or disproportionate impacts for protected groups by proactively seeking to mitigate against these.[[28]](#footnote-29)

This lack of consideration is demonstrated by ‘disability’, one of four S75 categories identified as at risk of ‘major’ adverse impacts by the Department’s assessment of impacts (6.1). Yet, the the Department does not propose or consider any specific mitigating measures in response to this finding at 7.9. In fact, ‘disability’ or ‘SEND’ are not referenced at all within areas for proposed mitigating measures.

Typically, children who fall within categories identified as at risk of major adverse impacts – ‘disability’, ‘race’ ‘and ‘dependency’ – are at greater risk of poverty, which is inextricably linked to educational underachievement.[[29]](#footnote-30) As noted above, we suggest that children with ‘multiple identities’ will also, undoubtedly, experience ‘major impacts’, although this is not specifically referenced in the analysis at 6.1. It is our view that the cuts are likely to have a severe detrimental impact on the most vulnerable children and young people, who in many cases will be affected by the reduction of several different services that have collectively provided them a vital safety net. It is crucial that the Department clearly demonstrates that mitigating actions have been carefully considered and proposes robust measures to mitigate identified inequalities for specific groups of children. At 7.4, the EQIA states that, ‘*where options for efficiencies are identified, these will be subject to separate screening. Where necessary, full EQIAs will be undertaken as options to live within the Department’s 2023-24 budget allocations are further developed and implemented’*. NICCY requests further details of these as they are developed.

Monitoring

Details of monitoring arrangements provided within the EQIA are lacking. The EQIA states ‘any adverse differential impact on equality of opportunity or good relations that may be identified through this assessment process will be taken into account in informing the Department’s Budget 2023-24 allocations’. Specific details of monitoring arrangements that will be implemented to monitor ‘**actual’** rather than ‘**predicted**’ adverse impacts of budget decisions on S75 categories, including sub-groups within these categories, and children with multiple identities, must be provided. Furthermore, we note the requirement for the Department to review the results of ongoing monitoring on an annual basis and to publish the results of this monitoring (Schedule 9 paragraph 4 (2) (b)), as outlined in ECNI guidance.[[30]](#footnote-31)

We further draw attention to the UNCRC’s Concluding Observations, June 2023, which stipulate, in relation to budgeting, that State Parties,

*a) Implement a tracking system for the allocation, use and monitoring of resources for children, with a view to eliminating disparities and ensuring equitability, and assess how investments in all sectors serve the best interests of children;* [[31]](#footnote-32)

Further details are therefore required of systems that will be implemented in relation to future monitoring of **actual** differential and adverse impacts of budget decisions on children’s access to and participation in education.

Services and programmes delivered by the Department of Education

As set out in the EQIA, the DE’s primary statutory duty is to promote the education of the people of Northern Ireland and to ensure the effective implementation of education policy. This includes a responsibility to ensure that children, through participation at schools, reach the highest possible standards of educational achievement, and to promote personal well-being and social development so that children gain the knowledge, skills and experience to reach their full potential as valued individuals. The Department also has a responsibility to lead, on behalf of the Executive, on the development and delivery of the Children and Young People’s Strategy 2020-2030.

Appendix two lists 165 programmes and strategies supported by the Department, both statutory and non-statutory, in undertaking its responsibilities. To effectively engage in a discussion about current or potential budget proposals, and potential impacts on children, it is crucial that relevant information is provided on proposals for each of the programmes listed, with reference to disaggregated data where possible. We recognise that the list included at appendix two may be incomplete and/or dated, and request that any further information provided by the Department in relation to budget decisions incorporates a full and up-to-date list of funded programmes that have or will be impacted. We further advise that all funding decisions should be informed by a child rights impact assessment (CRIA).

Children’s Budgeting

The use of CRIAs and a wider approach to children’s budgeting requires government departments to analyse the specific impacts of a budget on children and young people, starting as early in the budget cycle as possible. The aim of children’s budgeting, which is a current international human rights policy priority, is to ensure that the distribution of resources improves the outcomes for children and young people and, over time, to embed a child’s rights perspective at all stages of the budget process, with an understanding of intersecting identities.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has consistently recommended that States Parties develop child budgets as a key aspect of implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (‘UNCRC’). More recently, the Committee has developed a General Comment (19) on Public Budgeting for the Realisation of Children’s Rights (Art. 4).[[32]](#footnote-33) This provides further guidance to governments and other non-state actors as to how to manage public expenditure for children to realise the rights of all children. A core focus of all the human rights guidance on children’s budgeting is the participation of children in all stages of budgetary planning and decision-making.

Favourable conditions required for effective child rights budgeting include,

* Political will and commitment;
* Strategy;
* Administrative architecture;
* Children and young people disaggregated data; and
* Understanding at all levels.

The wellbeing of society improves most when society chooses to invest in its children and children’s budgeting is a key instrument in ensuring this happens. Currently the budget process in Northern Ireland is only compliant with one of the ten OECD’s principles of good budgeting governance.**[[33]](#footnote-34)**

It is NICCY’s view that we need to be bolder and visionary with regards our budgeting process in Northern Ireland and to take actions to ensure that it is rights based and involves children and their families, including those who are often marginalised, across the entire budget process.**[[34]](#footnote-35)** Such an approach would significantly enhance the EQIA process and help to ensure that the distribution of resources improves the outcomes for children and young people.

**Conclusion and recommendations**

NICCY recognises the very difficult position that government Departments, led by Permanent Secretaries, currently face, as they attempt to implement severe budget cuts in the absence of Ministers. While we welcome that DE has undertaken an EQIA on its draft budget, we are disappointed by the lack of data and detailed analysis of potential impacts, including differential and cumulative impacts, of budget decisions for children and young people, and by the failure to propose adequate mitigating measures.

In this submission we have referenced 165 statutory and non-statutory programmes and strategies funded to-date through the DE budget.[[35]](#footnote-36) It is notable that the EQIA does not specifically reference or include relevant data on the majority of these programmes, including proposals for their withdrawal or reduced funding.

If we are to protect children from the most devastating impacts of budget cuts, we must learn lessons from the Covid pandemic by taking action to embed a child rights culture within the fundamental workings of government and its agencies. NICCY considers it vital that any future funding decisions are made with full understanding of their likely impact on children, and we reiterate the importance of carrying out a child rights impact assessment (CRIA) to inform decision making, and in the long-term, the development of a children’s budgeting process.

**Recommendations**

1. **The EQIA should be revised, fully considering the specific impacts, including cumulative and differential impacts, of budget decisions on children from section 75 groups, with regard to all relevant programmes. The analysis should include impacts for relevant sub groups within S75 categories, as well as children with multiple identities.**
2. **A CRIA should be carried out on the draft DE budget, and this should include information on each programme delivered for/to children, including the 165 programmes listed in this submission, both in terms of budget proposals and likely impacts. Cuts should not be imposed where they will have an adverse impact on children.**
3. **In the long term a children’s budgeting approach should be built into the NI Executive Budgeting process.**

**Department of Education - Services provided 2022-23** [[36]](#footnote-37)

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1. [NICCY-advice-paper-NIAC-Inquiry-21-April-2023.pdf](https://www.niccy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/NICCY-advice-paper-NIAC-Inquiry-21-April-2023.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://www.niccy.org/a-new-and-better-normal-children-and-young-peoples-experiences-of-the-covid-19-pandemic/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. <https://www.niccy.org/wp-content/uploads/media/3766/fv-enoc-position-statement-on-cria.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. <https://www.niccy.org/what-we-do/training/cria/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. [The-Consequences-of-the-Cuts-to-Education-for-Children-and-Young-People-in-Northern-Ireland-Final.pdf (stran.ac.uk)](https://www.stran.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/The-Consequences-of-the-Cuts-to-Education-for-Children-and-Young-People-in-Northern-Ireland-Final.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. [Microsoft Word - PracticalGuidanceEQIA1204 .doc (equalityni.org)](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Public%20Authorities/EQIA-PracticalGuidance%282005%29.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. [Department of Education ‘planning for 20% cut’ to Sure Start programme budget | BelfastTelegraph.co.uk](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/education/department-of-education-planning-for-20-cut-to-sure-start-programme-budget/a1958711888.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Original list, sourced from [The-Consequences-of-the-Cuts-to-Education-for-Children-and-Young-People-in-Northern-Ireland-Final.pdf (stran.ac.uk)](https://www.stran.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/The-Consequences-of-the-Cuts-to-Education-for-Children-and-Young-People-in-Northern-Ireland-Final.pdf) , has been updated to reflect subsequent developments. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. [Schools' funding for special needs teachers cut in half - BBC News](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-65805746) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. [niccy-too-little-too-late-report-march-2020-web-final.pdf](https://www.niccy.org/wp-content/uploads/media/3515/niccy-too-little-too-late-report-march-2020-web-final.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. [Almost 150 SEN children in Northern Ireland do not have a confirmed school place for September 2023 | UTV | ITV News](https://www.itv.com/news/utv/2023-07-27/almost-150-sen-children-do-not-have-confirmed-school-place-for-next-year) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. <https://www.niccy.org/a-new-and-better-normal-children-and-young-peoples-experiences-of-the-covid-19-pandemic/>; [Children's lives and rights under lockdown: A Northern Irish perspective by autistic young people (qub.ac.uk)](https://pureadmin.qub.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/409333513/Children_s_lives_and_rights_under_lockdown.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. [Equality Screening - Discontinuation of the Engage III programme at the end of 2022 23 financial year.pdf (education-ni.gov.uk)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Equality%20Screening%20-%20Discontinuation%20of%20the%20Engage%20III%20programme%20at%20the%20end%20of%202022%2023%20financial%20year.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
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31. [tbinternet.ohchr.org/\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FGBR%2FCO%2F6-7&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2FC%2FGBR%2FCO%2F6-7&Lang=en) [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
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