

Minister Bruton announces consultation on Out of School Education Provision

Written submissions invited on current and future provision of Out of School Education

The Minister for Education and Skills, Mr. Richard Bruton, T.D., today invited submissions to the Department of Education and Skills on the provision of education for young people (aged 6-16) who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from mainstream education.

The Government has set the ambition to make Ireland's education and training service the best in Europe by 2026. Ensuring excellent educational outcomes for all young people is key to delivering on this ambition.

Leaving Certificate retention rates are currently the highest they have ever been and Ireland's school completion rates are among the highest in Europe. Crucially, the gap in retention rates to the Leaving Certificate between DEIS and non-DEIS continues to narrow, halving from 16.8% for the 2001 cohort to 8.5% for the 2010 cohort. A key action under the DEIS Plan 2017, which was published by Minister Bruton, is to close the achievement gap between DEIS and Non-DEIS schools.

While those completing mainstream education continues to increase, we must ensure that those who have disengaged or are at risk of doing so are receiving the best possible education. This review will look at the current and future provision of out of school education with a view to informing future policy in this area.

Announcing the review, Minister Bruton said, "This Government are committed to helping every child fulfil their full potential, regardless of their circumstances. I am very encouraged by the excellent school completion rates we are seeing, most importantly the improvements we are seeing in DEIS schools but I want to make sure that every child has access to an excellent education. That is crucial to having the best education and training service in Europe.

"This Review will identify the needs of the cohort of children who have disengaged with the mainstream education system or are at risk of doing so. We must develop better pathways for them and maintain their engagement with the education system.

"Those who are delivering and being catered for by Out of School Education will be placed at the centre of this Review. I encourage interested parties to take the opportunity to make a written submission to the Working Group by giving their views. By gathering a range of perspectives from interested parties, we will be able to better understand how to best support those in out of school settings and greater inform future policy in this area."

More detailed information on the terms of reference, scope of the review and membership of the working group is available at <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Social-Inclusion/review-of-out-of-school-education-provision/>

The closing date for the receipt of submissions Friday 6th April 2018. Submissions should be made by e-mail to outofschoolreview@education.gov.ie using the template submission form provided at the link above.

ENDS

Notes for the Editor

Background

- Under Action 88 of DEIS Plan 2017 the Department of Education and Skills and TUSLA committed to review the current provision of out of school education to inform future supports in this area.
- This Action is to be completed by Q3 2018.
- The Department estimates there are approximately 500 children catered for in out of school education.

Terms of Reference

- The Terms of Reference for the Review as agreed by the Working Group, having due regard to the level of provision in the sector, are;

What does current provision for out of school education look like?

What should it look like?

How can the state provide for it?

Review Working Group

- The Department of Education and Skills and TUSLA Educational Welfare Services have jointly established a Working Group to carry out the review.
- The group remains open ended and currently contains representatives from education stakeholders including the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Solas, Education and Training Boards Ireland, National Educational Psychological Service among others.

Scope of the Review

The scope of the review is as follows:

Formal education provision in the State for children aged 6-16 (or who have received less than 3 years of post-primary education, whichever is the later) who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from mainstream education.

The scope does **not** extend to education provision for children in:

- private fee charging schools
 - all categories of Home Tuition
 - home education
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- A separate review of the National Youthreach Programme has been commissioned by SOLAS and is currently underway. The Working Group will continue to be informed of the progress of the Youthreach Review through the Solas membership of the Group and liaison with the ESRI.

Next Steps

- A data collection exercise is currently being undertaken to gather information in relation to the governance and funding, education provision and children in this sector.
- The Working Group will review all information to make recommendations on future education provision in the out of school sector with a view to agreeing a final report by the end of Q2 2018.
- The process of carrying out the recommendations will begin in Q3 2018.