



**Response of the Ulster Teachers' Union  
on the Draft Framework for Specialist Provision in Special Schools.**

The Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Consultation on the Draft Framework for Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools. The UTU represents approximately 6,500 members of the teaching profession including Principals, Vice-Principals, Teachers and Trainee Teachers. UTU members are employed across all the sectors in nursery, primary, post-primary and special schools and educational support service.

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**1. Name/Organisation/School.**

Ulster Teachers' Union.

**2. Please select the category that best describes you as a respondent (please choose one option only):**

Other: Trade Union

**3. Please indicate the local government district area to which your response refers (you may choose more than one):**

General response

**4. Please select the category which best represents your sectoral interest:**

Other, the UTU represents many educational sectors.

**Please select the category which best represents your interest:**

Other, the UTU represents many categories mentioned here.

**Comment**

The Ulster Teachers' Union have grave concerns regarding the apparent lack of information on which we have been given to consult. Section 6.1 on Page 20 of the document has the title EA Consultation. Underneath is the quote *"Effective consultation is a key part of the policy-making process. People's views can help shape policy developments and set the agenda for better public services."* From the Code of Practice on Consultation 2004.

Ulster Teachers' Union have difficulty in responding as we have no clear idea what the consultation is regarding and what we are responding to. The lack of substance in this consultation is clear.

The Ulster Teachers Union would suggest that this entire consultation be scrapped. The Education Authority need to urgently examine what the future of Special School Area Planning will look like in the future.

**5. Do you agree that the draft framework focuses on EQUITY, CONSISTENCY AND ACCESSIBILITY of special school provision across the region?**

The draft framework focuses on these areas. We are unable to see any concrete plan for the way forward.

**7. Do you agree that the draft framework correctly identifies the inconsistencies of special school provision within your local government district?**

The draft framework focuses on these inconsistencies. We are unable to see any suggestions to solve this.

**9. Do you agree that the draft framework explains why change is required to: Meet the increasing demand for places in special schools?**

The consultation document has detail about the current situation regarding Special Schools. We are unable to clearly respond as there appear to be little suggestion in how to meet the increasing demands on places. Urgent adequate funding is necessary.

**11. Do you agree that the draft framework explains why change is required to: Respond to the changing and more complex profile of special educational needs?**

Although this is clear that change is required the Ulster Teachers' Union are unsure to what solution has been included.

**13. Do you agree that the draft framework explains why change is required to: Provide equity and consistency in the type of special school provision offered across the region?**

This consultation sets out that change is required to Special School provision. We are unclear to what solutions have been included, if any.

**15. Do you agree that the draft framework clearly outlines the EA's vision for special school provision: Consistent in the education and interventions offered?**

The document has the current provision indicated but offers no solution to a way forward to improve this.

**17. Do you agree that the draft framework clearly outlines the EA's vision for special school provision: Close to where children live?**

There is a vision. No solutions have been offered.

**19. Do you agree that the draft framework clearly outlines the EA's vision for special school provision: For all ages and stages of development?**

Again, a vision is present but there is no substance or indication of how this will be achieved.

**21. Do you agree that the draft framework clearly outlines the EA's vision for special school provision: Flexible to meet changing educational, physical and medical needs?**

A vision is presented but we would challenge that it is inflexible at present due to lack of funding and lack of a clear direction how this vision can be achieved.

**23. Do you agree with the specific CRITERIA proposed to evaluate the special school provision?**

Criteria are available in the document at Annex A. We would agree that these could be used to evaluate Special School provision. However, without adequate and substantial funding to this sector the criterions noted will not be met.

**25. Do you agree with the specific INDICATORS proposed to evaluate the special school provision?**

Again, we broadly agree with the indicators proposed but without the additional funding the sector will be unable to achieve these indicators.

**27. Do you agree that the criteria and indicators will enable the EA to deliver greater equity and accessibility of special school provision across the region?**

Unfortunately, criteria and indicators will not be the great deliverance to special school provision. Serious additional financial funding is necessary.

**28. Please provide additional comments**

This consultation is lacking any substance or information regarding what the future holds. The Ulster Teachers' Union have concerns that this is a paper exercise and the responses have been formulated in such a way that respondents will agree to the question. We have great difficulty to understanding what the proposal is.

**29. Please use the space below if you wish to make further comment on the draft Special Schools Area Planning Framework:**

The Belfast region needs urgent and immediate examination regarding Special School provision. This must be a priority for the EA.

Response from Ulster Teachers' Union via [office@utu.edu](mailto:office@utu.edu)

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