

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

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Dear Carolyn

Thank you for your letter of 19 November 2024 regarding Belfast City Council's motion surrounding post-19 provisions for young people in Northern Ireland.

I am committed to ensuring that young people with statements of special educational needs (SEN) are supported in their transition from school into adulthood.

My officials are working closely with colleagues across the Departments of Economy (DfE), Health (DoH) and Communities (DfC) to develop and enhance clear and appropriate pathways for young people transitioning from education into adulthood.

The RAISE programme is a whole-community, place-based approach designed to raise achievement and aspiration and address educational disadvantage. The programme will aim to improve outcomes for all children and young people, from cradle to career, ensuring every child is happy, learning and succeeding.

Funding of £20 million over 2 years from the Shared Island Fund is very welcome and, whilst there are limits as to how much can be realistically achieved within a finite budget, we are encouraging all stakeholders to consider the issues from "cradle to career".

The strategic plans that each of the RAISE localities will develop will be informed by the needs of the children and young people living in the RAISE localities.

I hope you find this information useful.

Yours sincerely

Paul Givan MLA
Minister of Education