

From: The Minister

Eilish McGoldrick
Democratic Services and Governance Coordinator
Belfast City Council

Via email: mcgoldricke@belfastcity.gov.uk

Dear Eilish

BELFAST PLAYING PITCHES AND OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY

Thank you for your letter of 15 May 2026.

I recognise the seriousness of the situation you raise whereby that some clubs and ground operators, including Belfast City Council, may not be able to comply with the requirements of the new Northern Amateur Football League National Conference League, as part of the wider restructuring of the football pyramid for Northern Ireland.

Whilst neither I nor my Department has any direct influence over the structures, criteria or regulations governing leagues administered by the Irish FA, the Northern Ireland Football League or the Northern Amateur Football League, I have asked my officials to continue to

engage closely with the Irish FA and league operators. Future investment through the Northern Ireland Football Fund, including the ongoing development of the Grassroots Facilities Programme, will consider facility needs across all levels of the game.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gordon Lyons', with a stylized, flowing script.

Gordon Lyons MLA
Minister for Communities