

RAISE Coleraine Strategic Area Plan





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Contents

RAISE Coleraine Strategic Area Plan	3
What is the RAISE Programme?.....	3
Introducing the RAISE Coleraine Locality.....	5
Key Statistics - Why is the RAISE Programme needed in Coleraine?	7
Existing Collaboration and Complementary Investment	9
Needs Analysis.....	12
Views of Children and Young People	12
Views of Parents and Carers	13
Gaps in provision	15
Emerging Priorities.....	16
Emerging Priority – School Readiness & Early Years Development.....	16
Emerging Priority – Attainment Gap	17
Emerging Priority – Pathways, Aspirations & Positive Destinations.....	18
Emerging Priority – Attendance & Engagement.....	19
Emerging Priority – Special Educational Needs (SEN) & Additional Educational Needs (AEN)	20
Summary of Key Needs Identified	22
Next Steps	23
RAISE Coleraine Strategic Area Plan Objectives	24



RAISE Coleraine Strategic Area Plan

What is the RAISE Programme?

The RAISE Programme is a whole community and place-based approach to tackling educational disadvantage in 18 localities¹ across Northern Ireland, supporting the Department of Education’s vision that “every child and young person is happy, learning and succeeding”.

TransformED NI, a Strategy for Educational Excellence in Northern Ireland, outlines the Minister of Education’s priorities in a comprehensive strategy for the transformation of teaching and learning in Northern Ireland. The RAISE Programme is the signature approach to tackling educational disadvantage in this regard and will complement existing school-based programmes.

The RAISE Programme’s Strategic Objectives are:

- Raising achievement and addressing educational disadvantage; and
- Raising aspirations through a whole community approach to education.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
Raising **achievement** and addressing educational disadvantage;
and
Raising **aspirations** through a whole community approach to education

RAISING ACHIEVEMENT

- ✓ Raising standards with a focus on increasing literacy, numeracy and digital skills outcomes for all pupils;
- ✓ Reduce the gap between FSME and non-FSME pupils;
- ✓ Improve pathways for children which motivate and support learners at risk of exclusion, marginalisation and underachievement;
- ✓ Increase opportunities and empower education professionals through professional learning programmes.

RAISING ASPIRATIONS

- ✓ Increase the value of education to families and children;
- ✓ Increase pupil attendance, engagement, confidence and aspiration;
- ✓ Increase the proportion of school leavers going to positive destinations;
- ✓ Improve relationships between education settings and children and young people, parents and community;
- ✓ Build capacity within communities and increase collective impact through a whole community approach.

INTERMEDIARY BENEFITS

¹ Belfast has been sub divided into four areas.



The RAISE Programme helps to deliver on the mission set by the ‘A Fair Start’ report to ensure all children and young people regardless of background are given the best start in life. It aims to raise educational achievement and aspirations using a combination of Locality-Led Projects and Cross-Cutting Initiatives.

A series of Locality-Led Projects will be identified through an open call to deliver against the objectives and needs set out in the Strategic Area Plan for each RAISE locality. Cross-Cutting Initiatives will complement locality led projects by responding in a strategic way to priorities common to several localities and bringing additional opportunities to communities around key themes.

This bespoke Strategic Area Plan sets out the context for Coleraine and identifies the key issues that underpin educational disadvantage in the area, highlights potential proposals on how to address the identified gaps in provision and support the educational achievement of children and young people in the locality.

This Plan has been developed through a co-design process involving public engagement and creative approaches to give voice to organisations, children and young people and parents in the locality. The Department of Education recognises the commitment of local stakeholders and the Locality Reference Group to this co-design process. The Locality Reference Group (LRG) has played a critical role in informing, shaping and developing this Strategic Area Plan on behalf of the locality. It was produced in accordance with the guidance on the development of a Strategic Area Plan which can be found on the [DE website](#)². This Plan is owned by the locality and the Locality Reference Group.

The Department of Education recognises the commitment of local stakeholders and the Locality Reference Group to this co-design process.

² Developing a Locality Strategic Area Plan, Department of Education



Introducing the RAISE Coleraine Locality

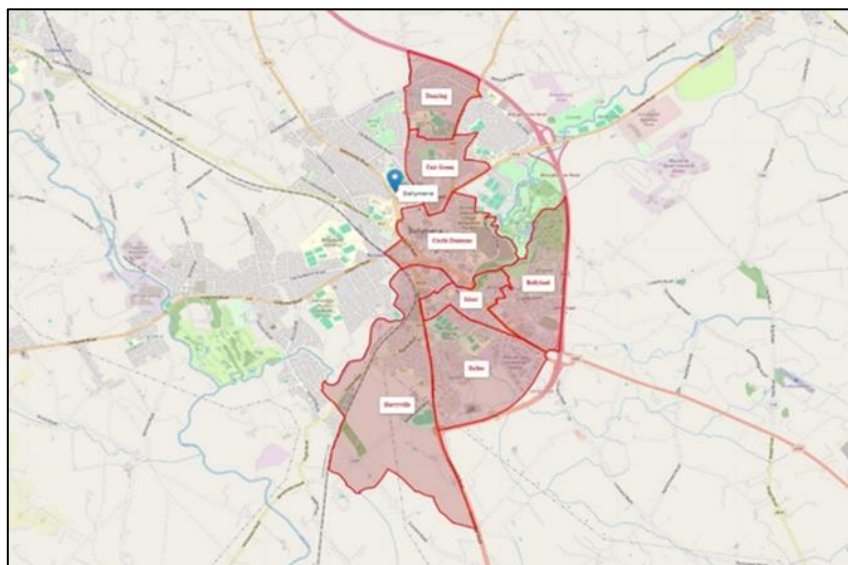
Coleraine is a town located in County Londonderry, within the administrative area of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (CCGC). The council was established in 2015 following the merger of the former Coleraine, Ballymoney, Limavady, and Moyle District Councils as part of the Review of Public Administration (RPA).

The town forms part of the East Londonderry Parliamentary Constituency for both the UK Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Coleraine sits within the Coleraine District Electoral Area (DEA), one of seven DEAs administered by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. This structure replaced the former smaller DEAs: Coleraine Town, Central, East, The Skerries, and Bann.

According to the 2021 Census, Coleraine had a total population of 24,483 residents. Of this, approximately 5,528 individuals (22%) were aged 0–18 years. This proportion is slightly above the Northern Ireland average of 21%³.

The map below illustrates the Super Output Areas (SOAs) within the Coleraine locality, outlining the geographic scope of the RAISE Programme.



The RAISE Coleraine Locality comprises 6 Super Output Areas (SOAs): **Ballysally 1, Ballysally 2, Central (Coleraine LGD), Churchland, Cross Glebe, and University.**

Coleraine is home to a diverse and evolving population, shaped by a combination of historical traditions and emerging demographic trends. While community identity and long-standing cultural influences continue to play an important role, the locality has experienced increasing diversity in recent years, with growing numbers of residents from minority ethnic communities, migrant families, LGBTQ+ communities, and other Section 75 groups.

Within the RAISE Coleraine locality, indicators of educational and social need are notably higher than the Northern Ireland average. Levels of Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME), Special Educational Needs (SEN), Newcomer pupils, and children looked after all reflect

³ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/people-and-communities/census>



the significant challenges faced by many families. Schools and youth services report increasing pressures linked to socio-economic deprivation, migration, and educational underachievement, highlighting the need for targeted support.

The locality is home to a significant Polish community, concentrated particularly in the Churchland area known locally as The Heights. The RAISE Locality Co-Ordinator has engaged extensively with migrant families and minority ethnic community networks to ensure that their experiences inform the development of services and improve access to educational opportunities.

Coleraine has also seen a growing number of asylum-seeking families temporarily accommodated within a local hotel. The Intercultural Education Service (IES) and the Department of Health (DoH) are working alongside schools and community partners to coordinate support. For younger children aged 4–11, Carnalridge Primary School has implemented supervised learning provision funded by the Education Authority (EA). For those aged 12–18, a dedicated community hub has been established by local faith-based groups, the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT), and voluntary organisations to provide creative activities, sports opportunities, professional advice, and links to wider services.

The Locality Co-Ordinator has undertaken extensive engagement across the Coleraine locality to support the development of the RAISE Programme. This has included meetings with key stakeholders from schools, statutory services, and the community and voluntary sectors; targeted engagement sessions with parents, children, and young people; facilitation of a strategic area planning workshop; and ongoing collaboration with the Locality Reference Group (LRG). This comprehensive engagement has ensured that local insights and priorities are embedded in this Strategic Area Plan.

Whilst there is strong community engagement and well-established local networks, single-identity neighbourhoods remain common across Coleraine, and legacy issues continue to influence patterns of social integration. Feedback from stakeholders highlights that marginalised groups, including migrants, LGBTQ+ young people, and minority ethnic families, continue to report experiences of racism, intolerance, and bullying. The development of the RAISE Programme offers an opportunity to strengthen inclusion, address inequalities, and improve educational and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people across the locality.



Key Statistics - Why is the RAISE Programme needed in Coleraine?

The vision for RAISE Coleraine is:

We envision a thriving, inclusive community where every child and young person is empowered to achieve their full potential. Through strong partnerships with families, schools, and local organisations, we are committed to breaking down barriers to education, fostering meaningful connections, and nurturing a culture of aspiration and success.

The statistics below set out the context behind the need for RAISE in the Coleraine locality.

- 47% of children in Ballysally and 30% in Churchlands are living in poverty⁴.
- 56% of benefit claimants in Ballysally and 43% in Churchlands are lone parents.
- 47.9% of pupils within the RAISE Coleraine locality are in receipt of Free School Meals. This is compared to the Northern Ireland average of 25.9%.⁵
- Children and young people in Coleraine are 25% more likely to experience mental health challenges compared to their peers elsewhere in the UK.
- The absence rate for the identified RAISE Coleraine SOAs is 10.2%, higher than the Northern Ireland average of 8.2%.
- In Coleraine, 43.3% of pupils are NOT achieving 5+ GCSEs A–C including English & Maths (2017/18 to 2021/22), compared to the Northern Ireland average of 25.3%.
- In RAISE Coleraine, only 18% of school leavers go on to Higher Education, less than half the Northern Ireland average of 40%.
- Coleraine has a slightly younger age profile than that of Northern Ireland with 22% of the Coleraine population were aged 0-18 years, higher than the Northern Ireland average of 21%⁶.
- The Causeway Coast and Glens area has the lowest Level 3+ qualification rate in Northern Ireland, 52% and the lowest digital literacy levels, 32.2%.
- Approximately 20% of young people are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), nearly double the Northern Ireland average of 10.3%.⁷

⁴ Neighbourhood Renewal Area (Source DFC 2022)

⁵ Data source: NI Annual School census

⁶ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/people-and-communities/census>

⁷ Neighbourhood Renewal Area (Source DFC 2022)



The data contained in the table below relates to the 6 SOAs identified in RAISE Coleraine⁸.

Total Pupil Numbers:	2,141 (including nursery pupils)
FSME:	1,026
Newcomer Pupils:	153
Children looked after:	30
Statemented Pupils:	264
SEN Category 1 & 2	298
Total SEN:	562
Minority Ethnic Communities:	110
% of school leavers Not achieving 5+ GCSEs A*-C incl. Eng/math 2017/18 to 2021/22: 43.3%	

Coleraine faces a complex set of challenges that go beyond the headline figures. High levels of poverty and social inequality are having a profound impact on children’s learning, development, and wellbeing, with many families experiencing financial pressures, unstable housing, and limited access to enrichment opportunities. These pressures are often compounded by other vulnerabilities, including single-parent households, special educational needs, and language barriers for newcomer and asylum-seeking families. In some communities, limited access to early years provision and targeted family support means many children start school without the social, emotional, and language skills they need to thrive.

Alongside economic and developmental barriers, Coleraine is experiencing rising concerns around children’s emotional health and wellbeing, with significant numbers of young people struggling with anxiety, low self-esteem, and behavioural challenges. Persistent school absence, higher than regional averages, further affects engagement and attainment, while community consultations highlight limited access to youth spaces, creative opportunities, and inclusive extracurricular provision. Stakeholders have also raised concerns about fragmented services, inconsistent access to specialist support, and postcode-driven inequalities, meaning that children with similar levels of need often receive very different levels of help depending on where they live. Together, these factors create a cycle of disadvantages that continues to affect educational outcomes and long-term life chances for many young people in Coleraine.

⁸ Data source: NI Annual School census



Existing Collaboration and Complementary Investment

Coleraine demonstrates a developing culture of partnership working across statutory agencies, schools, community organisations, and the voluntary sector. While collaboration is evident in a number of areas, the delivery of the RAISE Programme presents an opportunity to strengthen these relationships further. This approach aims to build on existing efforts, align with current provision, and minimise duplication of services, ensuring a more coordinated and responsive support system for children and young people.

The RAISE Programme aligns closely with the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's Community Plan⁹, "A Better Future Together", which sets out twelve intermediate outcomes for the borough, including the commitment that "children and young people will have the best start in life". RAISE will directly support the delivery of this outcome while being underpinned by the Department of Education's "A Fair Start" report¹⁰, which sets the policy context for tackling educational disadvantage through a whole-community, place-based approach.

At the centre of local coordination is the Coleraine Partnership, established in 2009 under the Department for Communities' People and Place strategy. The partnership supports regeneration and improved outcomes across two designated Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, Coleraine East (covering Ballysally and Millburn) and Coleraine Churchland's (covering The Heights and Killowen). Bringing together 25 members from statutory, voluntary, community, private and political sectors, the partnership meets bi-monthly and is supported by two working groups with 38 representatives. These groups oversee projects addressing social, economic and educational priorities in areas of highest need.

Early years support is a key focus in Coleraine, delivered through the Sure Start Partnership based in Society Street. Working alongside Focus on Family (Ballysally), Harpur's Hill Child & Family Centre (Cross Glebe), Westbann Development Group (Churchland's/Heights), and Women's Aid (Central Coleraine), the partnership delivers early intervention and family support across the locality. Complementary services include HomeStart, the Ballysally Integrated Nurturing Programme (BiNP), Harpur's Hill's Big Lottery-funded transition initiatives, and Westbann-led programmes supporting family wellbeing and inclusion.

Education-focused collaboration is well established through the Coleraine Education Community Project (CECP), funded by the Department for Communities and involving nine schools across the locality. Since 2010, the project has delivered targeted interventions to tackle educational underachievement, particularly in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, through literacy and numeracy support, attendance initiatives, and parent engagement programmes. Alongside CECP, the Coleraine Extended Learning Partnership, led by Kylemore Nursery School and involving two nurseries, five primary schools, and three post-primary schools, supports enrichment activities, improves access to extended learning, and fosters inclusion.

⁹ A Better Future Together with Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan | Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

¹⁰ A Fair Start – Final Report & Action Plan | Department of Education



Youth engagement is supported by the Bytes Project, which delivers cross-community youth programmes for 9–13-year-olds in Millburn and Churchland’s. Building on a successful pilot, the Bytes Project secured additional funding in 2023 to extend provision, introduce structured mental health support, and deliver inclusive activities for young people from diverse backgrounds.

Coleraine also benefits from links with regional networks and collaborative learning partnerships. Local organisations and schools have worked alongside counterparts in West Belfast, Ashton Community Trust, and Limavady to share best practice on regeneration and community-led education initiatives, ensuring innovative models are embedded locally.

Significant investment underpins and enhances the collaborative structures, strengthening the capacity of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area to achieve meaningful outcomes. Through the PEACEPLUS Programme, the locality is benefitting from a substantial funding package to support 23 projects, including initiatives specific to Coleraine.

Under Theme 3: Empowering and Investing in Young People, funding is directed towards a diverse range of targeted programmes designed to support education, youth development and mental health and wellbeing. These include:

- Shared Learning Together Education Programme, which encompasses initiatives such as ASPIRE, Healthy Kidz, and Young Social Innovators, promoting inclusive education and cross-community engagement.
- PEACEPLUS Youth Programme, supporting projects like STRIVE, YMCA Empower to Transform, and AMPLIFY Youth Action, all aimed at fostering leadership, resilience, and civic participation among young people.
- Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing, delivered through the Our Generation programme, which focuses on early intervention and promoting inclusion and emotional wellbeing.

This strategic investment reflects a commitment to empowering young people and building a more inclusive and resilient society across the region.

Schools across Coleraine benefit from annual Extended Schools funding, enabling targeted interventions that improve attainment, strengthen family engagement, and support pupil wellbeing. In addition, the Department of Education provides funding to support Nurture provision in local schools, alongside investment in the Pathway Fund and Targeting Social Need (TSN) programmes to tackle educational disadvantage.

Investment in skills and infrastructure also enhances provision for young people. The Department for the Economy have invested in the Northern Regional College (NRC), including the new Causeway Campus in Coleraine, which opened in 2023. This state-of-the-art facility offers places for 1,300 students and expands opportunities for apprenticeships, vocational training, and community education. There is further funding from the Department for the Skills for Life and Work programme, Apprenticeships NI, and Labour Market Partnerships to improve employability across the borough.



Support for young people’s wellbeing and inclusion is also strengthened through investment from the Education Authority (EA) and its youth service. Programmes such as REACH and FLARE promote mental health and resilience, while RISE NI delivers early intervention in pre-school and primary settings, focusing on speech, motor, and emotional development.

The RAISE Programme will complement, rather than duplicate, existing services by working alongside established local partnerships, funded programmes, and community-led initiatives. By aligning with existing strategies, maximising available resources, and embedding a place-based approach, RAISE will strengthen local capacity, address persistent inequalities, and improve educational and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people across the locality.



Needs Analysis

Views of Children and Young People

On behalf of the RAISE Programme, Stranmillis University College was commissioned to carry out engagement with children and young people across Coleraine to inform this Strategic Area Plan. The RAISE programme has adopted the Lundy Model of Participation (2007). This rights-based framework ensured that children and young people were provided with a safe and inclusive space to express their views, were supported to develop and articulate their voice, had their views actively listened to by an audience with the power to act, and saw their input have genuine influence on the development of the Strategic Area Plan¹¹.

An initial workshop facilitated by Stranmillis University College engaged twenty-four participants of varying ages at a community-based session. This was followed by two further consultations led by the Locality Co-ordinator, involving twenty-one young people aged 10–16 years from across the RAISE Coleraine SOAs. These sessions were delivered in educational and youth work settings and followed the same participatory methodology as the Stranmillis-led workshop. In total, 45 children and young people aged 8–18 years were directly consulted in RAISE Coleraine through engagement with the community and voluntary youth sector, statutory youth services and schools.

Broader regional engagement was captured through a dedicated RAISE Regional Consultation Event, attended by seventy children and young people. Participants represented a wide range of backgrounds and settings, including mainstream and alternative education, Irish Medium education, youth-led groups, care-experienced individuals and members of the Muslim and Traveller communities. This event provided a platform to further explore and validate key priorities in education for the Coleraine locality.

Some of the key themes highlighted by the young people included:

- **Exam Preparation & Transitions** – Some older participants reported feeling underprepared for exams, citing a lack of accessible academic support and mentoring. Concerns were also raised about the challenges of transitioning into post-primary.
- **Aspirations & Pathways** – While many young people have aspirations for the future, they reported limited access to career guidance, mentoring, and structured opportunities to develop the skills needed for employment or further education.
- **Mental Health & Wellbeing** – Young people reported challenges accessing timely and effective mental health and emotional wellbeing support. SEN related pressures, including ADHD and ASD, were repeatedly highlighted as significant barriers to learning and personal development.

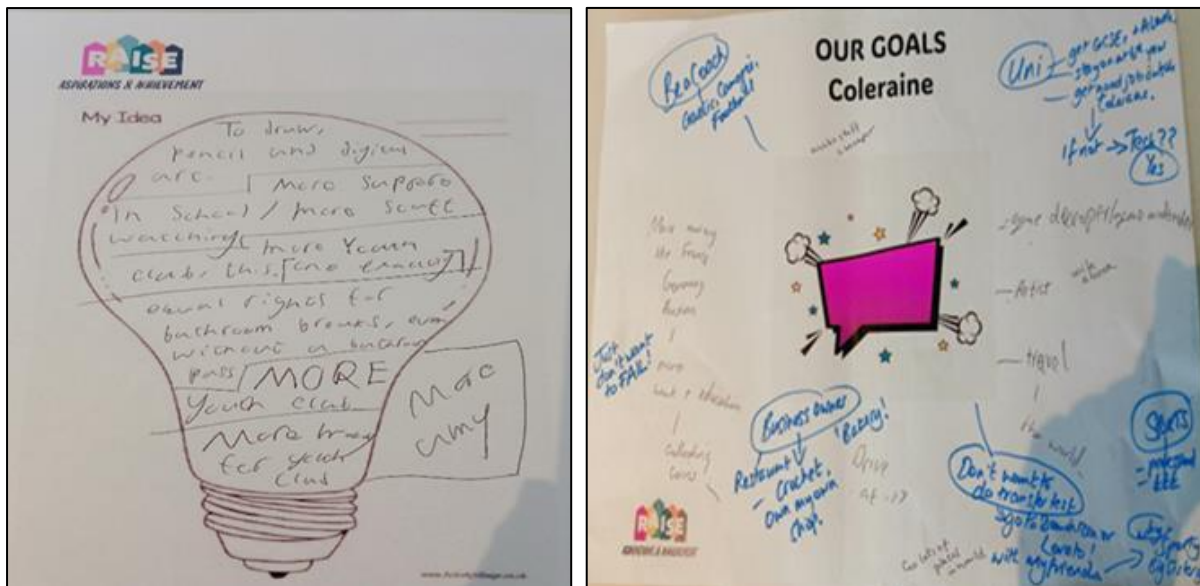
¹¹ [The Lundy Model | Research | Queen's University Belfast, 2014](#)



- **School Experience** – Participants raised concerns about bullying, stigma, and exclusion within school environments.

Engagement with children and young people highlighted a strong appetite among young people for improved emotional wellbeing support, greater inclusion within schools, and equal access to opportunities. Young people expressed a clear desire for their voices to be heard in shaping services and for better access to structured pathways that enable them to achieve their aspirations.

Education emerged as a significant theme, young people spoke about pressures linked to academic performance, exams, and transition points between school stages, noting that greater support during these periods would help reduce disengagement and anxiety. Some also felt that communication between schools, pupils, and families could be improved, calling for clearer information, better collaboration, and more consistent pastoral support.



Views of Parents and Carers

Parenting Focus, commissioned by the Department of Education, facilitated engagement with parents and carers within the Coleraine RAISE locality. A total of seven parents participated in two focus group sessions, supported by a wider parent survey circulated across the locality.

The first session gathered views on education, mental health, parental support, and access to local services. During the second session, the findings from the initial engagement were presented back to the group by the locality coordinator, allowing parents to confirm, challenge, or expand on the themes identified. This provided an opportunity for deeper discussion and ensured that the final insights accurately reflected the experiences and perspectives of families within the locality.



Parents and carers emphasised concerns about school readiness and transitions. Parents described difficulties preparing children for starting school, particularly where additional needs exist, and highlighted the value of early years programmes and targeted supports to improve outcomes. Many also felt that existing transition arrangements between primary and post-primary education could be strengthened to better support continuity of learning and wellbeing.

The need for earlier identification and support for children with special educational needs (SEN) and challenges linked to emotional wellbeing was highlighted by parents and carers. Many reported delays in accessing assessments, long waiting times for services, and inconsistent communication between schools and statutory agencies. They expressed a strong desire for clearer information about available supports and better collaboration between education, health, and community services to ensure families receive joined-up, timely interventions.



Parents and carers additionally highlighted inequalities in access to youth provision, extracurricular activities, and enrichment opportunities, with financial pressures acting as a barrier. They asked for widening opportunities for sports, arts, and social engagement, as well as improving access to mentoring and careers guidance.

Feedback gathered from both children and young people, as well as parents and carers, highlighted several shared priorities within the Coleraine locality. Across both groups, there is a strong call for:

- Better access and support for pathways into further education, training, and employment.
- Earlier intervention and timely support to address emotional wellbeing, mental health, and special educational needs.
- Better communication and stronger partnerships between schools, families, and statutory services to ensure more coordinated and effective support.
- More mentoring, careers advice, and life skills development to better prepare children and young people for the future.



Gaps in provision

The Coleraine locality faces persistent and interconnected challenges affecting educational attainment, emotional wellbeing, and opportunities for children and young people. While there is a strong network of schools, statutory agencies, and community and voluntary organisations delivering valuable services, current provision is not sufficient to meet the scale or complexity of need.

There are examples of effective local initiatives making a real difference. Programmes such as Sure Start, the Bytes Project, and the Harpur's Hill Early Years Readiness Programme demonstrate positive outcomes for families and young people. However, these models are either geographically limited or constrained by funding, meaning many children and families cannot access the same level of support. Stakeholders highlighted that extending the reach of what already works would significantly strengthen outcomes but requires additional investment and coordination.

Provision gaps are also shaped by broader structural challenges. High levels of poverty and inequality continue to drive educational disadvantage, with families facing barriers to accessing affordable childcare, early years services, and enrichment activities. Fragmented service delivery and limited coordination between schools, health, statutory services, and community organisations mean support is inconsistent, leading to duplication in some areas and gaps in others. Postcode-driven inequalities compound these challenges, with children living in neighbouring areas often receiving different levels of help despite similar needs.

Through extensive consultation, the Locality Reference Group (LRG) identified several emerging priorities where gaps in provision are most significant:

- School Readiness & Early Years Development
- Attainment Gap & need for GCSE support
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) & Additional Educational Needs (AEN)
- Attendance & Engagement
- Pathways, Aspirations & Positive Destinations

Addressing these gaps requires scaling up proven models, investing in targeted interventions, and improving collaboration between partners to ensure that children and young people in the RAISE Coleraine locality have the right support at the right time.



Emerging Priorities

Emerging Priority – School Readiness & Early Years Development

Why It Matters

- The first five years of life are critical for brain development, emotional regulation, and language acquisition, laying the foundations for lifelong learning and wellbeing.
- Global evidence shows that early intervention delivers the highest return on investment, helping to reduce long-term inequalities and improve outcomes.
- The Early Years Organisation recommends investing 1% of GDP in early learning and care by 2030, reflecting its strategic importance.
- The Locality Reference Group (LRG) and stakeholders agree this is the top strategic priority for Coleraine, representing the greatest opportunity to make a long-term positive impact on educational outcomes and life chances.

Coleraine Context

Coleraine faces growing challenges in ensuring children begin school with the skills they need to succeed. Local professionals report that many children are entering education without core language, social, and emotional skills, which has long-term consequences for learning and development. Around 26% of pupils in Coleraine are on the SEN register, reflecting significant developmental needs emerging from early childhood.

There are examples of effective early years interventions in the locality:

- The Harpur's Hill Early Years Readiness Programme has achieved measurable improvements in language, social development, and parental confidence through an integrated, multi-agency model.
- Sure Start delivers targeted family and early years support, but access is geographically restricted, leaving many families outside its reach.
- Programmes like Focus on Family provide valuable parental engagement and learning support, but capacity limits prevent them from meeting the full level of need.

Despite these positive examples, provision remains inconsistent, with postcode-driven inequalities meaning some families access high-quality services while others have little or no support. Capacity pressures, including limited numbers of skilled early years practitioners and restricted access to speech and language service, further widen the gap.

Coleraine has strong foundations to build on through effective existing models, but current provision cannot meet the scale of demand. There is an opportunity to:

- Extend successful programmes like Harpur's Hill, Sure Start, and Focus on Family into currently underserved areas.
- Enhance parental support not just in the early years but throughout primary school, equipping families with the knowledge, tools, and strategies to support children's learning and smooth educational transitions.



- Scale up early intervention to ensure equitable access, improve school readiness, and reduce long-term inequalities.

Emerging Priority – Attainment Gap

Why It Matters

- Socioeconomic disadvantage is a key driver of educational inequality, with children from lower-income households less likely to achieve qualifications and more likely to disengage from education.
- National research consistently links poverty to reduced attainment, which affects not only employment opportunities but also long-term health, wellbeing, and life outcomes.
- The Locality Reference Group (LRG) and stakeholders have identified closing the attainment gap as a strategic priority for Coleraine, given its direct impact on educational pathways, social mobility, and future prosperity.

Coleraine Context

Coleraine faces significant and persistent challenges around educational attainment. Between 2017 and 2022, 43.3% of school leavers failed to achieve five or more GCSEs including English and Maths, a figure well above the Northern Ireland average, 25.3%. At the same time, 47.9% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals (FSME), underlining the strong link between deprivation and lower attainment outcomes in the locality.

While schools are delivering a range of literacy, numeracy, and exam preparation programmes, provision is uneven and insufficient to meet the level of need. Stakeholders reported:

- Limited access to targeted tutoring and structured GCSE support programmes outside of school in community settings.
- Inconsistent delivery of literacy and numeracy interventions across schools and community settings.
- Fewer opportunities for pupils to access enrichment activities and broader learning experiences that build motivation, confidence, and aspiration.
- Inequalities in provision between areas covered by Sure Start and those without, with parents highlighting concerns about the long-term impact of this disparity.

Stakeholders emphasised that tackling this issue requires a whole-community approach. Supporting GCSE attainment cannot be achieved by schools alone, there is a need for greater collaboration between schools, families, community and voluntary organisations, and statutory partners to provide joined-up academic, emotional, and practical support. Initiatives delivered through community-based settings, such as homework clubs, mentoring programmes, and targeted tutoring, have been highlighted as effective but currently lack sufficient scale and consistency across the locality.

Coleraine has the foundations for change, with partnerships between schools, local providers, and community organisations already in place. There is an opportunity to:

- Expand access to high-quality tutoring and structured GCSE preparation programmes, targeting pupils at greatest risk of underachievement both in school and in community settings.



- Develop community-based learning initiatives after school to provide flexible, accessible support for pupils outside the classroom.
- Increase enrichment opportunities that raise aspirations, build confidence, and help young people stay engaged with education.
- Strengthen collaboration across schools, families, and community partners to create a coordinated approach to improving attainment and reducing inequalities.

Closing the attainment gap in Coleraine requires sustained investment, an integrated community response, and a commitment to ensuring that every child has access to the academic and enrichment support they need to succeed.

Emerging Priority – Pathways, Aspirations & Positive Destinations

Why It Matters

- Supporting young people into positive pathways, whether further education, training, or employment is critical to breaking cycles of intergenerational disadvantage and improving long-term life outcomes.
- The Northern Ireland Skills Strategy highlights the need to better link education, career pathways, and local labour market needs to prepare young people for the future economy.
- Without targeted intervention, young people are at greater risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), which has long-term consequences for wellbeing, employment prospects, and community resilience.

Coleraine Context

In Coleraine, low aspirations and limited awareness of future opportunities are significant barriers to positive outcomes. Young people reported feeling uncertain about their career options, with limited exposure to alternative pathways beyond traditional academic routes. Parents also highlighted difficulties accessing clear, up-to-date information about apprenticeships, vocational opportunities, and post-16 provision, making it harder to support their children’s decision-making.

Stakeholders stressed the need for stronger collaboration between schools, employers, and training providers to better prepare young people for local labour market needs and create clearer, more structured pathways into employment. Stakeholders also identified a need to raise aspirations earlier, starting in primary school, so that children begin to explore career opportunities at a younger age. Programmes such as Primary Futures have proven effective in connecting pupils with employers and showcasing the breadth of opportunities available, but these initiatives are limited in scale and could be expanded across the locality to have a greater impact.

Coleraine has the potential to transform how young people are supported into positive destinations by:

- Strengthening careers education and guidance to ensure pupils and parents have access to clear, consistent information about all available pathways.
- Expanding programmes like Primary Futures to raise aspirations earlier and expose children to a wider range of careers from primary level onwards.



- Developing stronger partnerships between schools, training providers, and local employers to improve alignment between skills supply and labour market demand.
- Increasing access to work experience, mentoring, and skills-based programmes to better equip young people for future opportunities and reduce the risk of becoming NEET.

Coleraine requires a coordinated, community-wide approach that builds aspirations early, strengthens employer engagement, and ensures every young person can access the right guidance, skills, and opportunities to achieve their ambitions.

Emerging Priority – Attendance & Engagement

Why It Matters

- School attendance is critical to educational attainment, social development, and future life opportunities.
- National evidence shows that pupils with poor attendance are significantly less likely to achieve key qualifications, leaving them at greater risk of disengagement from education, training, and employment.

Coleraine Context

Coleraine faces persistent challenges around attendance and pupil engagement. The locality's persistent absence rate (10.2%) is well above the Northern Ireland average, 8.2%, with many pupils missing substantial periods of education. Professionals reported that absence and reduced engagement are often linked to poverty, poor emotional wellbeing, additional learning needs, and limited family support.

Stakeholders highlighted several key pressures:

- A lack of targeted, family-focused interventions to tackle persistent absenteeism.
- Increasing numbers of pupils experiencing reduced engagement in learning, particularly in the later stages of primary and early post-primary education.
- Disparities between areas, with pupils in communities facing higher levels of deprivation at greater risk of disengagement.

While schools and community organisations are delivering a range of initiatives, including mentoring programmes, youth engagement projects, and home-school liaison work, provision is fragmented and under-resourced. For example, the Bytes Project and other local initiatives provide valuable re-engagement activities for young people struggling to stay in education, but capacity is limited, and many families cannot access this support when it is needed most.

Improving attendance and engagement requires a coordinated, whole-community approach. There is an opportunity to:

- Strengthen early intervention to identify and support pupils at risk of persistent absence before patterns become entrenched.
- Expand community-based engagement initiatives, such as mentoring, youth programmes, and family support, to re-engage pupils in education.



- Improve collaboration between schools, families, statutory services, and community providers to tackle the underlying causes of non-attendance.
- Ensure consistent, accessible support across the locality so that all children and young people have the opportunity to fully participate in education.

Addressing attendance and engagement challenges in Coleraine is critical to closing attainment gaps, improving wellbeing, and supporting every child to reach their potential.

Emerging Priority – Special Educational Needs (SEN) & Additional Educational Needs (AEN)

Why It Matters

- Children with special educational needs are at greater risk of lower attainment, poorer wellbeing, and reduced long-term opportunities without the right support in place.
- Northern Ireland strategies emphasise the importance of early identification, inclusive practices, and targeted intervention to improve outcomes.

Coleraine Context

Coleraine has a significantly higher proportion of pupils with SEN than the Northern Ireland average, with 562 pupils (26%) on the SEN register, including 264 children (12.3%) with statements. This places increasing pressure on schools, where capacity and resources are stretched.

Schools report challenges in providing specialist support, classroom assistance, and tailored interventions to meet the growing level of need. Parents expressed frustration about the inconsistent access to services, while stakeholders highlighted gaps in coordinated provision across education, health, and community settings.

A key priority identified locally is the need for greater professional development for SENCOs, teaching staff, and classroom assistants. Staff require enhanced training, tools, and practical strategies to better support pupils with additional needs and embed inclusive practices consistently across schools.

Coleraine has the potential to strengthen provision for pupils with SEN and AEN by:

- Investing in professional development for SENCOs, teachers, and classroom assistants to build capacity and improve inclusive practice.
- Enhancing targeted interventions and specialist provision to better meet children's needs within mainstream settings where possible.
- Improving collaboration between schools, families, and services to ensure more joined-up, effective support.

Addressing SEN and AEN needs is essential to improving attainment, reducing inequalities, and ensuring every child in Coleraine has the opportunity to thrive.



In addition to the emerging priorities, six wider overarching issues were identified that influence outcomes for children and young people across Coleraine:

- Poverty and inequality – Persistent deprivation continues to influence school readiness, attainment, and wellbeing across the locality.
- Emotional Health & Wellbeing – increasing concerns around children’s emotional health and wellbeing, with rising levels of anxiety, low mood, and behavioural challenges. Access to timely specialist support is limited, and existing services are struggling to meet demand.
- Access inequalities – Services and supports are unevenly distributed, with postcode-driven gaps limiting opportunities for some families.
- Service fragmentation – Capacity constraints and disconnected provision make it harder for families to access coordinated, timely support.
- Joined-up delivery – Stronger collaboration is needed between statutory bodies, schools, and the community sector to align services and maximise impact.
- Scaling what works – Proven local programmes need sustained investment and expansion to improve consistency and reach across Coleraine.



Summary of Key Needs Identified

The table below provides a summary of the key needs identified in Coleraine. Further detail is provided in the RAISE Coleraine Strategic Objectives Section.

Priority Ranking	Objective
1.	To improve readiness to learn for nursery to primary school for children aged 4-6 years old with a focus on social, emotional, cognitive and communication skills, while supporting pre-reading abilities and emotional regulation.
2.	To improve attainment at GCSE by delivering targeted after-school learning and revision sessions in school and community settings to support Year 11, Year 12, and repeating Year 13 pupils, particularly those on the C/D border to achieve five GCSEs at grades A–C, including Maths and English.
3.	To engage pupils in Key Stage 4 at risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) as they transition from school into further education, employment or training by providing mentoring, support and enhanced careers advice.
4.	To increase parental engagement and capacity to support children aged 7-11 years old, equipping parents with the knowledge and strategies to help with their children’s educational journey.
5.	Reduce school-based avoidance and persistent absenteeism among Key Stage 3 & Key Stage 4 pupils by implementing a Family Connector Model across three pilot post-primary schools.
6.	Improve early language outcomes for children aged 0-4 years, by building the capacity of the early year’s workforce across the Coleraine locality by establishing a cluster model.
7.	Strengthen the capacity of teachers, SENCOs and classroom assistants across the locality by delivering additional targeted, research-informed professional learning on areas including special educational needs (SEN), emotional wellbeing, Adverse Children Experiences (ACE’s), and trauma-informed practice (TIP).
8.	Raise aspirations and broaden career awareness among primary-aged pupils (6-11 years) by delivering the Primary Future Programme across all schools in the Coleraine SOAs.



Next Steps

To deliver against the objectives and identified needs set out in this Strategic Area Plan a series of Locality-Led Projects will be identified through an open call for projects. Project proposals are invited from a wide range of organisations. Further information is available in guidance notes on the [DE website](#)¹².

Organisations will submit a Locality-Led Project Identification Template for consideration by an Assessment Panel against agreed assessment criteria. Decisions on the range of projects to be supported in each Locality will be taken by the RAISE Programme Board.

¹² <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/raise-locality-led-projects>



RAISE Coleraine Strategic Area Plan Objectives

Objective	Rationale	Measures	Who will benefit?	Scale of Support	Potential Solutions	Priority / Ranking
Objective 1: Readiness To Learn – Nursey to Primary Support						
<p>To improve readiness to learn for nursery to primary school for children aged 4-6 years old with a focus on social, emotional, cognitive and communication skills, while supporting pre-reading abilities and emotional regulation.</p> <p>A consortium of community and voluntary organisations could deliver the programme in coordination with nursery and primary schools.</p> <p>This objective will extend and enhance an existing model delivered in the Harpur’s Hill area which supports transitions from Sure Start to nursery and primary schools into other locations within the RAISE SOAs.</p> <p>Timescale: January 2026 – August 2027</p> <p>Lead RAISE Intermediary Benefit Increase the value of education to families and children.</p>	<p>This was a priority highlighted in the Parenting Focus consultation and reaffirmed by the LRG.</p> <p>Research supports early intervention as critical for addressing rising developmental concerns, especially in speech, school readiness, and emotional regulation.</p> <p>90% of Early Years Providers have seen an increase in the number of children with SLCN.</p> <p>There is a clear link between smooth transitions and improved educational outcomes for pupils.</p> <p>Aligns with the Fair Start Report’s emphasis on early years (0–6yrs), complementing Sure Start’s 0–3yrs focus by bridging the 4–6yrs gap.</p>	<p>60% of parents whose children participated reported that their child experienced a smooth transition into primary school.</p> <p>Level of parental engagement in learning.</p> <p>Use Outcome Star to measure children’s progress across social, emotional, cognitive, communication and early literacy.</p>	<p>Children aged 4-6 years in the locality identified by participating nursery and primary schools on the basis of need using criteria such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child on Additional Needs Register ▪ Disability of child / in family ▪ FSM eligibility ▪ English as additional language ▪ Newcomer Family ▪ Neither parent working ▪ LAC / FIT involvement ▪ DV ▪ Families in crisis (e.g., temporary homeless) 	<p>58 rising to 78 in Year 2. Amount per school to be proportioned using RAISE data per school.</p> <p>3 primary schools and their feeder preschools located within the RAISE SOA’s. Schools will be ranked based on the largest number of target children and excluding those with similar projects.</p> <p>362 (16.9%) pupils are in Primary School Nursery, Reception, Year 1 & Year 2 in the locality.</p>	<p>It is anticipated that a Parent Support Transition & Home Link programme could deliver a range of bespoke interventions to improve readiness for the children identified.</p> <p>Key components of the programme may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Home Visits with resources to support parents and enable their child to smoothly transition from preschool and establish comfortably in foundation stage. ▪ Continuity of support for child through stages of transitioning and changes in barriers/issues they experience in the timeframe. ▪ School based groups for parents & children together to break down barriers and for parents alone to provide peer support. ▪ Collaboration with other community partners on a shared vision plus relationships with regional / area wide external support agencies. ▪ Focus of both school-based P&C sessions and home resources on early reading and parental engagement / understanding of the importance of play. ▪ Single workshops – based on need and multi-week parent programmes evidence based (e.g.: Solihull Parenting / Incredible Years). 	<p>1. (High)</p>



Objective 2: GCSE Attainment - After-School Revision

<p>To improve attainment at GCSE level by delivering targeted after-school learning and revision sessions in school and community settings to support Year 11, Year 12, and repeating Year 13 pupils.</p> <p>Focus on those pupils on the C/D border, to achieve five GCSEs at grades A–C, including Maths and English.</p> <p>Timescale: January 2026 – August 2027</p> <p>Lead RAISE Intermediary Benefit Raising standards with a focus on literacy, numeracy, and digital skills outcomes for all pupils.</p>	<p>This objective directly addresses the locality attainment gap, where 43.3% of school leavers did NOT achieve five GCSEs at grades A–C including Maths and English (2017/18 to 2021/22), significantly higher than the Northern Ireland average of 25.3%.</p> <p>The LRG have identified this as an area needing addressed.</p> <p>47.9% pupils in the locality receive FSME.</p> <p>Research consistently shows that children who grow up in poverty face significant barriers to learning, leading to poorer educational outcomes.</p> <p>Schools identified the need for additional support in community settings.</p>	<p>Increase the proportion achieving 5+ GCSEs including English & Maths among the targeted cohort (baseline vs post intervention).</p> <p>Numbers of pupils moving into further education or training.</p>	<p>Year 11, Year 12 and repeating Year 13 pupils as identified by the school on a basis of need.</p> <p>Focus on pupils who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the C/D boundary • FSME • EAL 	<p>376 (18%) of pupils are in Years 11-13 in the locality.</p> <p>Pupils will be identified by the post-primary schools within the RASIE SOAs, on the basis of need considering the focus pupil demographics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the C/D boundary • FSME • EAL 	<p>Deliver an after-school revision programme, key components of the programme may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School or community-based revision sessions. ▪ Sessions will be facilitated by current or former teachers, or individuals holding a recognised teaching qualification. ▪ Provision of quiet study spaces. ▪ Targeted small-group tutoring/learning support. <p>A designated organisation will oversee programme coordination, ensuring quality and consistency across delivery sites, this could be a school or community and voluntary organisation.</p> <p>Schools are encouraged to work in partnership with community or voluntary sector organisations to enhance reach and engagement.</p> <p>Activities should complement existing school initiatives to maximise impact and avoid duplication or displacement.</p>	<p>2. (High)</p>
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Objective 3: Positive Destinations Post School

<p>To engage pupils in Key Stage 4 at risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) as they transition from school into further education, employment or training by providing mentoring, support and enhanced careers advice.</p> <p>Timescale: January 2026 – August 2027</p> <p>Lead RAISE Intermediary Benefit Increase the proportion of school leavers going to positive destinations.</p>	<p>In 2023/24 18% of pupils in the locality advanced to higher education, compared with the Northern Ireland average of 40%.</p> <p>The LRG have highlighted this as an area for improvement.</p> <p>Between 2017/18 and 2021/22, 43.3% of pupils in the locality did NOT achieve five GCSEs at grades A–C including Maths and English, significantly higher than the Northern Ireland average of 25.3%.</p>	<p>Numbers of pupils moving onto education, employment, or training.</p> <p>Pre and post surveys on participation, motivation, confidence etc.</p> <p>Improvements in GCSE/Level 2 attainment with emphasis on English and Maths.</p>	<p>Pupils in Key Stage 4 at risk of becoming NEET as identified on a need’s basis by post-primary schools in the locality.</p> <p>Focus on pupils who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seeking alternative access to achieve Essential Skills literacy, numeracy, or GCSE for re-entry to education. ▪ Issues at home affecting attendance. ▪ English is the pupil’s second language and one not spoken within the family home. ▪ Engaging with statutory support services referred to i.e. social services, CAMHs, YJA. 	<p>30 pupils identified by post-primary schools as most at risk of becoming NEET.</p> <p>314 (15%) of pupils are Key Stage 4 in the locality.</p>	<p>It is anticipated that this targeted approach could involve a dedicated role to work in partnership with school career services, Northern Regional College (NRC), and local businesses to offer enhanced careers advice and guidance.</p> <p>Pupils will be identified from post-primary schools within the RAISE locality.</p> <p>Key components could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring young people have clear aspirations around Post 16 programmes through a deeper understanding of the possibilities available to them. ▪ Supporting pupils in raising awareness of what they need to achieve their aspirations and using individual strategies to support development. 	<p>3. (Medium)</p>
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Objective 4: Primary Transition - Parental Support Programme

<p>To increase parental engagement and capacity to support children aged 7-11 years old, equipping parents with the knowledge and strategies to help with their children’s educational journey.</p> <p>Building on Objective One Readiness to Learn, this objective extends support to parents of 7–11 year-olds as children progress through primary school. The focus shifts from preparing children to start school towards sustaining parental involvement in learning.</p> <p>Timescale: January 2026 – August 2027</p> <p>Lead RAISE Intermediary Benefit Increase the value of education to families and children.</p>	<p>The LRG have highlighted this as an area for improvement.</p> <p>The Parenting Focus consultation highlighted this as an area to be addressed.</p> <p>Report cards from Family Support Hubs outline extensive numbers of children aged 6-9 in locality being referred yearly.</p>	<p>A baseline survey will be conducted with the children and parents.</p> <p>60% of parents participating will report an improvement in their ability to engage with their child’s educational journey.</p> <p>40% of children involved will show improved educational outcomes.</p> <p>Parental engagement – use of measurement tools such as Outcome Star.</p>	<p>Children aged 7-11 years old and their parents within the locality identified by primary schools on the basis of need.</p> <p>Focus on children who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tier 1 and Tier 2 attendance ▪ Child on Additional Needs Register ▪ Disability of child / in family ▪ FSM eligibility ▪ English as additional language ▪ Newcomer Family ▪ Neither parent working ▪ LAC / FIT involvement ▪ Domestic Violence ▪ Families in crisis (e.g., temporary homeless) 	<p>Year one of the programme will serve as a pilot phase, implemented in one primary school with participation from 10 pupils.</p> <p>695 (32%) of pupils are aged 7-11 years old in the locality.</p>	<p>It is anticipated that parental support at primary stage, could extend the work of the family support team working within nurse to primary readiness to learn (Objective 1).</p> <p>This parental support role could be based either within a primary school, the family support team, or as part of a multi-sectoral/agency model involving NHSCT, private providers, and community & voluntary support services.</p> <p>Referrals will be made by the primary school for early intervention support and could offer a tailored programme of support with access to interventions or referral to specialist support services.</p> <p>It would be expected there would be close collaboration with statutory services e.g., SLT, Health visitors, School nursing team, Gateway etc.</p> <p>No designated timescales to be applied for the length of time support required, based on identified need at entry point and closing when child/family have addressed short term need.</p>	<p>4. (Medium)</p>
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Objective 5: Reducing Persistent School Absenteeism

<p>Reduce school-based avoidance and persistent absenteeism among Key Stage 3 & Key Stage 4 pupils by implementing a Family Connector Model across three pilot post-primary schools.</p> <p>The Family Connector team will deliver 1:1 support to pupils, and structured engagement with parents/carers, and coordinate referral pathways to community and statutory service, working with EHWTS in line with Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Schools Framework.</p> <p>Timescale: January 2026 – August 2027</p> <p>Lead RAISE Intermediary Benefit Increase pupil attendance, engagement, confidence and aspiration.</p>	<p>The LRG have highlighted this as an area for improvement.</p> <p>2023/24 attendance rate in Coleraine locality is 10.2%, higher than Northern Ireland average, 8.2%.</p>	<p>Reduction in the persistent absenteeism.</p> <p>Increase in pupil attendance across the cohort.</p> <p>Reduction in reduced/restricted timetables and re-engagement in full-time schooling.</p> <p>Pupil self-reported improvement in emotional wellbeing, anxiety management, and sense of school belonging through pre & post surveys.</p> <p>Number of families who engage with the Family Connector and successfully complete an individualised support plan.</p>	<p>Key Stage 3 & Key Stage 4 pupils with Tier 2 & Tier 3 attendance identified by schools on the basis of need, using criteria such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restricted/Reduced timetables. ▪ Young people not meeting EWO criteria but at risk of disengagement, especially in years 10, 11, and 12. ▪ Disclosure of issues at home and/or in their lives affecting attendance (EHWB – school-based anxiety, bereavement, separation, health reasons). ▪ YP engaging with statutory support services referred to i.e. social services, CAMHS, YJA, targeted youth service provision. ▪ Care experienced young people. 	<p>50 Post primary pupils – aged 12-16 years across 3 schools.</p> <p>This will be a pilot programme with the 3 amalgamating schools in Coleraine.</p>	<p>It is possible that a Family Connector Team could include two potential roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pupils – provides 1:1 Support and counselling for pupils at risk. ▪ Parents - works directly with parents/carers, providing tailor family support and acting as the connector between home, school and wider services. <p>It would be necessary for this team to coordinate with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EHWTS and statutory services including social service, CAMHS, YJA. ▪ Partner with local therapeutic providers such as Ashes to Gold or Zachary Geddis Foundation to deliver specialist mental health support either in-school or through referral based 1:1 sessions. <p>This model could be delivered within schools, with a lead school or in collaboration with specialist therapeutic service providers.</p>	<p>5. (Medium)</p>
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Objective 6: Strengthening Early Years Language Development through an Early Years cluster

<p>Improve early language outcomes for children aged 0-4 years, by building the capacity of the early year's workforce across the Coleraine locality by establishing a cluster model.</p> <p>Timescale: January 2026 – August 2027</p> <p>Lead RAISE Intermediary Benefit Build capacity within communities and increase collective impact through a whole community approach.</p>	<p>The LRG have highlighted this as an area for improvement.</p> <p>This cluster will enhance collaboration between preschools, community playgroups, and parents through a coordinated Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Framework. This strengthens professional skills, encourage shared learning, and supports staff in engaging effectively with parents, ensuring children enter primary school with the language skills required to thrive.</p>	<p>% of children achieving expected level of communication and language development at the end of preschool (baseline vs post-intervention).</p> <p>Number and % early years practitioners completed accredited CPD modules.</p> <p>Practitioner self-assessment of confidence in supporting language development.</p> <p>% of parents attending language focused workshops or home learning sessions.</p> <p>Number of parents provided with structured toolkits.</p> <p>Self-reported changes in parents' confidence in supporting early communication at home.</p>	<p>All pre-schools and pathway-funded community playgroups within the RAISE SOAs.</p> <p>Children aged 0-4 and their parents identified by pre-schools and playgroups on the basis of need.</p>	<p>Approximately 138 pupils aged 0-4 years old within Primary Nursery, Independent Nursery and DE Funded Voluntary and Private pre-schools.</p>	<p>A possible approach is to create a dedicated Early Years Navigator role to establish and lead a cluster network, based on the successful Area Learning Community (ALC) model used in post-primary schools. The Navigator would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinate training and development across settings. ▪ Facilitate cross-setting collaboration and peer learning. ▪ Build stronger links between early years providers, parents and schools. <p>A structured CPD framework for early years practitioners, should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language and communication development strategies for children aged 0-4. ▪ Early identification for speech, language and developmental delays. ▪ Best practice in engaging hard-to-reach parents. ▪ Building staff capacity to integrate evidence-based approach into daily practice. ▪ Workshops and toolkits to support parents in fostering home-based learning and early language development. 	<p>6. (Medium)</p>
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Objective 7: Professional Learning for Inclusive Education

<p>Strengthen the capacity of teachers, SENCOs and classroom assistants across the locality by delivering additional targeted, research-informed professional learning on areas including special educational needs (SEN), emotional wellbeing, Adverse Children Experiences (ACE's), and trauma-informed practice (TIP).</p> <p>The aim is to ensure school staff are better equipped to identify, support and respond to the needs of vulnerable children and young people.</p> <p>Timescale: January 2026 – August 2027</p> <p>Lead RAISE Intermediary Benefit Increase opportunities and empower education professionals through professional learning programmes.</p>	<p>The LRG have highlighted this as an area for improvement.</p> <p>Supports the recommendations in TransformED NI and publication of research informed conferences outlining support for Professional Development and Teacher Training.</p> <p>All learning opportunities would need to align with and not duplicate or displace any existing provision.</p>	<p>Number and % of staff completed training.</p> <p>Self-reported changes in staff confidence levels.</p> <p>Number of training sessions delivered.</p> <p>Number of schools actively participating in the programme.</p>	<p>Teachers, SENCOs and classroom assistants across all schools in the RAISE Coleraine locality, with a particular focus on SENCOs.</p>	<p>SENCOs, classroom assistants and teachers across all schools in the RAISE SOAs on the basis of need.</p>	<p>Potential CPD opportunities could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Special Education Needs (SEN) - strategies for early identification and tailored classroom support. ▪ Emotional Health & Wellbeing (EHWB) - embedding best practice from Emotional Health & Wellbeing in Schools Framework, 2021. ▪ Adverse Children Experiences (ACEs) – recognising and responding effectively to trauma. ▪ Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP) – ensuring staff adapt teaching and behaviours management approaches to support vulnerable learners. <p>Potential to structure the programme into three levels of intervention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Universal – training for all staff to raise awareness and build baseline skills. ▪ Targeted – additional support for SENCOs, pastoral leads, and key classroom assistants. ▪ Specialist – focused training for staff engaging directly with pupils requiring high level intervention. <p>All learning opportunities would need to align with and not duplicate or displace any existing provision.</p>	<p>7. (Low)</p>
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Objective 8: Raising Aspirations in Primary Education

<p>Raise aspirations and broaden career awareness among primary-aged pupils (6-11 years) by delivering the Primary Future Programme across all schools in the Coleraine SOAs. The programme will connect pupils with diverse role models and professional through interactive, school-based sessions and career-themed events, helping children explore future opportunities and understand the skills needed for success in education and work.</p> <p>Timescale: January 2026 – August 2027</p> <p>Lead RAISE Intermediary Benefit Increase the proportion of school leavers going to positive destinations.</p>	<p>The LRG have highlighted this as an area for improvement.</p> <p>2023/24, 18% of pupils in the locality progressed to higher education, compared to the Northern Ireland average, 40%.</p> <p>Between 2017/18 and 2021/22, 43.3% of pupils in the locality did not achieve five GCSEs at grades A–C including Maths and English, significantly higher than the Northern Ireland average of 25.3%.</p> <p>This approach aims to inspire pupils early, build confidence, and strengthen engagement with post-primary pathways and lifelong learning.</p>	<p>Increase the proportion of school leavers going to positive destinations.</p> <p>% of pupils who can name at least three different careers after the programme.</p> <p>Increase in pupil self-reported confidence about their future and ability to succeed.</p> <p>% increase in pupils reporting that schools feel relevant to their future.</p> <p>Number of pupils and schools participating in the programme.</p>	<p>Pupils aged 6-11 years old across primary schools within the RAISE SOAs.</p>	<p>Approximately 858 pupils in Years 3 – Years 7 across all primary schools with the SOA's.</p>	<p>Could possibly include the delivery of the Primary Future Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilize the Primary Future platform to match local schools with volunteers from a wide range of sectors. ▪ Design a calendar of interactive, school-based events were professional visit classrooms, assemblies, or host small-group workshops. <p>The Programme could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduce pupils to different careers, skills and educational journeys at a young age, encouraging them to think broadly about future opportunities. ▪ Link experiences to curriculum learning, supporting literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills. ▪ Encourage parent involvement by hosting family-friendly careers events in schools. ▪ Showcase local employment sectors and highlight future skills demands to strength links between families, schools, and the wider economy. <p>Possible delivery by an intermediary organisation with the capacity and expertise to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruit and manage volunteers. ▪ Coordinate events across participating schools. ▪ Ensure programme consistency and quality. ▪ A dedicate Pathways Coordinator could act as the single point of contact for schools, professionals, and families. 	<p>8. (Low)</p>
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