RAISE Dungannon & Coalisland

Strategic Area Plan



RAISE
ASPIRATIONS & ACHIEVEMENT

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RAISE Dungannon & Coalisland

Strategic Area Plan

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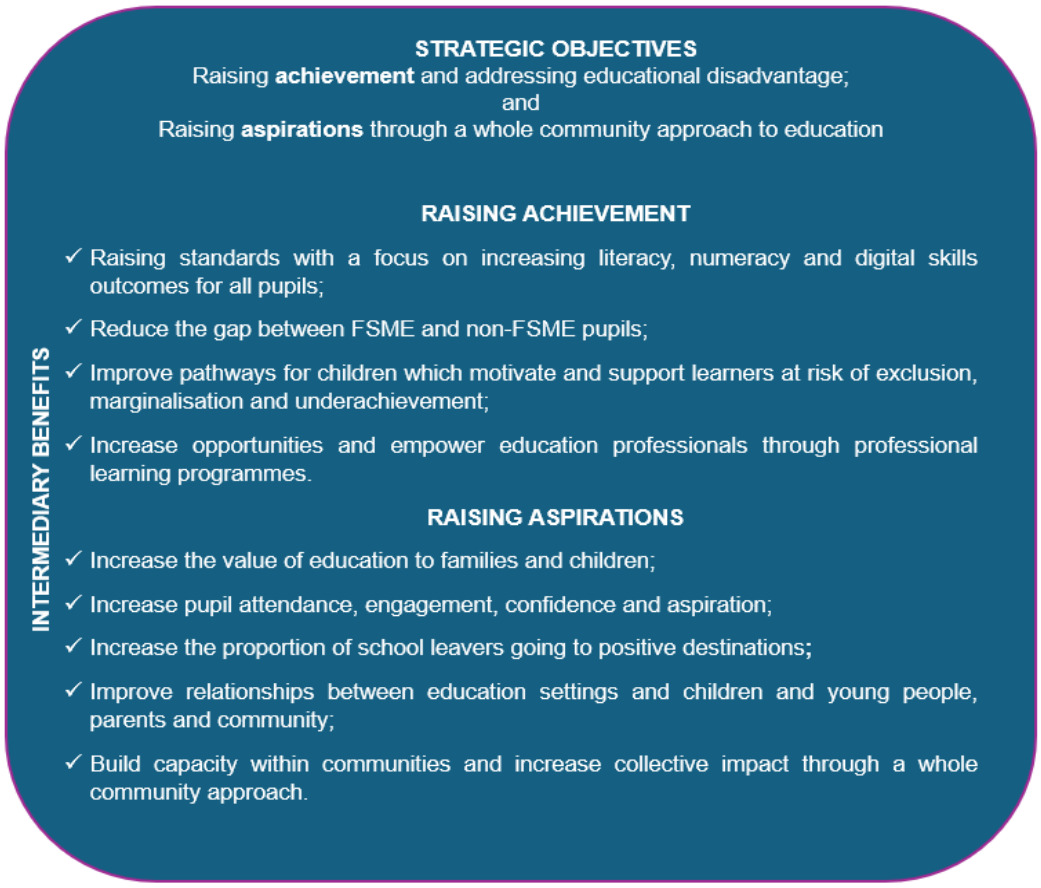
What is the RAISE Programme?

The RAISE Programme is a whole community and place-based approach to tackling educational disadvantage in 18 localities[1] 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.



[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 Dungannon 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 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.

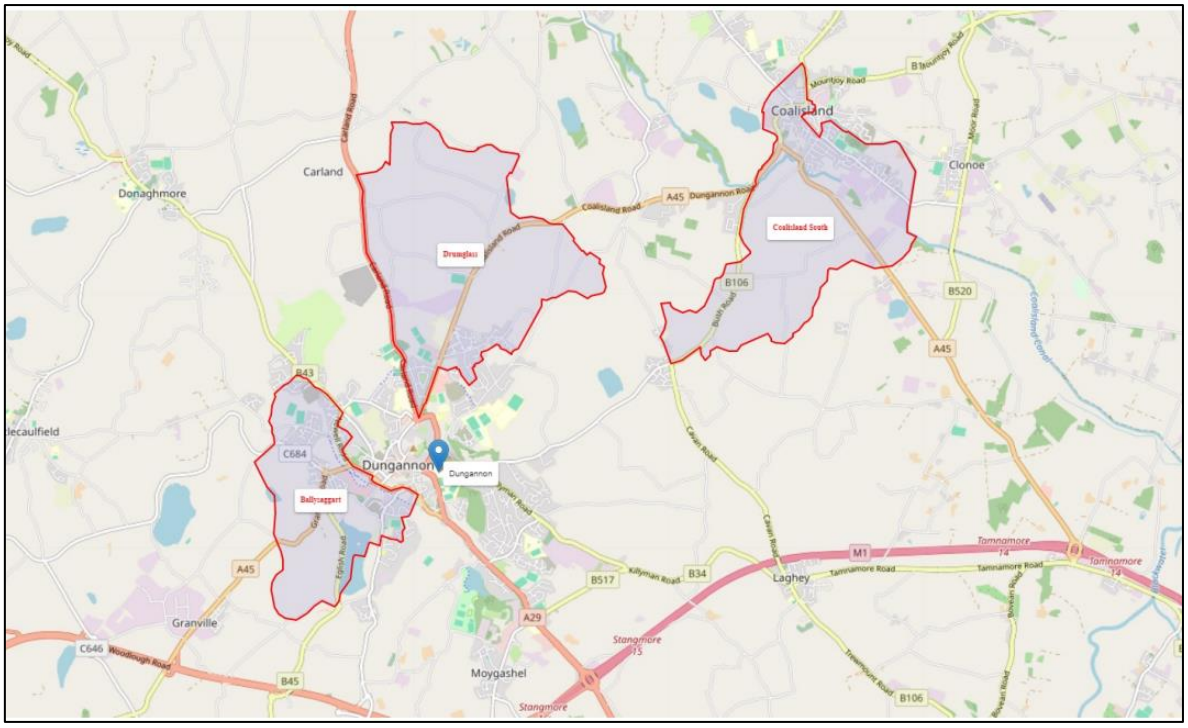
[2] Developing a Locality Strategic Area Plan, Department of Education

Introducing the RAISE Dungannon & Coalisland Locality

Locality Profile

The RAISE locality in Dungannon & Coalisland is part of the Mid-Ulster District Council, an area with a significant mix of urban and rural communities. Dungannon is an ethnically diverse population', including Traveller families and migrant communities, particularly from Eastern Europe. This demographic diversity highlights the need for inclusive and culturally sensitive service provision.

The specific Super Output Areas (SOA's) that RAISE will focus on are Ballysaggart, Drumglass & Coalisland South.



Stakeholders agree that these areas will benefit from additional support. Some new-build housing developments fall just outside the identified SOA's and stakeholders welcome the flexibility that is afforded by RAISE and agreed that the locality should be known as RAISE Dungannon & Coalisland to reflect this.

Population Overview

Dungannon and Coalisland

- **Dungannon**: According to most recent statistics, Dungannon had a population estimate of 25,680. Notably, 23.09% or 5,930 people were aged under 16, indicating a substantial school-age demographic.
- **Coalisland**: Coalisland recorded a population of 6,499.

Super Output Areas

- **Ballysaggart**: Population of 3,093, 0-15 population 842.**Drumglass**: Population of 2,619, 0-15 population 668.**Coalisland South**: Population of 2,776, 0-15 population 719.

In the RAISE SOA's in Dungannon & Coalisland Locality, there are 1,909 0–18-year-olds enrolled according to school census data 2024/25.[3]

- 956 of these pupils are male
- 953 are female
- 86 of these pupils are enrolled in Primary School Nursey Units
- 998 are enrolled in Reception & Year 1 to Year 7
- 825 are enrolled in Year 8 to Year 14.

These figures highlight a significant youth population in the area, emphasising the importance of youth-focused planning and services.

Deprivation Indicators

According to the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2017, the following insights pertain to the specified SOAs:

- **Education, Skills, and Training**: Coalisland North and South, Ballysaggart, and Drumglass are among the areas experiencing higher deprivation rankings in this domain.
- **Employment**: Coalisland North and South, along with Ardboe and Stewartstown, were identified as the most deprived areas in Mid Ulster concerning employment.
- **Health and Disability**: Coalisland South, Drumglass, and Ballysaggart are among the most deprived areas in terms of health and disability indicators.

These deprivation levels indicate challenges related to educational attainment, economic inactivity, and long-term health issues within the community and all RAISE SOAs are in the top 30% for all of the above.

[3] 2023 Mid-Year Population Estimates for Small Geographical Areas within Northern Ireland | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

Population Estimates for Super Output Areas (SOAs) and former Electoral Wards, Northern Ireland - Super Output Areas (SOAs) by gender and broad age bands (mid-2001 to mid-2020) - Open Data NI

Key Statistics - Why is the RAISE Programme needed in Dungannon & Coalisland?

The vision for RAISE Dungannon & Coalisland is:

In Dungannon and Coalisland, our vision is to foster a community where strong, healthy relationships form the foundation of everyday life. We are dedicated to creating an environment where every child and young person feels a genuine sense of belonging. By championing their needs and aspirations, we aim to support their growth, success, and development, ensuring they reach their full potential within a caring, inclusive, and connected community.

RAISE is needed in Dungannon and Coalisland as both areas show clear indicators of disadvantage across multiple domains. According to the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2017, several Super Output Areas (SOAs) in Dungannon and Coalisland fall within the top 30% most deprived areas for health and disability, education, and income.

The current profile of pupils in Dungannon & Coalisland, according to school census data 2024-25 highlights the need for focused investment through RAISE: *(2023/2024 School census data)*

• **Total pupils:** 1,954
• **Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME):** 552 pupils (28.25%) — above the NI average of 25.9%
• **Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs:** 144 pupils (7.37%) — slightly below the NI average of 8.55%
• **SEN Categories 1 & 2:** 311 pupils (15.92%) — significantly above the NI average of 11.54%
• **Minority Ethnic Pupils:** 650 pupils (33.63%) — over four times the NI average of 7.65%
• **Children Looked After:** 17 pupils (0.87%) — close to the NI average of 0.92%
• **Traveller Pupils:** 57 (2.92%)
• **Roma Pupils:** Fewer than 5

Percentage of school leavers not achieving 5+ GCSEs A-C including English and Maths (2017/18–2021/22): 41.92% — considerably higher than the NI average of 25.25%

The data highlights the need for focused intervention to improve GCSE attainment, especially achieving 5+ GCSEs (A*-C) including English and Maths. Engagement with local schools,

community organisations, statutory partners, young people and parents has identified some of the underlying complexity of causes and barriers to learning.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges, particularly in terms of children's social development, school readiness, and mental health. Stakeholders also report that progress made through previous programmes has stalled or reversed due to gaps in funding, staff capacity, and community-based infrastructure.

Consultation feedback, including sessions with young people and parents facilitated by Stranmillis University College, Parenting Focus and the Locality Coordinator, clearly indicates a need for targeted support programmes.

Absence rates continue to be a challenge for the area sitting at 10.8% absence rate for the area. This represents a significant number of children and young people absent from school on a regular basis. School leaders and community representatives note that this is an issue across all year groups and that it is challenging to pinpoint a specific trend. *(2023/2024 School leavers data)*

The percentage of school leavers not achieving 5 or more GCSE's including English and Maths is 41.9% and this figure has demonstrated a sizeable number of children and young people needing additional support.

Leaving education, many young people enter Further Education, with 39% of young people taking this path when leaving school. 12% of young people go directly into employment, and a further 29% go into Higher Education. 15% of young people go onto training. 5% of school leavers become unemployed or go to 'other destinations. *(2023/2024 School leavers data)*

These figures illustrate both the scale and complexity of the need in Dungannon & Coalisland, underscoring the importance of coordinated, long-term intervention through the RAISE Programme to improve educational outcomes and tackle persistent educational disadvantage.

Existing Collaboration and Complementary Investment

The Dungannon & Coalisland area has experience of collaboration across the education, statutory, voluntary, and community sectors. With a shared commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people, local structures and partnerships provide a solid foundation for joint working, strategic planning, and programme delivery. This section outlines the key collaborative mechanisms currently in place across the area.

Dungannon and Coalisland Area Learning Community

The Dungannon Area Learning Community (ALC) is a well-established collaboration between post-primary schools in the Dungannon & Coalisland area. The ALC provides a platform for school leaders to collaborate on curriculum delivery, share resources and best practice and enhance learning opportunities for pupils, particularly at post-16 level utilising the Entitlement Framework. Entitlement Framework | Department of Education. It also fosters ongoing relationships between school leaders and helps inform local strategic planning relating to education, inclusion, and support services.

Council Community Planning

Dungannon & Coalisland sits within the Mid Ulster District Council area, where a community planning partnership brings together, through the neighbourhood renewal programme, statutory, voluntary and community organisations to deliver improved outcomes for residents. The Peace Plus Partnership and associated structures also facilitate cross-sector collaboration, with an emphasis on supporting children, young people, and families. There is representation from various sectors on the Neighbourhood Renewal Forum, this works well for the specific sub-groups working towards their associated strategic objective. Representatives in the area have suggested this could be built upon to have wide ranging representation with a focus on education. Membership of this can be found here: Neighbourhood Renewal | Mid Ulster District Council and clicking into the Annual report section and scrolling to pages 3&4.

CYPSP Locality Planning

Dungannon Locality Planning Group, under the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP), brings together representatives from statutory, voluntary, and community sectors to identify local needs and improve outcomes for children and young people aged 0–24. This group is a key driver of early intervention and integrated working in the area. The Family Support Hub, coordinated by the local Health and Social Care Trust, plays a central role in coordinating early help and family support services.

There are numerous examples of strong collaboration within the Dungannon & Coalisland area. Schools work closely with local community organisations, statutory partners, and the voluntary sector to provide holistic support to children, young people and families. These partnerships

are often place-based, responsive, and built on trusted local relationships. While there is much positive practice to build on, stakeholders have also identified opportunities to further strengthen collaboration, particularly focusing on educational outcomes and aligning with wider community development and wellbeing goals and improve relationships between schools and the wider statutory, voluntary and community sectors.

There is investment in education and in tackling educational disadvantage in Dungannon & Coalisland. This includes the investment in youth services, Neighbourhood Renewal programmes, PeacePlus investment in youth entrepreneurship alongside significant investment in Sure Start, Nurture, Extended Schools, the Pathway Fund and Toybox.

Other government departments, including Department of Health and The Executive Office also invest in Dungannon & Coalisland. Programmes include Planned Interventions Programme, T-BUC Camps Programme and a range of programmes aimed at those from minority ethnic backgrounds. communities?

Needs Analysis

Views of Children and Young People

On behalf of the RAISE Programme, Stranmillis University College were commissioned to conduct consultations with children and young people across all RAISE localities. In Dungannon, Stranmillis carried out a focus group and alongside this the Locality Co-ordinator also conducted consultations.

Together they consulted with 47 young people aged 10–17 from across the Dungannon & Coalisland area using the Lundy Model of Participation. The Lundy Model: Article 12 in Practice - Rights Respecting Schools Award. 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 Plan.

The insights gathered offer a rich understanding of the lived educational experiences, aspirations, and challenges faced by young people, and reinforce the importance of embedding pupil voice in educational planning, fostering trust-based relationships, and rethinking school structures to better support wellbeing, engagement, and achievement.

Several barriers to learning were identified by young people, including negative perceptions of school as 'boring' and emotionally disconnected, concerns about teacher favouritism, and rigid teaching methods that fail to accommodate diverse learning styles. Structural issues such as early start times, long school days, and heavy homework loads were seen by young people as draining, while limited pupil voice and autonomy, especially in everyday decisions like seating and toilet access, contributed to feelings of the disempowerment. Many pupils felt more supported by extracurricular staff than by teachers.

Key themes arising from engagement with young people include:

- **Inclusive and responsive teaching methods** that reflect individual learning needs.
- **Wellbeing-focused school environments**, including adjustments to the school day, improved facilities, and better food provision.
- **Enhanced pupil voice and autonomy**, ensuring children feel heard, respected, and involved in decision-making.
- **Trust-building with adults in authority**, with greater reliability and follow-through on commitments made to pupils.

This needs analysis underscores the importance of embedding pupil voice into educational planning and design, fostering relationships of trust, and rethinking school structures to better

support wellbeing, engagement, and achievement. The Locality Reference Group considered these views in informing the Strategic Area Plan.

Views of Parents and Carers

Parenting Focus were commissioned by the Department of Education to carry out consultations with parents and carers across all RAISE localities. In the Dungannon area, the focus group had a small number of parents including members of the Irish Traveller community. This revealed a complex picture of educational engagement marked by both positive experiences and persistent systemic challenges. Early years provision was praised for its inclusive and culturally aware approach, particularly in supporting additional needs. However, significant concerns were raised regarding school engagement, SEN support, and cultural identity at primary and post-primary level, with some parents reporting delays in assessments, poor communication, and experiences of discrimination and exclusion.

A broader parenting survey was carried out by Parenting Focus with 139 respondents from Dungannon & Coalisland highlighting key barriers to learning and engagement, including emotional distress, low motivation, and unmet SEN and neurodiversity needs.

Parents identified a need for:

- Targeted small group learning and creative in-school approaches
- Youth work mentors and structured afterschool provision
- Improved school-home communication and emotional regulation support
- Academic help with GCSE English/Maths and speech, language, and communication needs

These findings underscore the need for integrated, cross-sector responses that blend educational, emotional, and social support to ensure all children, particularly those from marginalised communities can engage, learn, and thrive.

Gaps in provision

Several gaps and emerging priorities have been identified in the Dungannon & Coalisland locality through multi-stakeholder engagement. This includes consultations with young people facilitated by Stranmillis University College (CREU), parental engagement carried out by Parenting Focus, input from over 60 individual meetings with stakeholders and various meetings with a wide range of stakeholders. While there is a strong foundation of support across the area, stakeholders consistently highlighted pressures and challenges that continue to impact children, young people, families, and professionals.

These include barriers to inclusive education, emotional wellbeing, and meaningful engagement with learning. The insights gathered through the Lundy Model of Participation and other engagement mechanisms have helped surface key areas where provision is either lacking or requires enhancement. Each of these priorities has been further examined through available data and research to validate the need for targeted action under the RAISE Programme.

Key Gaps Identified:

- Speech & Language Support
- Education Pathways
- Early Years Intervention
- Nurture & Counselling Provision
- Attendance & Emotionally based School non-attendance
- Transition Support
- Family & Community Support
- Afterschool Provision
- Ethnic Minority Inclusion (Irish Traveller Community)
- Cross Sector collaboration

Emerging Priorities

Emerging Priority – Family & Community Support

Poverty, housing and food insecurity, limited childcare, and a lack of adult learning opportunities all affect families' ability to engage with education. While wraparound models do exist in pockets of Dungannon & Coalisland, stakeholders identified a need for more consistent, embedded provision. Parents voiced a desire to support their children but often felt disconnected due to fragmented or inaccessible services. Community outreach, holistic family support, and peer networks were seen as potential enablers. The scale and range of the current SureStart programme enables the area to have high quality early years and parental support. There are gaps in families receiving appropriate support post Surestart and those who either don't live in the catchment area or due to resourcing weren't able to secure a place on a SureStart programme.

The importance of adopting whole-community approaches to tackling educational underachievement is strongly reinforced by the recommendations in *A Fair Start* (Key Action 4), which directly informed the development of the RAISE programme. This strategy builds on lessons from its predecessor, the "Reducing Educational Disadvantage" Programme, and is influenced by successful international models implemented in countries such as Scotland, Wales, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United States. These examples consistently highlight the value of place-based, collaborative efforts that involve families, schools, and wider services working together to address disadvantage.

Supporting evidence from *A Fair Start* shows that during public consultation, the most frequently cited cause of educational underachievement was the lack of family support or role models. When asked about potential solutions, respondents prioritised greater family involvement and efforts to raise aspirations. Positive relationships between schools and parents, as well as the removal of barriers to engagement, were highlighted as key to improving outcomes.

Schools identified through engagement with RAISE recognised the benefit for schools in building strong connections with community, voluntary and statutory support services for pupils and families.

Emerging Priority – Education Pathways

Consultation with young people and youth workers has made it clear that there is an urgent need for diverse education pathways for those disengaged from mainstream schooling, particularly under the age of 16. While some grassroots mentoring and tutoring initiatives are already in place, they tend to be fragmented and lack sustainable funding. Programmes like BOOST, delivered by Coalisland Training Services have been effective and demonstrate what is possible. BOOST offers a youth-centred, community-based approach that blends informal

learning with relational support, helping young people reconnect through practical skills, mentoring, and personal development. These environments build confidence and motivation, especially for those who struggle in traditional academic settings.

Although 76% of young people progress to further or higher education, a significant number remain disengaged post-16. Feedback from youth workers and young people highlights the need to intervene earlier, getting young people upstream before disengagement takes hold. There is a need for creating learning environments that not only feel safe and supportive but also raise aspiration and nurture a desire to stay in education. By building confidence, offering practical and relational support, and making learning feel relevant, we can help more young people see education as a path worth pursuing.

Emerging Priority –Minority Ethnic & Traveller Inclusion

Traveller families, through consultations with Parenting Focus and stakeholders in the Dungannon & Coalisland area have raised serious concerns regarding discrimination, poor communication from schools, and a lack of cultural recognition. While some positive experiences were reported in early years settings, particularly where staff demonstrated cultural awareness and proactive SEN support, the dominant narrative relating to mainstream primary and post-primary schools was one of exclusion, unmet need and lower? school completion rates. Parents described incidents of bullying, identity suppression, and systemic barriers to accessing SEN services. These findings point to an urgent need for cultural competence training, improved outreach, and greater representation to build trust and foster inclusion within the education system.

In addition to the experiences of Traveller families, newcomer communities and local service providers highlighted significant barriers related to language, cultural understanding, and engagement with schools. Schools reported feeling under-resourced to support English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners, with challenges noted among the East Timorese community in relation to school readiness. Despite the presence of various programmes aimed at supporting children and young people, none currently offer a comprehensive, integrated approach to addressing the specific gaps identified in this locality. The findings of the Parenting Focus consultation, which centred on Irish Traveller experiences, was backed up by school leaders and community representatives who emphasised the need to recognise and respond to the additional challenges faced by these children and young people.

Emerging Priority – Attendance & Emotionally based School non-attendance

Attendance difficulties, particularly those linked to anxiety and emotional distress, are increasingly prevalent among school-aged children in the Dungannon & Coalisland area. Both

parents and young people described feelings of dread, exhaustion, and a lack of empathetic support from teaching staff. Educators acknowledged that current systems are often reactive, with interventions arriving too late to prevent disengagement. Key stressors such as academic pressure and testing at age 11 were frequently cited by stakeholders as contributing to anxiety and reduced motivation. Stakeholders across the locality consistently called for preventative approaches, improved school-home communication, and dedicated staff focused on wellbeing and engagement.

One effective intervention currently in place is the Learning Mentor Programme, funded through the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme. Operating within post-primary schools, this initiative provides tailored, one-to-one support for pupils facing barriers to engagement and achievement. Learning mentors work closely with students to build trust, improve motivation, and foster resilience, often through structured mentoring sessions, goal setting, and collaboration with families and school staff. The model takes a holistic approach, addressing both academic and personal development, and has shown positive outcomes in helping pupils re-engage with their education. The Locality Reference Group are keen to extend the benefits of this approach at an earlier stage.

Absence rates remain a significant challenge in the area, with a current rate of 10.8% representing a substantial number of children and young people regularly missing school. School leaders report that anxiety-related non-attendance is rising across all year groups, often rooted in broader mental health challenges. Parents consistently express frustration at the lack of timely, accessible support, particularly for early-stage interventions that fall below clinical thresholds. These concerns, echoed across Strategic Area Planning workshops, highlight a systemic gap in provision. Integrating the Learning Mentor model into alternative education pathways offers a valuable opportunity to create emotionally safe environments that prioritise wellbeing alongside academic progress. This approach not only addresses immediate attendance issues but also contributes to longer-term resilience and re-engagement for pupils at risk of exclusion or dropout.

Emerging Priority – Strengthen collaboration & Professional learning

Stakeholder discussions highlighted the critical importance of cross-sector collaboration in tackling educational disadvantage, while also acknowledging the complexities and tensions that can arise. Participants noted that sectors often hold opposing views on how best to address issues, and may lack a clear understanding of each other's challenges, constraints, and operational realities. Despite these differences, there was a strong appreciation for the unique knowledge, expertise, and resources that each sector brings, from education and health to social care and community services. Effective collaboration enables networking, signposting, and a shared understanding of the services available, which is essential for building cohesive, wraparound support for children and families. Crucially, building established links

and trusted relationships across sectors was seen as vital to the long-term sustainability of holistic interventions, ensuring that support is not only reactive but embedded, coordinated, and proactive in meeting the diverse needs of learners.

This evidence base, shaped by the voices of children, parents, educators, and community partners, underlines the importance of collaborative, cross-sector action. Embedding trauma-informed practices, prioritising wellbeing, increasing access to flexible learning, and ensuring consistent support across settings are key to creating a more inclusive, equitable education system in Dungannon and Coalisland.

Summary of Key Needs Identified

The table below provides a summary of the key needs identified in Dungannon & Coalisland. Further detail is provided in the RAISE Dungannon & Coalisland Strategic Area Plan Strategic Objectives section.

Priority Ranking	Objective
1.	To improve attendance of Key Stage 2 pupils identified by schools with attendance levels in the At Risk or Chronic Absence Tiers through a community-based mentor programme, working in partnership with schools, with a particular focus on those pupils with anxiety-related non-attendance to address and overcome identified barriers to education.
2.	To create flexible, community led learning pathways for young people in Key Stage 3 – Key Stage 4 at risk of exclusion or disengagement by facilitating a programme that aims to increase engagement and progression to positive destinations post-school using various methodologies including one to-one, small group and whole class approaches.
3.	To promote achievement and school completion for Irish Traveller children through community-based education-focused support, utilising relationship-based practice, linking with current statutory services to ensure that all families are effectively supported, resources are used efficiently, and duplication of efforts is avoided.
4.	To strengthen collaboration across education with community and statutory partners through the establishment of a Dungannon & Coalisland Education Forum and to enhance teaching and community practice through joint professional learning and parent education, with a focus on relationship-based approaches, neurodiversity, and child development.
5.	To provide a parent support programme to improve early speech, language, communication, and literacy outcomes for children aged 0–8 years, not involved with Sure Start, and improve relationships between parents and schools.

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[4].

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.

[4] RAISE Locality-Led Projects

RAISE Dungannon & Coalisland Strategic Area Plan Objectives						
Objective	**Rationale**	**Measures**	**Who will benefit?**	**Scale of Support**	**Potential Solutions**	**Priority / Ranking**
OBJECTIVE 1: ATTENDANCE						
To improve attendance of Key Stage 2 pupils identified by schools with attendance levels in the At Risk or Chronic Absence Tiers through a community-based mentor programme, working in partnership with schools, with a particular focus on those pupils with anxiety-related non-attendance to address and overcome identified barriers to education. **Lead RAISE Intermediary Benefit** Increase pupil attendance, engagement, confidence and aspiration.	Schools and community staff have highlighted rising anxiety-related absenteeism. Local data shows a growing cohort with persistent absence just below the formal threshold. Feedback from Strategic Area Planning workshops confirmed the need for relational based interventions that support children and young people by building resilience and improving confidence leading to improved educational outcomes. There have been promising results utilising the 'Learning Mentor' model in post-primary school and the Locality Reference Group are keen to test this model in primary schools as an earlier intervention.	Improved % attendance among targeted pupils; qualitative reports from mentors/schools; reduced numbers of school non-attendance due to anxiety. Ensure year-on-year improvement in achievement and skill development within the relevant curriculum area for each child or young person, tailored to their individual ability and level of participation.	Pupils in Key Stage 2 residing in the designated Super Output Areas (SOAs) within Dungannon and Coalisland, identified through school data as being in the 'At Risk' or 'Chronic Absence' tiers. This targeted group includes approximately 442 pupils in total, with an average absence rate of 25.6% among those in the 'At Risk' tier and 13.4% among those in the 'Chronic Absence' tier.	An estimated 50–60 pupils across 4 schools, for the period of the funding.	One example of how this objective could be delivered is the expansion of the Learning Mentor model, or a similar programme. Another evidence based approach may be appropriate. The Learning Mentor model, currently funded through Neighbourhood Renewal in post-primary schools in Dungannon and Coalisland, provides targeted one-to-one support for pupils facing barriers such as poor attendance, low confidence, or emotional challenges. Mentors build trusted relationships, support personal and academic development, and help pupils re-engage with learning. Expanding a learning mentor model or a similar programme into primary schools, could enable earlier intervention using this proven methodology.	1 High

OBJECTIVE 2: LEARNING PATHWAYS						
To create flexible, community led learning pathways for young people in Key Stage 3 – Key Stage 4 at risk of exclusion or disengagement by facilitating a programme that aims to increase engagement and progression to positive destinations post-school using various methodologies including one to-one, small group and whole class approaches. **Lead RAISE Intermediary Benefit:** Improve pathways for children which motivate and support learners at risk of exclusion, marginalisation and underachievement.	Consultation with youth providers, schools and young people has consistently highlighted a lack of meaningful, engaging, accredited learning pathways for those at risk of exclusion, particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4. Community-led initiatives currently operating in partnership with schools in Dungannon & Coalisland have demonstrated strong outcomes in re-engaging these young people and supporting progression. However, these programmes are limited in scale and sustainability, and many young people with chronic absence and low academic attainment remain without access to suitable pathways. By offering flexible, community-based learning pathways, delivered through one-to-one, small group, and whole class approaches, this initiative aims to intervene earlier, complementing the work of the Education Welfare Service without duplicating existing provision. The goal is to create environments where young people feel safe, motivated, and supported to learn, helping them build the confidence and aspiration needed to remain in education and pursue positive post-school destinations.	Progress will be measured through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including feedback from facilitators, schools, and young people to capture changes in engagement, confidence, and motivation. Baseline and follow-up assessment tools will be used to monitor improvements in literacy, numeracy, and personal development, alongside attendance tracking to evidence increased participation among targeted pupils.	Young people in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 who have been identified by schools as being at risk of exclusion or already disengaged from education, particularly those living in RAISE-designated Super Output Areas (SOAs) within Dungannon and Coalisland.	Of the approximately 688 young people in Key Stages 3 and 4 from RAISE SOAs, an estimated 152 (22.2%) experience chronic attendance issues, based on post-primary trends across Northern Ireland. This programme aims to engage 25–30% of this group, estimating 38 to 46 young people, through flexible, community-led learning pathways delivered in partnership with schools and local organisations. Consultation with schools will be used to identify young people who are at risk of exclusion or disengagement and will utilise local attendance data to support the identification of young people for the programme. Up to 50 young people per year working with up to 5 schools across the Dungannon & Coalisland area.	One example of how this objective could be delivered, would be the BOOST framework used by Coalisland Training Services. A potential programme would integrate mentor-led support, flexible learning environments, and life skill development to re-engage pupils and promote sustained progress. The approach should include building trusting relationships through consistent, one-to-one mentoring, helping pupils set personal goals, build confidence, and develop coping strategies for challenges both in and out of school. Another evidence based approach may also be appropriate to deliver the objective. The objective is to be delivered with and in schools. The programme needs to work closely with schools to develop flexible, personalised plans with emotional literacy, resilience, and practical life skills. Pupils will be supported holistically, with wellbeing integrated into every aspect of their learning journey, and mentors and educators working collaboratively to respond to emerging needs.	2 High

OBJECTIVE 3: Irish Traveller School Completion						
To promote achievement and school completion for Irish Traveller children through community-based education-focused support, utilising relationship-based practice, linking with current statutory services to ensure that all families are effectively supported, resources are used efficiently, and duplication of efforts is avoided **Lead RAISE Intermediary Benefit:** Increase the value of education to families and children	Highest number of Irish Traveller in NI live and are educated in Coalisland/Dungannon. DE statistics and local (family, school & community) knowledge demonstrate several concerning post-COVID trends, including non-return to education post-covid; non-transfer to post-primary school; and de-registration. Local Traveller Support Group has only 1 part-time Community Development Worker. Additional community supports are provided by STEP, but do not include a specific education programme or resource beyond the provision of Key Stage 2 after-school support in Coalisland. No similar post /dedication of resource exists in the locality, but strong stakeholder networks are in place to enable delivery.	Increased engagement with schools; increased Key Stage 3 registrations; improved trust and participation in school life.	Irish Traveller families; children aged 5–16 in Coalisland and Dungannon; priority engagement with children attending schools in SOAs. 162 Irish Traveller children attend schools in RAISE locality; 57 of these also live in the target SOAs.	20+ children will benefit annually from tailored out-of-school support programmes. 20 + Parents/Carers will benefit annually from outreach, drop-in advice clinics, workshops and literacy/numeracy support. 5+ Schools will benefit annually from workshops, training and community engagement/outreach.	One example of how this objective could be delivered is the appointment of a community-based Traveller Education Link Worker that could support participation, retention and progression. Key responsibilities: 1-Build relationships with and between Traveller and school communities. 2-Work with stakeholders, including IES, to identify and meet needs and support, particularly at key transition points. 3- Promote culture of inclusion in schools through community 'in-reach 4- Support out-of-school learning opportunities and environments for Traveller children and parents. Another evidence based approach may also be appropriate to deliver the objective.	3 High

OBJECTIVE 4: EDUCATION FORUM						
To strengthen collaboration across education with community and statutory partners through the establishment of a Dungannon & Coalisland Education Forum and to enhance teaching and community practice through joint professional learning and parent education, with a focus on relationship-based approaches, neurodiversity, and child development. **Lead RAISE Intermediary Benefit:** Build capacity within communities and increase collective impact through a whole community approach	Stakeholders across the locality report a fragmented approach to professional learning and limited opportunities for shared planning across sectors. Teachers and community workers are asking for joint training in trauma-informed practice, neurodiversity and developmental science. A structured forum can enable shared learning, co-design, and consistency, while aligning with the work of Area Learning Communities without duplicating it. There was also a strong message from the group that this forum could act as the key link for access to various services that will support the growth and development of children and young people from cradle to career. This could be aligned with point 3 from TransformED NI which aims to 'Priorities teacher professional learning'. There was agreement from school leaders in the Locality Reference Group that combined cross sector training could enhance support offered to children and young people to improve education outcomes.	• Education Forum established with active membership • Number of joint training sessions delivered • Participation levels in CPD across sectors • Practitioner self-assessments on confidence/competency • Collaborative projects or actions generated by the Forum	• Teachers, classroom assistants, SENCOs • Youth workers, early years staff, family support practitioners • Local education leaders and community partners • Parents involved in joint learning offers	• Quarterly Education Forum meetings with 12–18 members • 3 CPD sessions annually (15–20 participants each) • Joint training opportunities for school, community and other education staff	It is anticipated that a Dungannon & Coalisland Education Forum will be established and will serve as a central platform for joint professional learning and parent education. Key actions could include: Leveraging local expertise and peer facilitators to deliver high-quality CPD tailored to the needs of educators and community practitioners. Creating a shared locality learning calendar to coordinate training opportunities and maximise participation across sectors. Following a cross-sector training needs analysis, provide and implement training opportunities and parent education. Aligning the Education Forum with existing structures and networks where appropriate, to build on current strengths and avoid duplication. This integrated approach will foster stronger relationships, shared learning, and more consistent support for children and families across the Dungannon and Coalisland area.	4 High

OBJECTIVE 5: IMPROVE SLCN OF CHILDREN THROUGH PARENT SUPPORT						
To provide a parent support programme to improve early speech, language, communication, and literacy outcomes for children aged 0–8 years not involved with Sure Start and improve relationships between parents and schools. **Lead RAISE Intermediary Benefit:** Improve relationships between education settings and children, young people, parents and the community	High levels of speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) have been reported across early years settings in Dungannon and Coalisland, compounded by long waiting times for speech and language therapy (SALT) services. Schools and community organisations also highlight low parental confidence and engagement, particularly among families affected by poverty, inadequate housing, and low literacy levels. Evidence consistently shows that early intervention and active parental involvement are key drivers of improved educational outcomes, especially within RAISE SOAs. These priorities are strongly echoed in the *Fair Start* report, which recommends "greater policy and investment focus on the 0–6 age group," While Sure Start has received additional resources and is exploring team expansion to address many of these challenges there are still gaps in provision. Not all families live within a Sure Start catchment area or engage with their services. This objective aims to bridge that gap by providing home-based outreach support and collaborative workshops with other service providers. One aspect is on raising awareness of existing services, promoting sustainability, and ensuring families receive comprehensive, wraparound support tailored to their needs.	Pre/post assessment using tools like 'Stoke Speaks Out' Number of parents completing literacy/SLC programmes Follow-up parental engagement in schools or further programmes Practitioner and parent feedback	Parents and carers of children aged 0-8 living in RAISE SOAs who fall outside Sure Start catchment areas, particularly those with low literacy levels or limited confidence, have been identified as needing targeted support. Among these, the East Timorese community has emerged as a key demographic facing additional challenges, especially in relation to school readiness and language barriers. Potential participants should be families that fall outside the Sure Start catchment areas and its criteria or haven't been able to secure a place on a Sure Start programme. Support is also needed for early years and foundation stage staff working with these families to ensure culturally sensitive, inclusive, and effective engagement.	Deliver 4 to 5 workshops each year focused on supporting parents with speech, language, and literacy development. Alongside this, run 5 to 6 targeted outreach and engagement programmes designed to build parental confidence and involvement. Each programme will support between 20 and 30 parents, with additional integration of community-based food and housing support services to ensure a holistic and sustainable approach.	A possible approach could be to create an integrated programme that combines community-based learning hubs, home outreach, and evidence-based speech, language, and communication (SLC) support to increase parental engagement and improve early educational outcomes for children aged 0–8. The programme would need to address the complex factors contributing to educational disadvantage, including poverty, housing insecurity, low literacy, and SEN needs. Core components of the programme could be: • Community-led Learning Hubs • Home-based outreach & peer advocacy • Evidence-based SLC and literacy pathway • Multi-agency wrap-around support Another evidence based approach may also be appropriate to deliver the objective.	5 Medium



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