GUIDANCE NOTES:

THE PATHWAY FUND

2023/2024 and 2024/2025

Stream A - Application for Funding for awards from £15,001 up to £30,000

***Content relates to the Pathway Fund arrangements for 2023/24 and provisionally 2024/25. Funding awards in 2023/24 will be subject to DE budget availability.

Funding awards for year two (2024/25) are also subject to DE budget availability therefore, even if an award is made in 2023/24, there is no guarantee of all or any funding in year two.

Pathway Fund administration arrangements for year two (2024/25), and for any future years, will be determined at a later date.***

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INTRODUCTION

There will be one open call for funding applications in 2023/24 – new, current and previous applicants may apply. For 2023/24 all Pathway Fund applications should be submitted via the Pathway Fund online platform.

Applicants who are successful in 2023/24 will not have to apply again in 2024/25. Organisations that are successful in the 2023/24 application process will continue to be supported in 2024/25 providing there is confirmation of available budget from DE and organisations can confirm no change of circumstances. However, there should be <u>no expectation of Pathway funding beyond</u> 2023/24.

Your organisation is only eligible to apply to the Pathway Fund under one category; either Stream A or Stream B**. Only one application** per organisation is permitted.

These Guidance Notes are to assist those making applications to the Pathway Fund under Stream A.

We invite application from groups who require funding of awards from £15,001 up to £30,000. The closing date for Stream A applications is **4pm on Friday 23rd December 2022**.

It should be noted that the Pathway Fund is a competitive fund and you are strongly advised to commence preparation for your application well in advance of the deadline.

In support of the DE vision "**A system that is recognised internationally for the quality of its teaching and learning, for the achievements of its young people and for a holistic approach to education"**:

The outcomes of the Pathway Fund are:

- Improved development of children who are at risk of not reaching their full educational potential; and

- An enhanced, more sustainable Early Years sector.

KEY DATES

Information Sessions

The Pathway Fund would encourage all organisations to attend one of the Information Sessions being delivered during November / December. The session will go through the application process and give an overview of the online system and the requirements for completion of the form.

Date	Time
Thursday 24th November 2022	12.00pm to 2.00pm – Virtual via Microsoft Teams 4.00pm to 6.00pm – NICVA, 61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast
Monday 28th November 2022	2.00pm to 4.00pm – Virtual via Microsoft Teams 6.00pm to 8.00pm – Holywell Trust, 10-14 Bishop St, Londonderry
Tuesday 29th November 2022	6.00pm to 8.00pm – Tullyglass, 178 Galgorm Road, Ballymena
Wednesday 30th November 2022	6.00pm-8.00pm - Newry Early Years Centre, 2 Warrenpoint Rd, Newry
Thursday 1st December 2022	4.00pm to 6.00pm – The Junction,12 Beechvalley Way, Dungannon 6.00pm – 8.30pm – Virtual via Microsoft Teams
To book a place please go to www.early-years.org/the-pathway-fund	

Application Open Date
The online system will open for completion of application forms on **Thursday 1st December 2022 at 9:00am.**

Application Closing Date
The Stream A application form must be completed and submitted online by **Friday 23rd December 2022 at 4:00pm**.

THE PATHWAY FUND OVERVIEW

Stream A of the Pathway Fund will support all registered providers or facilitators of early years (0-4) education and learning provision such as:
- Registered Sessional Daycare settings (including Out of Schools, Summer Schemes, Playgroups, Crèches)
- Registered Full Daycare Providers (Day Nurseries)
- Registered Childminders

Applicants will need to meet the following eligibility criteria for Stream A:
- The setting is a <u>facilitator or registered provider</u> of early years education and learning, focused on children 0-4 years;
- Is <u>registered with the Health and Social Care Trust</u> (if a provider of Early Years services);
- <u>No duplication or displacement</u> of existing early years education and learning facilities in the area;
- The project is <u>compliant with the requirements of The Minimum Standards for Childminding and Day Care</u> (if a provider of Early Years services);
- <u>Safeguarding</u> policies and procedures are in place, regularly reviewed and being complied with. Safeguarding policies of applicant settings must also align with DE guidance;
- Appropriate <u>governance policies</u> in place;
- <u>Appropriate management and financial governance policies and procedures in place</u>
- <u>Financial need</u> for contribution from the Pathway Fund – including assessment of available reserves;
- <u>Additionality</u> – the applicant is <u>not receiving funding from another source</u> for the provision in the application and that, without grant funding, the project <u>could not begin</u>, or could only <u>begin at a later date</u>, or could only <u>begin on a smaller scale</u>.
  N.B: This can be activity for which the setting has received other funding in 2023/24 – providing they have not secured funding for the proposed service since receipt of Pathway/other Fund.
  Activity could include a **new cohort** of children receiving similar activity to that for which support was provided in 2022/23, providing the activity continues to meet other eligibility requirements.
  Applicants will be required to <u>demonstrate improvement</u> (a deepening of practice to demonstrate increased capacity or confidence or delivery).
  Quality improvement targets should be in practice to confirm <u>incremental quality development</u>.

<u>Cost per child place</u> should not exceed £1,500**

The **standard** allowance for cost per child place is up to £1,500.

Applicants must meet an average cost per child place criteria of no more than £1,500 per child place (or £2,000 in exceptional circumstances**). This is the cost of providing services for **one child place for the whole funding period**. As funding is allocated from April to March and the aim is to ensure optimum level of provision to recipient children, it is expected that for a standard programme the funding period will be **12 months.**

Cost per child is calculated by dividing the total amount requested from the Fund by the number of child places in the proposed project. Where the duration of a project is less than the full funding period (e.g. a Summer Scheme) the cost per child place will be **pro-rated** accordingly, i.e. a three month project should have a cost per child of no more than 3/12 months x £1,500 = £375.

A standard child place operates for the duration of the Pathway Fund annual period (e.g. 01/4/23 – 31/3/24 for 2023/24 funding period). Please refer to Annex 5 to see how cost per child place is calculated for different scenarios and services.

In exceptional circumstances only, up to £2,000 per child (amount requested divided by the number of child places in project**) can be allowed where there is a compelling case to show that higher average costs per child are essential to meet costs associated with provision to children with **complex needs**, e.g. severe development delay for a child on the ASD spectrum, Downs Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Global Developmental delay.

You will need to provide evidence in support of each child with complex needs which you have referred to in your application. The evidence for each child must be a referral letter from a medical or educational specialist who knows/ has known the child.

You should **not** provide the evidence with this application. You **should not name** individual children on this application.

If an applicant does not demonstrate and evidence clearly the compelling case to meet the additional cost per child place element, and the setting scores highly enough to receive an award, the average cost per child place will be restricted to £1,500 and the award adjusted accordingly.

If your application is successful, sight of evidence (each referral) will be required **on the first site visit.** This will be within two months of award of funding. You should ensure that the evidence you provide at the site visit is presented in accordance with Data Protection Principles.

If appropriate evidence is not provided at initial site visit, the amount of award may be adjusted.

Assessment:

- An applicant may request the higher cost per child element for only some children in their application e.g. one of 20 child places being provided for a child with complex needs attending the project. In these cases, the panel will review how the response

and evidence provided supports the compelling need and will ensure the funding requested reflects an average cost per child place taking account of the number of child places in the project and the evidence provided for those considered to have complex needs.

Stream A applicants are eligible to apply for funding of awards from £15,001 up to a maximum of £30,000.

If eligible, applications will be scored against the six Pathway Fund criteria:

> i. **Providing quality education and learning services in areas of social disadvantage to address both educational and social disadvantage;**
> ii. **Ensuring children with additional needs receive quality early years support;**
> iii. **Provision of quality services/support to children at risk of harm;**
> iv. **Provision of quality early years services in rural and other areas where there is little or no provision;**
> v. Improving the integration and building of community relations from an early age;
> vi. Enhancement of existing services through improving quality, staff development, partnerships, parental engagement, management and governance.

Once evaluated and assessed, applicants will be placed in ranked order in respect of the overall score against the six criteria.

Funding will be allocated on confirmation of need, in ranked priority against the established criteria and will include a **contribution towards the overall costs of a project** highlighted by the setting towards meeting the total cost of salaries, running costs, specified equipment etc. Capital costs cannot be funded under Pathway.

An independent panel will make all final decisions on funding awards.

Department of Education - National Fraud Initiative – Fair Processing Notice
The Department of Education is required by law to protect the public funds it administers. It may share information provided to it with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds, in order to prevent and detect fraud.

See guidance notes ANNEX 2 – Department of Education Fair Processing Notice

Where the funding requested from the Pathway Fund is one of a number of funding streams contributing to the project, underline applicants should demonstrate how it will complement and not duplicate the other funding streams.

Joint applications from organisations proposing to work together are welcome. All applicants would however need to be registered with the Health and Social Care Trust (if applicable).

A project will not be funded if:

- it duplicates services for which the applicant is already receiving funding from another source;
- the application relates to activity that has taken place in the past (i.e. retrospective funding);
- there is no demonstrable evidence that public funding is required to implement the project.

DE provides PSEP funding to support the delivery of its Pre-School Education Programme. PSEP funded settings can apply for Pathway Funding for activities not related to the PSEP funded activities. *The project for which the setting is seeking funding from the Pathway Fund must be in respect of provision which is additional to, and does not interfere with that funded under the PSEP.* Please refer to Page 13 for further guidance.

THE APPLICATION FORM

Please refer to the guidance notes when preparing your online application.

To support the completion of the application form using the online system, additional 'How to' videos can be viewed via the following link: https://www.early-years.org/the-pathway-fund

If you experience any difficulties with your online application from, please contact the Pathway Fund team via email: thepathwayfund@early-years.org

The Application Form cannot be amended after submission. Assessment of the application will be based only on the information contained therein and evidence provided.

ABOUT YOU / YOUR ORGANISATION

1. Name of your Organisation
Please record your organisation's name as it appears on your governing document or set of rules, e.g. Constitution.

2. Does your organisation use a different name in your day to day work?
Please provide any other name your organisation is known by.

3. Registered address of organisation
Please provide the registered address of the organisation. It is understood that this address may not be the address the project is being facilitated at. The postcode should be written using CAPITAL LETTERS.

4. Are you PSEP funded?
If No, move to Question 6

If Yes;

4a. Please provide your Pre-School Education Programme (PSEP) Unique Reference Number (URN) (DENI reference)
You will have this Unique Reference Number if you are funded through the Pre-School Education Programme (PSEP).

5. PSEP Funded Places
This is the number of funded preschool places you offer through the Department of Education Pre-School Education Programme for the year 2022/23. Please also provide the estimated/projected numbers of funded places for 2023/24.

6. Government Funding Database URN – You will have this Unique Reference Number if you receive any other government funding e.g. PSEP, Neighbourhood Renewal.

7. Bright Start Reference (e.g. SAC/01/N) - You will have this reference if you are funded through the DE Bright Start School Age Children Grant Scheme.

8. Type of Organisation
Please choose the most appropriate entity type for your organisation. Please select all that apply to your organisation

9. Charity Number
You will have this number if you are a registered Charity.

10. Start date of your organisation

Please indicate the official start date of your organisation.

11. Main Contact

The **main contact** for the application must be someone who can describe the project and respond to queries from the Pathway Fund Team during normal office hours.

You should also provide an **alternative contact name**, **telephone number and email address** (this **<u>must be different</u>** from the main contact) to be used in the absence of the above person and who can respond to queries from the Pathway Fund Team during normal office hours.

The Pathway Fund team may seek clarification from an organisation regarding their application. Should you wish to change the main or alternative contact details, after you have submitted the application form, you must inform the Pathway Fund office in writing, via email to thepathwayfund@early-years.org of the new main or alternative contact details.

ABOUT YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT

1. What is the name of your Project?

Please provide the name of your project. The 'project name' can be the same as the organisation name.

2. Where will your Project be located?

Please provide the postcode at which your project will be facilitated. The postcode should be written using CAPITAL LETTERS.

Please provide your Health and Social Care Trust area, Council area and Constituency area.

3. Project Summary

Please provide a summary of the project which the Pathway Fund will support you to deliver. Tell us about other aspects, beyond services, which will make up your project, such as activities, programmes and training.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Please provide clear and comprehensive responses to questions in this section. If eligibility criteria are not met, your application will not proceed to the next stage.

1. Facilitator/Registered Provider

Applicants must be a facilitator or registered provider of early years education and learning, focused on quality provision for children 0-4years. Please select the option which is applicable to your organisation.

If your organisation is a registered provider, please enter the registration number for the project for which you are applying for Pathway Fund support.

If your organisation is a facilitator of early years education and learning, focused on quality provision for children 0-4years, please describe how you meet this required criteria.

2. Duplication of existing early years

Please provide details of other registered provision in your area and demonstrate that you are not duplicating that provision.

3. Displacement of existing provision

You should tell us how you will ensure that there is no displacement of existing provision in your area by your proposed project. If there is potential overlap between the proposed Pathway Fund provision and any other provision e.g. Sure Start and/or PSEP provision, then **discussion between both parties must take place before the Pathway Fund application is submitted.**

PSEP Provision

PSEP is DE's universal education programme aimed at children (aged 3-4) in the year before entering compulsory education through which the Executive's Programme for Government commitment to preschool education provision is implemented.

- The presumption is that eligible 3-4 year olds will be attending PSEP provision and that PSEP provision takes precedence over Pathway support.

- Pathway support can complement PSEP provision but a Pathway applicant must demonstrate there is need for Pathway support in addition to PSEP provision.

- Where a proposed Pathway project includes support for PSEP target age children (3-4 years), then discussion must take place between the Pathway and the PSEP providers in the area before the Pathway Fund application is submitted and the applicant must confirm that an agreement regarding service delivery has been reached which is in the best interests of the children concerned.

- Where a PSEP provider is required under current legislation to offer a place to a younger

(2-3 year old) or older (4-5 year old who has deferred entry to compulsory education) child, then the PSEP place takes precedence over the Pathway place.

The Applicant must confirm that they have approached any PSEP settings located within their area (2 miles for 'urban', 5 miles for 'rural' or 'mixed' areas - to identify if your area is rural, mixed or urban, you should follow this link: http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/AreaProfile.aspx?Menu=True (Select Geography tab) to ensure there is not any potential displacement – see links below.

The Applicant should identify the number of PSEP settings they have had discussions with and **confirm that an agreement regarding service delivery has been reached which is in the best interests of the children concerned**.

The Educations Authority's website 'Search Schools' facility will enable applicants to search by radius using the 'search by location' option.

https://www.eani.org.uk/search-schools

The online database at 'Schools Plus' will allow applicants to search and filter settings as needed.

https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/services/schools-plus

Sure Start Programme

DE funds the Sure Start programme which provides support to children aged 0-3 years in (at least) 25% most disadvantaged areas in Northern Ireland. Pathway projects must be additional to and must not displace Sure Start services.

- Where a proposed Pathway project provides services in a Sure Start catchment area then discussion between both parties must take place before the Pathway Fund application is submitted and the applicant must provide written confirmation that an agreement regarding service delivery has been reached which is in the best interests of the children concerned.

- Attendance at the 'Sure Start Developmental Programme for 2-3 Year Olds' and other developmental support in Sure Start take precedence over a Pathway funded provision. Pathway applications should not include children who have been offered a place on the Sure Start Developmental Programme for 2-3 Year Olds.

- Children not receiving a place on the Sure Start Developmental Programme for 2-3 Year Olds should have their needs met by alternative Sure Start provision in accordance with the Sure Start Progressive Universalism model. Unless an applicant has evidence that a Sure Start project is not meeting this requirement, they should not use unmet Developmental Programme for 2-3 Year Olds (or other Sure Start) demand as evidence of need for their project. A list of the current Sure Start Developmental Programmes for 2-3 Year Olds is at Annex 3.

The Applicant must confirm that they have approached any Sure Start Programmes located within their area to ensure there is no potential displacement – A list of the current Sure Start Developmental Programmes for 2-3 Year Olds is at Annex 3. The Applicant should provide evidence by way of a letter from a Sure Start Manager that **confirms that an agreement regarding service delivery has been reached which is in the best interests of the children concerned**.

Note: *Funding may be adjusted if the project is determined to displace PSEP, Sure Start or other existing services*.

4. Minimum Standards for Childminding and Day Care

You should provide details of the dates of your most recent Social Services and Education and Training Inspectorate inspections, including the outcome.

5. Governance and Safeguarding Policies

Please confirm by ticking the boxes that your organisation meets each of the requirements as detailed. You are affirming that these are in place by signing this document.

6. Financial Assessment

Cost per Child Place Calculation

In this section tell us what services or actions you would like the Pathway Fund to support.

Please tell us if your project will support children with complex needs (up to £2,000 cost per child place). Note: if no, you will move to Table 2: For child places up to maximum of £1,500.

If yes, please confirm the number of child places your project will provide to children with complex needs. You will need to describe in detail how the higher level of award will enable your organisation to meet the needs of children with complex needs and complete further details in Table 1: For child places up to £2,000. You will need to describe in detail the complex needs presenting which may include medical and / or educational need/s of the child/ren attending your project. You will need to describe why you are currently unable to meet this need. You will need to detail how the Pathway Fund will enable your setting to provide for the child/ren attending.

Please ensure this information is as accurate as possible as you will have to report against this number if you are successful.

In the table you should detail the number of child places, children, operating days and months and the start and end date next to the service(s) which make up your project. You will need to calculate your Cost per Child place per Service and your Total Potential Award per Service. If you are seeking funding for more than one service please provide the breakdown by service.

Table 1 and 2
Service: You should enter information against each service you are requesting the Pathway Fund to support.

Child places: this is the number of places which you will provide in each service as part of your Pathway project.

Number of children: this is the number of children accessing the service(s). Often the number of children and places are the same. In some settings children may share a place, i.e. Sam attends Mon – Wed and Mark Thurs & Fri, this is 2 children accessing one place, in these instances the number of children will differ from the number of places.

Number of Days per Week service operating – this is the number of days which each service in your project will be running per week. If you are operating a pre pre school Monday – Wednesday, you should enter 3 days next to this. If you are also running a preschool Monday – Friday you should enter 5.

Start and end dates these are the dates which each service will be running from. You do not need to discount times the service may not be operating such as summer holidays.

Number of Months service operating – this is the number of months which each service in the project will be operating. If you are running a pre pre school from 1st April 2023– 31st March 2024 you may enter 10 months in the corresponding box, as you may be operating in line with the academic year. If you are also running a summer scheme in August you will enter 1 month next to summer scheme.

Cost per child place per service - A standard child place operates for the duration of the Pathway Fund annual period (e.g. 01/04/23 – 31/03/24 for 2023/24 funding period). Please refer to **Annex 5** to see how cost per child place is calculated for different scenarios and services.

Total potential award per service - Cost per child place per service multiplied by the number of child places per service.

Maximum Potential Award
This is the maximum <u>potential</u> award your project can apply for. The Maximum <u>Potential</u> Award will equal the total potential award per service from Table 1 (where applicable) and Table 2.

Please provide a breakdown of the age range of the children being supported through your Pathway Fund project
You should tell us the number of individual children who will access the child places in your project. You must tell us the age children will be when they start attending your project not the child's current age. Please fill all boxes. Enter '0' if you have no children in the relevant age group.

Please ensure this information is as accurate as possible as you will have to report against this number of children if you are successful.

7. Income and Expenditure

Applicants must be able to demonstrate a financial need for Pathway Funding in order to deliver the project. **Failure to demonstrate financial need for Pathway Fund support, will result in the application being deemed ineligible.**

The Financial Assessment will be conducted prior to scoring the application and scoring **will only proceed if the project meets all eligibility criteria.**

The Pathway Fund is a **contribution towards the overall costs** of a project. Applicants must demonstrate that no alternative funding is in place to provide the service outlined in

this application and that without support from the Pathway Fund the proposed project will not go ahead.

Income

Detail <u>all</u> the income you expect your project to receive and the sources e.g. fees, donations, sponsorship, grants etc.

Expenditure

Please detail the **ESSENTIAL** expenditure that your project will incur. Only those costs that are necessary to deliver the service should be included for consideration. You should apportion cost appropriately in line with your overall project.

Note: *Applicants should complete these tables as accurately as possible. The information provided by you in these tables is final and no further clarifications will be sought.*

Essential Staff Costs

Please list posts required to deliver the project. Only staff costs essential to the delivery of your Pathway project should be included. You need only provide information in the 'Essential Staff costs' section if you are requesting funding for a contribution towards salary costs. Please consider the likely start date of any new member of staff, calculate salary costs and apply pro-rata entitlements as appropriate. You should ensure that staff hours are reflective of time being spent directly on the Pathway Fund project and proportional to service delivery.

N.B: the Pathway Fund does not fund individual posts, it funds a contribution towards the overall cost to deliver a project.

Essential Operating Costs

Applicants should detail all essential operating costs in relation to the project for which you are applying for funding. Where these are shared with other projects, an apportionment should be applied.

Essential Resources and Equipment Costs

Pathway Fund is not a Capital Fund, so large items of equipment will not be funded. Applicants may request support for minor equipment/resources i.e. items which would not appear as a capital item in the organisation's accounts.

Essential Training Costs

Costs for training that is <u>essential to the outcomes identified</u> in your project should be detailed.

Total Essential Expenditure

This value will automatically generate following the input of all essential costings as outlined above.

Financial Need Calculation

This figure is calculated by subtracting Total Project Income from Total Essential Expenditure. If this amount is equal to or less than the Maximum Potential Award, this amount will be used as The Total Amount Requested from Pathway Fund, to a maximum of £30,000.

If the Total Amount Requested from Pathway Fund is less than £15,001 you should apply to Stream B. Please note Stream B closes for applications on **Tuesday 20th December 2022 at 4:00pm**.

8. Reserves

You need to tell us about the available level of unrestricted reserves which your organisation holds as this will be assessed and taken into account when considering your eligibility for financial assistance.

A Reserves Policy should be uploaded along with your application if you are holding reserves.

Note: A sample reserves policy is available on our website www.early-years.org/the-pathway-fund

Your reserves policy needs to set out:

- How much your organisation needs to hold in reserve and why
- How and when your reserves can be spent
- How often your reserves policy will be reviewed
- Your reserves policy needs to be signed and approved by management committee/owner manager.

How unrestricted reserves will be calculated

RESERVES	
Current Position Bank Balance / Year End Balance	For Current Year we will use your available bank balance at time of application. For 21/22 we will use your Year End Balance.
LESS Long Term Reserves (funds that cannot be liquidated for example fixed assets) if applicable	These are your Fixed assets. This amount should be in your year end accounts on the balance sheet under fixed Assets. e.g. Buildings, Vehicles and Equipment.
LESS Restricted Funds (funds that cannot be used for any other purpose and therefore unavailable) if applicable	Restricted Reserves are a reserve of money that can only be used for specific purposes. They can only be used for the particular purpose stipulated by the donor. E.G. a government grant which specifies it should be used for a specific purpose. These will be accounted for separately within your annual accounts.
LESS Designated Reserve Funds (funds that are set aside for a particular purpose or use and therefore unavailable) if applicable	These are funds which are designated or set aside for a particular purpose and are targets for a specific use and therefore unavailable. You may be planning a capital build or a fund for redundancies. **The target amount should be stipulated in your reserves policy**. The designated amount should be reasonable for the purpose and evidence provided that the designation has been agreed by the management committee.
EQUALS Unrestricted Reserves (funds that are available for use)	Funds that are freely available to spend on any of the organisations purposes. The available unrestricted amount of reserves will be taken into account when considering your eligibility for financial assistance.

Other Sources of Funding

Please give detail of any income your organisation currently receives and any pending applications for funding. You should tell us when this was received, or is expected to be received, and the period the funding covers.

All applicants are required to detail separately all current sources of funding received by their organisation. You also need to tell us if you are in receipt of any other sources of funding to support the project for which Pathway funding is sought.

You should specifically tell us if you have applied for or are in receipt of Bright Start School Age Childcare Grant Scheme funding and provide the Bright Start reference as it appears on offer letters you have received from the Childcare Partnerships (example: SAC/N/01).

You should specifically tell us if you are in receipt of or waiting for confirmation of PSEP funding; or if your project is in the Pre-School Education Programme (PSEP) or linked to provision of the PSEP. The DENI reference must be provided for PSEP funding. If linked to delivery of the PSEP the application must clearly state the linkages.

9. Annual Accounts

Please provide details of your most recent annual accounts, no earlier than 2021. This should be in line with your reporting requirements and your financial policies and procedures.

If your accounts have not been independently audited in line with your reporting requirements, please provide further information.

10. Summary Table

The Total Amount Requested will be either the Maximum Potenial Award (based on cost per child place calculation) or Financial Need Calculation, which ever is the lesser amount, if not equal.

Please enter the lesser amount in the box provided, to a maximum of £30,000

The table will automatically generate the figures based on the information you have provided within your application.

Applicants must meet an average cost per child place criteria of no more than £1,500 per child place. In exceptional circumstances only, up to £2,000 per child can be allowed where there is a compelling case to show that higher average costs per child are essential to meet costs associated with provision to children with complex needs e.g. severe development delay for a child on the ASD spectrum, Downs Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy and Global Developmental Delay.

Please review the total level of funding being requested from the Pathway Fund. If you are not content with the summary presented please review information provided in Questions 6

and 7. If the Total Amount Requested from Pathway Fund is less than £15,001 you should apply to Stream B. Please note Stream B closes for applications on **Tuesday 20th December 2022 at 4:00pm**.

Tick the box to confirm the information is accurate.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

There is a word count limit associated with each question, the system will not allow you to go over this limit.

How does your project meet the assessment criteria of The Pathway Fund?

Assessment criteria identify knowledge, skills and practice in relation to a set topic or area of interest/work. The assessment criteria of the Pathway Fund are derived from the overarching Fund outcomes and given this, you will be expected to demonstrate:

- knowledge and understanding of the needs of the children identified as at risk of not reaching their full educational potential and the enhancement and development of the Early Years sector.
- how the proposed project will meet the needs of the children identified as at risk of not reaching their full educational potential and contribute to the enhancement and sustainability of the sector

The guidance notes will provide you with a clear outline of the knowledge, skills and practice specific to each criteria. There are two factors which will influence the assessment of your application:

- how evidence was used to support your answer will be considered e.g. Evidence can be from your own research/evaluations, government information and statistics or academic research.
- Quality - it is expected that you will provide examples of factors which indicate a commitment to quality and quality improvement. You may be using these already or will start to as part of your Pathway Fund project.

There are six assessment criteria. The criteria (i) – (iv) highlighted in bold are most heavily weighted in the assessment process.

There are 2 or 3 questions for each, against which you will be assessed and scored accordingly. The marks and word count for each question is detailed in the application form. The word count must be adhered to. Any additional information submitted will be discounted during assessment.

(i) Providing quality education and learning services in areas of social disadvantage to address both educational and social disadvantage. (30 marks)

Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 Northern Ireland (MDM)
Education Skills and Training Deprivation Domain (EDM)
http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/AreaProfile.aspx?Menu=True

Please see Annex 2 for a full visual walkthrough of navigating this website and gathering the correct information relevant to your Super Output Area(s).
You are asked to identify the Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 and the Education, Skills and Training Deprivation ranking for the Super Output Area(s) in which you deliver your service.

Your MDM and EDM will be used to score your project out of 10 marks. Projects situated in areas with higher levels of deprivation will score more marks. However, please use the text box below your MDM and EDM rank to provide further information about the levels of disadvantage experienced by your children particularly if you feel that your MDM and EDM rank does not fully reflect the context of your children.

This criteria asks you to focus on how you propose to provide high quality education and learning services in areas of social disadvantage to address both education and social disadvantage.

This criteria asks you to:

- Describe what social and educational disadvantage looks like in your area
- Demonstrate a good understanding of what social and educational disadvantage is and how it affects a child reaching their full educational potential
- Provide a clear description of your project and how it will improve outcomes for children experiencing social and educational disadvantage
- Provide evidence of commitment to quality and quality improvement such as staff development, outcomes measurement, evidence based programmes

(ii) Ensuring children with additional needs receive quality Early Years support. (30 marks)

You should tell us how many children with additional needs your project will support. Whilst you may not have accurate statistics at this stage, you may reflect upon previous experience and knowledge of your local area.

SEN is defined in the Code of Practice (DENI 1998) as:

"A child has SEN if he/she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made to him/her"

A child has a learning difficulty if he/she:
- Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of a similar age
- Has a disability which hinders the child from making use of the educational facilities of a kind provided for children of the same age
- Is under five and falls within (1) or (2) above or would if special provision was not made for the child

SN/Additional needs - is the full range of significant needs a child may have:
- Learning Difficulties
- Specific learning Difficulties
- Emotional or Behavioural Difficulties
- Medical Condition
- Physical Development
- Visual Impairment
- Speech or Language Difficulties
- Hearing Impairment

This criteria asks you to:

- Demonstrate a good understanding of challenges faced by children with additional needs in your area
- Demonstrate a good understanding of barriers to accessing services such as building location or accessibility
- Provide a clear and full description of your project and how it will address the barriers to accessing services
- Demonstrate a good understanding of and clear description of how your project will support best practice for children with additional needs, including identification
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of tracking and monitoring the difference being made to children with additional needs
- Provide indicators of quality, quality improvement, outcomes measurement

iii. Provision of quality services/ support to children at risk of harm. (30 marks)

You should tell us about the risks that children are experiencing and how your project intends to address those risks and improve the situation of and outcomes for these children.

Support for physical, emotional, social, health needs and home learning environments improves the opportunities for children at risk of harm.

This criteria asks you to:

- Know and describe the factors which place children in your project at risk of harm
- Explain how the risk factors described for your area impact child development/outcomes for children
- Describe your project and link it to the factors which place children at risk
- Describe your project and how it will improve outcomes for children who are at risk of harm
- Provide indicators of quality and/or commitment to quality improvement, outcomes measurement

iv. Provision of quality early years services in rural and other areas where there is little or no provision. (30 marks)

You should describe the nature of your area (rural/mixed/urban) and tell us what other provision there is in the area and how your project will improve access. You should follow this link: http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/AreaProfile.aspx?Menu=True.   Select Geography tab. Here you will be able to identify if your area is rural, mixed or urban.

Your rurality will be used to score your project out of 5 marks. Projects situated in mixed or urban areas can provide additional information. Please use the text box to provide further information about the nature of your area if you feel that your NISRA Settlement Profile does not fully reflect the context of your children.

This criteria asks you to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and research into the numbers of children in target age group for your project
- Demonstrate understanding of the early education needs of the families of the children in the target age group
- Research the early education services provided in your area. To use this research to identify and describe any gaps in services
- Describe your project and how it fills any gaps identified in your area
- Describe your project and how it meets the needs of children and families

- Describe what actions you will take to ensure that your project is accessible
- Include indicators of quality or how you will improve quality, eg: leadership, training, monitoring and evaluation of outcomes

v. Improving integration and building community relations from an early age. (20 marks)

You should tell us about what you do to ensure your organisation is inclusive and how you work with children to build community relations. You may want to tell us about your setting, the community in which it is based and the background of the children attending.

You should tell us about any activity you plan to undertake to engage the local community and any activities or programmes you plan to undertake as part of the project, to build community relations.

This criteria asks you to:

- Know the religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the children in your project
- Demonstrate knowledge of age appropriate best practice which supports the understanding and acceptance of difference
- Demonstrate knowledge of how to build community relations and integration for children and families
- Describe how your project will put the knowledge which supports inclusion into practice

vi. Enhancement of existing services through improving quality, staff development, partnerships, parental engagement, management and governance. (20 marks)

You should be specific about **new/developed** actions you will take to enhance the quality of the service you deliver. You may mention some of the following areas (this list is not exhaustive):

- Staff development and training
- Partnerships you build with other organisations
- Parental engagement
- Management and governance

You should be specific about what you will do to enhance the service and the organisation and how this will improve the quality of outcomes for children.

CHECKLIST

The application consists of 10 separate tasks, nine of which are mandatory and <u>must be completed</u>. The task to upload a letter of support from Sure Start is optional and should only be completed where applicable.

You should ensure that you have selected the 'Mark as Complete' button at the end of each task.

PLEASE ENSURE:

All questions in each task in the form have been answered: - About You / Your Organisation   - About Your Proposed Project   - Eligibility Criteria   - Assessment Criteria   - Declaration
Supporting documentation Uploaded
- Signed Reserves policy (e.g. Evidence of Designated Funds, if applicable)
- Governing document or set of rules enclosed
- Latest Annual Accounts and statement of projected income and expenditure enclosed. (Providing a Balance Sheet <u>only</u> is not sufficient)
- Last Three consecutive months of original bank/building society account statements
- Evidence of confirmed agreement with Sure Start (if applicable)
Application for award from £15,001 up to £30,000

Only applications that are accompanied by all necessary documentation will be assessed.

Applications that do not include the required documentation will be deemed ineligible. There will be <u>no further opportunity to submit documentation available to applicants</u>.

Declaration

You will be required to declare the accuracy of the application at time of online submission. You must also confirm that you have the authority to submit the application. This must be signed by an Office Bearer of a group governed by a Management Committee/Board of Directors or the Owner if it is a private company.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications for Stream A must be received by **4:00pm on Friday 23rd December 2022**

The system will not allow you to submit your application form or upload supporting documentation after the closing date and time.

Please note the system will record the time and date you submit automatically and this will be used to assess eligibility.

You will receive an automated email once you submit your application, if you do not receive an email, please contact the Pathway Fund Team via email: thepathwayfund@early-years.org.

Early Years – the organisation for young children cannot accept responsibility for transmission delays.

You should not wait until near the closing time to submit your application.

Be aware of the speed of your internet connection, your system configuration and the volume of general web traffic that may impact on the time required to upload your application.

SELECTION PROCESS

An eligibility check will be carried out on each application in line with the guidance provided on Pages 13 – 15. Only those applications meeting <u>all</u> eligibility factors will be assessed and scored.

Only eligible applications will be assessed and scored according to relevant criteria using the scoring system set out within these guidance notes. Funding will be allocated in ranked priority.

Applicants will be issued with an Indicative Notification of Outcome from the Pathway Fund which will outline whether or not they have been successful and if successful, the indicative amount of award.

Successful Applications

Successful applicants will be subject to pre-contract checks to ensure their eligibility to handle public funds.

Successful applicants will be issued with a Letter of Offer from the Pathway Fund, setting out the conditions under which funding is offered to support the proposed activity, the amount of funding offered and the payment terms. Successful applicants will be required to provide evidence which demonstrates the achievement of outcomes for children ages 0-4 years. Successful applicants will be required to provide evidence of the policies as confirmed within their application.

Early Years will monitor the number of child places and the number of children accessing the service regularly and where numbers are less than those projected on the application form your allocation may be revised.

The Letter of Offer will specify how much money an applicant has been awarded, the length of the funding period, how payment will be made and the conditions attached to the funding award. In accepting the funding, the applicant will be required to sign a form indicating that they are prepared to fulfil these conditions.

The Letter of Offer Acceptance Form should be returned within two weeks of issue. No funding will be issued until this form is received and all (as necessary) pre-conditions are met. Successful applicants will be required to abide by any conditions set out in the Letter of Offer and to comply with all monitoring and evaluation arrangements. Where allowance of higher than £1,500 average costs per child place has been given, the offer is **provisional** and subject to review of supporting evidence on completion site visit.

Funding is awarded for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 only and subject to the availability of DE funding throughout the period. Applicants who are successful in 2023/24 will not have to apply again in 2024/25. Settings that are successful in the 2023/24 application process will continue to be supported in 2024/25 providing there is confirmation of available

budget from DE and settings can confirm no change of circumstances. However, there should be <u>no expectation of Pathway funding beyond</u> 2023/24.

Pathway Fund Scoring System

Criteria		Maximum Score
1	Pathway Fund Criteria	
	I. **Providing quality education and learning services in areas of social disadvantage to address both educational and social disadvantage.**	30
	II. **Ensuring children with additional needs receive appropriate early years support**.	30
	III. **Provision of quality services and support to children at risk of harm.**	30
	IV. **Provision of quality early years services in rural and other areas where there is little or no provision**	30
	V. Improving the integration and building of community relations from an early age.	20
	VI. Enhancement of existing services through improving quality, staff development, partnerships, parental engagement, management and governance.	20
	Maximum Total Number of Marks	**160**

The Pathway Fund is a competitive fund.

There is a minimum threshold of **55 marks out of a possible 160 marks**. If your application is scored below the threshold your application will be deemed not successful. If your application scores 55 or over, it will be placed in ranked order in respect of the overall score against the six criteria. Please note that meeting the threshold does not guarantee that you will receive funding.

Department of Education - National Fraud Initiative – Fair Processing Notice

The Department of Education is required by law to protect the public funds it administers. It may share information provided to it with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds, in order to prevent and detect fraud.

Data matching exercises

The Comptroller and Auditor General audits the accounts of the Department of Education. The Comptroller and Auditor General is also responsible for carrying out data matching exercises under his powers in Articles 4A to 4G of the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

Data matching involves comparing computer records held by one body against other computer records held by the same or another body to see how far they match. This is usually personal information. Computerised data matching allows fraudulent claims and payments to be identified.

Where a match is found it indicates that there may be an inconsistency that requires further investigation. No assumption can be made as to whether there is fraud, error or other explanation until an investigation is carried out.

The Comptroller and Auditor General currently requires us to participate in a data matching exercise to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud. We are required to provide particular sets of data to the Comptroller and Auditor General for matching. Details are set out in the Northern Ireland Audit Office's website, www.niauditoffice.gov.uk.

The use of data by the Comptroller and Auditor General in a data matching exercise is carried out with statutory authority. It does not require the consent of the individuals concerned under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Data matching by the Comptroller and Auditor General is subject to a Code of Practice. This may be found at www.niauditoffice.gov.uk.

Sure Start – Developmental Programme for 2-3 Year Olds

Sure Start
Developmental Prog

About Your Project - Super Output Area information

Please visit http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/AreaProfile.aspx?Menu=True

Please follow the steps below to provide the information required on your application.

Step 1: Insert your postcode and select SOA under the 'Geography' drop down. Click the arrow highlighted to continue to next step.

Step 2: From the results click on your 'geography'.

Step 3: The next screen opens with the 'Population 2019' tab as default. Please select the 'Deprivation 2017' tab for the information required for application.
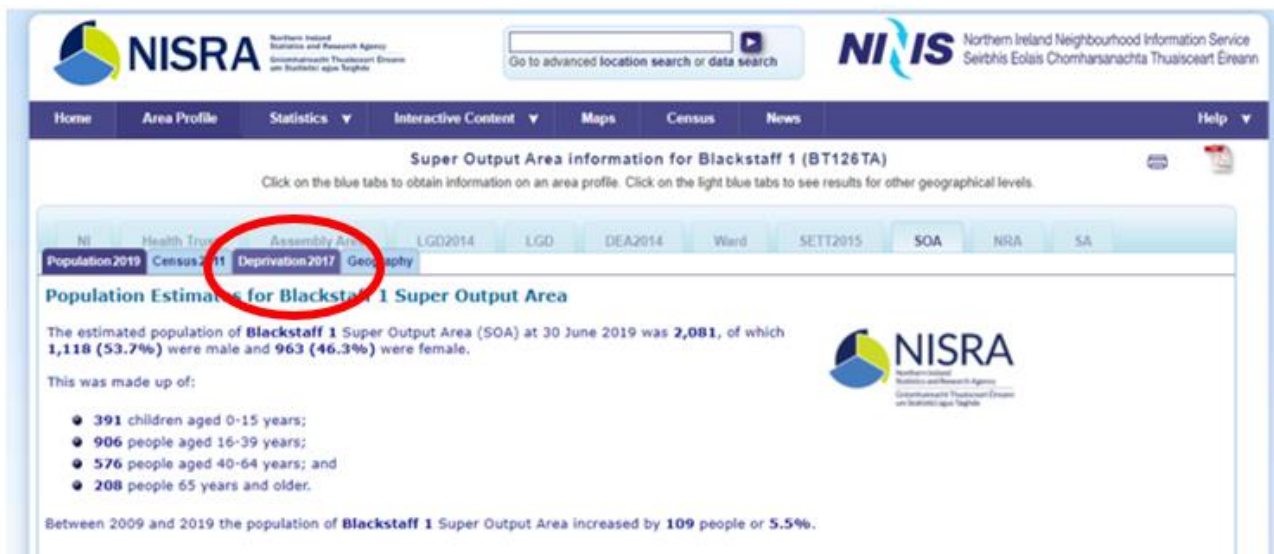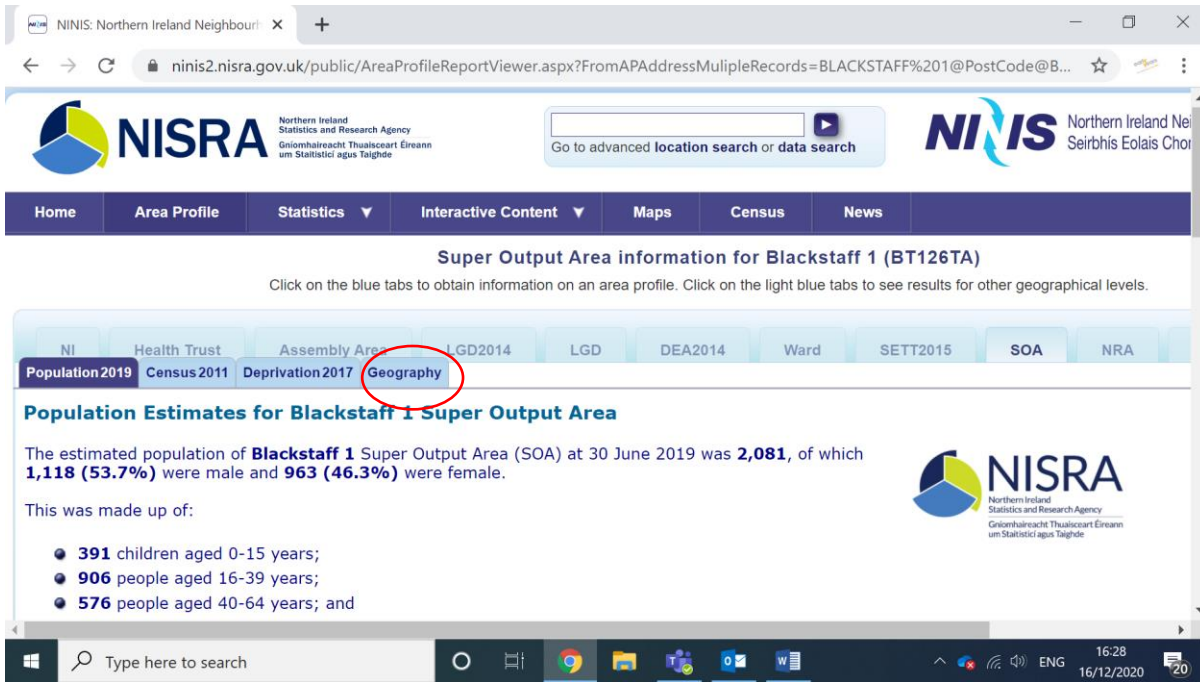

Step 4: The information required for application is highlighted below:

- Multiple Deprivation Measure Rank
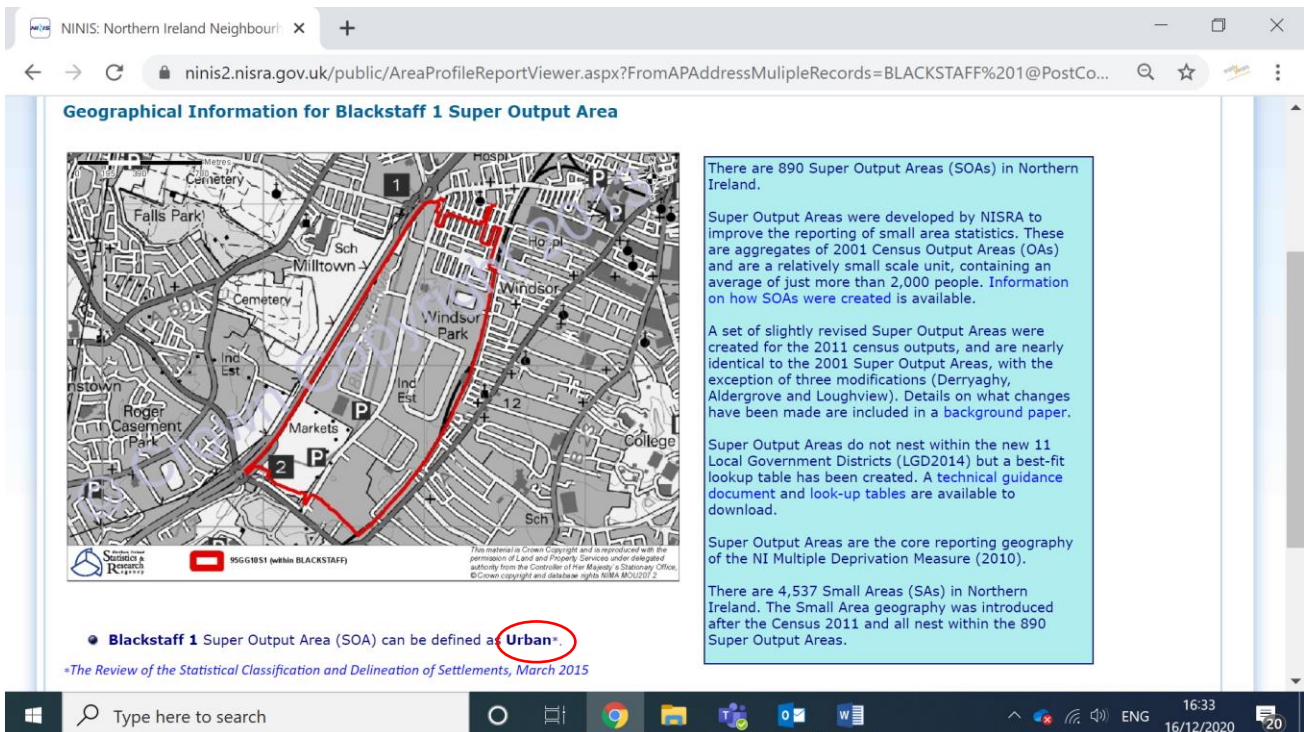- Education Skills and Training Deprivation Rank
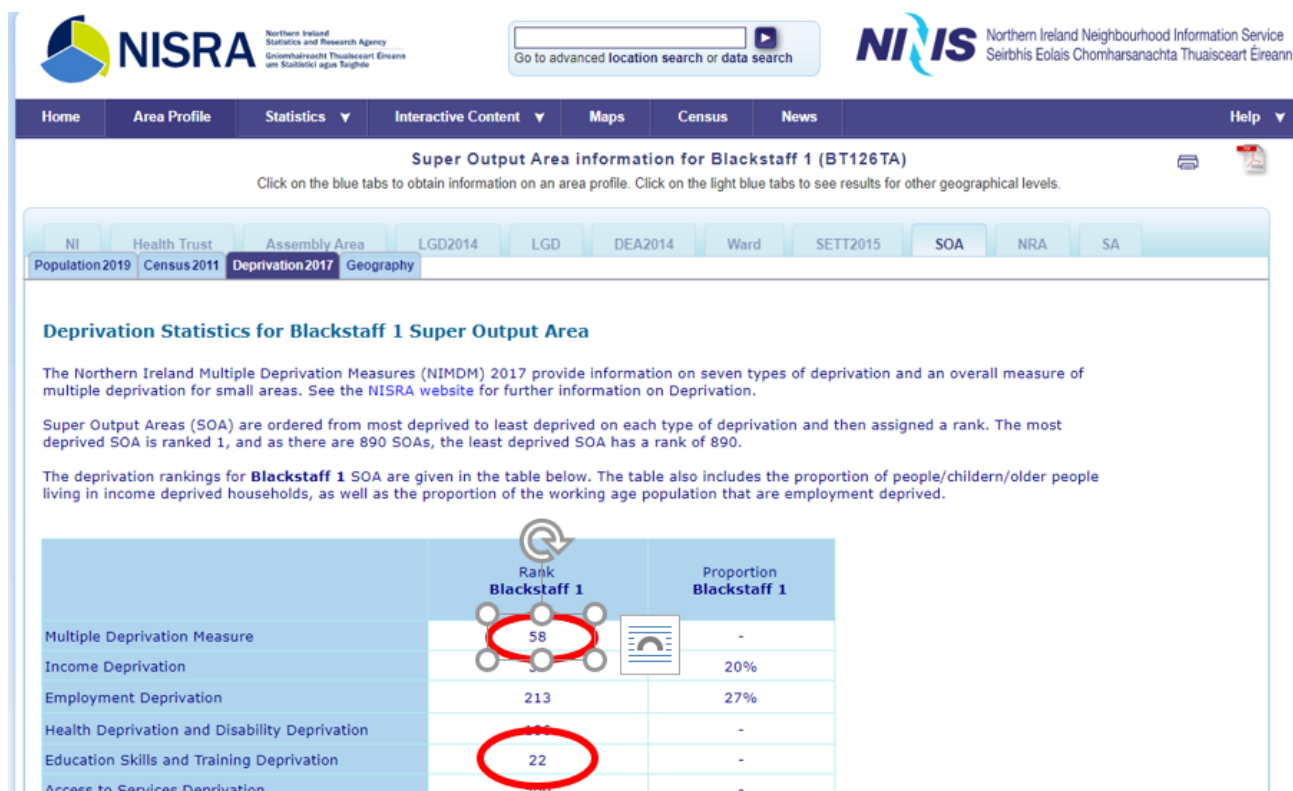
1. To find your urban rural or mixed classification you should follow the same steps as for MDM/EDM above.

At Step 4 you should click the Geography tab as pictured below

2. This will open the screen below and you see your classification at the bottom

Examples of Cost per Child place Calculations

Examples of how cost per child place is calculated for different scenarios and services are provided below:

1. **Pre Pre School - Operating 5 days a week over 10 months for 18 child places**

How many child places will your project offer	18	
How many days per week will your project operate	5	£1,500 divided by 5 days per week, then multiplied 5 days = £1,500
How many months will your project operate	10	£1,500 divided by 12 months, then multiplied by 10 months =£1,250
Cost per child place	£1,250.00	
Maximum Application Amount	**£22,500.00**	£1,250 multiplied by 18 Child Places =£22,500

2. **Daycare - Operating 5 days a week over 12 months for 40 child places**

How many child places will your project offer	40	
How many days per week will your project operate	5	£1,500 divided by 5 days, then multiplied by 5 days = £1,500
How many months will your project operate	12	£1,500 divided by 12 months, then multiplied by 12 months =£1,500
Cost per child place	£1,500.00	
Maximum Application Amount	**£30,000.00**	£1,500 multiplied by 40 Child Places =£30,000 (Max Application)

3. **Pre school operating 10 months 3 days a week for 8 child places with a summer scheme for 2 months 4 days a week for 20 child places.**

Pre school

How many child places will your project offer	8	
How many days per week will your project operate	3	£1,500 divided by 5 days, then multiplied by 3 days = £900
How many months will your project operate	10	£900 divided by 12 months, then multiplied by 10 months =£750
Cost per child place	£750.00	
Maximum Application Amount	£6,000.00	£750 multiplied by 8 Child Places =£6,000

Summer Scheme

How many child places will your project offer	20	
How Many days per week will your project operate	4	£1,500 divided by 5 days, then multiplied by 4 days = £1,200
How many months will your project operate	2	£1,200 divided by 12 months, then multiplied by 2 months =£200
Cost per child place	£200.00	
Maximum Application Amount	£4,000.00	£200 multiplied by 20 Child Places =£4,000
Pre School	*£ 6,000.00*	
Summer Scheme	*£ 4,000.00*	
Total Pathway Fund Grant	**£10,000.00**	

4. Pre pre school operating 10 months 5 days a week for 12 Complex Needs child places

How many child places will your project offer	12	
How Many days per week will your project operate	5	£2,000 divided by 5 days, then multiplied by 5 days = £2,000
How many months will your project operate	10	£2,000 divided by 12 months, then multiplied by 10 months =£1,666.67
Cost per child place	£1,666.67	
Maximum Application Amount	**£20,000.00**	£1,666.67 multiplied by 12 Child Places =£20,000

5. Pre Pre school operating 10 months 5 days a week with 10 child places and 2 complex needs child place, 5 days per week

Pre Pre School

How many child places will your project offer	10	
How many days per week will your project operate	5	£1,500 divided by 5 days, then multiplied by 5 days = £1,500
How many months will your project operate	10	£1,500 divided by 12 months, then multiplied by 10 months =£1,250
Cost per child place	£1,250.00	
Maximum Application Amount	**£12,500.00**	£1,250 multiplied by 10 Child Places =£12,500

Complex Needs child places

How many child places will your project offer	2	
How many days per week will your project operate	5	£2,000 divided by 5 days, then multiplied by 5 days = £2,000
How many months will your project operate	10	£2,000 divided by 12 months, then multiplied by 10 months =£1,666.67
Cost per child place	£1,666.67	
Maximum Application Amount	£3,333.34	£1,666.67 multiplied by 2 Child Places =£3,333.34
Pre Pre School	£ 12,500.00	
Complex Needs Child places	£3,333.34	
Total Pathway Fund Grant	**£15,833.34**	