



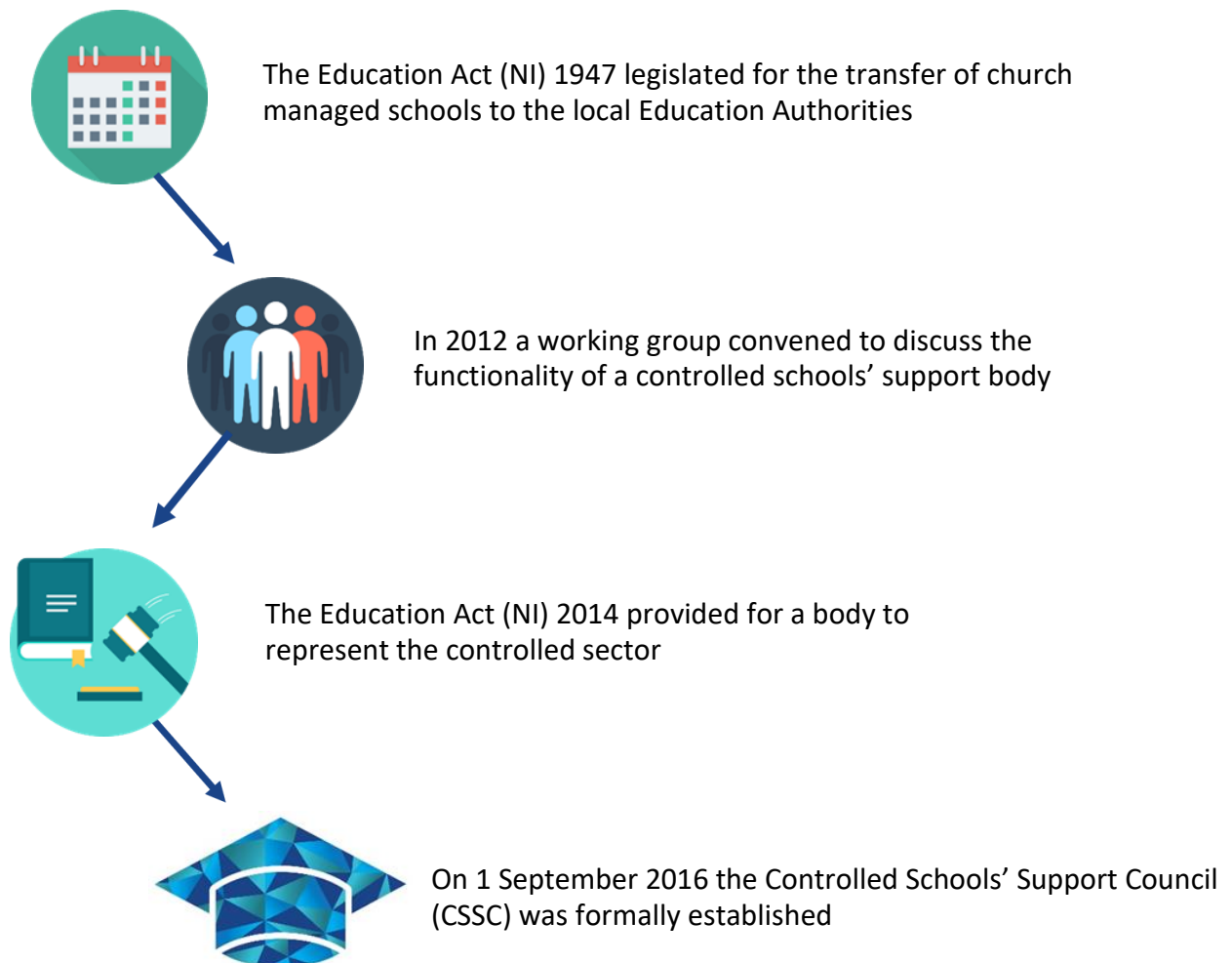
## Controlled Schools' Support Council – briefing note

The Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC) is the advocacy body for Northern Ireland's controlled schools.

Established in September 2016, it is the first time that the largest educational sector has a representative voice.

The need for CSSC has been made abundantly clear in the short time it has been in existence, with 92% of controlled schools opting-in to register with the Council

### CSSC history



## Vision of the Controlled Schools' Support Council

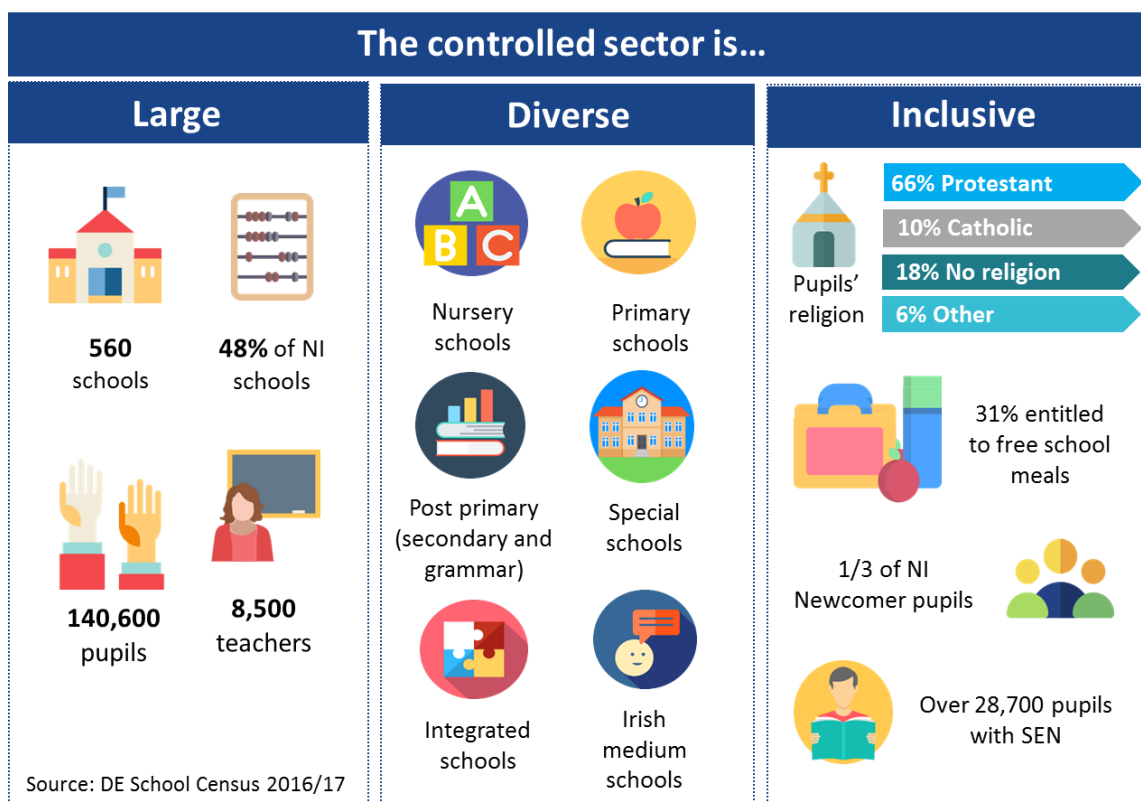
To support controlled schools in providing high quality education for children and young people, to enable them to learn, develop and grow together within the values of a non-denominational Christian environment.

### Definition of controlled schools

Controlled nursery, primary, special, secondary and grammar schools are under the management of the schools Board of Governors and the employing authority is the Education Authority (EA)<sup>1</sup>.

### Controlled education sector profile

The controlled sector is the largest education sector in Northern Ireland. Our baseline research<sup>2</sup> shows that the sector is not only the largest education sector, it is also diverse and inclusive.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/information-school-types-northern-ireland>

<sup>2</sup> CSSC's analysis of the controlled sector can be accessed at [www.csscni.org.uk/publications/cssc-analysis-of-the-controlled-schools-sector/](http://www.csscni.org.uk/publications/cssc-analysis-of-the-controlled-schools-sector/)

## Key functions

On 14 October 2014, during the Education Bill: Second Stage debate, the Education Minister stated the functions of ‘a new organisation to provide support for controlled schools’<sup>3</sup>.

### CSSC’s key functions



#### **Advocacy**

On behalf of individual schools and the wider sector



#### **Ethos**

Develop and maintain the ethos of the sector



#### **Governance**

Support EA in the appointment and training of governors



#### **Raising standards**

Assist schools to further raise levels of achievement



#### **Area planning**

Look at development plans for changes to school provision

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<sup>3</sup> See

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2014/10/14&docID=209460#561900>

## Key milestones

Key milestones to date include:



## Key achievements



### Advocacy

Listening to the views of controlled schools is essential and CSSC's Schools Support Officers are in regular contact with school principals to ensure that we are able to represent their views and opinions.

CSSC has representation on strategic groups, including DE's and EA's area planning structures and the EA's pre-school education group.

CSSC has responded on behalf of the controlled sector to public consultations including:

- DE's Children and Young People's strategy
- EA's strategic plan 2017-2027
- EA's review of residential and outdoor education centres
- ETI's governor inspection self-evaluation framework
- Changes to the Eligibility Criteria for Free School Meal and Uniform Grants.
- Consultation guidance on minibus driving licence requirements and 10B permits for road passenger transport
- Briefing on Northern Ireland Budgetary Outlook 2018-20



### Ethos

Legislation states that both religious education and collective worship should be non-denominational and based on the bible. To that end, CSSC is exploring the Christian ethos and collective worship throughout the controlled sector.

CSSC has convened a working group including representation from the Transferor Representatives' Council and Stranmillis University College. A range of stakeholders has been consulted including:

- controlled schools
- Education Authority
- Love for Life
- Scripture Union
- Child Evangelism Fellowship
- UNICEF.



## Governors

CSSC is committed to working with EA to support governors in controlled schools and this has been done in a number of ways. CSSC has:

- provided feedback on behalf of the controlled sector regarding the draft EA 17/18 governor training programme
- identified a need for training in ethos for the controlled sector
- developed a protocol for collaboration with EA to support of Governors in controlled schools.



## Raising standards

CSSC aims to disseminate examples of effective practice and encourage a culture of collaboration for the benefit of the sector.

School support officers have visited a number of controlled schools identified by ETI as 'outstanding' or 'very good', and CSSC hopes to encourage schools with an expertise in a particular area to collaborate with schools where this is an area for development.

Engaging with schools has enabled CSSC to:

- capture effective practice from schools' self-evaluation
- identify the main focus within school development plans
- identify networks, such as cluster groups or learning communities, with which schools engage
- developed a protocol for collaboration with EA to support raising standards in controlled schools.



## **Estate management**

Area planning has been one of the largest areas of work to date for CSSC. CSSC has representation at all levels with named officers as members of the area planning steering group, the area planning working group and the three area planning local groups.

In addition, CSSC continues to respond to every development proposal published that has the potential to impact on individual controlled schools or the sector as a whole.

This work includes:

- consideration of every development proposal
- review of every case for change
- analysis of the proposal in accordance with agreed CSSC policy statement on area planning
- consultation with controlled schools
- research of relevant legislation and statistics
- submission of CSSC response representing interests of controlled sector as appropriate both at pre-publication and formal consultation on development proposal.



## **Communication and research**

CSSC has a communications strategy in place to enable it to take a proactive approach to promoting the Council, successes of individual schools and the sector as a whole.

Bespoke plans are tailored to emerging issues such as the financial crisis facing the education sector and the impact of the change in minibus licensing.

In addition to interacting with the media, communications planning takes into account:

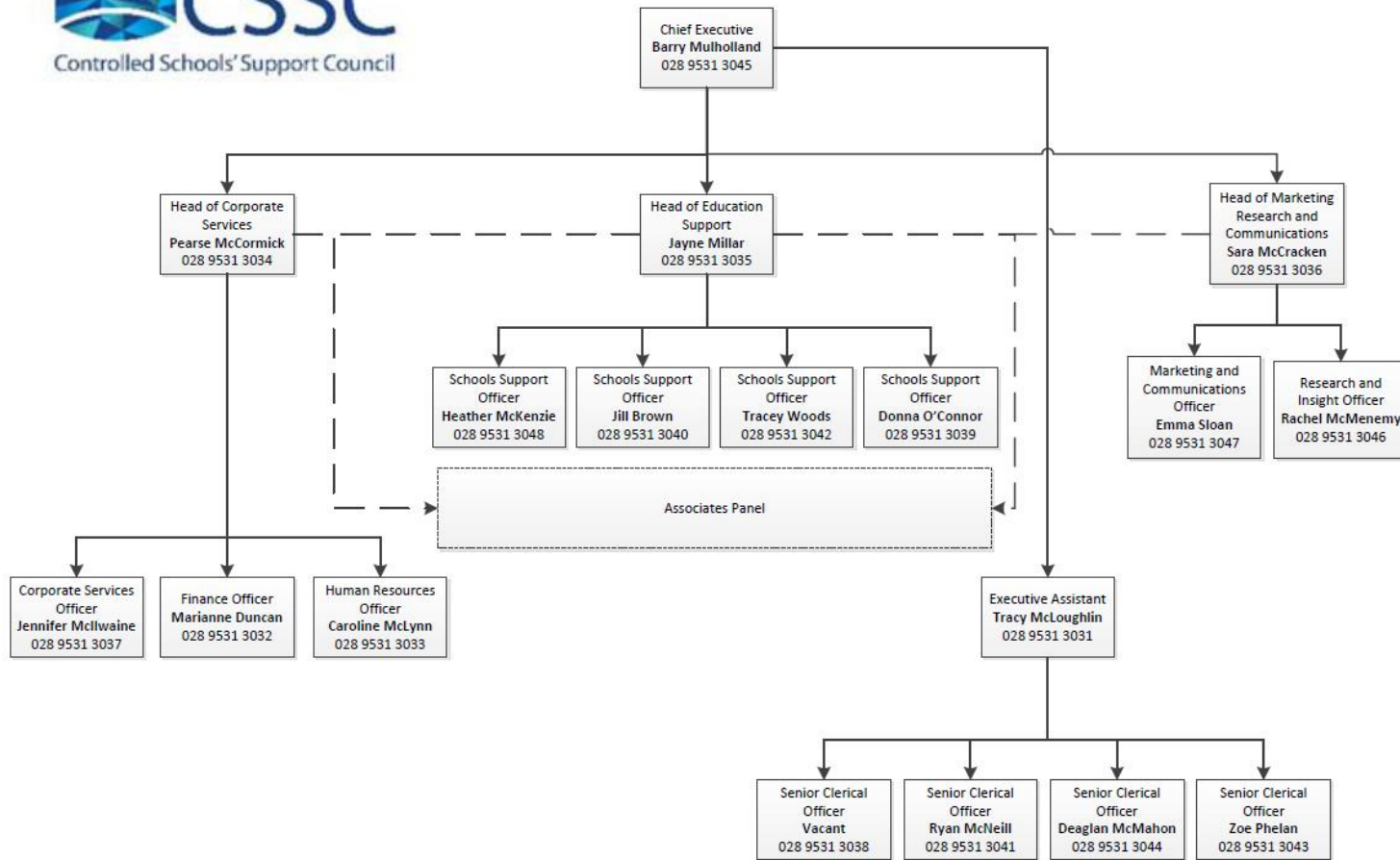
- engaging with politicians
- promoting views via the website and social media
- CSSC's own publications.

All communications work is underpinned by evidence, and a three-year research strategy in place.

# Staff structure



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