

# Education Minister announces expansion of Pre-School education provision

Education Minister Paul Givan has announced that an additional 102 pre-school settings across Northern Ireland have been approved to offer full-time pre-school education from September 2026.

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## New support grant scheme for patients

Health Minister Mike Nesbitt has announced the launch of the Support While Waiting Grant Scheme, a £500,000 fund enabling voluntary and community organisations to provide practical and emotional support to people awaiting treatment on Health and Social Care (HSC) waiting lists.

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## devolution agenda fallen into utter chaos

4 December 2025 by [Green Party](#)

Responding to government plans to delay key mayoral elections, Rachel Millward, Green Party deputy leader, said:

“Labour’s whole devolution agenda has fallen into utter chaos. They’re running scared of the voters and failing to solve the real problems in local government.

“They are failing to inspire voters and can’t delay democracy because they think they won’t like the outcome.

“They’ve seen the Greens rise in the polls and have decided to cancel the voters rather than engage with the issues. People in those areas have the right to vote for mayors the Government has promised them. This weak Labour government is trying to cover up the fact the voters know they are offering no change and are just more of the same.”

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## **Maintaining access to cash vital to local communities – O'Dowd**

The Finance Minister John O'Dowd has hosted a banking roundtable at Stormont to discuss access to cash.

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## **Bluetongue positive findings from further testing in County Down**

Preliminary results of testing carried out by DAERA on a Co Down herd, where two suspected cases of Bluetongue virus were recently identified and confirmed as BTV-3, have revealed suspected presence in a further 44 cattle.