2026-0091328

Department for Education

Josh MacAlister OBE MP
Minister for Children and Families

Ben Maguire MP
By email: Ben.Maguire.MP@parliament.uk

Your ref: BM20519

23 October 2026

Dear Ben,

Thank you for your correspondence of 16 September, on behalf of Jo-Anne Callow, CEO of An Daras Trust, Pennygillam Way, Launceston, PL15 7ED, regarding the applications and appeals submitted in relation to critical heating infrastructure failures at Windmill Hill Academy, Launceston and Lew Trenchard Church of England Primary School, Lewdown.

The core priority for the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) is to address significant condition need, keeping eligible school and sixth form college buildings safe and in good working order. Each CIF bid is assessed individually on its own merits, without reference to previous years' bids, and in line with the published criteria. We give the highest priority to condition projects that address compliance and health and safety issues and prioritise those which provide evidence demonstrating the greatest need. It may be helpful to confirm that each application is assessed twice by independent assessors on its own merits against our published criteria, with many undergoing a further moderation. Assessment and scoring rely on the evidence and specific circumstances provided in their bids by schools and colleges, with the onus on applicants to identify the proposed works in detail, and to show that the approach they are taking and the costs they are requesting are appropriate. The criteria are available on GOV.UK at: tinyurl.com/56BR7DNJ.

I appreciate that the schools will have been disappointed with the result of the CIF round for the financial year 2026 to 2027. CIF is a competitive bidding process and is heavily oversubscribed each year, with many high-quality applications. The success threshold is determined by the amount of available CIF funding, which means that some bids scoring well against priorities will still be unsuccessful. In total, the department received bids from over 1,700 applicants and has confirmed funding for 813 projects at 684 schools and colleges.

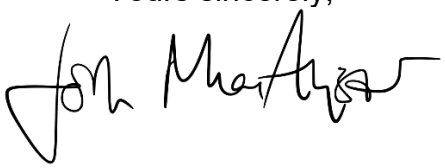
After each round, we provide applicants with individual assessors' feedback on their bids to allow for improvements to future applications. It might be helpful for me to clarify that feedback provided is not intended to justify why an application was not funded: it is possible to receive positive feedback about the quality of an application even when it is unsuccessful and, equally, for assessors to note circumstances where additional points might have been awarded. The assessors do not know when providing feedback on evidence provided whether or not the bid will be successful.

All CIF eligible schools have access to Urgent Capital Support (UCS) throughout the year in the event of an immediate condition issue that cannot wait for an application to the next CIF round. Given the concerns raised about the operational capacity of the schools, the trust should investigate this route if it considers that issues meet the eligibility criteria of a high level of urgency, such as an imminent risk to health and safety, or the closure or likely closure of all or a significant part of the school.

Officials assess applications and supporting evidence in line with published UCS criteria and support is typically provided in the form of a loan. Further details on eligibility, criteria, and how to apply, can be found on GOV.UK at: tinyurl.com/3VY8NPHH.

Thank you for writing. I hope that this response is useful for Ms Callow.

Yours sincerely,



Josh MacAlister OBE MP
Minister for Children and Families