



Essential Skills for Living



Equipped for the Future:
Building for Tomorrow



A Framework and Consultation
Paper on Adult Literacy

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Foreword

By the Minister for Employment and Learning



Improving the essential skills of literacy and numeracy in Northern Ireland is one of the key challenges that my Department and the Executive faces. I believe, firmly, that improving levels of these essential skills holds the key to the future success of Northern Ireland, as a society, as an economy and as a culture.

Far too many in our society have low levels of literacy and numeracy skills, a stark fact brought to our attention through the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) which estimated that over 20 per cent of adults in Northern Ireland perform at the lowest levels of literacy competence.

It has been said, often, that lifelong learning is the key to lifelong earning. I believe that to be true. It is, equally, my conviction that literacy and numeracy skills and, increasingly, the skills of information and communication technology, are the key that allows us to open the door of lifelong learning, which improves not only employability, but also social inclusion and personal development. There is no form of employment which does not require these skills.

For far too long, adult literacy education has been of low status within the education system. This Strategy document marks a radical new approach to literacy and numeracy in Northern Ireland. It has at its heart quality; quality in terms of curriculum, teaching and also in the esteem that such an important educational area rightly deserves.

The theme of the Strategy is the building of our capacity to deal with this issue. It sets out to:

- build a quality framework to underpin the provision of adult literacy and numeracy;
- build up the demand for such provision, from among those adults with low skill levels; and
- build up the number of tutors and increase provision.

Within the Executive, there is a shared vision of a Northern Ireland that can be competitive in a global economy, and one where all its citizens can participate fully in society. Through improving literacy and numeracy levels, we can go a long way to helping this vision become a reality.

I wish to thank the Basic Skills Committee, in particular, its Chairman, Richard Sterling and the Educational Guidance Service for Adult's (EGSA's) Basic Skills Unit, for the invaluable work they have done in this area, and for helping to raise the profile of adult literacy and numeracy in Northern Ireland. Their advice has played a key role in helping shape the Strategy.

The Strategy focuses on the needs of adults and, in particular, those who currently have low levels of literacy and numeracy. It should, however, be seen as a continuum with the policies of the Department of Education, as that Department strives to ensure that our children and young people develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

The Strategy sets out the direction to be taken. Many people have an interest in developing literacy and numeracy, not just those who work in the education sector but also those in the community and voluntary sectors, employers, trade unions and the general public. I want as many of these sectors as possible to be involved in implementing the Strategy. We have a huge challenge but, in partnership, we can work together in the interests of addressing this distinctive and important issue. I look forward, therefore, to receiving the views of all who wish to comment on my proposals.

I would like to assure you of my personal commitment to this challenge. I believe the time is now right to take a major step forward in our approach to Essential Skills in literacy and numeracy.



Carmel Hanna MLA
Minister for Employment and Learning

Learning in the Workplace

A survey carried out in 2000 by a large employer showed that a large minority of the workforce could benefit from support in English and mathematics.

Working in co-operation with the local Institute of Further and Higher Education, the employer introduced a training programme within the company.

The number of employees receiving support increased greatly once they witnessed their workmates benefiting from the tuition.

About seventy students have received help during 2000/01. Some have stayed on the programme for a relatively short time i.e. six to twelve weeks, depending on their needs. Others have opted for a longer period of tuition, i.e. six to twelve months. Help has been given in English, mathematics and basic computers. Already some students have achieved Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examination Board (OCR) certificates in Spelling Skills.

The support programme has also benefited some ethnic minority employees who work in the factory. Tuition has been given to operatives from Pakistan, Hong Kong, Lithuania, Columbia and Afghanistan.

The proposal is being extended to include other large employers in the area.

Executive Summary

Introduction

1.

This paper sets out the framework and actions for a Strategy to improve the essential skills of literacy and numeracy in Northern Ireland. These skills are defined as “ the ability to communicate by talking and listening; reading and writing; to use numeracy; and the ability to handle information”. In today’s society, information and communication technology (ICT), can also be regarded as an essential skill. While not addressing the development of ICT skills specifically in the Strategy, it is recognised that they will be the medium to draw many adults into learning and will be used frequently as a mode of delivery. Consequently, as adults increase their skills in literacy and numeracy they will also increase their ability to use ICT.

2.

The Strategy plans the introduction of a regional curriculum, accreditation for adult learners and improved tutor qualifications. It sets targets for building capacity and engaging new adult learners, and suggests ways in which these might be achieved. It recommends the structures that need to be put in place to effect the changes, and indicates the resources which government is committed to providing to take the work forward.

3.

Engaging adults to improve their essential skills means that the teaching must be relevant to the learners’ interests. As a consequence, a wide range of contexts will be used, for example, confidence-building courses as well as the wide range of leisure courses which are available. In addition, employers will be encouraged to develop the essential skills of their employees as part of their overall vocational training programme. This could be done, for example, while developing ICT skills.

4.

The proposals outlined in this paper are for public consultation.

Context

5.

Training in literacy and numeracy is provided currently through further education colleges, community groups, in the workplace and through the various programmes of the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL). Provision is patchy, and suffers from a lack of consistency in terms of curriculum and a professional career structure for the tutors. The Executive is committed to lifelong learning and developing a knowledge-based economy in Northern Ireland. It is, therefore, a social and economic imperative to improve the literacy and numeracy skills in a large proportion of the adult population. Improvement will not just happen; the Department needs to develop a structure to enable and encourage everyone to acquire these essential skills and help them to develop to their full potential.

Community Development

Cookstown and Western Shores Area Network (CWSAN) was established in 1996 to identify and voice issues of concern to communities in relation to rural under-development, disadvantage and to promote community development within the rural District Council Area of Cookstown, and parts of Dungannon and Magherafelt Council areas. CWSAN's main aim is fostering of community development with strong focus on moving towards social inclusion and community economic development.

The organisation received a grant to provide educational opportunities and progression routes in learning for adults who are socially deprived. They were also involved in offering training opportunities to local people who wish to act as volunteer tutors and the programmes include training in literacy and numeracy.

Information Technology Training On The Move

A local further education college has equipped a mobile unit with computers and takes the training in information technology (IT) to the learner. But it is not just IT. The tutors use IT to encourage the learner to also improve their literacy and numeracy skills. The college now uses the mobile unit to provide training in customer care, literacy, numeracy and IT for local retailers.

Learning In The Community Alongside Other Services

A Family Caring Centre operates a community house offering childcare, counselling, training and a range of support services for adults living in a large disadvantaged estate with high levels of unemployment. Staff, working with a guidance worker, are focusing on helping their adults to brush up on their literacy and numeracy skills, especially as many of them have not availed fully of their earlier formal education.

Principles

6.

The principles which underpin this Strategy are these:

- there will be visible and committed leadership;
- there will be a regional framework within which all provision for Essential Skills will sit;
- the provision for Essential Skills will be of consistently high quality;
- Essential Skills will be provided in a manner which makes them accessible to all; and
- tutors will be encouraged and supported to develop their skills within a professional framework.

Key Strands

7.

The Strategy has five key strands:

- leadership;
- building a structured framework;
- building quality;
- building capacity;
- engaging learners.

8.

These strands set out what the Department will do, and how it will be done. They are inter-dependent and not sequentially. The Strategy will deliver, by September 2002, a regional curriculum at entry level and an assessment regime at entry level by January 2003. The equivalent regime at levels 1 and 2 will be in place by September 2003.

Local History Inspires Learner

“As a mature student the challenge of the course is updating skills long since forgotten coupled with the local history of the shipyard. My Grandfather worked there and I grew up with the stories surrounding it. It is very depressing to see a proud company in such a decline. If only the local people could do something about it.

Then, I was asked to help develop an advertising campaign for a community project in my local area. This enabled me to learn about the shipyard, the history behind it, the people involved in shipbuilding and at the same time brush up on my English and maths.”

9.

Section 3 sets out, in detail, how these five strands can be achieved:

(a) Leadership

- The Strategy for improving Essential Skills will be driven by the Minister for Employment and Learning.
- The Minister will establish an Essential Skills Committee representative of all the major interests in the field and serviced by the Department.
- EGSA will be asked to mainstream and enhance support for Essential Skills across all its functions with a particular focus on advocacy and promotion.
- The proposed new curriculum and staff support body for the Further Education Sector will include in its remit the provision of curriculum and staff support for all providers of Essential Skills programmes.
- The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) will inspect the quality of Essential Skills irrespective of where it is provided.
- The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) will be the regulatory body for Essential Skills in Northern Ireland.

(b) Building a Structured Framework

- New standards and curricula for Essential Skills programmes will apply consistently across all provision, and will be sufficiently flexible to fit different contexts.
- The curriculum and qualifications for literacy and numeracy skills will be specific to Northern Ireland. They will be known as Essential Skills and will provide a continuum with existing Key Skills qualifications, and to provide identifiable benchmarks and progression routes for learners, higher education institutions and employers.
- There will be improved initial assessment of all learners.
- There will be regional assessment arrangements.

Men Return To Learn

A group of 17 men came together in a refurbished Housing Executive property in a large estate. Prior to taking on the house the group met in a nearby pub where they organised their own learning programmes and social activities. The majority had left school with no qualifications and wanted to brush up their literacy and numeracy skills. They felt they had no real choices about what they could do in the future. The group has completed an accredited community leadership course and an integral programme of learning activities including literacy, numeracy and information technology (IT).

The group members plan to remain together and develop their learning programme in their own premises. They work in partnership with a number of providers according to their learning needs. Ten have embarked on IT courses and have completed word-processing. Eight of these have also just begun an Access to Higher Education course with a local further education college and six have enrolled on a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) course in catering. The learners say:

“I hated school – I never thought I’d get any qualifications but this has changed me and I look forward to the course.”

“People think I’m thick because I can’t read and write but I’ve proved now I can educate myself.”

“My boss pays me less and treats me worse because I’ve no qualifications and can’t get a better job - but now I can get qualified and move on.”

(c) Building Quality

- There will be improved professional training, along with an improved career structure for tutors.
- New and effective quality assurance procedures will be introduced.
- There will be improved staff and curriculum support for those involved in the delivery of Essential Skills.
- An ongoing research and evaluation programme for Essential Skills will be established.

(d) Building Capacity and Engaging Learners

- Provision will be expanded in the Further Education and community and voluntary sectors.
- Opportunities to improve Essential Skills will be maximised in all the Department's programmes, such as New Deal, Focus for Work, learndirect and Jobskills.
- Opportunities to improve Essential Skills in the workplace will be expanded through greater involvement of employers and trade unions.
- Substantial support will be given to new initiatives which actively engage families in learning.
- In all initiatives, the potential to engage learners through relevant and flexible learning programmes through ICT will be explored.
- The Strategy will be underpinned by a comprehensive promotional campaign.

Confidence In Work

Declan is the foreman of the stores in the company where he works. He has held this position for ten years but has avoided most work that requires writing. His company wants to send him on a health and safety course. **“I don’t want to look stupid. If I could get some practice before I go I’d feel better.”** Declan attends a class in his local college to help with the literacy and numeracy he needs for work.

Women Prepare For Work

The combination of personal presentation skills, information technology skills, along with literacy and numeracy, and work experience carrying out reception duties in local hotels formed the basis of a successful course for women, who wanted to bolster their confidence after a period at home to raise their families. They were keen to upgrade their skills to give them more employment opportunities.

Investing in Literacy and Numeracy

10.

Through its current programmes, the Department invests heavily in adult literacy and numeracy. In the current year, this investment amounts to approximately £1.9 million. The Department has secured additional resources through Executive Programme Funds. In addition, through PEACE II funding, approximately £7million is available until 2006/7 to expand literacy and numeracy programmes. However, if the new approach advocated in this Strategy is to be successful, then further significant investment will be required. The Department will seek to secure the necessary resources; it will be a matter for the Executive and the Assembly to determine the priority to be given to this area of expenditure in matching future resources to the many competing calls for funding.

11.

This Strategy is not a “quick fix” to address the substantial problem of poor literacy and numeracy among adults; it is a new framework which will put in place an infrastructure that engages and supports the learner, provides professional development and resources for the tutor, and ensures the skills needed for a knowledge-based economy and an inclusive society.

12.

The ultimate success of the Strategy will depend on the ability to engage learners from all walks of life. For this reason substantial resources will be devoted to a comprehensive national promotional campaign aimed at increasing awareness and driving up demand among adults for literacy and numeracy.

Adults Return To Learn Because Of Their Children

Ed is a 34 year old man who has “gotten by for years” with limited reading, writing and maths skills. Having a young family of school age he is now keen to improve his skills in order that he can help his children with their schoolwork. Ed goes along to a class at his local community centre.

Margaret is a 32 year old mother of 2 young children who had not been “**too concerned**” about her difficulty with maths - until now. With her children now at school Margaret wants to be able to help them with their school work, and now having her “**mornings to herself**” she is able to attend a maths class at her Open Learning Centre to help her do just that.

Mary is a young mother who wants to improve her English skills and maybe work towards GCSE in order to improve her chances of gaining suitable employment once “**the children are older**”. Mary had worked in a factory when she was younger but feels that she could “**do a lot better**”. Now Mary goes along to her local college to work on her literacy skills.

Introduction

1.1

This paper sets out a proposed strategic framework and the actions, for the future provision of Essential Skills in Northern Ireland, including key developments in the curriculum and the teaching base.

1.2

The Department for Employment and Learning invites comments to inform both the Strategy and the key actions proposed. Appendix 1 lists specific questions for comment. As well as replies to these questions, comments on any other relevant matter will be welcomed.

How to respond to this document

1.3

Adult literacy and numeracy affect the whole of society; they lie at the heart of developing Northern Ireland, both economically and socially. It is essential that there should be a widespread and informed discussion on the Strategy and the proposals for action put forward in this document.

1.4

EGSA's Basic Skills Unit has been asked to manage the consultation process. Comments can be sent in writing or by E-mail to the address shown at the end of this section. If there are groups that would prefer to make an oral response, the Department will make arrangements to hear their views. Unless otherwise requested, it will be assumed that responses are not intended to be confidential.

Timescale for responses

1.5

The closing date for receiving comments is Friday 21st June 2002.

1.6

The consultation paper is being widely circulated to key interest groups. Additional copies and copies in large print, Braille and audiotape can be obtained by contacting the address, E-Mail address or telephone number below. The paper is also available on the Department's website at www.delni.gov.uk

What Happens Next ?

1.7

Following the consultation all the responses will be analysed by the Department and EGSA's Basic Skills Unit. The Department will consider the responses and finalise its action plan in September 2002.

Contact Address

EGSA Connecting Adults with Learning
Basic Skills Unit
4th Floor
40 Linenhall Street
Belfast BT2 8BA

Tel: (028) 9024 4274
Fax: (028) 9027 1507
E-Mail: bsu@egsa.org.uk

Context : Why Develop A Strategy?

2.1

Introduction

2.1.1

The current Programme for Government sets out the Executive's vision and priorities for Northern Ireland. The core principles underpinning the Investing in Education and Skills section of the Programme include:

- providing high quality education for all, with equal access for all;
- ensuring that all our young people have the skills and qualifications to gain employment in a modern economy;
- enabling people to update their knowledge, skills and qualifications; and
- assisting and supporting all those in the education system, including the socially excluded, to enable them to enter or return to the workforce, or to improve their quality of life.

2.1.2

The measures proposed are designed to widen access to everyone, in particular those in greatest need, to enable them to improve their skills. As such they will have a positive affect on all groups as identified under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. These measures will advance the Executive's New Targeting Social Need (TSN) policy and the work it is taking forward on the equality front, by providing the opportunity for social disadvantaged people and groups to improve their qualifications and basic skills, and increase their employability.

2.1.3

It is within this context that the imperative of improving adult literacy and numeracy is recognised. A knowledge-based economy, which is socially inclusive and maximises individual potential, must have a population with high levels of literacy. In 1996, Northern Ireland participated along with most Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in IALS. This was the first literacy survey of its kind. It provided information about literacy levels in Northern Ireland and, at the same time, provided an international comparator against which Northern Ireland could be benchmarked. The study showed that literacy levels in Northern Ireland were similar to those in Great Britain, Ireland and the United States but were much worse than in several other countries in Western Europe such as Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands.

2.1.4

The survey identified four levels of literacy and numeracy rather than simply determining literacy or illiteracy. The results indicated that 24% of those aged between 16 and 65 in Northern Ireland (around a quarter of a million people) performed at the lowest level of literacy (level 1).

2.1.5

Lower levels of literacy are associated, in the research, with a wide range of social, economic and personal difficulties. A study by Brynner and Parsons in 1997 entitled 'It Doesn't Get Any Better' found that those with the lowest levels of literacy are:

- up to five times more likely to be unemployed or out of the labour market;
- likely to have more children and earlier;
- more likely to have children who also struggle with literacy in adult life;
- more likely to be in poor health;
- more likely to live in rented accommodation;
- more likely to suffer depression;
- more likely to be homeless;
- less likely to take part in public activities or local community groups; and
- over-represented in prisons and young offenders institutions.

2.1.6

Poor literacy and numeracy skills have serious consequences for the individual, the family, society and the economy:

(a) The Individual

Those adults who performed at level 1 in IALS, and who were employed, had a low income. Research by City University in 1998 showed that adults with poor literacy skills are:

- most likely to end up in unskilled or semi-skilled work;
- twice as likely to have been made redundant or sacked from their first job; and
- four times more likely to experience long-term unemployment.

With improvements in literacy and numeracy, such disadvantages are reduced. People are more protected against adverse employment conditions, and are able to re-train for new employment opportunities.

(b) The Family

It is very likely that parents with limited literacy and numeracy skills will be less able to give their children a good start or to help them if they have problems.

The research by City University also showed that 60% of children in the lowest attainment group at age 10 had parents with low literacy scores.

(c) Society

According to IALS, improved literacy and numeracy lead to benefits across society. The level of crime, social welfare requirements and poverty can be reduced, health improved and community participation increased. Thus, addressing the weaknesses in literacy and numeracy could have significant positive consequences for the criminal justice system, the public health and social welfare agendas, and will increase the likelihood of people participating in the democratic process and community regeneration.

(d) The Economy

The report 'Literacy, Education and Training and their Impact on the UK Economy', by Ernst and Young, shows that illiteracy carries economic costs as well as causing personal problems.

People at work need good literacy and numeracy skills to be able to cope with the demands of the job, both safely and effectively. A survey undertaken by Gallup in 1993 estimated that poor literacy cost the British economy more than £4.8 billion each year in terms of poor quality control, lost orders, mistakes due to bad communication, and the costs of recruiting employees externally, when poor literacy and numeracy skills among existing staff limit internal promotion.

Business and industry in Northern Ireland have changed significantly in the past 10 years. There are fewer unskilled or semi-skilled jobs available. A knowledge-based economy, one which embraces the opportunities of modern technology, must ensure its workforce has the necessary competences in literacy and numeracy and the culture to continue learning and raising its skills. The OECD stated in 2000, that a knowledge-driven economy demands an extensively developed skills base.

2.1.7

In summary, there can be no doubt that improving an adult's literacy and numeracy levels can assist in improving his or her overall quality of life. Improvements in these essential skills can also promote greater economic development, social inclusion and cohesion. The Executive's Taskforce for Employability and Long Term Unemployed has identified poor literacy and numeracy as major barriers to securing employment. Enhancing an individual's level of literacy and numeracy can, therefore, enhance his or her employment opportunities.

2.1.8

The Department of Education (DE) has recognised that one key to solving the literacy and numeracy challenge lies in policies to improve literacy and numeracy in schools. It has set in place policies to address this challenge and is currently considering a renewed approach. DEL believes that these policies should be

complemented by the widespread adoption of a learning culture and a commitment to lifelong learning by adults. The creation of literacy and learning-rich environments in homes, in the community and in workplaces are objectives which should be pursued. Literacy-rich working environments benefit both employers and employees. Literacy and numeracy are important to profitability, productivity, quality of output and increased competitiveness. In a recent study, six manufacturing companies, in Illinois USA, making products ranging from hydraulic valves to bubble gum, provided basic English language reading and mathematics education for their employees. Supervisors reported that the programmes had a variety of positive effects on organisational effectiveness, including improvements in training, on-the-job performance, promotability of participants and in productivity.

2.2

What Does Literacy and Numeracy Mean?

2.2.1

Many attempts have been made to define literacy and numeracy. The Department uses a definition which encompasses, the skills and abilities needed by all to ensure that they can participate in society and working life. It defines literacy and numeracy as:

“ the ability to communicate by talking and listening, reading and writing; to use numeracy; and the ability to handle information”.

Developing these skills and abilities helps learners to develop the competence and confidence to express ideas and opinions. It also helps them to make decisions and to solve problems, and so to enhance the quality of everyday life. Through the development of these skills, individuals can develop their confidence as learners and become more able to manage and determine their own learning. ICT can also be regarded as an essential skill. It is not covered specifically in this document but will be used as the medium to draw many into learning. It can also be used as a learning resource and is of course, an important medium of communication.

2.2.2

It is acknowledged that the continuing development of literacy and numeracy skills is for everyone, irrespective of his or her current level of achievement. Particular priority should be given, however, to those who have not yet reached level 2 in the National Qualifications Framework (Level 2 is set at achievement of 4 or more GCSEs at grades A, B or C, and Key Skills at level 2).

2.2.3

To prevent confusion and to show complementarity with the existing Key Skills qualifications and curriculum, qualifications in literacy and numeracy will be referred to as “**Essential Skills**” .

2.3

Who Are The Learners?

2.3.1

The findings of the **IALS**, referred to above indicated that:

- 24 % of 16-65 year olds in Northern Ireland performed at the lowest level: this corresponds to around one quarter of a million Northern Ireland adults at level 1.

2.3.2

Further detailed analysis of the IALS evidence indicates in document literacy terms that:

- the older age groups performed worse than 16-25 year olds; over 40% of men and 41% of women at level 1 were in the 56-65 age group;
- 36% of the unemployed were in the level 1 category;
- 44% of the economically inactive were at level 1; and
- 19% of people in employment were at level 1.

Not surprisingly, literacy is associated strongly with duration of education; the percentage of people performing at the higher literacy levels increased with more extended education.

2.3.3

The Basic Skills Agency in England has calculated, on the basis of its research in England and Wales, that approximately:

- 57% of this level 1 group (15% of the total 16-65 population) need fairly modest help to enhance their skills to the required level;
- 22% of the level 1 group (5% of the total 16-65 population) need more specific and in-depth help; and
- 21% of the level 1 group (4% of the total 16-65 population) need intensive teaching.

If these figures, based on the Northern Ireland sample of 2,907 respondents, are extrapolated to the Northern Ireland population:

- around 160,000 people require fairly modest help to enhance their skills;
- around 50,000 need more specific help;
- around 40,000 need intensive support.

2.4

What Has Happened Since IALS?

2.4.1

A significant development in Northern Ireland since the publication of the IALS report has been the setting up of the Basic Skills Committee, a representative body comprising of all relevant groups (see Annex 2) supported by EGSA's Basic Skills Unit.

2.4.2

Under the remit of the Committee, EGSA's Basic Skills Unit was asked to:

- (i) promote collaboration among providers, and disseminate good practice;
- (ii) provide financial support to community and voluntary groups for activities related to innovation in adult basic education; and
- (iii) provide the Department with advice on standards, curriculum, tests, qualifications and the qualifications for tutors.

The advice, which has been provided, played a key role in informing this Strategy, and the Unit's work, over the last three years, has had a positive impact in raising the profile of essential skills.

2.5

Current Provision

2.5.1

The information about individuals engaged currently in formal learning remains patchy, and that in itself is an issue to be addressed. A survey carried out by the Basic Skills Unit indicated that there are, currently, around 5,500 learners involved in different forms of adult basic education. Further details on the learners indicate that there is an equal distribution between the genders, with the majority, some 85%, aged between 19 and 45 years.

2.5.2

Further Education (FE)

Adult basic education has been provided by most FE colleges since the 1970s. The FE sector remains by far the largest provider, accounting for approximately 5,000 of the existing learners. The classes provided are staffed by a mixture of paid and voluntary tutors, the vast majority of whom are part-time. There have been significant improvements in the provision in recent years, particularly in the development of accreditation for learners, and in the qualifications and in-service training available to tutors.

2.5.3

Community Provision

There has been an expansion in community-based adult basic education in recent years, often in collaboration with a local FE college. The introduction, in 1999, of the Innovation Fund, managed by the Basic Skills Unit, has helped to develop this

area of provision. The fund has supported 43 separate projects. The participation rates and the capacity of providers varied considerably, but, between September 1999 and September 2000, 1,260 learners participated in forms of provision which incorporated adult literacy; 740 of these were in community provision and 520 in partnership with either an FE college or an Open Learning Centre.

2.5.4

Work-based Provision

Given the large numbers of people with low levels of literacy and numeracy in the workplace (around 134,000), it is perhaps surprising that this is the least developed area of provision. There have been, however, some very good examples of development. During 1999/00, Moypark and the Upper Bann Institute of Further and Higher Education, collaborated to provide a programme for around 70 employees. In addition, UNISON and the Workers' Education Association (WEA), in conjunction with a number of employers, have supported approximately 550 learners over the last 7 years.

2.5.5

New Deal

All New Deal participants with literacy and numeracy needs have access to assessment and training. A 'Toolkit', aimed at raising the awareness of the New Deal Personal Advisers and assisting them in the identification of clients with literacy and numeracy difficulties, has been developed by a working group from DEL, the Basic Skills Unit, New Deal providers and the ETI. The 'Toolkit' is being used across the JobCentre network.

2.5.6

Focus for Work

Focus for Work, a new Departmental initiative, is designed to offer individuals a stepping stone or the extra helping hand they need to move towards employment. It is an approach which provides participants with the skills, confidence, advice, training or work experiences for which employers are looking.

Focus for Work comprises the following elements: JobCentre Employment Review Interviews, Jobclubs, Worktrack, Bridge to Employment, Training for Work and early entry to New Deal. Support is provided through these elements for people with poor literacy and numeracy skills.

2.5.7

Jobskills

The Access strand of the Jobskills programme for 16 – 18 year olds provides additional support for young people who are identified as having particular literacy and numeracy difficulties.

2.5.8

Learndirect

A key priority for the University for Industry (Ufi) is to expand, significantly, participation in learning in literacy and numeracy. Under its public brand name of learndirect, Ufi has commissioned innovative, on-line diagnostic and learning materials and tutor support which is available wherever and whenever it suits the learner – at home, in work, or in the growing network of easily accessible learndirect centres across Northern Ireland. Learndirect's mission is to make ICT integral to learning including in literacy and numeracy.

2.6

The Challenge

2.6.1

Adult basic education is regarded as an area of low status within the education sector. There have been recent improvements, but the curriculum has lacked consistency, rigour and adequate accreditation. It has not benefited from any significant investment. There has been a heavy reliance on part-time staff, often volunteers, who have limited professional support or development opportunities. Materials have not kept pace with the needs of the learner, and the use of ICT has been particularly limited. The accommodation used for training in adult literacy and numeracy is often poor. Finally, and most significantly, the number of learners enrolled has grown but still remains small; less than 2% annually of the need identified in IALS.

2.6.2

There is a need to engage far more learners. There are several reasons for the low level of demand. These include:

- a failure, so far, to attract and motivate learners in sufficient numbers;
- a failure to make provision which is sufficiently flexible; and
- the existence of particular barriers which prevent adults with limited formal education from returning to learning.

In consequence, in Northern Ireland, a new radical approach to training in adult literacy and numeracy is needed. There is need for a quality framework, which supports learning and teaching to the standard that adult learners deserve and should expect.

3.1

A New Direction: What Will The Strategy Do And How Will It Do It?

3.1.1

The preceding chapter painted a picture of the significant challenge to improve Essential Skills. This and subsequent sections set out the Strategy and actions being proposed by the Department for a new direction for Essential Skills in Northern Ireland over the next 10 years. It is recognised that the problem will not be fully resolved in that period. The aim of the Strategy is, however, to put in place the foundations for its ultimate resolution, and, if the resources are available, by the end of the period, to have progressed significant numbers of adults in their learning and skills.

3.1.2

The Strategy is designed to tackle resolutely the problem of poor Essential Skills among adults over a longer period of time. The aspirational objective of the Strategy is, by 2012, to reduce by half the number of adults with poor skills in literacy and numeracy. As a first step, and resources permitting, over 25,000 learners will have benefited by 2005 from the actions proposed in the Strategy. From September 2003 targets will also be put in place to measure learner achievement under the new assessment and accreditation arrangements. Further research will also be commissioned to assess the wider socio economic impact of the improved literacy and numeracy levels. Moreover, once engaged, learners will be on a ladder of progression to at least level 2 within the National Qualifications Framework.

3.1.3

The Strategy is designed to be delivered in two broad phases, which to some degree, overlap in time.

- **Phase 1 - building the structured framework** – the Strategy is to put in place a set of standards, a regional curriculum, appropriate assessment and accreditation procedures, and a more professionalised tutor base within the first eighteen months. These will be fully in place by September 2003.
- **Phase 2 - building capacity and engaging learners** – the Strategy is to build capacity across all providers of literacy and numeracy and to engage and exploit further new avenues such as work-based and family learning. The significant expansion will begin in the 2002/2003 academic year. A promotional campaign to engage learners will begin in January 2003, but with a major drive in September 2003.

3.1.4

The Strategy includes a number of key elements:

- (i) it will be both intra-Departmental and inter-Departmental; it will involve the main DEL programmes; it will complement the DE's literacy and numeracy strategy and the wider policies of Departments such as the Department of

Health, Social Services and Public Safety; the Department for Social Development; the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment; Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development;

- (ii) it will depend for delivery on a wide range of strategic and other partnerships involving a variety of providers;
- (iii) all provision will be expected to accord with the regional curriculum, standards and accreditation arrangements set out within the structured framework;
- (iv) it is designed to raise the status and professionalism of work in adult literacy and numeracy;
- (v) provision will be delivered, as far as possible, through the use of ICT, so also delivering this essential skill; advice is being sought on how ICT can best be used for the delivery of literacy and numeracy.

3.1.5

The Strategy has 5 key strands:

- leadership;
- building a structured framework;
- building quality;
- building capacity;
- engaging learners.

PHASE I – BUILDING THE STRUCTURED FRAMEWORK

A New Direction

4.1

Leadership

The Minister and Department

4.1.1

Building quality provision in Essential Skills is, of necessity, a long-term task. It will involve government departments, the universities which will be responsible for developing tutor training; all providers including FE colleges, currently the main providers; community and training organisations; employers and trade unions and the curriculum support and awarding bodies. The Strategy will be led by the Minister for Employment and Learning and driven forward by the Department to ensure that all strands are fully implemented. The Department will monitor, evaluate and, if necessary, adjust.

4.1.2

An Essential Skills Committee will be established by the Department. It will include, not only other government departments, but also the key stakeholders from business and industry, FE and the voluntary and community sectors. The Essential Skills Committee will replace the Basic Skills Committee. The Department will monitor the implementation of the Strategy and co-ordinate the work of the various bodies and organisations charged with its implementation.

4.1.3

Literacy and numeracy issues cannot be dealt with in isolation. Literacy and numeracy are important elements in the work of other policy domains such as health, the labour market, criminal justice and crime prevention, economic development, competitiveness and social development. Therefore, it will be important that other government departments respond to the challenge and work with the Department in addressing the proposals put forward in this Strategy.

EGSA's Basic Skills Unit

4.1.4

Three years ago, the Department of Education (before devolution) invited EGSA, an organisation with a long history of involvement in adult literacy and numeracy, to establish a Basic Skills Unit to act as an advocacy and advisory body. Its role was to promote and develop quality provision in adult basic education, to raise awareness and ownership among as wide a range of groups as possible, and to support innovative, community-based organisations providing adult basic education. The Basic Skills Unit gained a reputation as an important player in the fields of adult literacy and numeracy. It has undertaken valuable work in providing advice to DEL, in carrying out an audit of the range of provision that currently exists, and in

raising awareness about the importance of investing more heavily in the development of adult literacy and numeracy.

The Department now proposes to invite EGSA to:

- embed the expertise of the Unit across its organisation;
- act as an advocacy body for Essential Skills;
- lead the promotional campaign; and
- play a major role in driving up demand.

The Basic Skills Unit's management of the Innovation Fund has been successful and EGSA is asked to continue and extend this role, with a particular emphasis on innovation in the workplace. As there is a dearth of good quality research in adult literacy and numeracy in Northern Ireland, EGSA, in conjunction with the Department, will develop an agenda for research. There is a need to identify and celebrate good practice and EGSA, together with the ETI, will be tasked with this role.

4.1.5

EGSA will report directly to the Essential Skills Committee.

Curriculum and Staff Support

4.1.6

The Department is currently consulting on a new staff and curriculum support structure for the FE sector in Northern Ireland. The body is due to be set up in September 2002, and its remit will include the provision of curriculum and staff support for all providers of Essential Skills.

Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI)

4.1.7

The ETI will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the quality of all provision in Essential Skills, irrespective of the setting, and reporting on the standards and outcomes achieved.

Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)

4.1.8

The CCEA will be responsible for the regulation of Essential Skills in Northern Ireland. (Paragraph 4.2.12)

Actions

- The Strategy for improving Essential Skills will be driven by the Minister for Employment and Learning.
- The Minister will establish an Essential Skills Committee, representative of all the major interests in the field, and serviced by the Department.
- EGSA will be the major advocacy and promotional body for Essential Skills.
- The proposed new staff and curriculum support body for the FE sector will include in its remit the provision of curriculum and staff support for all providers of Essential Skills.
- ETI will inspect and will report on the quality and standards of Essential Skills irrespective of where it is provided.
- CCEA will be the regulatory body for Essential Skills in Northern Ireland.

Target

- By September 2002, the Essential Skills Committee will be in place.

4.2

Building a Structured Framework

4.2.1

The proposed approach to Essential Skills provision in Northern Ireland must be structured and coherent. The Strategy will be founded on a quality regime based on curriculum standards, rigorous assessment and the professional expertise of tutors. It is for this reason that the Department defines the first phase as the creation of a structured framework. More harm than good will be done if demand is driven up, capacity extended and learners engaged without the provision of learning which is relevant and valuable both to the learner and to employers and without ensuring that the teaching is of the highest standard.

4.2.2

Much of the recent, preparatory work of the Department and the Basic Skills Committee has focused on the framework. The proposals outlined below will ensure that, by September 2003, a formal, structured framework for Essential Skills is in place, one which has been designed specifically to meet the needs and aspirations of the learner in Northern Ireland and which provides a basis for quality.

The framework will include:

(a) Standards and Curriculum

4.2.3

The Basic Skills Committee has advised that the national standards produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in Great Britain and the Adult Core Curriculum in Literacy and Numeracy developed by the Basic Skills Agency for England and Wales should both be adopted in Northern Ireland. Expanding upon this advice, the Committee recommended that:

- further research be undertaken to clarify the relationship between the standards and the curriculum;
- additional guidance and tutor support materials be developed before the implementation of the curriculum in Northern Ireland;
- further research be undertaken in relation to the appropriateness of the curriculum for people with learning difficulties, and for learners whose first language is not English.

4.2.4

There is, at present, no agreed curriculum to guide the work in adult literacy and numeracy, in Northern Ireland. The introduction of a regional curriculum based on the core curriculum introduced in Great Britain will enhance the learning of adults, and will be welcomed by tutors. It will be built around a set of agreed standards and of progression routes. The curriculum, which will be implemented, will be a broad framework. It will include examples from different contexts such as citizenship and community, and economic activity. It will lay appropriate stress on the need for tutors to match the framework to the interests and activities which engage the learners. The curriculum will be sufficiently flexible to meet the different learning styles, the different prior achievements and the different learning goals of the adult learners. The Department will encourage tutors to share their experiences, and to learn from and with one another in teaching the curriculum.

4.2.5

In order to take forward the development of the regional curriculum and the associated standards, the Department has established pilot projects across programmes in FE Colleges, New Deal, Focus for Work, Jobskills and learndirect running from February until August 2002. Pilot projects have also been established in the workplace and in community and voluntary settings. The pilots will test how the curriculum can best be applied in different situations, for example, with young parents in a family learning setting, with adults in the workplace, or in community and voluntary contexts. They will also provide the opportunity to see how the core curriculum matches the needs of adults working at entry level and at levels 1 and 2 of the National Qualifications Framework.

4.2.6

Adults with learning difficulties, and those whose first language is not English, have special needs and requirements. The Department will commission research to see how these needs can best be met within the structured framework. The Department for Education and Skills in England has already been involved in the extensive development of the curricula for literacy and numeracy for adults with learning difficulties and those whose first language is not English. DEL will examine these proposed curricula to ensure they are fully applicable in the Northern Ireland context. Specific research will also be carried out into the Essential Skills needs of victims of conflict.

4.2.7

The pilot projects will produce exemplar units of work to illustrate how the core curriculum should best inform the planning of work for individual students, at different levels and within specific contexts. Each pilot will also address specific issues in assessment. Curriculum and staff support will be provided for each of the pilots by a curriculum expert. EGSA will have responsibility for managing and administering the pilot projects, specifically through:

- the identification and funding of voluntary and work-based pilots;
- the establishment and servicing of a pilot steering group;
- central co-ordination of all pilots across a wide range of contexts including FE, New Deal, etc;
- the management of dissemination events and the development of local resources; and
- the production of an interim report to inform final decisions by September 2002.

Actions

- A series of pilot projects will test the validity of the core curriculum in different learning situations, and with learners of different abilities and achievements.
- The projects will be managed by EGSA and supported by a curriculum expert.
- The projects will produce exemplar learning materials by September 2002.
- EGSA will be asked to provide specific advice on the standards and curriculum currently under development for people with a learning disability, for learners whose first language is not English, and for victims of conflict.

Target

- By September 2003, Northern Ireland will possess a regional curriculum for learners at all levels (Entry level completed in September 2002).

(b) Initial Assessment

4.2.8

Practitioners are often concerned about the best initial assessment tool to help them determine, quickly, the existing level of achievement of new learners. In fact, there is no single test instrument that can accurately give a full picture of a learner's achievement; enable a tutor to determine the level which a learner has achieved; allow a diagnosis of the learner's strengths and weaknesses and help the tutor to plan the way ahead. Tutors will be helped, therefore, to develop oral and written learning activities that will enable them, over time, to assess the strengths and shortcomings in a learner's skills and achievements. They will also be helped to develop appropriate skills to conduct initial assessment interviews with new learners, those returning to learning, those with learning difficulties, those learners whose first language is not English and those who are victims of conflict.

4.2.9

To assist developments in these areas, the pilot projects will assess the adequacy of the core curricula for literacy and numeracy in helping tutors to determine the level at which students are working. The projects will highlight any of the exemplar tasks that could be used to determine the strengths and shortcomings of learners, and provide guidance on how to interpret the learners' responses. From these projects, advice will be sought on other resources that exist or further work that is needed to help with initial assessment.

Action

- The pilot projects, and the proposed developments in tutor education, will each give significant attention to the development of the tutors' expertise in making an initial assessment of a learner's achievements and abilities, and the need for exemplar tasks and resources to facilitate this development.

Target

- By January 2003, Northern Ireland will have guidance material based on the regional curriculum at entry level to assist with the initial assessment of learners.

(c) Assessment and Accreditation

4.2.10

The Basic Skills Committee recommended that there should be new nationally recognised qualifications for adult literacy and numeracy at entry levels and levels 1

and 2. The Committee expressed reservations about the external National Tests used in England and Wales to test achievement in Core Curriculum, it recommended that the tests be further evaluated in the Northern Ireland context, and that other assessment methodologies be explored. The Department accepts this, and believes further that, it is important for assessment and accreditation to produce valid and reliable outcomes, which motivate the learners and inform the support given to them. Assessment will, therefore, be developed alongside the curriculum, and will be used as a means of both confirming the progress made by the learner and of informing future learning and teaching. The Executive and the Department also require clear information on the achievements of learners in order to evaluate the approach and justify public spending.

4.2.11

The progression routes of adult learners are not necessarily the same for all, nor do all adult learners conform necessarily to the linear pattern of progression suggested by some of the existing qualifications, particularly at entry level. Some adults, for example, may be competent orally but find reading more challenging; others may be competent in reading familiar material but have limited versatility to handle a wider range of text, or may struggle to convey information and ideas in writing. It is, therefore, necessary to develop a number of flexible pathways through which adults might reach entry level rather than having vertical or sequential levels of performance within the entry level.

4.2.12

The Department has asked CCEA to develop assessment materials linked to the regional curriculum, to be used both to inform and accredit learning at entry level. The pilot curriculum projects will explore how far the existing national tests at levels 1 and 2 and used in England and Wales to accredit adult literacy and numeracy and Key Skills, represent a valid and reliable assessment of a learner's achievements at those levels within the regional curriculum. CCEA has also been asked to review the tests at levels 1 and 2 and how they might be developed into an assessment regime that reflects more accurately the breadth of the regional curriculum.

The Department believes that such advice could also help to clarify the relationship between Essential Skills and Key Skills and, in the longer term contribute to the development of a single Key Skills qualification. Such a change would provide greater clarity for the learners, providers and employers and demonstrate clearly the progression routes to the higher level Key Skills qualifications that already have standing and recognition by employers and Higher and Further Education Institutions.

In the meantime in Northern Ireland it is proposed that the entry level qualification be referred to as Essential Skills. Pending the completion of the CCEA's work, adult learners in Northern Ireland above entry level will follow the regional curriculum for Essential Skills, build a portfolio of work, complete the existing external tests and thus work towards the full Key Skills qualification.

Actions

- The pilot curriculum projects will explore how far the existing National Tests at levels 1 and 2 represent a valid and reliable assessment of the learner's achievement at those levels.
- CCEA will provide advice on forms of assessment at entry level, and explore the assessment methodologies for the level 1 and level 2 linked to the new National Tests to provide a continuum with existing Key Skills qualifications and accurately reflect learner achievement.
- The qualification system for adult literacy and numeracy at entry level in Northern Ireland should be referred to as Essential Skills.

Targets

- By January 2003, Northern Ireland will possess an assessment and accreditation regime for Essential Skills at entry level.
- By September 2003, the CCEA will provide advice on assessment methodology for levels 1 and 2 to provide a continuum with Key Skills.

(d) Progression and Profiling

4.2.13

If the success of the Strategy is to be monitored, and any necessary adjustments made to it, the Department needs to know the numbers of adults who are returning to learning, what sort of venues and contexts are most popular, and the progress which the learners are making. Providers will, therefore, be asked to keep accurate records of learner enrolments and progression. While all providers currently keep records, the Department will review the consistency of their approaches and the validity and usefulness of the information collected. CCEA, as the main examining body in Northern Ireland, has a wealth of experience in developing and managing such information, and will provide advice on these matters.

Action

- CCEA will, as part of their exploration of the assessment regime, provide advice on how achievement of learners might be tracked and recorded irrespective of where they are enrolled.

Target

- By September 2003, CCEA will provide advice on a recording and tracking system linked to the assessment regime.

Building Quality

(a) Quality Assurance

4.2.14

The various providers of Essential Skills should work to a single set of quality assurance indicators. Therefore, following consultation with practitioners, and taking cognisance of the 'Quality Framework' produced by Queen's University as part of its involvement in a European Socrates Project, the ETI will develop for Essential Skills a version of the document, "Improving Quality: Raising Standards" (IQRS) currently used to guide the inspections of FE colleges. The ETI will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision, irrespective of the setting or provider, and will report on standards and outcomes, as well as the trends in both enrolments and the progression of the learners. ETI will work to the adult literacy and numeracy indicators laid out in IQRS.

4.2.15

As with the existing IQRS indicators, it is intended that these new indicators will be used by practitioners, in whatever setting, to evaluate the quality of their own provision.

Actions

- ETI will develop a set of IQRS indicators against which all practice in Essential Skills will be monitored and evaluated.
- ETI will develop arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of all provision, and for reporting on standards and outcomes, as well as the enrolment and progression trends of the learners.

Target

- By September 2003, Northern Ireland will have a single set of quality indicators to evaluate Essential Skills.

(b) Initial Tutor Training and Continuing Professional Development

4.2.16

The Basic Skills Committee advised that further work was required to develop a tutor education framework to support the development and delivery of adult literacy and numeracy in Northern Ireland. It recommended, further, that such a framework should provide ongoing professional development and be accessible at various levels. The development of a professional and well-trained body of tutors dedicated to the implementation of the curriculum provision of Essential Skills is critical for success. Approximately 170 paid tutors and 260 volunteers were involved in basic literacy and numeracy teaching in 1999-2000. The majority of tutors (66%) currently involved in the FE sector are part-time. The vast majority of full-time FE tutors who provide adult literacy and numeracy education do so for only a small

percentage of their working week. The average number of adult literacy and numeracy teaching hours per week for tutors was 6.37. There is little time given to staff development or planning. Almost all of the tutors have either a City & Guilds 9285 or an OCR specialist qualification.

4.2.17

There is a need for a better career structure and improved initial and in-service training which recognises the professionalism of existing tutors, and which will be accessible to new tutors. To achieve the strategic objective of reducing the numbers of adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties by one-half, a much strengthened and larger tutor base is needed. The Department has, therefore, asked Queen's University Lifelong Learning Department, which has its own Certificate/Diploma Course in the Teaching and Management of Literacy and Basic Education, and the University of Ulster, which is currently responsible for the Post Graduate Certificate in Further and Higher Education (PGCFHE), to work together on five different 'strands' of tutor development for all existing and new tutors:

- the development of a tutor training programme for all new tutors specialising in Essential Skills;
- the development of a qualification in the management of Essential Skills education as part of Continuous Professional Development;
- the development of a series of modules, designed to extend the expertise of existing tutors and which would be accredited within the Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation Transfer Scheme, and form part of Continuing Professional Development for tutors;
- the development of a module in the teaching of Essential Skills within the PGCFHE to be available to all lecturers; and
- for volunteer tutors, the development of a training programme, which has clear links with, and a progression route to, the new tutor training programme.

Action

- Queen's University and the University of Ulster will formulate proposals for various strands of tutor training ranging from management and continuing professional development levels to that needed by volunteers.

Target

- By June 2003, Northern Ireland will have professional qualifications in place for Essential Skills tutors.

(c) Curriculum and Staff Support

4.2.18

Tutors will require professional support and advice and appropriate materials for the emerging curriculum. As indicated earlier, the pilot projects will test the new curriculum and standards, and will also develop exemplar material and highlight other resources which will be needed. Although the pilots will have the support of an expert, it is recognised there will be a need to put in place an appropriate curriculum and staff support structure beyond the pilots. This structure will support the implementation of the regional curriculum wherever it is provided, including with the voluntary and community sectors, and disseminate the results of the pilot projects. It will also have a particular concern for the adequacy and availability of appropriate teaching and learning resources across a range of media. It will, if necessary, commission more such resources, particularly with a regional 'flavour'. It will have a liaison role with similar bodies in England, Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. The Department proposes that the planned new body for staff and curriculum support for the FE sector in Northern Ireland will take this role. The pilot projects will provide further advice on the remit of this support structure.

4.2.19

Although the situation is improving, ICT is not used extensively in adult literacy and numeracy classes. Of the classes running last year almost half did not use ICT at all. ICT is, however, an integral part of communication in the 21st century as well as a powerful teaching and learning tool. It has also been shown to be a strong motivator in encouraging adults to return to learning.

4.2.20

The pilot curriculum projects will look at the place of ICT within the curriculum, and at ways in which it might be exploited as a teaching and learning tool. One of the pilot projects will look specifically at how adult learners can be given the confidence and skills to use a computer and various software or on-line resources to take forward their Essential Skills, including their ability to find or research information for themselves. It is also essential that the use of ICT in the development of Essential Skills is considered in the tutor education programme, and the universities have been asked to explore this issue in the development of the tutor training regime.

Action

- The pilot projects and the tutor education programme will give attention to relevant and increased use of ICT in implementing the curriculum.

Target

- By June 2003, the new central staff and curriculum support structure being proposed for the FE sector will support all Essential Skills providers.

4.2.21

(d) Accountability

It is essential to ensure that the provision for adult literacy and numeracy is no longer considered as being of low status within the education system. All providers will be expected to demonstrate clearly their commitment to quality, and to have available the necessary resources.

Action

- As a condition of funding, all providers of Essential Skills will be required to demonstrate that they are using the regional curriculum, standards and assessment for Essential Skills, and have tutors either trained or working towards the professional qualifications.

Target

- By September 2003, the Department will require all providers to deliver Essential Skills in the context of the Quality Framework.

(e) Building the Research Base

4.2.22

The development of adult literacy and numeracy skills is a complex area and additional research, specific to Northern Ireland, will be of value. In the first instance, it would be helpful to establish a baseline, in addition to the IALS data specific to Northern Ireland. EGSA will be asked to consider the work being undertaken in England, by the Department for Education and Skills and the Office of National Statistics and to make recommendations on its potential application in Northern Ireland. As the Strategy is implemented, it will be necessary to know what works best in Northern Ireland, and how different learners respond in different contexts. It will also be important to improve the understanding and knowledge of the pattern of adult learning, and to find answers to questions such as the following:

- what are the factors which contribute most to learners' progress and what factors hinder progress?
- how far does adult literacy and numeracy learning impact on the quality of adults' lives, and how can adults continue to build on their progress by transferring their skills to new situations? and
- how can the most disadvantaged and excluded adults be reached?

4.2.23

EGSA, along with ETI, will advise the Department on the research which should be commissioned or what further consultation might need to take place with learners and tutors. Hand in hand with developmental research, an evaluation of the impact of the Strategy will be undertaken.

Actions

- EGSA will be asked to consider and make recommendations on the establishment of a Northern Ireland baseline to supplement the IALS data.
- As the Strategy is implemented and developed, it will continue to be informed by a programme of research.

Target

By September 2002, a research programme will begin to be developed.

PHASE 2 - BUILDING CAPACITY AND ENGAGING LEARNERS

5.1

Building Capacity

5.1.1

Significant numbers of new learners will need to be engaged if the strategic objective is to be reached. This will mean that the traditional providers such as the FE colleges, and, the community and voluntary sectors must expand their provision significantly. Learning must also extend within the workplace and other non-traditional settings. Putting in place the structured framework, and the quality elements, can be described as phase 1 of the Strategy. Building capacity and engaging the learners is phase 2.

5.1.2

Engaging adult learners is not susceptible to a “one size fits all” approach. Learning must be relevant to the learners’ interests, and must harness those interests and take account of the contexts in which adults find themselves. Learning should be available in a non-threatening environment that reinforces the learners’ confidence and personal skills, and helps to maintain their interest and motivation. A wide range of informal settings outside traditional classrooms will be explored.

5.1.3

The expansion of provision for Essential Skills and the increase in the numbers of adult learners enrolled will, of necessity, have to be managed to reflect the availability of tutors. However, because the average number of hours provided by any one existing qualified adult basic education tutor is, at present, very small, there is existing spare tutor capacity to be utilised.

5.1.4

To reflect the importance of the development and improvement of Essential Skills in the adult population, DEL will make Essential Skills provision free to the learner in all its programmes.

Action

- Maximum use of the existing tutor capacity within the system will be made.

(a) Further Education

5.1.5

FE colleges have, traditionally, been the major provider of adult literacy and numeracy education. If the Strategy is to succeed the colleges will need to expand substantially their provision including work in partnership with many other agencies and organisations across Northern Ireland.

5.1.6

The provision that is offered will be flexible. It will reflect the range of interests of the adults within a given area and, if possible, be provided at times and in modes which suit the learner. Some of the provision of Essential Skills may be discrete; some of it may be integrated within other courses; in contexts and interest areas

that appeal to the learners/potential learners; all of it will be relevant and purposeful for the learner. Some examples of where existing adult literacy and numeracy work has been integrated successfully with other areas of learning include:

- Family Literacy;
- The Sparrows Project (a programme which included modules of ICT, personal presentation, work experience in reception skills or catering and career guidance);
- Literacy skills and training in tourist guiding; and
- ICT and literacy skills for the farming community.

5.1.7

There are, however, many other areas to be developed by colleges, for groups already in particular industries of employment, unemployed people who would benefit from renewing their skills while applying for work, and groups who share a common interest. Colleges should extend their partnership with industry, business and the local community in the provision of Essential Skills. Working with parents is also a crucial area to be developed. Other areas which may develop Essential Skills include:

- programmes related to occupation and employment;
- health education programmes;
- programmes dealing with human rights and justice;
- training programmes in health and safety;
- local history and folk lore, reading and recording memories;
- programmes in cross-community development;
- programmes in hospitality and tourism.

5.1.8

Colleges should explore different patterns of provision ranging from taster courses of, for example, one session weekly for four to six weeks to more intensive courses which involve several sessions a week for six or more weeks. Past initiatives such as the Partnership Fund, the Access Initiative and the Skills Fund have illustrated that colleges can engage new learners, using both innovative and locally-based approaches. Colleges will be required to produce action plans which will contain an audit of local need, clear aims, outcomes, and the criteria for success, details of the tutor expertise available and proposed monitoring arrangements. They must also

5.1.9

build upon and expand the partnerships already in place to drive up and meet demand locally. Excellence will be recognised and rewarded. It is proposed to recognise Centres of Excellence for Essential Skills within the FE sector.

The non-statutory sector will be a partner in the delivery of the Strategy. The Department will review its compact with the Workers' Education Association (WEA) to ensure that it focuses appropriately on the delivery of Essential Skills.

Actions

- Each FE College will be required to draw up an action plan to extend its work in Essential Skills.
- Centres of Excellence for Essential Skills will be created.
- Compacts with the non-statutory sector will be renewed or developed to focus on Essential Skills.

Target

- By March 2003, the statutory and non-statutory FE sector will have engaged an additional 1,000 learners, an increase of almost 20% over current levels.

(b) Community and Voluntary Sectors

5.1.10

Through the work carried out under the Innovation Fund¹, some local voluntary and community groups are demonstrating their ability to encourage the local population to return to learning. In particular, community education empowers people experiencing exclusion and poverty; it is flexible and responsive to local needs, and is a crucial element in community building and cohesion. There are clear benefits for the community providers in developing partnership arrangements with the statutory FE sector, in terms of support and student progression. The Department wishes to support such partnerships. There is also a need for an expansion of provision within the community sector. The current European Union (EU) PEACE II funding with its specific emphasis on adult literacy and numeracy offers the community and voluntary sectors the opportunity to obtain funding to support this expansion. The Department wishes to ensure that they can do this, but only where they show that they can work within the structured framework. In these circumstances, the Department will ensure that the support provided for the curriculum and for improving tutor skills, is available to the voluntary and community sectors.

¹ part of the package of measures introduced in conjunction with government's Lifelong Learning Strategy in 1999

5.1.11

The Department also wishes to recognise excellence in the community and voluntary sectors and proposes, through EGSA, to identify champions and exemplars of excellence who could inform and advise others.

Actions

- Partnerships between the voluntary and community sector providers and local FE colleges should be supported as a way of ensuring progression for learners.
- The community and voluntary sectors will be supported to obtain Peace II funding.
- Excellence in voluntary and community provision will be identified and recognised.

Target

- By September 2003, to identify and support champions for Essential Skills within the voluntary and community sectors.

(c) The Workplace

5.1.12

Most individuals with low levels of Essential Skills are in the workplace. It is clearly crucial that employers and trade unions play an active part in the overall Strategy. Employers should act as advocates of learning to their employees, and seek ways of encouraging them to take up learning opportunities, and to enhance or update their Essential Skills, where that is considered necessary. Industry listens best to industry, that is, to others who face the same challenges and share the same philosophy. Essential Skills champions will be identified from among participating employers. In relation to trade unions, the success of recent developments, such as those demonstrated by UNISON, must be spread more widely. New and innovative approaches will be explored and champions from among the trade unions will also be identified.

5.1.13

This document has emphasised repeatedly that for learning to engage adults it must be relevant. The Department is, therefore, anxious to explore how Essential Skills might fit in with other company or union training programmes. Other ways to encourage employers to support adults wishing to return to learning will also be explored including, FE/business partnerships - reciprocal arrangements in which students are offered work experience and employees join Essential Skills classes.

5.1.14

The Department recognises that employers and trade unions will need support to take this forward and, in particular, to help meet the costs involved. For this reason, the Department has, on a pilot basis, established a workplace Innovation Fund

administered by the Basic Skills Unit. The effectiveness of this initiative as a vehicle for supporting work-based learning will be reviewed.

Actions

- Essential Skills pilot projects in the workplace funded through the Innovation Fund will be managed by EGSA.
- Ways in which employers might be supported in encouraging their employees to upgrade their Essential Skills will be explored.

Target

- By September 2003, to identify and support champions for Essential Skills among employers and trade unions.

(d) Family Learning

5.1.15

Reference has already been made to family learning as an important context of learning. Family learning is a vehicle for promoting lifelong learning, and for improving Essential Skills across the population. The incentive for parents to develop their own skills so that they can assist their children must not be underestimated. Family learning, or inter-generational learning, is a gateway for improving Essential Skills that needs to be exploited further. The Department, therefore, proposes to create a support fund for Family Learning to be administered by EGSA. The focus of the fund will not be to support provision. FE colleges, and the voluntary and community sectors will still be expected to be the main providers, and as indicated above, funding is being made available to allow them to do that. The purpose of the Family Learning Fund will be to encourage the innovation necessary to facilitate family learning programmes.

Target

- By September 2002, establish a fund to support family literacy programmes.

(e) Department Programmes

5.1.16

The Department funds a range of training programmes such as New Deal, Focus for Work, Jobskills, and learndirect. In all programmes, a priority will be placed on Essential Skills, that is participants on all these programmes will be given, the opportunity and support to develop and enhance their Essential Skills. This focus is particularly important in programmes such as New Deal and Focus for Work, where the target group or groups mirror very closely those groups which may have low levels of literacy and numeracy achievement.

5.1.17

The Executive's Taskforce for Employability and Long Term Unemployed has emphasised that priority should be given to Essential Skills. The Department will ensure that they feature prominently in any development or programme resulting from the work of the Taskforce.

5.1.18

Across Northern Ireland (and the UK generally) Ufi, under its brand name "learndirect", has developed multi-media self-study packages for learning, and set up 32 learndirect centres providing information and advice about on-line training and learning opportunities. One of the pilots will involve learndirect, and will explore the suitability of these materials for adult literacy and numeracy work. It will also provide advice on the learning support needs for the provision of Essential Skills through this medium.

Action

- The Department will ensure that the development of Essential Skills will be a priority across all its programmes.

Target

- By September 2002, all training programmes under DEL's control will have access to Essential Skills.

(f) The Tutor Base

5.1.19

The tutor base will be expanded not only with the FE sector but also the community and voluntary sectors, and the private training sector through involvement in programmes such as Jobskills and New Deal. This will mean a growth in full-time and part-time tutors. In this document, a clear commitment has been made to quality in the provision for Essential Skills. Such commitment applies equally to the provision put in place for tutors. Those currently involved in adult literacy and numeracy, and those contemplating entering the field, need to know that they will be working in a professional environment where their work is valued, equally with all other education and training, and where they have a clear professional pathway.

5.1.20

It has already been indicated how a new framework for tutor training will be developed. The Department will support the expansion of the tutor network through the provision of free tutor training within the new framework over the next three years.

Action

- The Department will remit fees for tutors of Essential Skills over the next 3 years.

Target

- By March 2005, to increase the tutor base of new tutors by 50% and for volunteer tutors by 100%.

(g) Funding Programmes

5.1.21

To build capacity, both in the short term and in the longer term, will require the resources necessary to fund the actual learning programmes. Initially, there are four sources available for providers. These are:

- (i) the FE College funding mechanism – available only to FE colleges;
- (ii) the EU Peace II funding (through EGSA) – available to a much wider range of providers;
- (iii) other Departmental programmes such as Jobskills and New Deal; and
- (iv) Workplace and Family Innovation funds available through competitive bids to EGSA.

These sources will operate side by side through the 2002/3 academic year (up to end August 2003). Currently, £1.9m annually is spent on this area from within the FE budget; in EU Peace II, £7m is available until 2006/7. After August 2003, the EU Peace II funding stream will continue until the end of the EU programme in 2006/7. The Department will, however, seek to put in place a funding stream from September 2003, which will be open to all providers. This funding stream, the total amount of which will be dependent on the overall availability of resources, will have certain key criteria:

- (i) it will be available only to those who commit themselves to use the regional structured framework, and who are deemed capable of delivering it;
- (ii) it will be allocated through a bidding process where contractors will undertake to attract and progress new learners through to accreditation; and
- (iii) it will give preference to partnership approaches.

5.1.22

Funding may also become available through the re-consideration of Individual Learning Accounts. This mechanism, which delivered support, through fee reductions, for small elements of learning to thousands of learners could include specific support for those requiring Essential Skills, and could be tied to providers committed to the structured framework. The Department's ultimate objective would be to make Essential Skills provision free to the learner, resources permitting.

5.2 Engaging Learners

(a) Promotional Campaign

5.2.1

The success of the Strategy will depend on the development and implementation of a comprehensive promotional campaign, which increases awareness and drives up demand among adults for Essential Skills. Such a campaign will have to address, sensitively, the difficulties for people acknowledging they have literacy and numeracy problems, and the challenge that respondents at the lowest level of achievement in IALS, were generally very satisfied with their skills.

5.2.2

Research by the Basic Skills Agency in England suggests that approximately half of those at level 1 may need modest help only. It is important to try to find ways of encouraging adult learners to develop a better estimate of what they can do and what, with a little help, they might be able to do. The publication of the Strategy provides the first step in the campaign to increase awareness of Essential Skills. It is important that the momentum generated is maintained, and, to this end, it is proposed that the launch of the Strategy should be followed up by a series of initiatives, including widespread public advertising. EGSA has established itself successfully as the main advocacy body for adult literacy and numeracy in Northern Ireland, and has considerable experience in the promotion of adult learning. The Department wishes to build on this success and expertise and so has asked EGSA to provide, by June 2002, advice on a promotional campaign for Essential Skills. The promotional campaign will begin to be implemented in the 2002/03 academic year, with a major drive taking place in September 2003.

(b) Encouraging Learners

5.2.3

In addition, EGSA will provide advice on the wider aspects of promotion such as:

- who should handle the initial contact and support of learners arising from promotional activity? and
- what scope there is to involve, sensitively, in promotional activity those individuals who come into regular contact with the general public, for example, government offices such as JobCentres, Post Offices, and in the private sector such as in supermarkets and chemists?

5.2.4

A key to the success of the Strategy will be the early identification of learners with weaknesses in literacy and numeracy. The 'Toolkit' and training for New Deal Personal Advisers help them to identify adults who may have literacy and numeracy difficulties and encourage them to avail of support through providers of Core Gateway. By September 2003, the Department will work with EGSA and ETI to extend the 'Toolkit' and training to front line staff who are involved in the other Departmental programmes.

(c) Using Information and Communication Technology

5.2.5

In a survey undertaken recently by learndirect in Great Britain, the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in learning was shown to motivate 92% of learners with weaknesses in literacy and numeracy. The majority said that ICT helped them concentrate and it is successful in attracting learners, especially young males. Significant investments have been made by the Department in ICT in FE colleges and libraries and community groups have benefited substantially through funding from the New Opportunities Fund. In order to exploit the benefits of ICT, as well as developing ICT as a Key Skill, the Department has asked ETI to monitor closely the use of ICT in learndirect programmes and to provide advice on how to extend the use of ICT across Essential Skills programmes offered outside of learndirect.

Actions

- EGSA will provide advice on a comprehensive promotional Strategy by June 2002.
- ETI will provide advice on how to extend the use of ICT across Essential Skills programmes outside learndirect.

Target

- A promotional campaign will begin in January 2003 with a major drive taking place in September 2003.

5.3

Conclusion

5.3.1

The Strategy offers a radical new approach to engaging those adults with weaknesses in literacy and numeracy and gives the issue the status and importance it deserves. In the first instance, it will concentrate on putting in place a structured framework within which all subsequent development can take place. This will lead to significant improvements in levels of adult literacy and numeracy for many thousands of people, which can unlock the potential of many for the benefit of the economy and society, and most importantly of all, for the individual learner.

5.3.2

The Department in line with the commitments given in its Equality Scheme conducted a Preliminary Equality Impact Assessment (Preliminary Assessment) on the Essential Skills Strategy.

The purpose of the Preliminary Assessment was to assess whether the Essential Skills Strategy is likely to impact on equality of opportunity or good relations and sought to identify which Section 75 groups, if any, would be adversely affected.

Whenever a Preliminary Assessment indicates that a new policy or change in policy is likely to impact on equality of opportunity or on good relations, then before any such policy is adopted by the Minister or the Department, the Department will estimate the likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations using available relevant information and commissioning research if appropriate.

If the policy is judged by the Department to be likely to have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity or good relations, then before adopting such a policy, the Department will consult publicly and will give due consideration to the views submitted to the Department.

However, the measures proposed in this Strategy are designed to widen access to everyone to enable them to improve their skills. As such, the Preliminary Assessment identified a positive effect on all Section 75 groups with no potential for adverse impact.

The Preliminary Assessment is available on request from the Department.

5.3.3

The Department will evaluate and monitor all the measures introduced through the Strategy. Monitoring will begin immediately with an evaluation in 2005. The effects of the Strategy will be assessed, and conclusions presented on whether the Strategy is succeeding and whether it represents the best value for money.

Targets and Timescales

6.1

In order to reduce the numbers of people with limited literacy and numeracy skills, it will be necessary to increase, significantly, the number of learners coming forward. It is estimated that about 5,500 adult literacy and numeracy learners, currently, receive some form of structured learning each year through colleges, New Deal, and the voluntary sector. By 2005, this should be 10,500.

6.2

A large expansion of provision is required but the Strategy is based on the view that the development of a structured framework embracing regional standards, curriculum, assessment and accreditation is an essential pre-requisite to expansion of numbers. A quality framework is required if more learners are to be engaged and retained.

6.3

Challenging targets have been set to achieve the twin aims of this Strategy i.e. to develop a quality framework and engage and provide for many more learners:

Building a Quality Framework

- by September 2002, the establishment of the Essential Skills Committee;
- by June 2003, a support structure will offer assistance to all providers;
- by September 2003, CCEA will provide advice on a recording and tracking system linked to the assessment regime;
- by September 2003, a regional curriculum, new professional qualifications, assessment and accreditation arrangements will be in place.

Building Capacity and Engaging Learners

- by September 2003, a regional promotional campaign will be fully implemented;
- the tutor resource will be increased by 50% over the next 3 years through engaging new tutors and increasing the capacity of the existing base;
- by 2005, some 10,500 learners will be engaged annually;
- by March 2005, 25,000 learners will have been supported. This represents roughly 10% of our target population.

Specific targets for engaging learners are as detailed below.

Table 1: Learners supported by Strategy (Subject to available funding)

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	Total number supported over the next three years
Learners currently supported by colleges and the voluntary sector	5,500	5,500	5,500	16,500
New learners helped with new funding	1,000	2,500	5,000	8,500
Total number of learners	6,500	8,000	10,500	25,000

Consultation Questions

While the Department welcomes comments on all aspects of the Framework and Consultation Paper, it particularly invites your views on the following issues:

Building the Quality Framework

1. Does the Department's Strategy put in place the necessary foundations upon which to build a quality structured framework?
2. Are there any other actions that need to be taken to ensure that adult literacy and numeracy in Northern Ireland will be characterised by quality in all aspects i.e. delivery, teaching, accreditation, and support structures?

Building Capacity: Engaging Learners

1. What are your views on the proposals for engaging new learners across FE, community and voluntary sectors, and the workplace?
2. Have you any suggestions as to what other actions and provisions might be made available to ensure the Department engages the 25,000 learners targeted in the Strategy?
3. What are your views on how Essential Skills for Living can be promoted to reach and engage as wide an audience as possible?

Targets

1. Do you agree with the targets the Department has set?

Basic Skills Committee

Maureen Bennett	Education and Training Inspectorate
David Elliott	Amey Ltd (formerly with BT)
Brian Henry	Newry and Kilkeel Institute of Further & Higher Education
James Lee	Castlereagh College of Further & Higher Education
Maura Maginn	Educational Guidance Service for Adults, Management Board
Tom Moore	Northern Ireland Committee Irish Council Trade Union
Claire Morgan	Workers' Education Council
Seamus Murphy	North West Institute of Further & Higher Education
Liam Parker	Worknet
Peter Scott	Belfast Institute of Further & Higher Education
Richard Sterling	Coolkeeragh Power Ltd
David Welch	Educational Guidance Service for Adults, Management Board
Jim Wilkinson	Department for Employment and Learning
Peter Wolfe	Moy Park Ltd
Tony Dardis	East Tyrone College of Further & Higher Education
Eileen Kelly	Educational Guidance Service for Adults
Mags Connolly	Educational Guidance Service for Adults Basic Skills Unit

ACTIONS

Phase 1

- The Strategy for improving Essential Skills will be driven by the Minister for Employment and Learning.
- The Minister will establish an Essential Skills Committee, representative of all the major interests in the field, and serviced by the Department.
- EGSA will be the major advocacy and promotional body for Essential Skills.
- The proposed new staff and curriculum support body for the FE sector will include in its remit the provision of curriculum and staff support for all providers of Essential Skills.
- ETI will inspect and will report on the quality and standards of Essential Skills irrespective of where it is provided.
- CCEA will be the regulatory body for Essential Skills in Northern Ireland.
- A series of pilot projects will test the validity of the core curriculum in different learning situations, and with learners of different abilities and achievements.
- The projects will be managed by EGSA and supported by a curriculum expert.
- The projects will produce exemplar learning materials by September 2002.
- EGSA will be asked to provide specific advice on the standards and curriculum currently under development for people with a learning disability, for learners whose first language is not English, and for victims of conflict.
- The pilot projects, and the proposed developments in tutor education, will each give significant attention to the development of the tutors' expertise in making an initial assessment of a learner's achievements and abilities, and the need for exemplar tasks and resources to facilitate this development.
- The pilot curriculum projects will explore how far the existing National Tests at levels 1 and 2 represent a valid and reliable assessment of the learners' achievement at those levels.
- CCEA will provide advice on forms of assessment at entry level, and explore the assessment methodologies for the level 1 and level 2 linked to the new National Tests, to provide a continuum with existing Key Skills qualifications and accurately reflect learner achievement.

- The qualification system for adult literacy and numeracy at entry level in Northern Ireland should be referred to as Essential Skills.
- CCEA will, as part of their exploration of the assessment regime, provide advice on how achievement of learners might be tracked and recorded irrespective of where they are enrolled.
- ETI will develop a set of IQRS indicators against which all practice in Essential Skills will be monitored and evaluated.
- ETI will develop arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of all provision, and for reporting on standards and outcomes, as well as the enrolment and progression trends of the learners.
- Queen's University and the University of Ulster will formulate proposals for various strands of tutor training ranging from management and continuing professional development levels to that needed by volunteers.
- The pilot projects and the tutor education programme will give attention to relevant and increased use of ICT in implementing the curriculum.
- As a condition of funding, all providers of Essential Skills will be required to demonstrate that they are using the regional curriculum, standards and assessment for Essential Skills, and have tutors either trained or working towards the professional qualifications.
- EGSA will be asked to consider and make recommendations on the establishment of a Northern Ireland baseline to supplement the IALS data.
- As the Strategy is implemented and developed, it will continue to be informed by a programme of research.

Phase 2

- Maximum use of the existing tutor capacity within the system will be made.
- Each FE College will be required to draw up an action plan to extend its work in Essential Skills.
- Centres of Excellence for Essential Skills will be created.
- Compacts with the non-statutory sector will be renewed or developed to focus on Essential Skills.
- Partnerships between the voluntary and community sector providers and local FE colleges should be supported as a way of ensuring progression for learners.
- The community and voluntary sectors will be supported to obtain Peace II funding.
- Excellence in voluntary and community provision will be identified and recognised.
- Essential Skills pilot projects in the workplace funded through the Innovation Fund will be managed by EGSA.
- Ways in which employers might be supported to encourage their employees to upgrade their Essential Skills will be explored.
- The Department will ensure that the development of Essential Skills will be a priority across all its programmes.
- The Department will remit fees for tutors of Essential Skills over the next 3 years.
- EGSA will provide advice on a comprehensive promotional Strategy by June 2002.
- ETI will provide advice on how to extend the use of ICT across Essential Skills programmes outside learndirect.

Summary of Targets

Target	Date
Essential Skills Committee will be in place.	September 2002
Northern Ireland will possess a regional curriculum for learners at all levels.	September 2003 (Entry level completed in September 2002)
Northern Ireland will have guidance material based on the regional curriculum at entry level to assist with the initial assessment of learners.	January 2003
Northern Ireland will possess an assessment and accreditation regime for Essential Skills at entry level.	January 2003
CCEA will provide advice on assessment methodology for levels 1 and 2 to provide a continuum with Key Skills.	September 2003
CCEA will provide advice on a recording and tracking system linked to the assessment regime.	September 2003
Northern Ireland will have a single set of quality indicators to evaluate Essential Skills.	September 2003
Northern Ireland will have professional qualifications in place for Essential Skills tutors.	June 2003
The new central staff and curriculum support structure being proposed for the FE sector will support all Essential Skills providers.	June 2003
The Department will require all providers to deliver Essential Skills in the context of the Quality Framework.	September 2003
A research programme will begin to be developed.	September 2002
The statutory and non – statutory FE sector will have engaged an additional 1,000 learners, an increase of almost 20% over current levels.	March 2003

Target	Date
Identify and support champions for Essential Skills within the voluntary and community sectors, and among employers and trade unions.	September 2003
Establish a fund to support family literacy programmes.	September 2002
All training programmes under DEL's control will have access to Essential Skills.	September 2002
Increase the tutor base of new tutors by 50% and for volunteer tutors by 100%	March 2005
A major promotional campaign will begin.	January 2003 (Major drive in September 2003)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CCEA	Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DE	Department of Education
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning
DETI	Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
EGSA	Educational Guidance Service for Adults
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
FE	Further Education
IALS	International Adult Literacy Survey
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IQRS	Improving Quality: Raising Standards
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PGCFHE	Post Graduate Certificate in Further and Higher Education
TSN	Targeting Social Needs
Ufi	University for Industry
WEA	Workers' Education Association

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The Department for Employment and Learning
Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
Belfast, BT2 8FD
Tel: (028) 9025 7777
Fax: (028) 9025 7744