



CONTENTS:

1. **Foreword** by the Minister with responsibility for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland, Barry Gardiner MP
2. **Introduction**
 - 2.1 Background
 - 2.2 Employability
3. **Update on the Economic and Labour Market Context**
4. **Progress Report / Improving Employability in Practice:** evidence and case studies to illustrate the impact of the Taskforce's work.
 - 4.1 Personal Attributes
 - 4.2 Personal Circumstances
 - 4.3 Managing the Labour Market
 - 4.4 Structural Aspects
 - 4.5 Partnership in Action - **Targeted Initiatives**, a holistic approach to improving employability.
5. **Looking Ahead - Key Areas**
6. **Performance against target**
 - 6.1 Evaluation
 - 6.2 Overview of Performance against target

Appendices

Progress in detail - Action Points/Recommendations	Annex 1
EDF Performance Indicators and Targets	Annex 2
Sub-Regional Performance Indicators and Targets	Annex 3



1. Foreword

Barry Gardiner MP, Minister with responsibility for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland.




In my capacity as chair of the Taskforce on Employability and Long-term Unemployment Implementation Group, I am pleased to present this report outlining progress since the report was launched in December 2002.

The Taskforce was established by the Northern Ireland Executive under its first Programme for Government, in recognition of the fact that too many people were marginalised and excluded from social and economic progress and acknowledging that unemployment is one of the most profound causes of poverty. Set firmly within the context of New Targeting Social Need, (New TSN) the report challenged all departments to work together to help disadvantaged people increase their knowledge, skills and confidence and to help remove the barriers to employment faced by so many in our community.

The Report recognised that “Transforming employability, eradicating long-term unemployment and promoting social inclusion cannot be a quick or easy fix.” The vision set in place a long-term strategy for employability, building on past experience, using new approaches and tackling the issues in a holistic, coherent and integrated way. It established a partnership for employment between government, employers, the voluntary sector and individuals.

This long-term vision requires a strategic investment in education and training linked closely to the strategy for economic development. Enhancing skill levels contributes to improved productivity and competitiveness. With a stronger economy whose benefits are shared with the most deprived, comes the best prospect of achieving social inclusion.

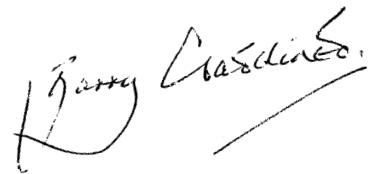
Since publication of the Report much has been achieved and I am pleased to report the progress that has been made on each action point. It is good to see the impact on the ground and how it is changing peoples lives for the better. The Targeted Initiatives pilots in West Belfast, Greater Shankill, Londonderry and Strabane are testing, using a real collaborative approach, the Taskforce Report’s ambitious agenda aimed at reducing long-term unemployment and economic inactivity. A number of the component parts of Targeted Initiatives have been modelled on labour market concepts recommended in the earlier Report of the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Taskforces. These are positive developments which I believe, prove that the statutory sector can learn much from well developed relationships with the voluntary, community and private sectors. However there are many areas where we need to do more and the scale of the task should not be underestimated. Long-term unemployment and relatively low levels of skills and economic inactivity remain deeply rooted in the Northern Ireland economy. Many years of work lie ahead if these problems are to be



successfully addressed and the implementation of the recently launched draft Northern Ireland Skills Strategy will be important in taking this forward.

Future priorities in relation to employability and skills have been identified and it is on these areas attention will be focused in the coming months. I look forward to working with all interested parties to deliver against these challenges. A decent job and good wage provide the best route out of poverty. Improving employability therefore remains a key part of Government's strategic approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion.

The findings of research into Labour Market Dynamics and the impact on gender, religion and disability in relation to employment, unemployment and non-employment will be available next year. As new TSN policy develops in the coming months, we will maintain a focus on the commitments we have made to increase employability, and report progress on these as part of our broader commitment and strategy for reducing poverty and improving the living conditions of those in greatest need in Northern Ireland.



Harry Coadine



2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

The Taskforce on Employability and Long-term Unemployment was established in March 2001 in order to drive forward action on employability and reduce long-term unemployment. The Taskforce was chaired by the then Minister for Employment and Learning and included senior representatives from across departments, the Northern Ireland Office, and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

The Taskforce commissioned a detailed Scoping Study to review existing evidence on employability; clarify the issues surrounding it and develop workable definitions. From the study a discussion document was produced and issued to over 450 organisations. The discussion document formed the basis for 31 engagement meetings held to ensure that the Taskforce was as inclusive as possible. In addition 68 written submissions were received from interested parties.

The Final Taskforce Report was launched on 16 December 2002 and since then over 600 copies of the full Report and 1200 copies of the summary document have been issued.

The Report contained 12 action points and 39 recommendations affecting most Government Departments. It challenged departments to work together in developing and implementing policies to increase employability and reduce long-term unemployment. In developing the action plan and recommendations it was acknowledged that some of the measures would impact in the short-term whereas others will be for the medium and longer term.

The Report committed the Department for Employment and Learning to lead the implementation of the Action Plan and an Inter-Departmental Implementation Group, chaired by the Department's Minister, has been established.

The Implementation Group has been realistic in its approach to this review of its work, many of the agreed targets look as far forward as 2010 in recognition of the challenges involved. However, the review reports real progress across many areas. It will be some time before significant progress is seen against targets such as the GB/NI differentials, but there are many positive developments along the way to achievement of these challenging goals.



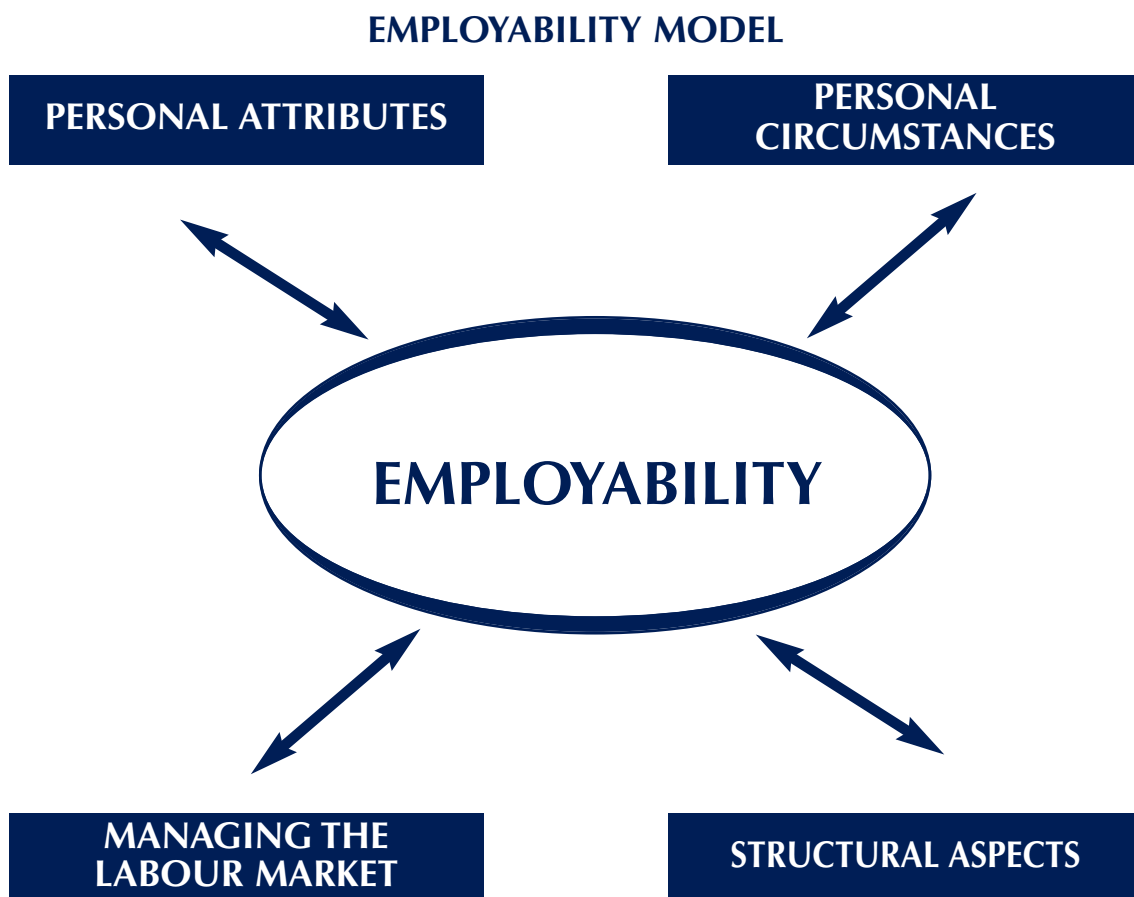
2.2 Employability

For the first time in Northern Ireland, the Taskforce carried out an analytical study of the concept of employability. Key themes were identified and the consultation process reinforced the view that there are many complex factors that impinge on an individual's ability to enter and remain in employment ranging from transport, childcare and health to the prevailing labour market. The following definition of employability was agreed:

'Employability is the capability to move into and within labour markets and to realise potential through sustainable and accessible employment. For the individual, employability depends on:

- * *the knowledge and skills they possess and their attitudes;*
- * *the way personal attributes are presented in the labour market;*
- * *the environmental and social context within which work is sought; and*
- * *the economic context within which work is sought.'*

To better understand the complex factors associated with an individual's capacity to obtain and sustain employment, the Taskforce developed the concept of the Employability Model. It is this conceptual framework that provides the background to the report and the 12 action points and 39 recommendations which flow from it.





3. UPDATE ON THE ECONOMIC AND LABOUR MARKET CONTEXT.

In the 1990s the Northern Ireland economy grew faster than any other UK region. Over 100,000 jobs were created and unemployment fell to its lowest levels for a generation and educational standards improved. However, significant numbers of people were left behind. When the report was published Northern Ireland had a lower share of its working age population in a job than any other UK region. The share of workless households was 21 % compared to a UK average of 16%.

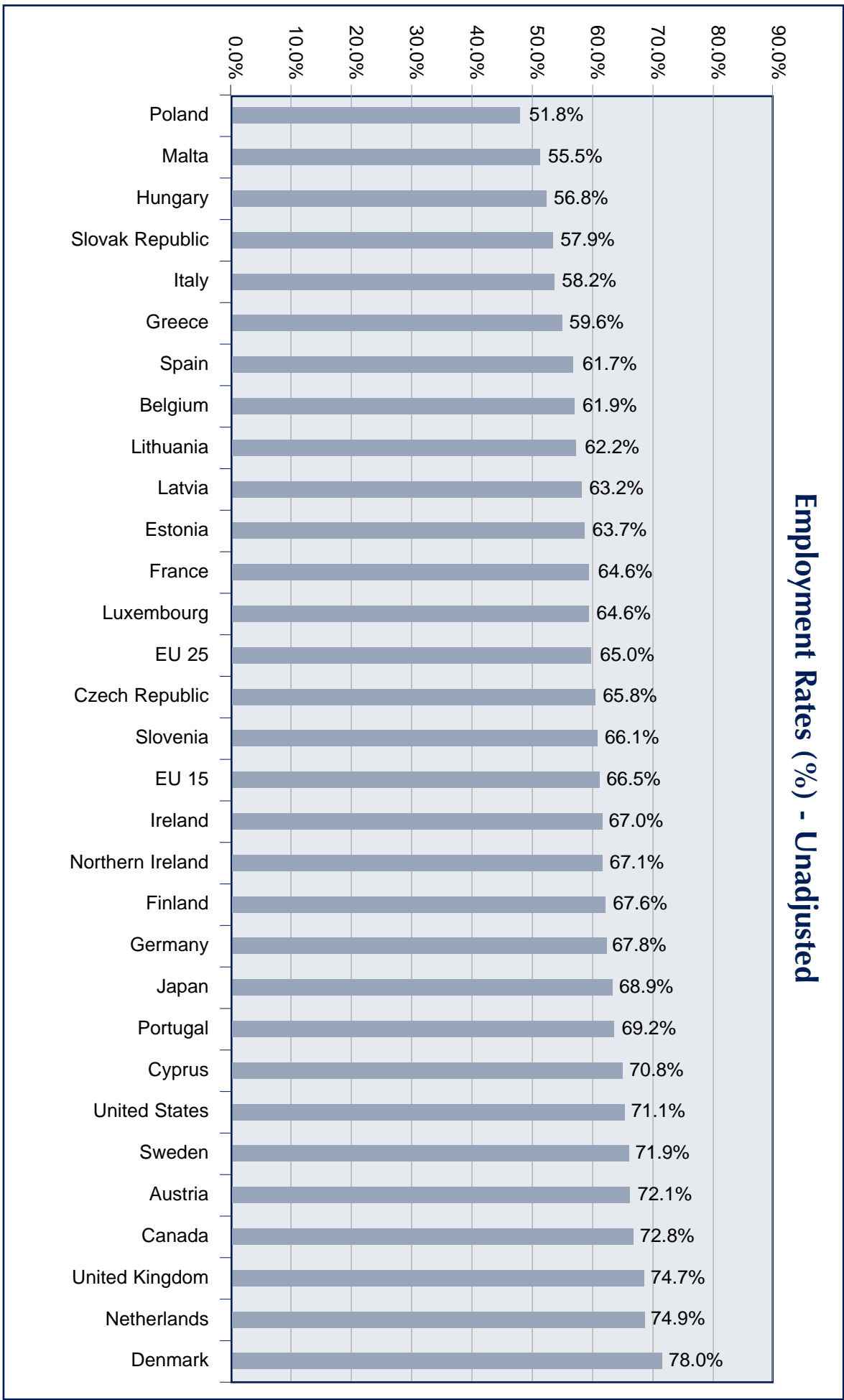
Almost two years on from the Taskforce Report employment levels continue to rise with 721,000 people in a job. The proportion of people earning more than £400 per week has increased from 33.6% in 2000 to just over 40% in 2003 and the proportion of people earning less than £250 per week has decreased from 33% to 23.6%.

While these developments are encouraging, the Economic Development Forum's January 2004 progress report highlighted a number of areas where improvement is needed if the Forum's vision of significantly strengthening the Northern Ireland economy by the year 2010 is to be realised. Although employment continues to grow, and we see the beginnings of positive movement in earnings levels, increased productivity and more "high value-added" jobs are needed to increase Northern Ireland's GDP per head. Manufacturing exports have declined for a second year and business expenditure on research and development declined by 1.7% in real terms between 2001/02 compared with a UK increase of 3.3%. Business start-ups in Northern Ireland declined by 4% in 2002 while the UK saw an increase of 0.7%.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) unemployment rate at June - August 2004 was 35,000, which represents 4.7% of the workforce, lower than at least 4 UK regions - London (6.9%), North East (6.0%), West Midlands (5.4%) and Scotland (5.7%). It is also 4.3 percentage points below the EU25 average rate of 9%. The claimant count for Northern Ireland at September 2004 was 29,700 (3.6 %) a decrease of 0.6 percentage points on September 2003.

Despite these improvements there remain pockets of long-term unemployment. (25.1% of all claimants at September 2004 were claiming for one year or more, an increase of 0.1% over the year).

In tandem with falls in JobSeeker's Allowance (JSA) figures there have been increases in the numbers claiming inactive benefits, particularly Incapacity Benefit, where numbers have increased from 109,000 in February 2003 to 111,000 in February 2004 (a 1.8% increase). The number of economically inactive people, in Northern Ireland at June - August 2004 was estimated at 545,000, an increase of 26,000 over the year. The growing number of economically inactive people is a cause for concern. The Taskforce Report identified this as a key issue and the Department for Employment and Learning is leading a number of initiatives to address this. Through its involvement in the Welfare Reform and Modernisation programme with the Social Security Agency, the Department is introducing measures to put a work focus to the forefront of the benefit system, so that everyone can benefit from positive engagement to improve their employability.



Labour Market Regional Summary: June - August 2004 (seasonally adjusted data)

	Total aged 16 and over	Total economically active	Total in employment	ILO Unemployed	Economically inactive	ILO Unemployment rate (%)	Activity rate (%) 16-59/64	ILO Employment rate (%) ¹
North East	2028	1185	1114	72	842	6.0	74.6	70.3
North West and Merseyside	5394	3302	3161	141	2091	4.3	76.8	73.9
Yorkshire and Humber	3977	2460	2353	107	1517	4.3	77.8	74.3
East Midlands	3395	2134	2053	82	1260	3.8	79.0	76.3
West Midlands	4198	2603	2463	139	1595	5.4	78.2	73.8
East of England	4341	2849	2748	101	1492	3.5	82.3	79.4
London	5895	3784	3523	261	2111	6.9	75.0	69.7
South East	6406	4210	4056	153	2197	3.6	81.9	78.3
South West	4012	2534	2446	87	1479	3.4	81.6	78.7
England	39646	25061	23918	1143	14585	4.6	78.7	75.0
Wales	2350	1374	1311	63	976	4.6	74.7	71.7
Scotland	4069	2584	2437	147	1485	5.7	79.7	74.8
Great Britain	46064	29019	27665	1354	17046	4.7	78.6	74.8
Northern Ireland	1304	756	721	35	548	4.7	70.5	67.1
United Kingdom	47368	29780	28392	1387	17588	4.7	78.4	74.6

(thousands) Source: DETI

¹ May - July 2004 (Source: Labour Markets Trends, October 2004)



4. PROGRESS REPORT

Since the publication of the Taskforce Report, the Employability Implementation Group has been active in taking forward the Action Plan and its Recommendations. While the Group is realistic in terms of the progress that can be expected at this stage of implementation, it is pleased to report progress across all parts of the Employability Model. (More detail of specific progress made against each Action Point and Recommendation is set out in Section 6 Annex 1.)

Real engagement with the voluntary and community sector is crucial to the successful implementation of many of the Report's recommendations and a great deal of progress has been made in this area. Within Targeted Initiative areas the Department for Employment and Learning has engaged with voluntary and community sector partners to establish local Stakeholders' Forums. This engagement is far reaching in terms of the Department involving these sectors in shaping policy and devising new service delivery mechanisms. This level of engagement will also be a key feature of DSD's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

4.1 Personal Attributes

- Action points 6,7,12
- Recommendations 5,11,12,33


Personal attributes, ie the possession of skills and personal qualities such as motivation and flexibility have long been seen as key to employability. Northern Ireland's economic success relies on the availability of a skilled workforce capable of meeting the current and future needs of the economy.

Essential skills, key skills and vocational skills levels were highlighted as critical areas for improvement, especially literacy and numeracy given the results of the International Adult Literacy Survey carried out in the mid 1990's which found that over 20% of the working age population of Northern Ireland was performing at the lowest levels of literacy. The unemployed or economically inactive were much more likely to be at the lowest levels than those in work.

The Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Education (DE) have achieved considerable progress in this area. A new Public Service Agreement (PSA) target has been introduced by the Department for Employment and Learning to measure the number of adults improving their essential skills levels:

"By 2007, 18,500 people will have achieved a recognised qualification in Essential Skills compared to 100 in March 2003."

The Department assisted 6,500 learners from April 2002 to March 2003 and a



further 10,845 were supported by end of March 2004. Essential skills qualifications from Entry Level up to Level 2 are now in place.

To encourage take up of essential skills training the Department has funded a major promotional campaign aimed at convincing adults facing essential skills challenges that “Learning Works”. The Gremlins theme has played a major role in the promotion campaign on television, radio, newsprint and billboards and will continue to do so throughout 2004. The Gremlins highlight how low levels of literacy and numeracy can cause embarrassment or prevent people from participating in ordinary everyday things. Since the start of the campaign, advertisements have proved to be very popular with 99% of callers ringing the helpline reporting that they could relate to the “Gremlins”

Ambrose

A new responsibility in his job role requiring more written communication was the catalyst for Ambrose to go back to the classroom. Ambrose realised he needed to brush up on his literacy skills and decided to join an Essential Skills programme with Upper Bann Institute of Further and Higher Education. He has completed OCR levels 1 and 2 in literacy and is now considering doing GCSE's in English and Maths.

Ambrose said:


‘I left school at 16 with a Junior Certificate in Woodwork and Metalwork having drifted through school with no interest in any academic subjects.

I moved aimlessly from job to job. Four years ago I was made a Trade Union Representative for the company I am currently working for. Immediately I had to write reports and take statements from co-workers. I was confronted by my poor spelling for the first time in my life. I was terrified that anyone would find out. I remember feeling embarrassed and had not realised until that time what a big problem it was for me to write.

‘Two years ago I decided to join an Essential Skills class to get help. At first I found it daunting but realised the only person who could make a difference was me. I have to say learning soon became a pleasure and now practically a hobby! I have achieved my first academic qualification and my confidence has soared. I have two young children and I am now able to help them with homework. I am so grateful for the opportunity to return to learning and would definitely recommend Essential Skills to anyone who needs help’.

Londonderry Chamber of Commerce

In March 2003, The Londonderry Chamber of Commerce developed an innovative pilot to test a model of delivery of Essential Skills to employees, in the context of the workplace, and to assist those who would benefit from an



appropriate skills improvement programme. The pilot, North West Pathways for Adults in Employment, was delivered in 4 companies in Derry and Strabane: Derry City Council, Adria Ltd., Wheelers and NuPrint Trimmings. The pilot was funded by the Workplace Innovation Fund, administered by the Basic Skills Unit at EGSA and supported by Invest Northern Ireland.

Derry City Council's experience

Derry City Council found itself in a position of having to recruit externally, rather than being able to promote from within existing staff, because people lacked the basics needed for career development. As an employer the Council wanted to be able to offer promotional opportunities to long-serving, experienced employees.

The project was delivered on-site during normal work time and employees were released from work to undertake training. Employees travelled from work stations around the city centre to training and conference facilities in Council offices and benefited from 2 hours training per week over a ten-week period.

The delivery model was structured around reading, writing, number and communication skills associated with work tasks in a fictitious council. The programme was initially delivered in one to one sessions and later to small groups of learners. As learner confidence increased, ICT was introduced to enhance and progress learning in literacy and numeracy. An employee representative was trained as a Learning Advocate, to identify and effectively sign post future Essential Skills gaps among employees and to encourage the integration of Essential Skills training into the company training programme.

Results/Achievements


- * Of the 10 male learners who enrolled, 8 completed an Essential Skills learning programme.
- * Learners reported this opportunity "life-changing" in terms of their work and personal lives.
- * 6 of the 8 learners achieved an OCR certificate in Basic ICT.

The group were nominated for, and subsequently won, a Northern Ireland Group Adult Learner's Award.

Results

"The positive results of this project cannot be over-estimated. The increased employee confidence, motivation and performance has impacted greatly on the organisation. The learner participants have experienced a very real sense of achievement and appreciation of their own capacity to learn."

Chief Executive, Derry City Council



“The course was great and we looked forward to it every week. I only wish that it could have been longer”.

Course Participant

Improving Employability through Vocational Training and Employment Programmes

Vocational skills improvement requires ongoing review and evaluation of available training and employment programmes. In 2003 the Department for Employment and Learning evaluated and revised the range of training and employment programmes being offered. A review of the pilot adult vocational training programme, Training for Work, indicates that clear need exists to support unemployed people not eligible for the range of New Deals to gain the qualifications necessary to find a job.

The New Deal programme has undergone a similar evaluation with a view to increasing flexibility as recommended by the Taskforce. Further details are discussed at 4.5 Targeted Initiatives.

Ann

Ann worked in Courtaulds for 21 years before being made redundant in July 2003. During an Open Day at the factory advising employees of the options for re-training, Ann learned of the training opportunities offered by Enterprise Ulster under the Training for Work programme.

Having worked in the textile industry for so long, Ann was eager to work in a completely different area and was placed in the accounts department of the Radisson Roe Park Resort in Limavady, during which time she undertook SAGE Accounts to complement the practical work experience. Commenting on Training for Work, Ann said that she liked the flexibility of the programme, which allowed her to sample a completely different work occupation.

Ann’s placement provider was very impressed by her application to the job and offered her a full-time position as Accounts Assistant on completion of her training programme.

Commenting on her experience Ann said, “Having qualifications is one thing, but the on-the-job experience gained whilst on placement through the Training for Work programme was, I believe, the essential element that helped me secure employment. I would recommend anyone to use the programme as a stepping stone to employment.”



Stephen

Finding it difficult to find work in Belfast, Stephen departed for London in search of work. For 5 years he was employed by Morson International as a Railway Track and Tunnel Maintenance Operative.

Due to family commitments, Stephen returned to Belfast in 2002 and was unemployed for almost a year. During a visit to the local JobCentre he learned of the Training for Work programme. Qualified with an NVQ Level 2 in plumbing, Stephen was eager to use his skills in this field and was subsequently placed with Phoenix Gas. To date Stephen has completed OFTEC 101 Boiler Servicing Certificate and is working towards his CORGI Registration.


Duncan Whelan, Operations Manager, Phoenix Gas said, "Stephen has a positive attitude towards work. He is qualified and very capable of working in the gas service industry."

On completion of his Training for Work programme Stephen was offered full-time employment with Phoenix Gas.

A review of the effectiveness of the arrangements for Modern Apprenticeships in Northern Ireland, commissioned by the Department for Employment and Learning, was completed in 2003. A number of the recommendations set out in the consultants report have been implemented including a revised funding structure and enhanced arrangements to monitor the performance of the suppliers responsible for the management of the programme. Other recommendations, such as removal of the over-24 age barrier and extension of apprenticeships into the public sector, are under consideration.

Under a special initiative supported by the Department for Employment and Learning and Peace II funding from Europe, the Construction Employers Federation is managing a pilot Modern Apprenticeship programme through which 20 of the major companies in the construction industry in Northern Ireland have agreed to employ 200 additional apprentices in a range of skills during the two year period September 2004 - August 2006. The purpose of the initiative is to engage young people from inner-city areas of Belfast which have been adversely affected by conflict and unrest in the last few decades in a structured training programme to develop their skills and increase their employability. The initiative will enhance the supply of young people with advanced occupational skills and broader key skills into the construction industry and, at the same time, enable them to make a positive contribution to their local community and reduce the socio-economic problems of unemployment.

The Department for Employment and Learning has recently published its new skills strategy which identifies its primary objectives: "to raise productivity and



competitiveness through increased workforce skills” and “to enhance employability and therefore social inclusion through the attainment of skills”.

The Department has also produced a new Further Education Strategy, ‘Further Education Means Business’ which proposes radical and ambitious change for the governance and long-term future of that sector in order to improve its contribution to the broad social, educational and economic fabric of Northern Ireland.

Education for Employability

Literacy and Numeracy

The Department of Education has made good progress on the implementation of the Review of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. An in-service training programme on literacy and numeracy has been provided to key teachers. The literacy training programme is virtually complete and the numeracy training programme will be completed by 2006. The review of the literacy strategy has led to an increased focus on pupil performance data analysis within schools and targeted professional help for those schools where pupil performance was poorest. There is also increased emphasis on ICT in literacy and numeracy. In addition the Department has accepted CCEA’s proposals for a revised curriculum at Key Stages 3 & 4.

Post-Primary Review

In January 2004 the then Minister with responsibility for education, Rt Hon Jane Kennedy MP, announced her decision to accept, in full, the recommendations of the Costello Working Group.

Key recommendations include the establishment of an Entitlement Framework to guarantee all pupils access to a wide range of courses, including vocational courses; greater co-operation and collaboration among schools and between schools and further education colleges to provide that access; ending the transfer tests and their replacement by a system of admissions based on informed parental and pupil choice; the development of new admissions criteria; and the development of new post-primary arrangements at local level. The new arrangements will have wide implications for the education sector and the Department of Education will be engaging with all the education partners in taking this forward.

A review of Business Education links and associated activities is ongoing. It is hoped that a new strategy will emerge from the review to ensure that links fully support the “Learning for Life and Work” as part of the curriculum.



- Education for Employability Transition 10 - Department of Education Project

This project was developed by CCEA in partnership with the Education and Library Boards, to support the delivery of Education for Employability at Key Stage 3.

The Project Aimed to:

- raise awareness of ‘employability skills’ and their importance to life and work;
- develop knowledge of the local economy;
- provide opportunities for pupils to develop a range of key skills including communication and team building;
- increase pupil self-esteem and raise aspirations about future employment.

During the 2002/2003 period Clondermot High School, Londonderry, St Patrick’s High School, Dungiven, Enniskillen High School, Portora Royal, Enniskillen, Thornhill College, Derry and Limegrove Special School, Limavady participated in the project.

Schools developed a 3-day programme of work including the following:

- Team building;
- Business Enterprise;
- Skills development workshops;
- Involvement of adults from the community and world of work;
- Research, including the use of ICT;
- Workplace visits;
- Mock interviews.

The project was evaluated by CCEA and for this pupils completed a ‘before and after’ questionnaire.


After the event pupils were more positive about:

- seeking information and advice;
- planning their time and efforts;
- working with others to reach agreement on an issue or situation where there are different points of view;
- dealing with situations where they have to talk to adults whom they don’t know;
- standing up in class and speaking out;
- dealing with stress and tension.

4.2 Personal Circumstances

- Action Points 2,8,9
- Recommendations 2,3,9,15-17,26-34

Personal circumstances affecting employability include transport, childcare and physical and mental health. Health was identified by the Taskforce as a major



issue with 20% of the working age population (208,000) claiming that they have a disability.

Health and Employability

The link between health and employability was recognised by the Taskforce and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) strategy "Investing for Health". The Department for Employment and Learning and DHSSPS are working together on the formation of strategies to address not just the shortage of skilled staff required to work in the Health Service but also at a practical level devising initiatives aimed at increasing the employability of those individuals in receipt of Incapacity Benefit. In the next year both departments intend to launch and begin to test these initiatives. In addition a planned evaluation of Health Action Zones (HAZ) will look at employability issues with a view to identifying what aspects should be rolled-out across Northern Ireland.

There are now four Health Action Zones. These are cross-sectoral partnerships which are working to locally identified priorities supporting the achievement of the objectives of Investing for Health - one of which is "to reduce poverty in families and children".


The evaluation of Health Action Zones is underway and is expected to be completed by the end of November 2004. The Terms of Reference focus primarily on their effectiveness and efficiency as an intersectoral approach to meeting the needs of disadvantaged communities. It will also examine the contribution to other government initiatives and links between HAZ and other Partnerships, including the Investing for Health Partnerships.

The Benefits System

The disincentive effects of the "benefits trap" or the perceived benefits trap were widely reported during the Taskforce consultation process. The Action Plan highlighted the need for work to reduce these effects and to simplify the process of moving from benefits to work.

The Social Security Agency, Inland Revenue and Department for Employment and Learning have been working closely together to take forward a number of measures aimed at eroding these disincentives and demonstrating that work pays.

At the heart of this has been the introduction of Tax Credits. Working Tax Credits and Child Tax Credit were introduced by the Inland Revenue in April 2003. Through a joined up approach, the Inland Revenue and Social Security Agency have together sought to maximise public awareness of the availability and benefits of Tax Credits. This has been underpinned by a robust training programme to enable staff to give clear and professional advice on Tax Credits and putting in place fast track procedures to ensure these are paid expediently to those moving from benefits into a job.



The Jobs & Benefits Service delivered by the Department for Employment & Learning and the Social Security Agency is another significant element of the strategy to impact on the benefits trap barrier. The implementation of this service with emphasis on work focused interviews has been supported by a concentrated communications and training effort including a focus on “in work” benefits, and “better off” work calculations. The new joined up service is being implemented across Northern Ireland in a planned rollout.

Enniskillen


“Gabrielle, who is a lone parent, recently attended a work focused interview and expressed an interest in getting back to work. Her options were discussed at length with the Lone Parent Adviser and better off work calculations were prepared to assess the financial implications. Gabrielle decided to enter a New Deal Option which lasted for 26 weeks and following this, Gabrielle asked for information on vacancies in the clerical field. The Adviser fast tracked her working tax credit, lone parent and housing benefit and Gabrielle was successful in an interview for the Civil Service and is now employed in the Enniskillen Office. Gabrielle has stated that she is much better off in the working environment and expressed her appreciation on the professional service that was provided and was surprised at how smooth the change over was. Gabrielle has also agreed to tell her story to other lone parents in the “Focus Magazine”.

Ballymoney

“John recently attended a work focused interview where he expressed an interest in starting up his own business. This was discussed at length with the Lone Parent Adviser and better off work calculations were prepared to clarify what the financial implications of a return to work would be. The Adviser set up an appointment for him with Invest NI which he attended and went on to complete a business start course. Following this John returned to the Lone Parent Adviser who completed the work benefit calculation confirming how he would be better off in employment. John subsequently started his business and the Adviser fast tracked his working tax credit, lone parent and housing benefit. John returned to the Ballymoney office a month later to thank the Adviser for the encouragement and help that he received throughout the whole process. He was very impressed with how smoothly the changing of benefits went. He stated that he was delighted to be back in work and how better off he was in a working environment.

Childcare

The lack of access to affordable, high quality childcare was highlighted as a major factor affecting women in particular as a barrier to employment. In the context of the Taskforce, Childcare refers to daycare, the primary purpose of which is to enable parents to take up or remain in work, training or education. The Report’s recommendations aimed to strengthen the development, co-



ordination and implementation of policies affecting daycare. Strong interdepartmental leadership and commitment was called for.


The Inter-Departmental Group on Early Years IDGEY has lead responsibility for delivering against the Childcare actions and recommendations in the Northern Ireland Childcare Strategy, Children First. IDGEY has established a sub-group to develop a detailed work programme for the group concentrating on an appropriate approach to a review of the strategy. It has been agreed that DHSSPS will lead the review which will commence in November 2004. As part of government's cross departmental strategic approach to the social economy, the review will consider opportunities for social economy enterprises in the delivery of childcare services.

On completion of the revised Childcare Strategy, a Training Strategy, which supports that plan, will be developed by the Department for Employment and Learning. In the meantime existing strategies in support of Children First have been continuing. Engagement will continue with the Department for Education and Skills (GB) and the Sector Skills Development Agency on the establishment of a UK-wide Sector Skills Council for the Childcare sector. Also the Department for Employment and Learning has initiated discussions with DHSSPS about future funding arrangements for vocational training and is confident that European Social Fund (ESF) funding arrangements will be extended to 2008.

Assistance towards childcare costs is provided for lone parents and certain others participating in the Department for Employment and Learning's training and employment programmes such as Jobskills, New Deal, and Training for Work. In addition, for those participating in Further and Higher Education the Department provides funding to colleges and universities to assist with childcare costs for some groups of students.

Employers for Childcare, a charitable organisation established in 2002, has been funded by the European Union's Building Sustainable Prosperity fund and match funded first by the Northern Ireland Executive's EPF and now by the Department for Employment and Learning. It aims to remove the childcare barrier which prevents parents being able to access the labour market. Its key objectives are to promote to employers the business benefits that implementing childcare policies can bring and to facilitate a partnership between employers and childcare providers. During 2003 the organisation established a partnership with the Department for Employment and Learning that provides a freephone helpline in JobCentres and Jobs & Benefits Offices to allow jobseekers to access information on available local childcare provision. The organisation has briefed staff in local offices and offers professional advice on childcare options, practical help and signposting with issues such as tax credits, parental leave entitlements and flexible working options.

The Department for Employment and Learning has also introduced new employment rights for working parents. The Employment (Northern Ireland)



Order 2002 grants the right to paid paternity and adoption leave, amended the law relating to statutory maternity leave and makes provision about flexible working hours.

Transport

The Taskforce identified mobility associated with transport constraints as a barrier to participation in the labour market. Many facets of the issue were considered particularly the availability and affordability of transport, including access to a driving licence, and the need to provide public transport at appropriate times to employment areas from areas of potential employees.


The Department for Regional Development's (DRD) Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) aims to improve public transport services and will introduce initiatives that will provide increased access to employment, training and other services.

The Regional Transportation Strategy is being implemented through 3 transport plans. Each transport plan will include a full range of transport initiatives including public transport improvements, highway improvements, road maintenance, capital works and other relevant policy measures, in line with the strategic investment priorities set by the RTS. Specifically :

- The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, published in November 2004, will support development proposals in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan and together provide an integrated approach to the future development of the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA).
- The Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTN-TP) has a fundamental role in contributing to the achievement of sustainable progress on social, economic and development goals in Northern Ireland. The RSTN of Northern Ireland comprises five Key Transport Corridors, four Link Corridors and the Belfast Metropolitan Area Corridors, along with the remainder of the trunk road network. This network includes the complete rail network. The Plan will be published by the end of this year.
- The Sub-Regional Transport Plan, which will detail proposals for the rest of the region, is due for completion by March 2006. Work on this Plan is happening in tandem with the Department of the Environment's (DOE) work on Development Plans.

The Transport Plans will realise significant beneficial impacts in terms of mobility and improved accessibility to employment. These impacts will be as a result of public transport services that will provide better service quality and penetration in many urban and rural areas and easier interchange between different transport modes.

The need to integrate land use and transportation is a key objective in delivering



the Region's transportation vision. Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 13 "Transportation and Land Use" will be published by DRD by the end of this year. The Policy Planning Statement will help promote more effective government policies on education, health, economic growth, access to employment and targeting social need through better integration with transportation. It will introduce new requirements for transport assessments, travel plans and accessibility analyses. Transport assessments and travel plans will be required to be submitted and considered as part of the development control process. Accessibility analyses will be carried out during the preparation of development plans and will make accessibility across all transport modes a key consideration in determining the allocation of land.

Concessionary Fares Scheme

In recognition of the mobility difficulties faced by some communities, DRD has recently extended its Concessionary Fares Scheme for public transport to include four additional client groups. From April 2004 the new Half Fare SmartPass scheme entitles 50% off the standard single fare on scheduled bus and rail routes throughout Northern Ireland to people in receipt of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance for one year, those who have been refused a driving licence on medical grounds, those who are partially sighted and those with a learning disability. Translink continues to offer reduced bus and rail fares to unemployed jobseekers in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance and those on New Deal Gateway.


In Targeted Initiative areas and in partnership with local community and voluntary groups, all aspects of employability are being considered. In this context the Department for Employment and Learning continues to explore options for mobile service provision and will positively consider additional proposals arising from the Stakeholder's Forum in regard to access and mobility.

4.3 Managing the Labour Market

- Action Points 3,5
- Recommendations 4,6,7,8, 18-23

Central to addressing this aspect of employability has been the development, by the Department for Employment & Learning and the Social Security Agency, of the Jobs & Benefits Service. At the heart of this joined up service, which has been underpinned by a concentrated training and communication drive, is the focus on work as an integral part of the benefit claiming process.

Initially targeted at those claiming Jobseekers Allowance, the service is now extended to all new working age customers ie: those traditionally furthest from the labour market. This enhanced service is now offered in 22 Jobs & Benefits



Offices. £48m funding has already been invested in the Project and a further £27m will enable a full rollout of the services across Northern Ireland resulting in a total of 35 Jobs and Benefits Offices.


Central to the work focused service is the role of the Personal Adviser. Throughout the work focused interview process, the Personal Adviser provides individual support to help the customer identify and address barriers to work. The service continues to develop to ensure that all clients irrespective of the benefit they claim are given access to job search, job brokerage and employability assessment services to improve their ability to access and find employment in the labour market. Ongoing developments to improve the service include the roll out of work focused interviews to include partners of benefit claimants from April 2004, and further development of the Personal Adviser role.

Work is also currently underway on planning of Incapacity Benefit pilots along similar lines to the Pathway to Work pilots in Great Britain.

Sandra is a 43 year old lone parent whose youngest child is 15. She last worked 10 years ago and became a lone parent and sole provider for her son 8 years ago. Although she was dependant on benefits to provide an income she was keen to take up employment and become independent. During a Lone Parent Adviser interview she was advised of a job opportunity which she applied for and was successful but then became hesitant because of the implications of coming off benefit and paying her mortgage herself. The Adviser was able to assess how much better off she would be in employment, and assured her that if the job became unsuitable within a year she could reclaim benefit and would not have to serve a further qualifying period to receive help with mortgage payments. As a result, she felt more confident in moving into the work environment because of the safety net provided. A month later Sandra sent in a card with the following message: "Thank-you for all your help and advice helping me get back into the workplace also for sorting out my Tax credits which I have received into my account."

Careers Guidance

The Department for Employment and Learning has carried out a review of its Careers Guidance Service in the context of the Fulton Report's recommendations. The Service has been restructured with a view to providing a strong focus on priority work with young people while also developing a capacity to deliver a coherent approach to work with adults. Discussions are in train to progress the role of Careers Guidance within Targeted Initiatives, work focused interviews and



ongoing work with New Deal participants. Work with statutory, voluntary and specialist agencies will continue to be developed within mainstream Careers Guidance work and within the Targeted Initiative pilots. Youth Service, Include Youth, the Door Project and First Key have already been included in the planning for Careers Guidance policy and practice.

Include Youth (Give and Take)

Over the past year the Careers Service has built a very positive relationship with Give and Take. This project reaches out to disadvantaged young people throughout Northern Ireland. The Belfast project is based in Rosemary Street and deals mostly with young people from the North and West side of the city. The project supports young people who are striving to overcome a multitude of social, health, behavioural, personal and educational issues that have left them in a very vulnerable position where, at the age of sixteen, they lack social skills, motivation, maturity or confidence to face life post year 12.

The Careers Service designed and delivered a six week careers awareness programme within Give and Take which is currently being reviewed to address the more specific needs of the group. Each young person has a different start and finish date within the project and as their participation within it draws to a close, each young person receives more one to one support and guidance from a Careers Adviser to aid their transition into education, employment or training. At present, a number of the young people are moving into Jobskills Training, Employment and New Deal.


As a direct consequence of this project a number of valuable relationships have been created and built upon including referrals from other youth organisations and aftercare teams. The knowledge gained from this project will hopefully help the design, implementation and training policy of the Careers Service Outreach Strategy.

Gerry D

When Gerry first met his Careers Adviser he was in Year 12 in school studying for 7 GCSEs. He wanted to do well in his exams but he had other “distractions”.

He was playing senior level football with an Irish League club, and had been since age 15. He had an offer of a scholarship to a soccer academy in Chicago and was very tempted but unsure if it was completely right for him. He contacted his Careers Adviser at this stage and she helped him see that going away without completing his GCSEs could be risky, especially if Chicago didn't work out. She advised deferring going until he had completed his GCSEs and also helped him see that he needed to start thinking about a back-up plan.

Gerry also had an interest in radio. He had family connections in the industry and had a good idea of what the business involved. By his own admission, he



pestered a local station boss to give him a chance. He persevered for a year until he finally agreed to let him present the sports results. He progressed from this to presenting his own local NW chart show. This experience led him to think about a career in this area and his Careers Adviser pointed him in the direction of the NWIFHE and the National Diploma in Media Studies. He still had the Sports Academy offer but as time went by he had some football experiences which disillusioned him and he decided against going to Chicago.

Unfortunately, Gerry's GCSE results weren't quite strong enough to earn him a place on the National Diploma in Media Studies and again his Careers Adviser tried to help him source a Jobskills provider offering the NVQ in Media (Radio) Production. Regrettably, no such provider could be found in NI and another route had to be explored.

Gerry's long-term plan is to progress to management level in the industry and, as well as production skills his Careers Adviser helped him see that business administration would provide a good grounding for this. He is retaking his GCSE Maths with a view to getting on the National Diploma in Media Studies next year.

Gerry has just started his NVQ2 in Business Administration, in placement with Drive 105 FM and while it is early days he is happy with where he is at the moment and that he has a solid plan in place. His path into the radio industry has not been direct and not perhaps exactly as he might have planned it, but he is happy and busy and committed to his career in broadcast media.

Gerry is full of praise for his Careers Adviser who supported him in finding his way through the options and opportunities that exist to find a career that suits his talents and aspirations.

Electronic delivery of Jobsearch services

The use of technology to deliver jobsearch services has been increased significantly by the Department for Employment and Learning to support the one to one advice and guidance offered in Jobs & Benefits Offices. JobCentre Online, comprising of Touch Screen Job Points in all JobCentres and Jobs & Benefits Offices and a jobseeker's website is available 24 hours a day from any location with Internet access. The site allows users to access a list of suitable jobs with just "two touches" or "two clicks". Users can register on the site, save searches, upload their CV and complete on-line job applications. In Targeted Initiative areas Jobpoints are also available in community locations. A recent development has been the sharing of job vacancies with the Republic of Ireland, the first time that two EU member states have used the technology to share vacancies to the general public in the other state's format.



4.4 Structural Aspects

- Action Points 1,4,9,10
- Recommendations 1,13,24,25,35-39

JOB CREATION

The availability of job opportunities is a key element in tackling unemployment. Invest NI is clearly focused on increasing job opportunities through attracting inward investment and promoting growth in local companies. This was recognised by the Taskforce as an essential component of any integrated strategy to address employability and long-term unemployment.

During 2003/04, Invest NI secured 11 new inward investment projects of which 10 will be located in New TSN areas and will create over 1000 new, good quality jobs for these areas. Invest NI has also issued offers of assistance of £125.5m, of which £71.5m (57%) went to New TSN and Special Status areas.

Invest NI's Accelerating Entrepreneurship Strategy sets out the Agency's proposals for increasing the NI business birth rate. The Strategy aims to create a culture and an environment, through education and promotional campaigns, which support and encourage entrepreneurs. As a result of the Invest NI "Go for It" campaign, there was an increase in the number of referrals to the Start a Business Programme. During 2003/04, Start a Business contributed to 2,637 new business starts of which 38% were located in New TSN or Special Status areas and have the potential to create some 1,655 jobs in these areas. Invest NI has also provided support for businesses operating in the social economy.

DETI has developed and extended monitoring procedures to measure the direct and indirect impact of the job creation and employability-related measures listed in its New TSN Action Plan. Companies in receipt of financial assistance from Invest NI are now asked to provide background details on new employees recruited as a result of that assistance. This includes details of their previous economic status, gender, age, religion, disability, race and dependants.

Andor Technology

Andor Technology announced an investment of over £6 million at its Springvale base in West Belfast in April 2003. The investment will enable the company to expand its operations, potentially double its workforce within three years and exploit its lead in the development and manufacture of specialist scientific cameras. Andor was formed as a spin-out company from Queen's University and moved to Springvale in 1997.



Seagate Technology

In April and July 2003, Seagate announced separate investment, totaling around £94 million, at its Springtown facility. This investment is among the most significant in Northern Ireland in recent years, and will enable the company to develop and produce next generation technology for the global computer industry.

IMPROVING THE EMPLOYMENT INFRASTRUCTURES IN DISADVANTAGED AREAS

West Belfast and Greater Shankill Task Forces


Substantial progress has been made in recent months in taking forward the recommendations of the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Task Forces (WBGSTF). Following publication of the Task Forces' Report, in February 2002, a number of practical actions aimed at improving employment prospects and reducing poverty in the area, including the establishment of the Employment Services Board, were approved. Progress on many other recommendations, however, remained slow until the process was re-invigorated by Ian Pearson's announcement, in March 2003, of the new £50m Integrated Development Fund (IDF).

Following the IDF announcement, a Joint Working Group (JWG), comprising representatives of the original Task Forces, local Councils, Local Strategy Partnerships and relevant Government Departments, was set up in July 2003 to carry out a comprehensive review of the WBGSTF Report; produce an Integrated Area Strategy; identify existing sources of funding to support implementation of the Strategy; and prepare an application for IDF funding.

The Joint Working Group (JWG) working in a close and committed partnership, has now finalised a detailed Strategy and associated IDF bid which comprises a comprehensive package of interventions aimed at tackling core issues across the Task Force area. Projects included in the package will address basic education issues, job creation and the need for greater assistance to help traditionally 'hard-to-reach' groups find sustainable employment.

Neighbourhood Renewal

In the most disadvantaged areas of Northern Ireland the Taskforce recommended that government should seek to promote increased inter-agency working to tackle the underlying causes of unemployment and specifically long-term unemployment. The potential of area-based initiatives (PEACE II, URBAN II, Neighbourhood Renewal etc) to reduce the barriers to employment were recognised.




Minister John Spellar launched DSD's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy in June 2003. The strategy clearly links the aims of the Taskforce with its economic renewal theme which underlines that helping people in the most deprived areas to get jobs will be one of the best ways of tackling poverty and disadvantage. In July 2004, the Minister announced details of the thirty two primary areas that have been selected for regeneration and renewal, following a period of extensive consultation. The areas identified by the Minister include 13 in Belfast, 4 in Londonderry and 15 in other towns and cities across Northern Ireland - a total population of approximately 250,000. DSD are in the process of establishing the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy within the selected areas. The Minister also announced his initiative to establish a complementary "Areas at Risk Pilot Programme", which will help other disadvantaged areas from falling into decline. The Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal outlines the type of activities that should be included in the 7-10 year Neighbourhood Vision Frameworks.

Activities highlighted under the 'Economic Renewal' objective include:

- making sure that people living in the most deprived neighbourhoods have the skills they need to participate in the labour market;
- helping people from the most deprived neighbourhoods to get into higher and further education;
- helping people in the most deprived neighbourhoods to overcome barriers to work such as poor transport or a lack of suitable childcare;
- supporting training and transport schemes that can help people in the most deprived neighbourhoods get to the jobs that are available elsewhere;
- ensuring that people on benefits are encouraged and supported to take up their full entitlement and that the process of seeking advice on a wide range of benefit and other issues is made more accessible
- supporting social economy programmes that can encourage community and social enterprises.

In October 2003 DSD entered into an agreement with AM to develop the Victoria Square Area as the first in a series of regeneration schemes for Belfast City Centre. The Victoria Square Scheme will provide 3,000 jobs during construction and 3,000 permanent retail/leisure sector jobs when it is completed. The Scheme is scheduled to open by Spring 2007. DSD is preparing a New TSN Action Plan with the developer, which will involve linking the employment opportunities to maximize the benefits to adjacent neighbourhoods. In March 2004 the Department published a Regeneration Policy Statement for Belfast City Centre. This sets out the Department's approach to further regeneration within the City Centre.

Minister Spellar announced the publication of the DSD's 'Heart of the City - Integrated Urban Design Study' for Londonderry on the 18 August 2003. The study puts forward strategic proposals for key riverside sites including Ebrington Barracks, Fort George and the Queen's Quay area as well as recommending



improvements to transportation, design quality and public spaces. The strategy will further develop the city centre's role as an employment location, as a centre for modern and traditional manufacturing businesses, as a retailing and tourist centre for the wider North West region and as an administrative centre for public and private services. It will also inform and influence the wider planning of the city council area, which ILEX, the new Urban Regeneration Company will oversee.

North West Action Plan -The North West Action plan, which was launched recently by Invest NI, aims to create a balanced and vibrant economy in the North West by implementing a series of targeted economic development measures. It is aimed at stimulating economic regeneration in this region. Homeloan Management Limited (HML), a leading player in the UK mortgage servicing market, is to invest over £9.5 million (backed by Invest Northern Ireland) in setting up a new operation in Londonderry and will make a significant contribution to that regeneration. It will create 400 valuable jobs over the next three years. The Department for Employment and Learning through its Jobs and Benefits Offices, will be assisting the Company to recruit its staff.

Rural Development Programme (2001- 06)

Elements of DARDs Rural Development Programme (2001- 06) including capacity building, Local Regeneration Projects and Programmes, Sectoral and Area Based Development Projects and Programmes, Micro-business development and the Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative will continue to impact on employability and tackle the widest possible range of needs and opportunities in Northern Ireland's rural areas.

DARD has appointed a number of Partnerships/Agencies to assist in the delivery of the Rural Development Programme. There are 12 LEADER Action Groups appointed under the LEADER+ Programme and 5 Partnership bodies have been appointed to deliver the Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative under the PEACE II Programme.

The Focus Farm Programme, a "Vision for the future of the agri-food industry" initiative which embraces peer learning was launched at the end of March 2004.

Furthermore, DARD has commissioned a fundamental review of its Rural Development Policy. This review will engage widely with stakeholders and will be informed by a study of the needs/problems of rural communities and the effectiveness of current policy and delivery methods.



Rural Development-Peace II Branch Farm Diversity Study - ICT Programme [Training for Farmers]


DARD'S Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Training for Farmers programme is a unique combination of computer training, one-to-one mentoring and financial assistance. It is funded by the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation and has been running since February 2003. It is delivered by ten regional promoters across Northern Ireland and already some 1,300 farm family members have attended the training.

This programme has been specifically designed to help farmers and their families improve their skills and to promote the use of ICT in the farm business. It enables farmers to exploit the potential of ICT to best advantage in their businesses while participating in the development of reconciliation and mutual respect within and between communities.

The training is designed to help farmers learn through examples which are directly relevant to farm businesses. Mentoring visits help farmers apply the competence gained in the classroom to their own farm situation. The following case study highlights some of the benefits of the programme.



Barbara Scott, with husband James and children Ben, Emily and Jack, making use of her newly acquired skills.



Barbara Scott is a dairy farmer's wife from Ballymoney who completed her training at Acorn The Business Centre in June 2003. Following her training Barbara now uses a computer to keep VAT records for the farm business, downloading milk statements from the purchaser, sending and receiving e-mail and management of turkey orders.

After their youngest child started playschool in September Barbara, after eight years as a full time mother and farmers wife, returned to work as a Home Economics, Health and Social Care teacher. The ICT programme has eased this return to work with new skills such as using the Internet, now a valuable tool for lesson preparation.

Barbara plans to complete the remaining three modules of ECDL through Acorn The Business Centre. This recognised qualification will be beneficial to her future employment opportunities.

4.5 Targeted Initiatives

The Taskforce proposed the introduction of Targeted Initiatives to test the Report's ambitious agenda. These would be concentrated in areas throughout Northern Ireland of high unemployment and social deprivation. Referring to this at the launch of the Report the Minister said "This Report incorporates a long-term vision with short to medium term actions in a new integrated approach to employability. It needs to be demonstrated how this integration can be achieved and how its constituent elements can be best combined. The exercise will also provide a clear assessment of how existing initiatives are working on the ground, and suggest how streamlining and quality improvement can be achieved."

The Department for Employment and Learning introduced Targeted Initiatives in 4 areas, West Belfast, Greater Shankill, Londonderry and Strabane in 2003. They are already providing an integrated and co-ordinated approach to improving the employability of individuals and help them return to the labour market.

The core components within a Targeted Initiative are:

- A Stakeholder's Forum
- A Job Assist Centre (JAC)
- A Transitional Employment Programme (TEP)
- Enhancements and flexibilities within existing programmes and services such as New Deal, Careers guidance and opportunities for disabled people.

Stakeholders' Forum

The Stakeholders' Forum facilitates a local consultative process in each area to ensure that all stakeholders i.e. statutory, community, voluntary and private sectors can offer expert advice, based on sound local knowledge.



Job Assist Centres

Job Assist Centres are testing a Career Advancement Centre approach and will act as a labour market intermediary service working with and complementing the services offered by the statutory sector to meet the needs of those most distant from the labour market. The centres are already providing outreach, mentoring and career counselling services to individuals in these most disadvantaged communities.

Transitional Employment Programme

A Transitional Employment (Intermediate Labour Market) Programme has been introduced in all Targeted Initiative areas. The Programme is aimed at long-term unemployed, who complete the New Deal programme yet remain unemployed.

Personal Advisers


The Department for Employment and Learning's Personal Advisers in Targeted Initiative areas are testing new models to measure and help improve clients' employability. For example screening for essential skills needs has been introduced at the first point of contact for some client groups. These measures will be evaluated in 2004 for their effectiveness in improving assessment and measurement of client employability

Flexibility within existing programmes.

Within the New Deal programme a range of measures have been introduced and are being tested in Targeted Initiative areas. These include an Advisers Discretion Fund, which allows a payment of up to £300 to remove specific barriers to employment e.g. provision of tools etc. In addition, financial incentives to New Deal participants who take steps to address Essential Skills needs is being piloted. The Disablement Advisory Service has introduced a "Work Preparation Programme" aimed at preparing clients with disabilities for the transition to work. The service has also stepped up its promotion of Employment Support Programme and Access to Work with some early success. Four Careers Guidance pilots commenced in October 2003 to target guidance programmes at those young people identified as disengaged in the 2002 School Leaver Destination Statistics.

Engaging with Stakeholders

Within West Belfast and Greater Shankill areas the Department has engaged with the Employment Services Board, (as recommended by the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Taskforce Reports) and the Board has agreed to act as the Stakeholders Forum. The Board has been and continues to be directly involved in Targeted Initiative developments locally, in particular the development of Job Assist Centres and the Transitional Employment Programme. The local partnership has ensured that the local community has been consulted during the



development of the various elements of the Initiative and has enabled the Initiative to reflect the local needs.

“With the obvious convergence of the findings of the West Belfast & Greater Shankill Task Forces and the Department for Employment and Learning Task Force on Employability & Long Term Unemployment, the approach adopted by the Department for Employment and Learning in shaping and developing its Targeted Initiatives to address the employment and employability differentials of West Belfast and Greater Shankill has been one of collaboration and true partnership from the outset.

Padraic White, Employment Services Board, March 2004


“Targeted Initiatives are a welcome development, bearing in mind my work with employers who are keen to develop strategies to improve skills and identify job opportunities which people in the West Belfast/Greater Shankill areas could access. The Employers’ Forum is committed to addressing barriers to employment, and Targeted Initiatives provide a real vehicle which employers can utilise, in an effort to move the unemployed into jobs. Working in partnership with the Targeted Initiatives team, education and other training providers, we believe that together we can provide solutions which tackle the problem of unemployment.”

Deirdre Timoney, Director, Employers’ Forum

West Belfast Job Assist Centre

When Suzanne initially came to Job Assist she said she ‘felt lost and trapped’ as a result of being unemployed. Mentors worked through a process with Suzanne and she developed an action plan around what she wanted in life. Through mentoring, Suzanne gained confidence and belief in her own abilities and was starting to look at a full range of employment opportunities that would not only suit those abilities but that she also enjoyed. An option Suzanne was quite excited about was the Engineering Skills for Industry course and she applied for the course with the support of the Job Assist Centre. An interview for Suzanne was arranged with BIFHE and Job Assist worked with Suzanne on interview techniques. Suzanne was accepted onto the course and is the only girl in a class of twenty.

Since enrolling on the course, Suzanne calls in to Job Assist on a weekly basis, and her confidence has soared. She feels that she now has a direction in life, and is focused on successfully completing her course and securing employment with Bombardier. She has also worked on issues in her personal life and is visibly more happy and content.



Suzanne continues to work with Job Assist to develop her long term career path and empower herself to make her own choices in her own life and future.

5. LOOKING AHEAD - KEY AREAS


When the Taskforce published its report and Action Plan it was explicit in explaining that the actions and recommendations were made intending no hierarchy of action. All of the actions and recommendations were seen as essential as part of an integrated approach. New TSN policy focused on promoting employment and employability as central to tackling social exclusion and addressing inequalities. The proposed Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Strategy aims to build on the improvements achieved through New TSN, evolving into a wider anti-poverty strategy where employability remains a central theme in aiming to improve the income and living standards of the most disadvantaged people in Northern Ireland. Consultation on the anti-poverty strategy is ongoing and discussions on the way forward will be made following the consultation. The work of the Implementation group is likely to fit well into the employability theme of the strategy and the implementation of the Taskforce's recommendations will continue to be taken forward in the context of the strategy.

In addition it is important to recognise that there are numerous new and emerging strategies being taken forward by departments which share the objectives set out in the Taskforce Report. Key measures include cross departmental policies aimed at integrating social policy into public sector procurement and the identification and development of a number of strategic employment locations aimed at exploiting the potential for economic development at selected locations on the strategic network of key transport corridors and links.

Integration of Social Policy in Public Sector Procurement

Following a Review of Public Procurement the Executive agreed in May 2002 a revised public procurement policy for Northern Ireland Departments, their Agencies, non-Departmental Public Bodies and Public Corporations. Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) now works with all public bodies to achieve best value for money in their procurement activities while having due regard to the integration of economic, social and environmental policies.

The Directorate considers that integrating social and procurement policies may have a positive impact on tackling unemployment and improving individual's employability prospects. One of the recommendations from this Review was to initiate a pilot project of 20 procurement projects to evaluate the potential for



the use of public procurement contracts to assist the unemployed into work. Within these a contract provision requires contractors to bring forward and implement an employment plan for utilising the unemployed in work on the contract.

Seven pilot projects have been initiated since June 2003 and the University of Ulster is carrying out an assessment. Early evidence from the Projects initiated to date shows that the process is not having any detrimental effect on the contracting process and that there is no evidence of significantly increased costs or workload for clients or contractors.

Plans to agree a voluntary “Social Compact” with a number of Northern Ireland’s top construction companies are being developed. The “Social Compact” is a voluntary agreement whereby companies would make a commitment to the delivery of social policy objectives through their everyday employment and training practices. The positive outcomes will be a better trained and skilled workforce and strengthened local community ownership of projects. Monitoring arrangements to gauge the impact of award of government contracts on unemployment, increased employability and New TSN will be developed.

Social Consideration in Public Private Partnership (PPP)

The Procurement Board, chaired by Minister Ian Pearson, co-ordinates overall procurement policy. At its October 2004 meeting the Board agreed to the establishment of a working group to draw up guidance on the integration of social considerations into Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). (The working group will also draw up guidance on equality screening of PPP projects). Membership of the working group will include OFMDFM, SIB, CPD and representatives from the Procurement Board. Proposals for the full Membership and terms of reference for the working group will be submitted to Ian Pearson for consideration.

The Department of Education has discussed and identified two major capital projects that will aim to recruit some of the workforce from the unemployment register. These new school projects are in Newry and Carryduff. The Department is working to identify other suitable projects.

Strategic Employment Locations

The Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 (RDS) proposes the creation of a regional portfolio of Strategic Employment Locations (SELs) in order to promote and exploit the potential for economic development at selected locations on the strategic network of key transport corridors and links. An inter-Departmental group led by DETI is currently examining factors, such as the availability of skills and labour, that influence the location of business investment and the potential for economic development in the regional context. An announcement on SELs will be made as soon as possible once work has been completed.



Developments in Great Britain

In Great Britain there have been a range of developments which link directly to the Taskforce agenda. Plans announced by the Chancellor in Budget 2004 challenge departments to “meet the productivity challenge” by increasing skills levels and introducing more flexibility to the economy. Tackling the numbers of people with no or low skills levels is a priority whether they are in work or unemployed. In addition plans aimed at “Increasing Employment Opportunity for All” recognise that having achieved significant falls in unemployment levels through the New Deal programme and other factors there is a need to do more for those who face more difficult barriers to work. The growing numbers of economically inactive people require more help and support in identifying and addressing the barriers that they face to participation in the labour market. All these point to an ongoing Agenda where the implementation of the Taskforce recommendations will play a central role in promoting employability for all and prevent social exclusion and poverty

6. PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGET

6.1 Evaluation

The Implementation Group established an Evaluation Subgroup in June 2003 to assist the group to monitor progress towards the relevant targets contained in the Taskforce Report, to commission research as necessary, and to plan an evaluation programme.

To date the group has initiated an evaluation programme that makes provision for sharing existing and emerging best practice. It has developed employability impact measures for the Action Points and Recommendations and has plans for an overarching evaluation to draw together the results from departments’ individual evaluations with a view to assessing the overall effectiveness of the action plan. The group has also supplied the performance against target for the Economic Development Forum’s Medium Term Strategic Priorities; and the Sub-Regional Performance Indicators and Targets at Annex 2 and 3. It should be noted that there are technical issues involved in using these indicators to measure change. Measurement is often dependent on using data from sample surveys (for example, the Labour Force Survey) where factors such as sampling error will affect the data. In these circumstances it is difficult to distinguish between real change and variations due to the use of sample data.

A key piece of work initiated by the subgroup is the commissioning of research into Labour Market Dynamics and the impact on gender, religion and disability in relation to employment, unemployment and non-employment trends over time and the main factors driving change. This is a very complex piece of work, the results of which will be very valuable in terms of future priorities and target setting. It is expected that the study will be completed by end of February 2005.



6.2 Overview of Performance against target

Annexes 2 and 3 detail the movement against the 2010 targets that has occurred for each of the 20 or so indicators identified in the Taskforce Report. In general, these show that the position for around half of the indicators has remained stable or improved, whilst in nearly half of the cases the position has declined since 2001/2.

However, we need to treat these figures with some caution. In general, the indicators that have moved in the wrong direction have been those which indicate the overall state of the labour market and the position of people within it (for example, the indicators show that there has been an increase in inactivity and decrease in the employment rate vis-a-vis GB). Historically, in the medium-to long-term (ie over a period of years) these key labour market parameters such as inactivity rates change very slowly - there is a considerable amount of inertia in the labour market.

In addition to medium-to long-term stability there is considerable short-term change: figures vary from quarter to quarter with seasonal and other changes in the labour market, and will also vary considerably due to sampling error - most of the data are derived from sample surveys (chiefly the Labour Force Survey). Thus it is difficult - especially over a short time span and with a short run of figures - to distinguish between changes which are real and permanent, and those which are transitory, or due to some irregularity in the data.

In order to properly assess these changes, it will be necessary to view this data over a longer time period, when it should become easier to distinguish between real change and fluctuations.

It should also be borne in mind that changes in key labour market data reflect changes on the demand side and especially the performance of the global, national, and local economies. This is important for two reasons:

- Firstly, closing gaps is easier in a period of expansion rather than contraction or little change. In this context it is worth noting that most world economies have been flat over the past few years with growth insufficient to affect a considerable expansion in workforces. In Northern Ireland this is felt more keenly as we have a growing population of working age (caused by past high birth rates and a stemming of out-migration). Prospects for the world and UK economies are currently good, and Northern Ireland is projected to share proportionately in future UK expansion - but there remain uncertainties on the world scale (not least with the current (October 2004) high level of oil prices) and within the UK, with concerns about the impact of high levels of personal debt and the state of the housing market. The fact that economies do not always move in the same direction at the same rate can also impact on comparator figures.



- Secondly, there are unique factors that might impinge positively and negatively on Northern Ireland over the period. Recently, one of these has been the performance of the textile industry. Northern Ireland has traditionally had a strong textile industry - and, in employment terms, this has been a bulwark of NI manufacturing and has provided employment for many people. However, over the period from 1995 to 2001, figures from the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) show that the number of jobs in the textile industry fell by nearly 12,000. This more than offset the good performance of other types of manufacturing industry (which added 8,000 jobs over the same time period). New Census of Employment figures are due to be published in December, but the incidence of redundancies in the textile sector since 2001 suggests that the position has got worse since then, and global trends suggest more retrenchment in the future as at least a strong possibility. So although the jobs picture in Northern Ireland has been generally positive over the past decade or so, it is important to remember that setbacks in some sections of the economy can still impact on a considerable number of people and this can in turn affect the overall headline indicators.

It is because the economy and the labour market are in a state of change that it will be important not only to monitor the indicators, but to revise them if this is appropriate. The Economic Development Forum (EDF) is currently reviewing its indicators and, as the Taskforce indicators were developed to complement those used by the EDF, it will be necessary to review the indicators used by the Implementation Group in the light of any changes adopted by EDF.

Progress in detail - Action Points/Recommendations	Annex 1
EDF Performance Indicators and Targets	Annex 2
Sub-Regional Performance Indicators and Targets	Annex 3

PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES		
Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
<p>2. The Benefits Trap - Work to reduce the disincentive effects of the “benefits trap” and to simplify the process of moving into the world of work.</p>	<p>R2 The Inland Revenue, DEL and DSD monitor the impact of these measures in reducing disincentives to employment</p> <p>R3 Information on new and existing Tax Credit schemes should be readily available, and SSA and DEL JobCentre staff be made fully aware of the implications of the credits scheme.</p> <p>R9 Benefits training should continue to be treated as a priority area and further improved by restructuring of staff training and greater focus on skills such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Customer service (including dealing with ethnic minorities, disability awareness and dealing with victims); * Benefits specific knowledge; * New Deal training; * Marketing techniques; and in addition, plans to communicate and market services at central and local levels should be developed. 	<p>Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit introduced by the Inland Revenue on 6 April 2003.</p> <p>Training for SSA and DEL staff on Tax Credits is complete and a Service Level Agreement has been developed.</p> <p>Benefit training continues to be a priority, particularly in-work benefits. The Social Security Agency has recently evaluated and reviewed its training framework. Personal Benefit Advice that provides estimates for a range of benefits and tax credits and provides ‘Better-off working’ calculations is available in all Social Security Offices, Jobs & Benefits Offices and the Benefit Shop.</p>
<p>8. Childcare - Review the current Childcare Strategy</p>	<p>R28 That arrangements for the development, co-ordination and implementation of policies</p>	<p>The Inter-Departmental Group on Early Years (IDGEY) has lead responsibility for</p>

PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
<p>and provide a coherent lead role in the issue.</p>	<p>affecting daycare be strengthened, and that a single Department be given a clear lead role in this. Responsibility for childcare activity is, by its nature, fragmented across a number of NI Departments. Strong inter-departmental leadership and focus is required to ensure that policy co-ordination is effective. The leadership and focus should be accompanied by a strong commitment from individual Departments to give priority to areas of daycare policy appropriate to them.</p> <p>R29 That the NI Childcare Strategy be reviewed to ensure that it is sufficiently focused on addressing the issues of availability/access, affordability and quality that were raised through the Taskforce consultation process. The NI Childcare Strategy is due for review for a variety of reasons including: Women's participation in the labour market continues to grow, and with it the demand for more daycare provision. In the Labour Force Survey around two thirds of women who are economically inactive and want a job consistently cite ' family and home care' as the main reason for not seeking work.</p>	<p>delivering against the Childcare actions and recommendations in the Northern Ireland Childcare strategy, Children First. IDGEY established a sub-group which developed a detailed work programme for the group, this included the Taskforce recommendations and an approach to the review of the overall childcare strategy.</p> <p>It has been agreed that DHSSPS will lead the review which will commence in November 2004. All these factors will be considered in the review.</p>

PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
	<p>R30 That as part of the review of the NI Childcare Strategy, account should be taken of the outcomes of the UK level review of childcare that is currently taking place.</p> <p>R31 That a programme of meaningful research should be undertaken to inform the proposed review of the NI Childcare Strategy. A research project has already been conducted to quantify the future demand for and supply of childcare provision in NI, and the report is currently being considered. Considering this could also be given to supplementing this work with further research activity.</p> <p>R32 That consideration is given to the introduction in NI of the Internet based Childcare Information System used extensively in GB. It is probable that part of the childcare availability/access problem is not just lack of provision, but also lack of easy access to information on provision that is available. The purpose of this Internet based IT system is to provide potential users with comprehensive, accurate and up to date information on childcare places that are available across NI.</p>	<p>IDGEY has strong links with the UK childcare partnerships. Through these links all new developments in the UK will be considered in the context of Northern Ireland needs.</p> <p>The review will involve an update on existing research with further research commissioned as necessary.</p> <p>This will be considered in the review.</p>

PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
	<p>This project was announced as part of the current NI Childcare Strategy but pressure on other fronts has hindered progress. DHSSPS has lead responsibility in this area.</p> <p>R33 That a robust training strategy is developed for the childcare sector in NI. The NI Childcare Strategy contains a commitment on the part of DEL to take the lead in developing such a training strategy. While some progress has been made, for example through the creation of the NVQ Bursary Schemes outlined previously, there is potential for increasing activity in this area as part of the new NI Childcare Strategy that might emerge under Recommendation 29. Activity in this area would address the issues of quality and availability/access. DEL has lead responsibility in this area.</p> <p>R34 That a new portfolio of initiatives and projects should be developed to implement the new NI Childcare Strategy that will emerge from the review. Existing initiatives and projects should continue, and priority should be attached to the potential new projects</p>	<p>On completion of the revised Childcare Strategy emerging from Recommendation 29, a Training Strategy which supports that plan will be developed. In the meantime existing strategies in support of Children First will continue and engagement will continue between the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department for Education and Skills (GB) and the Sector Skills Development Agency on the establishment of a UK-wide Sector Skills Council for the Childcare sector.</p> <p>As part of government's cross departmental strategic approach to the social economy the review will consider opportunities for social economy enterprises in the delivery of childcare services.</p>

PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
	<p>referred to above. However, once the review of the NI Childcare Strategy and the administrative arrangements have been completed, and the research findings are available, effort should be made to develop, and secure funding for new projects and initiatives that will help to deliver the strategy.</p>	
<p>9. Transport - Address transport issues to reduce mobility problems which obstruct employability.</p>	<p>R26 That a pilot project is developed to assist the unemployed with obtaining a driving licence.</p> <p>R27 That DEL, in partnership with Translink, could further promote existing schemes to provide cheaper transport for sections of the unemployed, and that Translink should also consider the viability of extending fare discounts for a fixed period of time to assist with the transition from unemployment into work, possibly introducing a pilot scheme using Smartcards.</p>	<p>Subject to further exploration with key stakeholders, DEL will consider the introduction of a pilot project on assistance with driving licenses and/or discounted fares within Targeted Initiative areas.</p> <p>Initiatives in the Regional Transportation Strategy resulting in new or improved public transport services will provide access to employment, training and other services for many less affluent people, thereby facilitating their inclusion in society. (see also Transport developments under Structural Aspects)</p>

PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
	<p>R15 An additional 150 places should be provided on the Employment Support Programme; thus increasing the ceiling to 1000 places.</p> <p>R16 Additional funding should be provided for the Access to Work programme, to meet increasing demand from people with disabilities for support to overcome barriers to employment.</p> <p>R17 Relevant departments should jointly consider the future provision & funding arrangements for vocational training for people with disabilities. At present this is funded primarily by the EU through voluntary bodies</p>	<p>The Disablement Advisory Service (DAS) is introducing a new delivery model for Employment Support that will reduce unit costs and release funding to provide extra places.</p> <p>DAS staff are working towards reducing support costs in Access to Work to allow more disabled people to be assisted.</p> <p>Discussions are underway with DHSSPS about vocational training provision in time for the completion of the existing round of ESF funding.</p>

MANAGING THE LABOUR MARKET

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
<p>3. Personal Advisers - Enhance the role of the Personal Adviser to give better individual support and to promote, in particular, job readiness skills and attitudes.</p>	<p>R4 Any developments in the combined job brokering/benefits service delivery in GB should be closely monitored and, where appropriate, applied to NI.</p>	<p>Personal Advisers in Targeted Initiative areas including those operating in Job Assist Centres have been trained in use of employability models, Client Progress Kit (CPK) in Belfast and Holistic Assessment Re-integration and Progression Model (HARP) in the North West. They have also been trained in screening for essential skills. These models are currently being tested and will be evaluated over the TI pilot period for their effectiveness in improving assessment and measurement of client employability.</p> <p>DEL and DSD continue to monitor developments in GB. Work-focused Interviews for Partners were introduced on 12 April 2004 and a more intensive JSA regime was introduced on 19th April 2004. Both measures are in line with GB developments.</p>

MANAGING THE LABOUR MARKET

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
	<p>R6 DEL and DSD should investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The provision of mobile services to greatly increase the opportunity for customers in rural areas to access services; * The development of a 'Back to Work Toolkit' that contains all the information on how to enter or return to, the labour market; and 	<p>In October 2003, DWP introduced a "one-strike" policy for non JSA customers who fail to attend Work-focused Interviews. The extent of the problem is currently being evaluated in NI and the policy is being equality screened.</p> <p>Work is ongoing on planning the introduction of an Incapacity Benefit Reform pilot in Northern Ireland similar to those in GB.</p> <p>SSA/DEL have agreed to take forward a project to explore options/costs for a mobile service. A project proposal has been agreed and initial research has been carried out this year.</p> <p>DEL and SSA have agreed that the Back to Work Toolkit is no longer required as it's use has been superseded by the work performed in Jobs & Benefits Offices by Personal Advisers, which is reinforced by Work Focused Interviews.</p>

MANAGING THE LABOUR MARKET

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
	<p>strengthening existing links with the voluntary and community sector in terms of information provision, joint publications, seminars for benefit customers and closer IT links.</p>	<p>Existing links with the voluntary and community sectors have been strengthened through:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) articles on benefit entitlement included in voluntary & community publications / newsheets e.g. Blind Centre (typed articles). (b) a number of joint publications with the public sector e.g. A-Z Guides. (c) benefit seminars with advice workers from the voluntary and community sector e.g. Direct Payment Seminar. (d) The Social Security Agency website has been developed to include links to many other sites e.g. CSA, DEL, Bryson House, Citizens Advice Bureau. <p>Consideration is also currently being given to the production of a regular publication providing information on the Welfare Reform Programme to the voluntary sector.</p>

MANAGING THE LABOUR MARKET

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
	<p>R7 DEL and DSD should continue to roll out the new job brokering and benefits service to deliver an enhanced and much more integrated service in new Jobs and Benefits Offices. Should further resources become available, however, a shorter timeframe should be envisaged.</p> <p>R8 The pilot of the more ambitious service, which seeks to extend the joined-up arrangements to customers claiming other benefits, should be evaluated and, if effective and efficient should be introduced across NI.</p> <p>R10 DSD and DEL explore how closer links can be forged with the voluntary sector to improve services to mutual customers from their respective positions and to identify</p>	<p>The final report of the ongoing evaluation of the ONE pilot issued on 28 March 2003.</p> <p>Learning from the pilot, and the findings of the report, has informed the development of an extended work focused service. The new joined up job brokering and benefits service is currently available in 22 co-located Social Security Offices and JobCentres. The enhanced work focused service provides all new claimants for working age benefits with a work-focused interview and the support of a Personal Adviser service.</p> <p>DEL senior regional staff are members of over half of the Local Strategy Partnerships in the District Council areas throughout NI. These Partnerships</p>

MANAGING THE LABOUR MARKET

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
	<p>and address other non-benefit barriers to employability.</p>	<p>involve the voluntary and community sectors as well as representatives from the statutory and elected local government areas, and are mainly engaged in administering the Peace II programme.</p> <p>Within each of the TI areas, DEL has engaged with voluntary and community sector organisations to establish Local Stakeholders Forums.</p> <p>Two staff from the Voluntary Sector were seconded to the SSA for 6 months from October 2002. The purpose of the secondment was to work together to achieve better outcomes for mutual customers, many of whom are the most vulnerable in society. SSA staff & the Voluntary Sector Secondees have now completed Joint Research to identify issues on service provision and identify ways services to mutual customers can be improved. The recommendations are now being taken forward by the Agency.</p>

MANAGING THE LABOUR MARKET

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
<p>5. Employability Skills and Career Advancement Centres - Develop an effective and coherent Skills and Career Guidance Service including integrated Career Advancement Centres (CAC) as one-stop comprehensive labour market intermediary services.</p>	<p>R18 The Taskforce supports the recommendation of the Criminal Justice Review that the Criminal Justice community and others work co-operatively to develop a comprehensive resettlement strategy to maximise services to this socially excluded group.</p>	<p>A joint NIPs/PBNI Resettlement Strategy was launched on 8 June 2004. Many aspects are now being implemented. The Department for Employment and Learning is engaging with the Northern Ireland Prison Service, Probation Board for Northern Ireland and other statutory partners including the Social Security Agency and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive on employment and benefit services for prisoners at various stages of their imprisonment and return to the community.</p>
<p>5. Employability Skills and Career Advancement Centres - Develop an effective and coherent Skills and Career Guidance Service including integrated Career Advancement Centres (CAC) as one-stop comprehensive labour market intermediary services.</p>	<p>R19 The role, management and delivery of Careers Service are reviewed and developed in line with national and local changes to support priority focus on social inclusion. R20 Flexible and tailored guidance programmes are developed to support young people who are socially excluded or who are at risk of social exclusion.</p>	<p>On 02/02/04 Careers Service introduced a new management structure. The newly structured service has redefined its levels of service, providing a strong focus on priority work with young people while also developing a capacity to deliver a coherent approach to work with adults. It has commissioned reviews of Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) for young people and adults.</p>

MANAGING THE LABOUR MARKET

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
	<p>R21 The Careers Service works in partnership with a wide range of statutory, voluntary and specialist agencies to develop guidance programmes in support of a social inclusion policy.</p>	<p>Targeted Initiative funding has been used to introduce four pilot projects intended to target guidance programmes at those young people identified as disengaged or at risk of social inclusion.</p>
	<p>R22 The Careers Service should develop a coherent approach to adult guidance work with a view to supporting the Department's re-integrative approach with people who are long-term unemployed.</p>	<p>Work with statutory, voluntary and specialist agencies continues to be developed within mainstream careers guidance work and within the Targeted Initiative pilots. Youth Service, Include Youth, the Door Project and First Key have already been included in the planning for Careers Guidance policy and practice.</p>
	<p>R23 The Careers Service works closely with EGSA, the Information Advice and Guidance network and the Careers Departments of the FE and HE providers in developing a coherent approach to adult guidance.</p>	<p>Careers Information and Guidance Branch has now taken responsibility for the funding of EGSA and of the LearnDirect Helpline. This is the beginning of an integrated approach to adult guidance work that will be further developed.</p>

STRUCTURAL ASPECTS

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
<p>1. Job Creation - Implement DETI and Invest NI strategy to stimulate job creation including the targeting of investment in areas of greatest economic disadvantage.</p>	<p>R1 DETI seeks to extend and develop monitoring procedures to measure the direct and indirect impacts of the job creation and employability-related measures listed in its NTSN Action Plan</p>	<p>From 1 April to 31 December 2003, Invest NI secured 57 first time visits by potential inward investors to Northern Ireland. Of these 89% (51 visits) were to New TSN areas, offering the prospect of over 500 new, good quality jobs for these areas. Through its economic development activities, Invest NI has made offers of assistance of over £125.5m (from April 2003 to March 2004), of which £71.5m went to New TSN and Special Status areas. Invest NIs Accelerating Entrepreneurship Strategy sets out the Agency's proposals for increasing the NI business birth rate. The strategy aims to create a culture and an environment, through education and promotional campaigns, that support and encourage entrepreneurs. Companies in receipt of financial assistance from Invest NI are now asked to provide background details on new employees recruited as a result of that assistance. This includes details of their previous economic status, gender,</p>

STRUCTURAL ASPECTS		
Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
		community background, disability and minority ethnic status. The categories of 'age' and 'dependants' have also been added to monitoring forms recently. To date, DETI has published two annual statements on its findings - the first on 19 July 2002 and the second on 15 September 2003. Further statements will be published each year and the information will be used to help DETI in assessing the effectiveness of key programmes and setting challenging new objectives and targets.
<p>4. Intermediate Labour Markets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop Intermediate Labour Markets to assist individuals in moving into the world of work. 	<p>R13 DEL should seek to develop pilot projects of both the LMI and ILM and seek to evaluate their effectiveness in the NI context. In the medium-term, lessons learnt from the pilots, if successful should be extended to further areas of socially excluded groups, suffering high levels of long-term unemployment.</p>	<p>In the course of 2003/04 the Department for Employment and Learning introduced ILM (Transitional Employment) pilots in 4 Targeted Initiative areas. West Belfast, Greater Shankill, Derry and Strabane. The Department also introduced Job Assist Centres (JACs) in the TI Pilot areas. JACs are modelled on the positive aspects of both the current LMI and JobBridge pilots.</p>

STRUCTURAL ASPECTS

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
<p>9. Transport - Address transport issues to reduce mobility problems which obstruct employability.</p>	<p>R24 Support for the strategic direction and underlying principle of the RTS, particularly those parts of the Strategy that address access and employability issues. R25 That Translink develops formal links with community groups and local employers</p>	<p>Following an evaluation of the current LMI pilots, taking into consideration the JobBridge evaluation, a common Labour Market Intermediary service has been introduced in North, South and East Belfast.</p> <p>Close working links have been developed with JobCentre Plus and DWP colleagues involved in the development of services to prisoners, employers, Incapacity Benefit recipients and migrant workers. Together with Department for Work and Pension GB, The Department for Employment and Learning and SSA are closely monitoring the position regarding access to the labour market for new EU nationals following enlargement on 1st May 2004.</p>
		<p>The Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan, which sets out proposed improvements to the rail network and trunk road network, is due for completion by the end of this year. The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan,</p>

STRUCTURAL ASPECTS

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
<p>10. Learning from Best Practice- To explore opportunities for collaboration with research, evaluation and policy development in the Republic of Ireland, EU and USA as well as the UK for mutual benefit and the sharing of good practice.</p>	<p>through its established links with the various Local Strategy Partnerships in the main urban areas.</p>	<p>which will deliver a modern integrated transport system for the Greater Belfast area, is also due for completion by the end of this year and the Sub-Regional Transport Plan, which will detail proposals for the rest of the region, is due for completion by March 2006.</p> <p>The Budget for 2004-2006 includes total expenditure by the Department for Regional Development for roads and transport in Northern Ireland of around £340m in 2003-04 rising to £425m in 2004-05.</p>
		<p>The 'Paths to Work / Paths to Inclusion' Convention, aimed at sharing international best practice in relation to Transitional Employment, took place on 18 and 19 November 2003 in the Waterfront Hall. 400 delegates attended from GB, Europe, USA and Australia. It was recognized by all who attended as a huge success.</p>

STRUCTURAL ASPECTS		
Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
<p>11. University-Community Partnerships - Link research and knowledge capacities of higher education to the development needs of local deprived communities and initiate research to support the EQUAL programme.</p>	<p>R14 The universities engage directly with the local communities most affected by unemployment and use their expertise in research and evaluation to promote development and to identify and share best practice.</p>	<p>Meetings are ongoing with DEL and with the EQUAL NI support organisation to identify available research. The HEROBC fund enables universities to provide facilities for the community sector to identify opportunities and access relevant research. The Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) will enable HEROBC-funded community activities to continue from August 2004.</p>
	<p>R35 Any evaluation of the two HAZs must look at employability issues and identify whether they are an appropriate mechanism for roll-out across NI.</p>	<p>The evaluation of Health Action Zones (HAZ) is underway and is expected to be completed by the end of November 2004. The Terms of Reference focus primarily on their effectiveness and efficiency as an intersectoral approach to meeting the needs of disadvantaged communities. It will also examine the contribution to other initiatives and links with other Partnerships, including Investing Partnerships for Health Partnerships.</p>

STRUCTURAL ASPECTS

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
	<p>R36 In the most disadvantaged areas and neighbourhoods of NI, Government should seek to promote increased inter-agency working to tackle the underlying causes of unemployment and specifically long-term unemployment.</p>	<p>The Minister, John Spellar MP, launched the Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal 'People and Place', on 24 June 2003.</p> <p>The Strategy highlights the linkages with the aims of the Taskforce particularly through the key objective 'Economic Renewal' which underlines that helping people who live in the most deprived areas to get jobs will be one of the best ways of tackling poverty and disadvantage.</p>
	<p>R37 DSD should seek to maximise the potential of area-based initiatives (PEACE II, URBAN II, Neighbourhood Renewal etc) to reduce the barriers to employment.</p>	<p>The Department (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit) has signed off the Peace II Action Plans which are all located in the Greater Belfast Area.</p>

STRUCTURAL ASPECTS

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
	<p>R38 DSD should ensure that major regeneration initiatives are linked to employment matching services to maximise the benefits to adjacent neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>In October 2003 DSD entered into a Development with AM to develop the Victoria Square Area as the first in a series of regeneration schemes for Belfast City Centre. The Victoria Square Scheme will provide 3,000 jobs during construction and 3,000 permanent retail/leisure sector jobs (not all additional) when it is completed. DSD is preparing a New TSN Action Plan with the developer which will involve linking the employment opportunities to maximize the benefits to adjacent neighbourhoods.</p> <p>DSD has published a new Regeneration Policy Statement for Belfast City Centre. This will set out the Department's approach to further regeneration within the City Centre and to linking the employment opportunities to maximize the benefits to adjacent neighbourhoods. The Minister announced the publication of the Department's 'Heart of the City - Integrated Urban Design Study' for Derry on the 18th August 2003.</p>

STRUCTURAL ASPECTS

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
	<p>R39 The implementation of the Action Plan on the Report of the Vision Steering Group and the key elements of the Rural Development Programme Strategy 2001-2006 - Capacity building, Local Regeneration Projects and Programmes, Sectoral and Area Based</p>	<p>The study puts forward strategic proposals for key riverside sites including Ebrington Barracks, Fort George and the Queen's Quay area as well as recommending improvements to transportation, design quality and public spaces.</p> <p>The strategy will further develop the city centre's role as an employment location, as a centre for modern and traditional manufacturing businesses, as a retailing and tourist centre for the wider North West region and as an administrative centre for public and private services. It will also inform and influence the wider masterplanning of the city council area, which ILEX, the new Urban Regeneration Company will oversee.</p> <p>The Vision Action Plan was published in November 2002 and most recommendations are now being addressed. While Vision provided the initial policy context for this work, it is being kept under constant review.</p>

STRUCTURAL ASPECTS

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
	<p>Development Projects and Programmes, micro-business development and Natural Resource Rural Tourism. In doing so, to deliver a rural development Programme that will be able to tackle the widest possible range of needs and opportunities in NI's rural areas and support the widest possible range of beneficial projects.</p>	<p>It is expected that the Peace II monies available through the RDP will be committed by the 31st December 2004 and that the monies allocated to the relevant Measures of the EU Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity (PBSP) will be committed by 31 December 2006. The Focus Farms Programme, a Vision initiative which embraces peer learning, was launched by Ian Pearson on 30 March 2004. It is funded by the EU Peace II Programme. 80 farm businesses have been accepted for participation in the initiative with further applications under consideration. DARD has appointed a number of Partnerships/Agencies to assist in the delivery of the Rural Development Programme. Under the Leader+ initiative 12 Local Action Groups (LAGs) have been appointed to take forward Action 1 (Integrated Territorial Development Strategies). In June 2004 all 12 LAGs received formal contracts from DARD to deliver Action 2 (Cooperation) measures.</p>



STRUCTURAL ASPECTS		
Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
		<p>Five Partnership bodies have been appointed to deliver the Peace II Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative (NRRTI). These are now operational.</p> <p>In March 2004 DARD instigated a fundamental review of its Rural Development Policy. To inform the review, a study of the needs/ problems of rural communities and the effectiveness of current policy and delivery methods is being undertaken. The study and the review itself will be concluded by the end of 2004.</p>

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
<p>6. Adult Training - Develop a comprehensive training system drawing on and improving the best aspects of New Deal and Focus for Work.</p>	<p>R12 DEL continues to refine and improve its menu of programmes and initiatives to assist unemployed and economically inactive people back into the workforce, bearing in mind both the needs of individuals and the needs of employers.</p> <p>R5 A more focused and targeted emphasis should be developed to ensure that the schemes are communicated to, understood and easily accessed by those at whom they are aimed, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio advertising campaign publicising 'Back to Work Initiatives'; • Advertising and PR campaigns in those areas where the services from the new Jobs and Benefits Offices are being rolled-out; and • The continued production of comprehensive signposting guides to all public services. 	<p>An Intra-Departmental working group has been set up to develop a "Communicating with Customers" strategy similar to that in GB which aims to improve service delivery to customers with sensory impairment and migrant workers. The first strand of the strategy focused on the evaluation of the Language Line service for clients who cannot understand English which was introduced throughout the network from July 2003.</p> <p>A benefits publicity campaign has been rescheduled to December 2004. The amount of the Back to Work Bonus was increased in October 2004 making this an appropriate time to commence the campaign.</p> <p>A rolling programme of advertising and PR to coincide with the opening of Jobs and Benefits Offices is ongoing. 22 Jobs and Benefits offices have now gone live. Advertising and PR will continue for the remainder of the offices as the roll out continues.</p>

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
	<p>R33 That a robust training strategy is developed for the childcare sector in NI. The NI Childcare Strategy contains a commitment on the part of DEL to take the lead in developing such a training strategy. While some progress has been made, for example through the creation of the NVQ Bursary Schemes outlined previously, there is potential for increasing activity in this area as part of the new NI Childcare Strategy that might emerge under Recommendation 29. Activity in this area would address the issues of quality and availability/access. DEL had lead responsibility in this area.</p>	<p>Two publications (“Choices 2” & “Choices 3”) emphasising the advantages of New Deal for Lone Parents have been produced in partnership with Gingerbread in May 2002 and June 2004.</p> <p>The ongoing series of A-Z Guides (Pensioners, Farmers and People with Disabilities) have been completely revised and the guides re-published for 2004.</p> <p>On completion of any new Childcare Strategy emerging from Recommendation 29 a Training Strategy which supports that plan will be developed. In the meantime existing strategies in support of Children First will continue and engagement will continue with the Department for Education and Skills (GB) and the Sector Skills Development Agency on the establishment of a UK-wide Sector Skills council for the Childcare sector.</p>

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
<p>7. Literacy & Numeracy - Put into operation, the results of the Review of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in schools and ensure the implementation of the Essential Skills Strategy to address deficits in literacy and numeracy skills among adults.</p>	<p>R11 The Taskforce fully supports DEL's Essential Skills for Living Strategy and looks forward to its early implementation.</p>	<p>Essential Skills Qualifications from Entry Level to Level 2 are now in place.</p> <p>A new PSA target has been put in place to measure the number of adults improving their levels of Essential Skills: <i>'By 31 March 2007, 18,500 people will have achieved a recognised qualification in Essential Skills compared to 100 in March 2003'.</i></p> <p>6,500 learners were supported from April 2002 to March 2003. A further 10,845 were supported by March 2004.</p>



PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Taskforce Action Point	Associated Recommendations	Update on Progress
		<p>(DE) Revisions to the Literacy Strategy are in place. The Numeracy Strategy has one further year to run and is being monitored. The Department has established a new Improvement in the Classroom Strategy Group, which includes all the education partners, to ensure that a co-ordinated approach is taken to the development and implementation of these and other major reviews which will impact on schools.</p>

Taskforce Action Point	Aim of Targeted Initiatives	Update on Progress
<p>12. Targeted Initiatives -</p> <p>Establish such initiatives in areas of lowest employment and high social deprivation to promote and to assess the integrated approach to employability set out in the Action Plan.</p>	<p>The aim of the initiatives will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put in place an approach which integrates the various actions set out in the report; • Monitor and assess how existing initiatives are working on the ground; • Suggest ways in which on-going streamlining and quality improvement can be achieved; • Undertake in conjunction with research on EQUAL, regular local labour market analysis that addresses the flow and stock of the unemployed, hidden unemployment and a longitudinal appraisal of the destinations of programme participants; • Build collaborative practice with local Area and Strategic Partnerships and with statutory agencies and local universities, to ensure that employment and training issues are effectively linked to local regeneration strategies; and • Draw on the thinking and best practice from other parts of the UK, the Republic of Ireland, the rest of Europe and the USA. 	<p>DEL introduced Targeted Initiatives (TIs) in 4 areas in 2003/04. They provide a co-ordinated service tailored to the needs of individual clients.</p> <p>Four key components within a Targeted Initiative are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders Forum (SHF) • Job Assist Centre (JAC) • Transitional Employment Programme (TEP) • A range of flexible and innovative approaches within existing mainstream programmes <p><u>Stakeholders Forum</u></p> <p>In all Targeted Initiative areas local organisations have been identified and agreed to act as the Stakeholders Forum.</p> <p><u>Job Assist Centre</u></p> <p>JAC contracts have been awarded for all the Targeted Initiative areas. 13 JACs are now operational with 263 clients engaged.</p>



Taskforce Action Point	Aim of Targeted Initiatives	Update on Progress
		<p><u>Transitional Employment Programme</u> The Programme is now operational in all four Targeted Initiative areas with 216 clients in a work placement.</p> <p><u>Flexibilities within Existing Programmes</u> New Deal – New Deal has successfully introduced the Advisers Discretionary Fund and essential skills payments incentives in April 2004 (both enhancements to current provision).</p> <p>DAS - The Employment Support Programme is actively being promoted by DAS and a small number of clients have already obtained jobs. A number of clients have also been assisted in finding and keeping employment through the Access to Work programme. The Work Preparation Programme is now operational.</p>



Taskforce Action Point	Aim of Targeted Initiatives	Update on Progress
		<p>Careers - Pilots commenced in October 2003 to target guidance programmes at those young people identified as disengaged in the 2002 School Leaver Destination Statistics. TI funding is being used to facilitate access to guidance, to provide careers resource materials and to support experiences of employment and learning.</p>

7.3 EDF Performance Indicators

PRIMARY INDICATORS

Strategic Priority Area: Equality of Opportunity / Social Inclusion

Objective: "To maximise and support the integration of disadvantaged individuals / groups into mainstream economic activity."

Indicator	Position at 2002	2010 Target	Actual Position at 2003
LTU as a % of the economically active (ILO measure)	August-October 2001 NI vs UK gap = +0.73%	August-October 2010 NI vs UK gap = 0.0%	Jan-March 2004 NI vs UK gap = +1.2% (NI 2.24%, UK 1.03%)
Changes in employment of people from new TSN areas	Baseline to be established	Attract 75% of all first time inward investment projects to New TSN areas	2002/03 = 80%
Low income measure percentage of employees earn < £250 per week	April 2000 NI = 32.7% UK =24.9%	April 2010 NI = 27.7%	April 2003 = 23.6%

Source: Invest NI

DETI Statistics and Research Branch

DETI Equality and Diversity Unit

Note: Earnings are positively skewed by a small number of highly paid employees. For example, 10% of men earn less than £214 per week and 10% earn more than £727, for women these figures are £189 and £574 respectively (New earnings Survey 2003). The earnings targets have not been adjusted for inflation.

Strategic Priority Area: Human Capital – Enhancing Capabilities and Skills

Objective: “To ensure that the Northern Ireland workforce is equipped with appropriate skills to support the current and future needs of the economy.”

Indicator	Position at 2002	2010 Target	Actual Position at 2003/04
(a) Proportion of working age population qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2 (highest qualification). *1	(a) 2001 NI %/UK % = 109%	DFES targets	(a) Winter 2003/04 NI%/UK% = 97%
(b) Proportion of working age population qualified to NVQ level 3 (highest qualification).	(b) 2001 NI %/UK % = 89%		(b) Winter 2003/04 NI %/UK % = 91% *2
(c) Proportion of working age population qualified to NVQ level 4 (highest qualification)	(c) 2001 NI %/UK % = 79%		(c) Winter 2003/04 NI %/UK % = 89%

Source: Labour Force Survey

Notes: *1The first review highlighted an error in the wording of these indicators – ‘National Qualification Framework (NQF)’ should read ‘National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ)’.

*2 Parity with the UK may be insufficient if NI is to compete on a global scale.

Indicator	Position at 2002	2010 Target	Actual Position at 2003/04
Proportion of working age population with no qualifications	2001 NI %/UK % = 163%	see Annex 5 of Working Together for a Stronger Economy	Winter 2003/04 NI%/UK% = 168%
Level of Essential Skills for Living (ii)	5,500 Learners supported by FE colleges and the voluntary sector	2004/2005 Target 10,500 learners supported (sub to review in light of Adult Literacy Strategy)	At July 2003 8,732

Source: Labour Force Survey, DEL

SECONDARY INDICATORS

Strategic Priority Area: Equality of opportunity / social inclusion

Objective: "To maximise and support the integration of disadvantaged individuals / groups into mainstream economic activity."

Indicator	Position at 2002	2010 Target	Actual Position at 2003/04
Employment rate – working age population rate ROI value: 15+ population rate 56.9% 16+ population rate NI 56.0%	August-October 2001 NI vs UK gap = +6.7%	August-October 2010 NI vs UK gap = +4.7%	Jan 04 – March 04 NI/UK gap = +7.9%
Unemployment rate ILO % of economically active ROI value: ILO ROI 2001 4.30%	August – October 2001 NI vs UK gap = +0.9%	August - October 2010 NI vs UK gap = 0.0%	Jan 04 – March 04 NI vs UK gap = +0.5%

Source: NI Labour Market Statistics

Indicator	Position at 2002	2010 Target	Actual Position at 2003
Economic inactivity rate – working age population ROI value: 15 + all person rate 2001 39% NI 16 + rate all person 40%	August - October 2001 NI vs UK gap = + 6.4%	August - October 2010 NI vs UK gap = +4.9%	Jan 04 – March 04 NI vs UK gap = +7.9%

Source: NI Labour Market Statistics

Strategic Priority Area: Human Capital – Enhancing Capabilities and Skills

Objective: “To ensure that Northern Ireland workforce is equipped with appropriate skills to support the current and future needs of the economy.”

Indicator	Position at 2002	2010 Target	Actual Position at 2003/04
High income measure proportion of employees earn > £400 per week	April 2000 NI = 33.6% UK = 39.4%	April 2010 NI = 38.6%	April 2003 40.1%
Higher level jobs (% employees in SOC 1-3)	2001 – SOC 1-3 NI % / UK % = 79.5% 2001 – SOC 1-2 NI % / UK % = 88.5%	NI %/ UK % = 100% NI % / UK % = 100%	Winter 2003/04 NI%UK% = 88% Winter 2003/04 NI%UK% = 85%

Source: DETI Statistics and Research Branch

Note: Earnings are positively skewed by a small number of highly paid employees. For example, 10% of men earn less than £214 per week and 10% earn more than £727, for women these figures are £189 and £574 respectively (New earnings Survey 2003). The earnings targets have not been adjusted for inflation.

Indicator	Position at 2002	2010 Target	Actual Position at 2003
Proportion of organisations with IIP accreditation	March 2001 (a) 200+ employees NI % / UK % = 64%	March 2010 (a) NI % / UK % = 100%*	December 2003 (a) NI % / UK% = 111%
	(b) 50+ employees NI % / UK % = 70%	(b) NI % / UK % = 100%*	(b) NI % / UK% = 85%
		* Subject to review	

Source: IIP figures provided by DEL
Number of companies with IIP (200+ employees) in NI = 147 UK = 5,712. For 50+ employees NI = 379 UK = 16,538
Note: The denominator used in this calculation is the number of VAT registered businesses with 200+ employees (NI = 227 UK = 9,794) and 50+ employees (NI = 980 UK= 36,280).

Important Note: The Economic Development Forum is currently in the process of reviewing its framework of Medium Term Strategic Priorities in preparation for publication of the Forum's 2nd Annual Statement. The primary purpose of the review is to ensure that the targets set for the NI economy are viable, can be influenced by policy and that the overall framework is properly focused on the areas of greatest importance to the economy. Since the Taskforce undertook to use these indicators to monitor the impact of many of its actions and recommendations, the revised EDF indicators and targets will be considered and the Taskforce response reflected in future progress reports.

Annex 3

4.1 SUB-REGIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS

Performance Indicator	Target	Position as per Employability Taskforce Report	Update position
1. Reduce economic inactivity in the working age population	Reduce gap between Catholic and Protestant economic inactivity rates by 5 percentage points (measured as a 3 year rolling average) by 2010	7.1 percentage points (1998-2000 average)	7.9 percentage points (2000-2002 average)
	Reduce gap between male and female economic inactivity rates by 5 percentage points (measured as a 3 year rolling average) by 2010	16 percentage points (1998-2000 average)	16 percentage points (2000-2002 average)
	Reduce gap between the economic inactivity rates between disabled and non-disabled people by 10 percentage points (measured as a 3 year rolling average) by 2010	45 percentage points (1998-2000 average)	42 percentage points (2000-2002 average)
2. Decrease the employment rate gap between groups	Decrease the gap between Catholic and Protestant employment rate (ie those in employment as a percentage of the working age population) by 6 percentage points (measured as a 3 year rolling average) by 2010.	10 percentage points (1998-2000 average)	10 percentage points (2000-2002 average)

Performance Indicator	Target	Position as per Employability Taskforce Report	Update position
	Decrease the gap between male and female employment rates by 6 percentage points (measured as a 3 year rolling average) by 2010.	13 percentage points (1998-2000 average)	14 percentage points (2000-2002 average)
	Increase the employment rate for disabled people by 10 percentage points by 2010.	30.5% (2001)	34.8% (2002)
3. Unemployment rate (% ILO economically active)	By 2010, reduce the absolute difference in Protestant and Catholic ILO unemployment rates by 50% compared with a similar point in the economic cycle	4.1 percentage points (1998-2000)	3.7 percentage points (2000-2002 average)
4. An improvement in the labour market position of the most disadvantaged wards	In the wards most disadvantaged on the Noble Employment Domain, a reduction of 20% in the proportion of all NI employment deprived who live in these wards, ie if the 10% most disadvantaged wards currently account for 26.6% of all the employment disadvantage in NI, by 2010 they will account for only 21.3% of all employment disadvantaged people in NI.	26.6% of all the employment disadvantage in NI	26.3% of all the employment disadvantage in NI



