EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

1. Scoping study of young people not in Education, Employment and Training

The Department for Employment and Learning completed a scoping study of those young people who are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in Northern Ireland. The study was commissioned following a debate held in the Northern Ireland Assembly in recognition of the issues faced by these young people and the implications of their disengagement for the economy and society as a whole.

The Study report was submitted to the Executive and it was agreed at its meeting on 22 July 2010 that a cross-Departmental mechanism should be put in place to develop a strategic approach to tackle the issue.

*Report:*

*‘A Scoping Study of those young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in Northern Ireland.’*

1. Consultation on the strategy

Based on the findings of the Scoping Study, the Department for Employment and Learning launched a public consultation on the strategy for young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) on 24 March 2011. (Consultation period – March – June 2011)

The strategy is designed to give young people new opportunities and new hope. It aims to tackle the issues surrounding those who are in the NEET category in a progressive, sustainable and realistic way. It is based on the premise that, whatever their background, aspirations or aptitudes, every young person should be given the opportunity to progress through adolescence fully equipped to play an active role in society and gain the skills they need to enter the labour market.

*Consultation document:*

*‘Pathways to success: Establishing an initial broad strategic direction and supporting cross -departmental actions to reduce the number of young people most at risk of remaining outside of education, employment or training (NEET).’*

1. Launch of the strategy

Following the consultation period, the Department for Employment and Learning launched its strategy for NEETs: ‘Pathways to Success’ in May 2012. The strategy focuses on actions to prevent young people falling into the NEET category and on measures to re-engage those who have become NEETs. It also sets out key supporting measures to ensure that young people’s needs are identified and matched with appropriate opportunities.

*Strategy document:*

*‘Pathways to Success: Preventing exclusion and promoting participation of young people.’*

1. Delivering the strategy

The strategy is a key part of Northern Ireland’s Delivering Social Change Framework, which is central to the Programme for Government (2011–15). Signature projects are currently underway to tackle poverty and improve children and young people’s well-being and educational opportunities.

*Overview of Signature Projects:*

*‘Announcement on the delivering social change signature projects.’*

 PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS