

**Information from NUS-USI (National Union of Students – Union of Students in Ireland) to Employment and Learning Committee’s Inquiry into post-Special Educational Need provision in education, employment and training for those with Learning Disabilities**

I wish to express NUS-USI’s gratitude to the Committee for Employment and Learning for holding this inquiry into post Special Educational Need provision in education, employment and training for people with learning disabilities.

This is an extremely important issue and is a subject which NUS-USI believes must receive the urgent attention of the Northern Ireland Executive. Government must deliver the funding needed to ensure that the highest standard of services are made available to people with learning disabilities and to also ensure that everyone with learning disabilities can access these services.

It is absolutely crucial that all barriers to participation or barriers to use of services are removed and equality must to be at the centre of all government policy and service provision.

NUS-USI believes that government should undertake detailed research to identify specific services that are needed as regards post-Special Educational Need provision. It is important that government undertakes this research to establish an accurate evidence base of the type of services needed across Northern Ireland.

Joined-up government is a key element of ensuring that the best services possible are provided, and we would call on government departments to work together to deliver the best outcomes for people with learning disabilities.

Within this inquiry, it is vital that the Committee establishes a clear picture of the services that are current available, and also any potential gaps in services as regards post-Special Educational Need provision. It is also important that the Committee can ascertain all of the potential barriers to services that people may face, so that these barriers can be swiftly addressed and removed.

NUS-USI believes that widening access and participation in education and training must be a key priority to ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to reach their potential. We therefore believe that widening access and participation should be central to this inquiry and we believe that government, training providers, education institutions and employers should work collaboratively to deliver the best possible opportunities and services for people with learning disabilities.

NUS-USI does not wish to give evidence at the Committee; however, we are happy for this information to be provided to the Committee as part of the inquiry.

Many thanks,

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