

From the Office of the Minister



Department of

**Enterprise, Trade  
and Investment**

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**Our Ref: DETI COR 045/2014**

Mr Robin Swann  
Chairperson  
Committee for Employment and Learning  
Room 375  
Parliament Buildings  
BELFAST  
BT4 3XX

10 February 2014

Dear Robin

I refer to your letter of 23<sup>rd</sup> January seeking input to the Committee for Employment and Learning's inquiry into post special education need provision for those with learning disabilities in Northern Ireland.

I welcome this inquiry into the concerns raised by both the Committee and advocates of those individuals with learning disabilities and their families that once they leave full time education where they have had long-term support, they find themselves with very little help or options for what they do next.

I am pleased to attach my Department's submission to the inquiry at Annex A.

Yours sincerely

**ARLENE FOSTER MLA**

Minster of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

**WRITTEN SUBMISSION - INQUIRY INTO POST SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED FOR THOSE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

1. This written submission has been prepared to assist the Committee for Employment and Learning in their inquiry into post Special Educational Need Provision in education, employment and training for those with Learning Disabilities in Northern Ireland.
2. The Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment (DETI) is responsible for a range of functions in Northern Ireland including economic development policy (including industrial development, energy, telecommunications and tourism). DETI sponsors four agencies, established as non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) which play a key role in shaping and implementing economic development policy.
3. Invest Northern Ireland is one of DETI's NDPBs and its role is to grow the local economy by supporting new and existing businesses to compete internationally and by attracting new investment to Northern Ireland.
4. Under the Terms of Reference the Committee for Employment and Learning will examine the current range of choice and opportunities available for those with Learning Disabilities on leaving full time schooling.
5. Whilst Invest Northern Ireland do not run any specific programmes for people with learning disabilities, Invest NI support Social Enterprise, which may or may not be engaged with disabled people. Invest NI's Social Entrepreneurship Programme seeks to develop and support social enterprises throughout Northern Ireland, therefore, leading to increased economic growth in the region.
6. Invest NI also run an event every year entitled 'Working for Me', which aims to encourage entrepreneurship amongst people with disabilities. It is attended by both disability groups and individuals. The owner of a micro business (dog grooming) who was supported by the Cedar Foundation is speaking at this year's event, outlining the support she has received to date.
7. DETI welcomes the opportunity to provide a written submission to this Inquiry.