



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Committee for Employment and Learning

# OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Pathways to Success: Departmental Briefing

25 September 2013

# NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

## Committee for Employment and Learning

### Pathways to Success: Departmental Briefing

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**Members present for all or part of the proceedings:**

Mr Thomas Buchanan (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Sammy Douglas

Mr David Hilditch

Mr Chris Lyttle

Mr Fra McCann

Ms Bronwyn McGahan

Mr Pat Ramsey

Mr Alastair Ross

**Witnesses:**

Mr Colin Jack

Department for Employment and Learning

Dr Tracy Power

Department for Employment and Learning

Mr Brian Smart

Department for Employment and Learning

**The Deputy Chairperson:** I welcome Mr Colin Jack, Dr Tracy Power and Mr Brian Smart from the Department for Employment and Learning. The floor is yours.

**Mr Colin Jack (Department for Employment and Learning):** Thank you very much. I very much welcome the opportunity to update the Committee this morning on the delivery of the Pathways to Success strategy. It has been some time since we gave you an update on Pathways to Success and the work that we are doing with young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). We have now very much moved into delivery mode and are trying to reduce the numbers of young people who are not in education, employment or training.

As the Committee is aware, Pathways to Success is an Executive strategy. It is the formal strategy to address the needs of young people who are not in education, employment or training. The strategy is underpinned by a strong evidence base of best practice, including the Committee's report that followed its inquiry in 2011. We have extensively referenced that report in the strategy. The strategy was also developed following significant engagement with the voluntary and community sector, including with young people themselves.

I will start by telling you a bit about the infrastructure through which the implementation of the strategy is being managed, particularly the engagement with the voluntary and community sector and with business, local government and other Departments.

We have established a NEET advisory group. That is chaired by the Department, and it oversees the implementation of the strategy on a quarterly basis. The document that we have provided to the

Committee today is the most recent update that has been provided to the NEET advisory group. It will meet again towards the end of next month.

The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) also helped to develop the voluntary and community sector NEET strategy forum, which is a group of non-governmental organisations that are active in the area. That forum is represented by five members on the NEET advisory group and an additional voluntary and community sector member is nominated by the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA). Some 65 organisations that deliver for, or have an interest in, young people who are NEET participate in the NEET strategy forum. Membership is open and continues to grow. One of the collaboration and innovation fund projects that we fund helps to support its work and align the work of the different organisations to the delivery of the strategy and the general challenges of dealing with that group of young people.

At this point, I am able to say that we are doing what we set out to do in the Pathways to Success strategy: we are making good progress with the various new initiatives that have been launched over the past nine months or so; and we are on the way to realising the overall target that, by 2020, every young person will not only have an opportunity to access education, training or other preparation for employment but will be able to avail themselves of that opportunity.

I want to give you a bit of further context, because I know that the numbers of young people are always something that the Committee has an interest in. Tracy was with you last week along with James Gillan from the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) and gave you a lot more detail.

We have 225,000 young people aged between 16 and 24 in the region. Just to set out what we are doing under Pathways to Success in context, 165,000 of those young people are in one DEL scheme or another. That covers apprenticeships, training, higher education, further education, Steps to Work and our programmes under Pathways to Success. So, around 70% of young people are being supported by DEL in some shape or form. I suppose that a very significant proportion of the Department's overall budget of around £800 million a year goes to young people in that age category, and it broadly reflects that 70% or three-quarters proportion.

An individual young person within that 165,000 could be counted more than once. For example, those who are in part-time education are included in the labour force survey definition of young people who are NEET. So, as the Committee is well aware, we need to be careful when we look at the figures.

The current youth unemployment rate for those aged between 18 and 24 is 18.8%, which compares to a UK average of 19.4%. At the moment, we are faring around the same as Scotland and Wales with that level. A number of English regions have higher levels of youth unemployment, namely the north-east of England, Yorkshire and Humberside, the West Midlands, and inner London.

The NEET figure includes those who are unemployed. However, it also includes those who are not in full-time education or in government-supported training and have other barriers to participation. The labour force survey estimate in the quarter ending June 2013 was that 46,000 young people here aged between 16 and 24 were NEET, which was a decrease on the figure of 54,000 the year before. However, we currently have a slightly higher level of young people in Northern Ireland who are NEET, at 21% of the relevant population compared to around 18% in the UK as a whole. Of those 46,000 people, 21,000 are unemployed and 25,000 are economically inactive. Of the 21,000 unemployed, 9,000 are long-term unemployed. So, we have some way to go to re-engage those young people with the world of work.

The labour force survey figures are not available at district council level for NEETs due to the small numbers. However, we have looked, at a more local level, at the count of claimants aged between 18 and 24 who receive jobseeker's allowance. That showed that, in August this year, around 17,000 people were in that category. The highest numbers of those are in Belfast and Derry, making up 21% and 10% of the Northern Ireland total respectively. The rate in Belfast is 10.5%, and the rate in the north-west is 16%, at least it is in the city of Derry. Other districts with high rates are Limavady and Strabane, both of which have over 14% of the population aged between 18 and 24 claiming jobseeker's allowance.

That sets in context the measures that we have put in place. They are aimed at making provision for some 14,000 of our most vulnerable young people by 2015.

I want now to take you through the main achievements of the specific Pathways to Success interventions for those who are furthest from the labour market and face barriers to participation. The

biggest single intervention is the collaboration and innovation fund (CIF), which is a £9 million fund that has been made available to 18 organisations from the voluntary and community and educational sectors to deliver project activity from December 2012 to March 2015. We are currently funding, as I said, 18 organisations, but a further £1.7 million has just been made available to fund a further five organisations up to March 2015.

The projects under the collaboration and innovation fund will support over 6,400 young people with a diverse range of employability needs. The CIF is exploring new approaches to address the general and specific employability barriers faced by NEET young people through a broad range of provision, including mentoring, vocational qualifications, personal development, motivational and life skills, and employability skills. The fund was established to provide a basis for different approaches that will meet the needs of different people. We have a range of interesting initiatives being taken forward under that fund. For example, one project involves Derry City Council employing young people for a period of 32 weeks. During that time, they get the opportunity to apply for permanent positions within the council. That is an initiative that we are able to do under the collaboration and innovation fund that we would not actually have been able to do, for various reasons, under the European social fund.

There is a wide range of other innovative approaches under the collaboration and innovation fund. The overall outputs so far are very encouraging. Around 38% of those who have completed the programmes to date have moved on to a positive destination already: 9% have gone into work; 15% have gone into further education; a further 14% have gone into advanced training. Those are the positive results so far. It is still early days for the collaboration and innovation fund.

The next initiative I will mention is the community family support programme. Originally, that was intended to be a relatively small-scale pilot, looking initially at the needs of 44 disadvantaged families in targeted areas from January to June this year. Since 'Pathways to Success' was published, the community family support programme was designated as a signature project under Delivering Social Change by the Executive, and additional resources have been made available to upscale that pilot and roll it out across Northern Ireland. The procurement has just been completed, and the roll-out to 720 families across the region is about to get under way. In the pilot, we had 29 participants who were 16- to 24-year-olds and 25 who were 14- and 15-year-olds. So, the programme was intended to target young people who were at risk of becoming NEET, as well as those who already were and younger siblings of those who were NEET. The programme provides a range of support for families and parents with employability skills and issues around household management and so on. It has a funding allocation of £4 million from this year through to 2015. The new programme will roll out from November.

Another development since the publication of 'Pathways to Success' is that the local employment intermediary service (LEMIS) has transferred within the Department from the employment service to my division, which is the European and employment relations division. The initiative has been refocused in order to put greater emphasis on tackling the issue of young people who are NEET. The Committee has had presentations previously on LEMIS. It is an initiative that is designed to help unemployed people in the community overcome the various barriers that might prevent them from finding and keeping a job. It is provided by local community employment organisations in different parts of the Belfast, Derry, Strabane, Newry and Mourne, Moyle and Cookstown council areas. It also operates on an outreach basis across the region to people with a common employability barrier. We have added those who are NEET in the 16- to 24-year-old group to the existing target groups of those who are homeless, ex-offenders, ex-prisoners, people with a history of drug and alcohol misuse, and care leavers. To reflect that refocusing, the LEMIS budget has been increased in 2013-14 from £1.7 million to £2.1 million, which has allowed an additional nine client-facing mentors to be recruited and caseload premiums to be introduced. It is intended that LEMIS will reach 2,000 people this year, of whom 700 are in the 16- to 17-year-old group.

Another significant development in the area of tracking of young people has been the introduction of a case management approach by the Careers Service of all 16- and 17-year-olds who do not have a positive destination when they leave school or who drop out of provision while they are 16 or 17. The Careers Service also visits all the young people who are taking part in projects that are funded under Pathways to Success to give them further advice and support to help them move from the provision under Pathways to Success to more mainstream and advanced provision.

In the past year, data-sharing agreements have been established between the Careers Service and all but four of the schools in Northern Ireland, covering 92% of pupils who are aged 14 and above in year 10. That means that a set of data has been passed across from the C2k system to DEL, with

individual contact details and so on for young people, which means that individual young people can be followed up by the Careers Service.

To support the development of the tracking system, we have the increasing use of the unique learner number, which means that we will be able to identify all young people individually and make sure that we have a complete picture of the provision that they have had and where they are at any point in time. Some changes will be made to the Department's client management system, which will allow it to operate as a tracking system from the summer of 2014. That means that it should be fully operational for the beginning of the 2014-15 year.

The European social fund (ESF) programme has continued to contribute to our provision for young people not in education, employment or training. We have a target of 4,500 young people to benefit under that programme. During the year, we have had a transfer of an additional €24 million into the ESF programme from the European regional development fund (ERDF) programme, leveraging a further €36 million in match funding from DEL and other sources. As that increase is covering the whole of the ESF programme's area of activity, it means that we have a significantly increased capacity to provide support for those who are NEET.

Finally, before the Committee asks questions, I just want to mention a major European conference at which the Department is planning to showcase what we are doing to tackle youth unemployment and the NEET issue. That is scheduled for 21 and 22 November. That conference will provide the opportunity for all local organisations in the field of ESF, the collaboration and innovation fund, LEMIS, the community family support programme and other initiatives to show what they are doing and to share learning with people coming from other areas and to learn about best practice from elsewhere. That will align fairly well with the first anniversary of the programmes under Pathways to Success beginning to deliver. I hope that, through the paper and my opening statement, the Committee has a good impression of the activity that we are supporting.

**The Deputy Chairperson:** Thank you, Colin, for your comprehensive report. We welcome all the progress that has been made to date in the field of NEETs. It is a very important issue, and it is one that the Committee has been looking at and has had great interest in. All the action points are green, apart from one, which is amber and relates to improved educational attainment. The risks there come down to challenging issues. Will you tell us what challenges you are facing? Further to that, 150 graduate teachers were recommended to be put in place. I notice that, on 24 June, the first tranche was advertised. How successful was that, and how many new posts have come forward as a result of that?

**Mr Jack:** In preparing for today, we noted that there was just one amber action in the report. It falls to the Department of Education. There were initially six signature projects under Delivering Social Change, and that particular action was one of them. I would need to get more detail from the Department of Education on what the specific issues were that delayed that project, but all the other actions are currently on target.

**The Deputy Chairperson:** Do you have any information on how successful the advertisements were for the first tranche of posts, which were advertised on 24 June for recent graduate teachers?

**Mr Jack:** No. We would need to find that out from the Department of Education.

**The Deputy Chairperson:** You mentioned a conference coming up on 21 and 22 November. Can you send the Committee some more detail on that? We have no detail on the conference at all, and it may be that some members are interested in it.

**Mr Jack:** We certainly can, and we will be sending invitations to Committee members.

**The Deputy Chairperson:** Where is it?

**Mr Jack:** It is in the Titanic building.

**Mr P Ramsey:** You have presented a lot of information to the Committee, and trying to analyse it all in a short period is quite difficult. I will home in on some of it. Colin, you are right to say that the Committee has a huge interest not only in the NEET issue but in youth unemployment. We have been vigorously approaching that from different angles over recent years. It complements well the

presentation that we received last week from Tracy. You talked about there being 54,000 people in the NEET category last year and 46,000 this year. There are unexplained variances. No one is taking credit to say that they have removed those from the list. I do not understand those variances. Clearly, resources have to be targeted at a subregional level where there are much higher levels of unemployment, particularly among young people, and I do not see that.

Being parochial, there are good and excellent programmes. You mentioned LEMIS, the council, Include Youth and others. They are doing good work. I have met all of those organisations, and, in fact, when we were in Derry, the chair of Derry City Council gave us a fairly good presentation on how well the council is advancing that programme. However, I do not see where we are making a difference over the past 12 months. I do not see, in any presentation that I am seeing, all the efforts that we are making in programming. We were all saddened and disappointed when we saw the figures on unemployment in the Derry City Council area. They are nearly 2% higher than any other area in Northern Ireland, and 3% higher than some areas. That is unexplained. You mentioned Belfast and the north-west. Give me evidence of where you are focusing and targeting resources to areas of high need.

**Mr Jack:** The LEMIS programme, which I mentioned, is targeted on the areas that are most disadvantaged and which are highest on the various indicators of deprivation. In general, the initiatives that we fund are targeted where they are most needed. One of the features of the programmes generally is that young people are identified and tracked down individually wherever they are, and those obviously will be concentrated in areas where there are particular difficulties. Certainly, we are satisfied that there is a good spread of provision under our new programmes across the region, and particularly in the areas where the problem is most —

**Mr P Ramsey:** Colin, I accept in good faith that those projects and programmes are working, but, clearly, they are only stabilising and not making any inroads.

**Mr Jack:** I suppose that it is fair to say that we are in fairly early days in the delivery of programmes. Most of the participants who have been through the collaboration and innovation fund projects are still there. Around a third have been through programmes and left, but most are still in the programmes. So, it may take a bit of time to see the results of the specific initiatives feeding through.

**Mr Brian Smart (Department for Employment and Learning):** I suppose, Pat, you have to recognise that Pathways to Success provides £25.2 million in additional money for young people who fall into the NEET category. The CIF project, for example, has only really got up and running from January of this year, and, already, we have roughly 1,200 people through that. We have a further five programmes coming on stream to augment that, which will increase the budget and the targets. We have refocused LEMIS and increased the numbers of people to go through the programme this year to 2,000, of which 35% will be 16- and 17-year-olds; that is an additional 700 young people who will come in to that. The community family support programme will be rolled out to 720 families, and that will touch on roughly 1,800 young people. That will roll out across the five health trusts and will commence next month. So, momentum is building in those programmes.

We piloted the community family support programme and worked closely with health and social services and others to make sure that the programme design met the needs of those families most at risk of becoming NEETs and to try to encourage the family members to get in contact with education and training again. That will involve 720 families over a two-year period. It involves £4 million and will touch on 1,800 young people. It is early days. We will commence the evaluations of the programmes, certainly CIF, next year. We also have the community access and employment programme, which has recently commenced. It is an initiative from the further education side of the Department that is reaching out to young people to encourage them to take part in further education courses. We have sent you some details of the partners who will deliver that.

We feel that what we are doing is fairly comprehensive. Additional money has been given. It is early days, but there has been good progress on the numbers of young people who we have been in contact with. We want to drive that forward. The additional money that is coming from the extra five CIF projects, together with the additional money going to LEMIS, will also augment that. Six months down the line, we will be in a better position to report to the Committee on the numbers of young people who are going through, and 38% of young people going to a positive destination from CIF is, in my opinion, a fairly good outcome. The caveat is that it is early days, but we have got additional money and new projects to look at innovative ways of looking at that very difficult group of young people.

**Mr P Ramsey:** Brian, I appreciate that; it is very good. I look forward to hearing in six months' time a much more positive story about the figures, Tracy. I am only reflecting the young people in my constituency. They are so frustrated because they have an appetite for work and queued in their thousands at a jobs fair two weeks ago for seasonal retailing jobs. There were thousands of them. However, they see no future and, therefore, become further marginalised because they become demotivated and demoralised. On behalf of the people who I represent, I want bespoke programmes that are targeted in a much more meaningful way than at present. The programmes that you talked about are excellent, but I think that you should be doing more.

**Mr Jack:** We always look for opportunities to do the most we can, and there have been various opportunities during the year to access additional funding for that issue, because we recognise the significance of it. We were able to secure additional funding through Delivering Social Change for the community family support programme. We have been able to access additional funding from elsewhere in the Department for a further expansion —

**Mr P Ramsey:** In the October monitoring round, £1 million was handed back for youth employment projects.

**Mr Jack:** The youth employment initiative features in Pathways to Success, but we have allocated additional funding to the programmes that we are directly delivering under Pathways to Success. We have been able to increase the number of —

**Mr P Ramsey:** Could you not have used that £1 million?

**Mr Jack:** We have taken up some money from elsewhere in the Department and allocated it to the collaboration and innovation fund. We have increased the number of projects from 18 to 23.

**The Deputy Chairperson:** Pat is absolutely right. The concern was raised in the Committee last week that, while work is ongoing and bodies are doing good work, are we really targeting people in a way that is effective? The view coming through was that we have all these programmes in place, but how effective are they for the young people we are talking about? As I look through your targets, action points and progress to date, I notice that future plans have to be put in place in a number of them to monitor the progress and the effectiveness, and there is work to identify bands to deliver the programmes. It appears that there is still quite a bit of work to do in monitoring this to see how effective it is and the progress that we are making. I am concerned that we have some work ongoing but no way of measuring it to see how effective it really is. We are not seeing the figures coming forward as to what is happening.

**Mr Jack:** Pathways to Success is a new strategy that was published in the middle of 2012. It responded to a gap in the provision that was identified by the Committee and the Department through an extensive consultation process aimed at building up the skills level and the capacity of those young people who have the biggest barriers to participation. The view that we came to when we were developing the strategy was that we had lots of programmes in existence: for example, Training for Success, which is for 16- to 18-year-olds, the full set of provisions under further and higher education, apprenticeships and so on. The Committee's earlier work and the work that we did in developing Pathways to Success identified that there were young people who were not ready for those existing programmes. The programmes that I have outlined today are the new programmes that are intended to bring those young people up to the level where they can participate in the other programmes and move on into employment. We have some really encouraging figures from the first few months. It takes time to set up programmes. We got an additional budget — an additional £25 million — and the programmes started to deliver around the turn of the year. Already, 1,200 young people have been through the collaboration and innovation fund projects, and, of those, we have almost 40% moving on to positive destinations. We will certainly continue to monitor and evaluate how we are doing. We got this running from a standing start relatively quickly, and we want to continually learn lessons from it to make sure that we make adjustments in light of experience. If we find that there are areas where there are particular issues, we will look at what we can do to address those.

**Mr F McCann:** Thank you for the presentation; it was interesting. I agree with Pat. Sometimes you come in and you are totally swamped with the huge amount of information. It is always good to see it when the vast majority of it is tagged with a green mark, because that says that it is working. However, our job is to try to look through that and get the answers that we require. I have picked up a number of issues. When you give the percentages of the most difficult areas, is the Belfast area done

by head of population or is it done through the worst areas? Belfast is a city with 250,000 people, so is it 10% of the 250,000 people?

**Dr Tracy Power (Department for Employment and Learning):** It is 10% of the relevant age group, which is 16- to 24-year-olds.

**Mr F McCann:** That is fine. With regard to the NEET advisory group, you said that there was a representative from NICVA. How was that person chosen, because there are many in the community sector who would say that that does not represent them and that it would not reflect them because NICVA is seen as a large voluntary group?

**Mr Jack:** NICVA nominated one person — NICVA being the umbrella organisation for the voluntary and community sector — and a further five members were nominated by the voluntary and community sector NEET forum that had already been up and running.

**Mr F McCann:** How were they chosen?

**Mr Jack:** There was a process among the members. As I mentioned, there are 65 member organisations in the NEET voluntary and community forum. My understanding is that that forum is open to any voluntary and community organisation that is working with young people who are NEET.

**Mr Smart:** You will remember, Fra, that, when we met the Minister a couple of weeks ago, that issue came up. We indicated to you then that we had been in contact with the forum. Membership remains open for any voluntary or community organisation that seeks it and wishes to join. The forum would very much welcome new members. As you know, we have also extended an invitation to voluntary and community groups, which you were in contact with, to go along to the conference that it held at E3 on 16 September. So, we would very much welcome more and more people getting involved in the NEET forum, because they are the practitioners on the ground. Like you and other members of the Committee, they are engaging with young people on an ongoing basis. They are speaking to their parents and meeting young people who have particular concerns about what could be enhanced in the Department's portfolio of programmes. That is very useful for us.

Those members will come along to the NEET advisory group, which is chaired by DEL. That is an advisory group for the Minister, so they can raise issues about what we are currently doing and what we maybe should do more of, and that is reflected back to the Minister in a quarterly report. We very much welcome ongoing engagement with the voluntary and community sector, because we do not have all the answers. We want to learn from others and respond in the same way as we have done by way of the Pathways to Success, which did engage meaningfully with a whole range of voluntary and community sector organisations as well as business and other educationalists and those who are interested in young people.

**Mr F McCann:** How often do both groups meet?

**Mr Jack:** The NEET advisory group meets approximately quarterly.

**Mr Smart:** The NEET strategy forum meets monthly, I think. The Bryson Charitable Group, which is one of the CIF providers, is coordinating a range of activities — one of which I described, which was a conference in E3 in September — to look at the CIF projects to meaningfully consider whether what they are doing is still relevant and to look at any particular issues or barriers that they are facing. We can put you in contact with Jo Marley from Bryson. We have no difficulties about that, and I already spoke to her prior to the meeting that we had with the Minister and Sinn Féin. That NEET forum is open to whoever wants to join it.

**Mr F McCann:** It is a matter of how it communicates to groups that that is available. We raised that with the Minister in our meeting with him. We met 16 or 18 groups that deliver services, and most of them did not even know that the others existed in their areas, and some of those were in the same small vicinity. That told us that there was a problem with the communication.

In all of this, I have no doubt that quite a lot of good work is being done. As a matter of fact, what we have in front of us clearly outlines that. Pat raised the fact that we received a presentation a number of months ago in Derry, and he is right to say that there was a programme there, partly funded by DEL. It is not only down to the city council but is a partnership throughout the city. I do not know how



many people are employed on it. It impressed me, because it seemed to be that it was working with communities and with employers and had a fairly good track record in placing people not only for the length of time of their programme but into full-time employment. That impressed me. It is that sort of work.

I have continuously raised the issue of NEETs. This week, a young man in the area that I represent died through drugs at a party at a house. Most of the people who were at the party are NEETs, and there is nothing to tell me that anyone is in connection with them to offer them a way out of it or to offer them any hope. I and other members have continuously raised the point that huge numbers of young people are not being touched by these projects and programmes. I think that it is in all our interests to try to ensure that that connection is made.

**Mr Jack:** That is very much why we came up with the collaboration and innovation fund. We want to offer voluntary and community organisations with experience of working with young people the opportunity to develop ranges of approaches that would be suitable in particular areas or with the particular groups that they target. Some of them target specific geographical areas and others target specific groups within the NEET category. For example, we have one project in Armagh, the Appleby Trust, that specifically targets young people on the autism spectrum. The project that you mentioned in Derry has people employed through the council for a period. That gives them time to build up their skills.

**Mr F McCann:** I think that it is much more than the council. Maybe Pat can come in here, but I think that there was an interaction between other employers in the area that allowed people to go in.

**Mr Jack:** Yes. There are other projects. The whole idea of sharing experience with each other and trying to reduce duplication was also part of the rationale for that fund. We will be evaluating all the different approaches that are taken to try to learn which ones work best.

There has also been some innovative practice in how the organisations recruit young people to take part in programmes. They are proactive, and they go to where the young people are. They look outside schools, outside post offices and wherever they expect to find young people. They go and look for them. That is something that the voluntary and community groups can do that is sometimes a bit more difficult for the statutory providers to do.

**Mr Smart:** However, there is an example where the South West College went out and targeted an estate and knocked on 550 doors. That was fairly innovative. It was able to recruit 20 young people by doing that. There are innovative approaches taking place.

As Colin said, once we evaluate it, we will take the good bits of what we think works and shape that into CIF2, if you want to put it that way. That will ensure that we are much more targeted in how we engage with these young people and progress them into full-time training, education or employment.

**Mr F McCann:** In the community that I live in, there were serious problems about a year and a half ago, and serious problems still exist. You said that people go out and rap doors. In my area, some groups go down to Albert Street and talk to the kids at the corner of McDonnell Street. They do that to encourage them away from drugs and into education. There has to be a better way of working with them. There is a large number of kids who do not tap into the resources that are there.

You mentioned Sure Start. Is that one of the groups that will deal with the family hubs?

**Mr Smart:** The main organisation in your constituency would be the Upper Springfield Development Trust. It will work in partnership with a whole range of providers across Belfast to take forward the community family support programme. As you know, it has a long and distinguished record of working in the community and with young people and others who are seeking employment or training. We have every confidence that it will be able to deliver on that significant programme.

**Mr Jack:** Across the region as a whole, we have made sure that we have designed the community family support programme in a way that promotes close cooperation with the health and social care authorities. We have used the boundaries of the five health and social care trusts as the basis of our areas for that programme in order to make that kind of cross-agency working smoother and more successful and effective.

**Mr F McCann:** I have one last comment. I mentioned Sure Start because I know that it is a lifeline to many families in many communities and provides an excellent service.

**The Deputy Chairperson:** OK. No other members have indicated that they want to ask a question. I thank you all for coming today and giving us an update on the strategy. It is very much appreciated.