MEMBERSHIP AND POWERS

Remit and Powers

The Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister is a Statutory Committee established in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Belfast Agreement, Section 29 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and under Assembly Standing Order 48. The Committee has a scrutiny, policy development and consultation role with respect to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister and has a role in the initiation of legislation.

The Committee has power to:

- Consider and advise on Departmental Budgets and Annual Plans in the context of the overall budget allocation;
- Approve relevant secondary legislation and take the Committee stage of relevant primary legislation;
- Call for persons and papers;
- Initiate inquiries and make reports; and
- Consider and advise on matters brought to the Committee by the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Membership

Chairperson Mr Mike Nesbitt

Deputy Chairperson Mr Chris Lyttle

Mr Alex Attwood[1]

Mr Leslie Cree

Miss Megan Fearon

Mrs Brenda Hale

Mr Alex Maskey

Ms Bronwyn McGahan

Mr Stephen Moutray

Mr George Robinson

Mr Jimmy Spratt

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[1] With effect from 7 October 2013 Mr Alex Attwood replaced Mr Colum Eastwood

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister ('the Committee') agreed that scrutiny of the Delivering Social Change Signature Programmes would be a strategic priority for the Committee for the 2013-14 session.

2. In October 2012 the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) announced the development of six Signature Programmes under the Delivering Social Change framework:
   - Improving Literacy and Numeracy – led by Department of Education
   - Nurture Units – led by the Department of Social Development and Department of Education
   - Social Enterprise Incubation Hubs – led by the Department of Social Development and Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
   - Positive Parenting – led by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
   - Family Support Hubs – led by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
   - Community Family Support Programme – led by the Department of Employment and Learning

3. While the delivery and implementation of the Signature Programmes is the responsibility of a number of Executive departments, the allocated budget for these Programmes is drawn from the Delivering Social Change Central Fund for which OFMDFM has management and governance responsibility.

4. The Committee wished to gather evidence from stakeholders on the Signature Programmes. Recognising the wide range of stakeholders involved, the Committee agreed at its meeting of 18 September 2013[2] to hold an event to gather evidence on the views of stakeholders and to provide a platform for discussion on potential enhancement of the Programmes. The Committee convened an event comprising relevant government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), members of the Committee for OFMDFM and stakeholders from the public and private sector.

5. The stakeholder event was held on 13 November 2013 in Parliament Buildings and discussions covered four themes:
   - Experience of delivery and implementation to date
   - Challenges and opportunities of the Programme delivery mechanisms
   - Innovative ideas to support effective delivery of the Programmes
   - Suggestions for future Signature Programmes

6. A number of key issues which were common across the Signature Programmes were raised:
   - Perceived lack of joined up working
   - Perceived lack of consultation

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[2] http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/ofmdfm/minutes/2013-2014/minutes-20130918.pdf

- Difficulties in measurement of outcomes
- Need for long term planning
- Importance of identifying best practice and information sharing
- Need for clarity of message and awareness raising

7. The evidence gathered from stakeholders at this event has informed a number of Committee recommendations which will be forwarded to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for consideration and response.

8. In addition, challenges and opportunities unique to each Signature Programme were identified as well as suggestions for future Signature Programmes. The Committee will forward the key issues raised for each specific Programme to the lead Executive departments and the respective Assembly committees for consideration and comment.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Joined up working

9. The Committee does acknowledge the challenge of joined up working on such complex issues and welcomes that Delivering Social Change is a cross cutting Executive initiative aimed at integrating means of tacking poverty and social exclusion into departmental delivery.

10. The Committee however believes that effective policy design at the outset can include ways to tackle barriers to effective implementation such as: development of shared objectives with stakeholders; clarity of purpose of the Programme including clarity of roles of all stakeholders; integration of the Programme into departmental and stakeholder business plans; and early establishment of practical mechanisms for facilitating joined up working. The Committee recommends that lead departments re-evaluate the policy design process for the Signature Programmes in advance of any future tranche of Programmes. The Committee also recommends that lead departments further consider the establishment of working groups or project teams which include key providers and stakeholders including other relevant departments where information can be shared and early resolution of issues can be sought.

Consultation

11. In overseeing implementation of the Delivering Social Change Framework, the Committee recommends that OFMDFM should seek to ensure that effective and timely consultation is undertaken which includes engagement with organisations, groups and individuals who are experienced in the respective fields of future programmes.

12. As the overseeing department, OFMDFM should seek to ensure that all lead departments for delivery of these Programmes can evidence a sufficient level of consultation. The Committee believes that a greater degree of sustained engagement and joined up working between departments and stakeholders could potentially address some issues for the current Programmes. The Committee also recommends that in advance of announcement of any future tranche of Signature Programmes, comprehensive consultation is undertaken with practitioners in the relevant fields.

Measurement of outcomes

13. The Committee believes that the tools of monitoring and evaluating the Programmes should have been clearly defined in advance of initiation of the Programmes. The Committee believes that a more comprehensive consultation with experienced practitioners and organisations in these fields would have assisted the departments in identifying realistic, timely and measureable outcomes. The Committee recommends that as the overseeing department, OFMDFM works closely with the lead departments in defining measurable outcomes which can be used to determine the success of interventions which can be mainstreamed into Executive policy in the future.

Long term plans

14. The Committee acknowledges that the outcomes from these Programmes will be longitudinal and acknowledges the challenges of government terms. The Committee recommends that the Executive could seek a cross party commitment to continuation of the Delivering Social Change Framework for the next mandate in order to secure the longer term focus on these complex issues. The Committee however does acknowledge that during the next mandate, any number of prevailing challenges such as the economic climate may put pressure on Executive priorities and budgetary allocations.

Best practice and information sharing

15. The Committee recommends that lead departments work with stakeholders to gather and capture information on best practice and innovation in the domains of the Programmes in order to develop an effective legacy of sharing of information. While acknowledging the challenges of gathering this information, the Committee believes that capture of this information will be vital in enhancement of current and development of future services.

16. In gathering this information, the Committee recommends that lead departments seek to ensure that delivery partners also gather views from service users in order to reflect on their experiences.

Clarity of message and awareness raising

17. The Committee recommends that lead departments consider how to raise awareness of the Programmes. Consistent and clear communication of the Programme aims would contribute to greater clarity on the Programmes and support greater take up of the services offered. Branding of the Programmes with a clear identity would support delivery partners n highlighting the services offered and would also facilitate a greater level of signposting.

18. The Committee believes that a communications plan should have been an integral part of the implementation plan for the Signature Programmes and recommends that this element is included in any future plans for further Programmes.

INTRODUCTION

19. Delivering Social Change is a framework developed by the Northern Ireland Executive to tackle poverty and social exclusion. As these issues cut across a number of Executive departments, the framework seeks to co-ordinate key actions across departments to take forward work on priority social policy areas.

20. Given the importance of this key policy initiative, the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister ('the Committee') agreed that scrutiny of the Delivering Social Change Signature Programmes would be a strategic priority for the Committee for the 2013-14 session.

21. The Executive's Ministerial Sub Committees on Poverty &Social Inclusion and Children & Young People are leading on the Delivering Social Change Programme and identified a number of key causes which are believed to contribute to continuation of poverty and deprivation including problems with literacy and numeracy, the need for parenting support and early intervention for children, and lack of employment opportunities coupled with local community dereliction.

22. In October 2012 the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) announced the development of six Signature Programmes under the Delivering Social Change framework. A copy of this announcement is at Appendix 2. The Signature Programmes were set up to improve literacy and numeracy levels, to offer increased family support and to support job creation within local communities.[3]

23. The six Signature Programmes announced in October 2012 were:
   - Improving Literacy and Numeracy – led by Department of Education
   - Nurture Units – led by the Department of Social Development and Department of Education
   - Social Enterprise Incubation Hubs – led by the Department of Social Development and Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
   - Positive Parenting – led by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
   - Family Support Hubs – led by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
   - Community Family Support Programme – led by the Department of Employment and Learning

24. The Committee is cognisant of the fact that delivery and implementation of the Signature Programmes is the responsibility of a number of Executive departments but recognised the lead role of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in overseeing these Programmes. In particular, the allocated budget for these Programmes is drawn from the Delivering Social Change Central Fund for which OFMDFM has management and governance responsibility.

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[3] http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/index/delivering-social-change/signature-programmes.htm

25. The Delivering Social Change strategy is an example of cross departmental working and in welcoming such an approach, the Committee recognises that such an issue requires a collaborative, cross-departmental and cross sectoral approach in order to effect real change.

26. The Committee was briefed by junior Ministers on 5 December 2012[4] on the Delivering Social Change framework and junior Minister McCann stated:

    "….. in October, the First Minister and deputy First Minister announced the development of six Signature Programmes under the Delivering Social Change framework to tackle issues including literacy and numeracy, family support and pathways to employment for young people. Those will be supported by investment of around £26 million under the framework and are examples of some of the initiatives that will deliver on priorities identified in the draft early action paper. Departments will now come together to deliver those actions through the Delivering Social Change governance structure. In addition to the ministerial subcommittees, that include the Programme board of senior officials, chaired by Jonathan and me, which meets every eight weeks, and within the framework, the Signature Programmes will be underpinned by Programme delivery plans against which there will be regular reports on progress.

    ……We have said on numerous occasions, as have many Committee members, that we need a holistic and joined-up approach if we are going to make any real, meaningful change in people's lives. It is about having all the departments around the table agreeing. It is also about ensuring that when we announce things such as the Signature Programmes, they link with one another and dovetail together, rather than sit in isolation. We all know that unless we take a holistic view of making changes in people's lives, it is not going to happen."

27. Having been further briefed by departmental officials on the Signatures Programmes on 18th September 2013, the Committee agreed to convene a stakeholder event comprising relevant government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), members of the Committee for OFMDFM and stakeholders from the public and private sector. The Committee wished to gather evidence on the views of stakeholders on the Signature Programmes and to provide a platform for discussion on potential enhancement of the Programmes.

28. In advance of the stakeholder event, the Committee requested submissions from the departments leading on each of the Signature Programmes providing details on the background to the Programmes and an update on the current position. Copies of these departmental submissions are contained in Appendix 3.

29. The stakeholder event was held on 13 November 2013 in Parliament Buildings. The Committee agreed that discussions should be around four key themes in order to do a stock take of current delivery; to discover stakeholder views on how delivery could be enhanced; and to identify suggestions for any future Signature Programmes.

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[4] http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Official-Report/Committee-Minutes-of-Evidence/Session-2012-2013/December-2012/Delivering-Social-Change-OFMDFM-Briefing/

30. These four themes were:
    - Experience of delivery and implementation to date
    - Challenges and opportunities of the Programme delivery mechanisms
    - Innovative ideas to support effective delivery of the Programmes
    - Suggestions for future Signature Programmes

31. The Committee wrote to the other Assembly committees seeking details of stakeholders relevant to each of the Signature Programmes and issued invitations to stakeholders to participate in discussions on specific Programmes. A list of attendees is contained in Appendix 4.

32. The evidence gathered from stakeholders at this event has informed a number of Committee recommendations which will be forwarded to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for consideration and response.

33. In addition, challenges and opportunities unique to each Signature Programme were identified as well as suggestions for future Signature Programmes. The Committee will forward the key issues raised for each specific Programme to the lead Executive departments and the respective Assembly committees for consideration and comment.

Acknowledgement

34. The Committee wishes to express its gratitude to the stakeholders who participated in the event. The contributions of these stakeholders were invaluable. The Committee also wishes to express its appreciation to the departmental officials for their support of the event.

SIGNATURE PROGRAMMES – CURRENT STATUS

35. At the date of the Committee's event (13 November 2013) five of the six Signature Programmes have been implemented. Preparatory work is on-going in relation to the remaining Programme – the Social Enterprise Incubation Hubs. Details of the allocated budget and current status of each of the Programmes is below. Projected profiles of expenditure through to 2015-16 are in Appendix 5.

36. In October 2013, the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister also announced a seventh Signature Programme to enhance play and leisure opportunities for children and young people. £1.6million funding has been allocated from the Delivering Social Change framework and will be provided over three years to support initiatives that champion play, greater local access to space for play and planning and support for play at a community level. The detail of how this Programme will be delivered is still under consideration between departments. At the date of the event, the Committee had not been briefed on this Programme and therefore this Programme was not included in the discussions.

Improving Literacy and Numeracy: Department of Education

37. This Programme aims to improve literacy and numeracy levels in both primary and post primary schools. The Programme will see the employment of 150 recently graduated teachers who are without permanent employment on a 2 year fixed term contract to deliver tuition where appropriate in English and maths to Year 11 and 12 post-primary school pupils are who are not likely without intervention to achieve a grade C in English and/or maths. The Programme will also see the employment of 80 recently graduated teachers, who are without permanent employment on a 2 year fixed contract to deliver tuition where appropriate to primary school pupils who are not likely to be at the expected level in English and/or maths at the end of Key Stage 2.

    Allocated budget: £12 million (plus Department of Education commitment of £2.03million)

    Current status: Advertisements for recruitment of these teachers were published in the press in June, July and August 2013. As of 4th October 2013, 157.1 appointments funded through the OFMDFM Delivering Social Change Programme have been funded.

Additional Nurture Units: Department of Social Development and Department of Education

38. This Programme aims to deliver 20 new nurture units within schools settings. These new units are in addition to the seven nurture units already being rolled out by the Department

of Social Development. These units help address barriers to learning among children arising from social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. Trained staff in these units will select the children who will benefit most from the support and will develop individual learning plans agreed with teachers and parents.

Allocated budget:	£3 million
Current status:	20 teachers and 20 classroom assistants have been recruited and the nurture units are now in place for the 2013-14 academic year. It is anticipated that 480 children will benefit from the units.

Social Enterprise Incubation Hubs: Department of Social Development and Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment/Invest Northern Ireland

39. This Programme will create Social Enterprise Incubation Hubs servicing areas of multiple deprivation over a two year period. The Programme is designed to tackle dereliction and community eyesores but also the lack of local employment by encouraging social enterprise business start-up within local communities. The hubs will offer a range of business advice and practical support to social enterprise entrepreneurs. The Department of Social Development is responsible for identifying the locations for the hubs and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment/Invest Northern Ireland is responsible for the operation of the hubs.

Allocated budget:	£4 million
Current status:	Potential locations have been identified and leases are due to be signed for 9 locations by October 2013 and the remaining 2 by January 2014. It will be January 2014 before the stakeholders/delivery agents responsible for delivering the Programme in each of the locations will be confirmed. Invest NI envisages the hubs being operational in March 2014.

Parenting Support: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

40. This Programme takes forward additional support to new and existing parents living in areas of deprivation through positive parenting programmes which provide guidance, training and information to up to 1,200 families. Delivery of this Programme has been delegated to the Public Health Agency.

Allocated budget:	£2 million

Current status: A range of parenting support programmes has been developed from the Public Health Agency's on-going engagement with stakeholders through the Child Development Programme Board and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. These will focus on parenting programmes for vulnerable groups and include the 'Parenting Ur Teen' programme; 'Strengthening Families' programme; and 'Incredible Years' programme.

Family Support Hubs: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

41. This Programme will see 16 existing Family Support Hubs receiving continued support, and 10 new Family Support Hubs being established. A Family Support Hub is a multi-agency network of organisations that either provide early intervention services or work with families who need early intervention services. The Hub brings together representatives from statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations who work in the local areas to provide early intervention family support services.

Allocated budget: £3 million

Current status: The initial priority has been to establish hubs in areas where none exist and the development infrastructure has been established. 3 hubs are now in place in the Northern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust area. In Belfast HSC Trust area, work is on-going to identify locations for 4 hubs, with the first hub to be online by December 2013. It is expected that all 10 hubs will be online by April 2014.

Pathways to Employment for Young People (Community Family Support Programme): Department of Employment and Learning

42. The Programme will see the scaling up and roll out of a pilot intervention to support young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and their families by developing skills and linking them to the employment market through structured Programmes. The pilot began in January 2013 targeting 44 post primary school families with children between 14 and 18 years in East Belfast, West Belfast, Strabane, Cookstown and Newtownabbey. During the pilot, families completed short accredited training courses and work placements. They were also provided with one to one employment advice including CV writing and interview techniques. The families also engaged in debt management, stress management, healthy eating and cooking programmes and confidence, motivational and life coaching classes. The Programme will replicate this model and increase the target number of families to 720.

Allocated budget: £2 million (plus Department of Employment & Learning commitment of £2 million)

Current status: The up scaled Programme is scheduled to commence in October 2013 and will be delivered in 5 contract areas which mirror the HSC Trust areas. The Programme delivery will have 3 cycles each of 26 weeks supporting 240 families in each cycle.

COMMON ISSUES AND COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

43. While each Signature Programme is distinct with its own objectives a number of issues were common across discussions on each individual Signature Programme. These common issues may have wider implications for the success of the Northern Ireland Executive's Delivering Social Change framework and therefore the Committee wishes to highlight these issues to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in order to support the department in enhancing delivery and outcomes on these Programmes.

Joined up working

44. A common issue raised by stakeholders as one of the challenges of the current Signature Programmes was the perception of a 'silo mentality' or a lack of joined up working across Executive departments and/or statutory agencies involved in delivery or monitoring of the Programmes. Stakeholders cited this lack of joined up working as being a limiting factor in the effectiveness of the Programmes.

45. The Committee does acknowledge that the Delivering Social Change framework seeks to coordinate key actions across departments in order to address the cross cutting issues of poverty and social exclusion. Tackling these societal issues does require working across government in partnership with other service providers and local communities and coordinated action on such complex issues is difficult.

46. **Recommendation: The Committee does acknowledge the challenge of joined up working on such complex issues and welcomes that Delivering Social Change is a cross cutting Executive initiative aimed at integrating means of tacking poverty and social exclusion into departmental delivery. The Committee however believes that effective policy design at the outset can include ways to tackle barriers to effective implementation such as: development of shared objectives with stakeholders; clarity of purpose of the Programme including clarity of roles of all stakeholders; integration of the Programme into departmental and stakeholder business plans; and early establishment of practical mechanisms for facilitating joined up working.**

47. **The Committee recommends that lead departments re-evaluate the policy design process for the Signature Programmes in advance of any future tranche of Programmes. The Committee also recommends that lead departments further consider the establishment of working groups or project teams which include key providers and stakeholders etc. where information can be shared and early resolution of issues can be sought.**

Consultation

48. A widely held view among stakeholders was that there had been insufficient consultation with stakeholders and experienced practitioners in the respective domains of the Signature Programmes. Stakeholders were largely positive about the objectives of each of the Signature Programmes but some expressed differing views about how these objectives could be achieved based on their experiences in this area.

49. Concerns were expressed by stakeholders that this lack of consultation could have a negative impact on the outcomes of the Signature Programmes as Programmes had been initiated without taking account of existing projects and best practice.

50. Departmental officials at each table confirmed that there had been consultation on each Programme.

51. **Recommendation: In considering the evidence gathered from the stakeholders at the event, the Committee recommends that taking into account OFMDFM's role in overseeing implementation of the Delivering Social Change Framework, the department should seek to ensure that effective and timely consultation is undertaken which includes engagement with organisations, groups and individuals who are experienced in the respective fields of future programmes. OFMDFM should seek to ensure that all lead departments for delivery of these Programmes can evidence a sufficient level of consultation. The Committee believes that a greater degree of sustained engagement and joined up working between departments and stakeholders could potentially address some issues for the current Programmes. The Committee also recommends that in advance of announcement of any future tranche of Signature Programmes, comprehensive consultation is undertaken with practitioners in the relevant fields.**

Measurement of outcomes

52. Concerns were expressed by stakeholders that appropriate tools for monitoring, measurement and evaluation of outcomes had not been developed or widely shared with those delivering services under the Programmes. Stakeholders highlighted the necessity in particular for measuring the 'value added' by these Signature Programmes where evidence should be sought of how these Programmes and the attendant allocated budget had enhanced tackling the societal issues rather than perhaps duplicating services which were already in existence.

53. Stakeholders stated that the nature of some of the Programmes meant that measuring the value added and therefore the worth of the Programme would be challenging as it would be difficult to isolate outcomes and attribute success or otherwise to the interventions offered by the Programme.

54. There were concerns from stakeholders that any future mainstreaming of specific interventions could be at risk as the evidence base to support this mainstreaming would be absent.

55. **Recommendation: The Committee believes that the tools of monitoring and evaluating the Programmes should have been clearly defined in advance of initiation of the Programmes. The Committee believes that a more comprehensive consultation with experienced practitioners and organisations in these fields would have assisted the Departments in identifying realistic, timely and measureable outcomes. The Committee recommends that as the overseeing department, OFMDFM works closely with the lead**

departments in defining measurable outcomes which can be used to determine the success of interventions which can be mainstreamed into Executive policy in the future.

Long term plans

56. A strong theme emerging from each discussion was the issue of longer term measures to tackle the issues of poverty and social exclusion. While the stakeholders were positive about the Executive taking steps to tackle these issues and about the budget allocated, there was frustration that the Programmes were time bound, with the expected end of mandate for this current Executive (i.e. 2016) being the longest term for any Programme. The stakeholders highlighted the long term and often intergenerational aspects to the issues of poverty and social exclusion which require a long term focus from all stakeholders. The use of short term strategies in such deep rooted societal issues was viewed as unsustainable. The challenge of building up expertise and retention of staff with such expertise when funding is based on a relatively short term model was raised by a number of stakeholders.

57. There was also frustration that evaluation of outcomes and measurement of success of the Signature Programmes in 2016 may not present a true picture of how effective these Programmes have been as often the results of these interventions are not evident until several years into delivery. Stakeholders were therefore concerned that this lack of accuracy on measurement of effectiveness could result in a lack of future funding for and expansion of the current Programmes.

58. **Recommendation: The Committee acknowledges that the outcomes from these Programmes will be longitudinal and acknowledges the challenges of government terms. The Committee recommends that the Executive could seek a cross party commitment to continuation of the Delivering Social Change Framework for the next mandate in order to secure the longer term focus on these complex issues. The Committee however does acknowledge that during the next mandate, any number of prevailing challenges such as the economic climate may put pressure on Executive priorities and budgetary allocations.**

Best practice and information sharing

59. A key issue emerging from discussions at the stakeholder event was in relation to the capturing of best practice and sharing of information. Stakeholders felt that it was important that current and any future Signature Programmes avoid trying to 'reinvent the wheel' where there were existing examples of good practice in tackling poverty and social exclusion.

60. Stakeholders also felt that with each of these six Signature Programmes, it was vital that best practice and learning was effectively captured – not only to improve delivery for the current Programmes but to inform the development of any future tranche of Programmes. The learning and best practice would not only serve to inform departments but would also be very useful for voluntary and community groups operating in each sector to develop and tailor their services. The issue of a resource or bank of good practice knowledge was raised.

61. **Recommendation: The Committee recommends that lead departments work with stakeholders to gather and capture information on best practice and innovation in the domains of the Programmes in order to develop an effective legacy of sharing of information. While acknowledging the challenges of gathering this information, the Committee believes that capture of this information will be vital in enhancement of current and development of future services. In gathering this information, the Committee recommends that lead departments seek to ensure that delivery partners also gather views from service users in order to reflect on their experiences.**

Clarity of message and awareness raising

62. Stakeholders raised the issue of the importance of raising awareness of the Programmes. Not only is this important for those most in need of the support offered by the Programmes, but it was also vital for all involved to understand the aims of the Programmes and the clear roles of each stakeholder.

63. Stakeholders highlighted that there was often a lack of understanding of what the Programme was offering and that both those providing and those using the services often had very different interpretations of the Programmes.

64. This lack of clarity has meant that service users are sometimes attributing negative experiences to the Programme when in fact those services are not being offered by the Programme. Conversely, credit for positive outcomes often isn't attributed to the Programme as a result of confusion about what the Programmes offer.

65. Stakeholders felt that branding is very important to support promotion of the Programmes – to effectively let people know what's happening, how the Programmes work and what services are offered. This branding was felt to be particularly important for Programmes such as the Family Support Hubs as they don't have a physical presence.

66. There is also a need for greater public visibility of the Programmes so other public services including public representatives can signpost individuals or groups to the relevant Programme.

67. **Recommendation: The Committee recommends that lead departments consider how to raise awareness of the Programmes. Consistent and clear communication of the Programme aims would contribute to greater clarity on the Programmes and support greater take up of the services offered. Branding of the Programmes with a clear identity would support delivery partners n highlighting the services offered and would also facilitate a greater level of signposting. The Committee believes that a communications plan should have been an integral part of the implementation plan for the Signature Programmes and recommends that this element is including in any future plans for further Programmes.**

SIGNATURE PROGRAMMES – STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS

Improving literacy and numeracy: Department of Education

68. Theme 1:   Experience of delivery and implementation to date

- Officials from both the Department of Education and the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister outlined that the priorities of improving literacy and numeracy were clear but there were operational challenges.
- Announced this time last year but didn't start until this year
- Delays due to failure to check policy for equality implications
- There was insufficient consultation on the Programme – significant weakness.
- Limited consultation and discussion between Department of Education and OFMDFM
- It was acknowledged that work to resolve issues was necessary to ensure that the Programme was workable.
- It was decided that each school would release an experienced teacher to carry out the proposed work and their place could be filled by the newly qualified teacher.
- It took time to identify the most effective strategy to utilise the available funding.
- One to one tuition was not considered the best way to tackle literacy and numeracy issues with pupils.
- The focus should be on primary education rather than post primary
- Educationalists would put the emphasis on nursery and early years
- More investment is needed in pre-school and nursery stages.
- The use of targets is not ideal as it is a short term perspective – the focus should be more long term.
- Calls for a long term strategy to deal with this issue are not listened to - there was frustration that short term strategies are used and that these are not sustainable.
- The issue of retention of experienced staff in temporary posts for short term strategies was raised.

69. Theme 2:   Challenges and opportunities of the Programme delivery mechanisms

- Officials acknowledged the operational challenges with the tight timeframe including working around the timings of the academic year.
- The announcements were made without forethought or consultation – little engagement with educationalists
- Impressed by the implementation but concerned about measurement and evaluation of how effective the Programme was.
- There is no 'value added' measure.
- Officials advised that action and delivery plans would be submitted to the Western Education and Library Board by end October 2013.
- Very important that best practice is developed and shared and that backfill teachers should build up best practise from these Programmes and the curriculum should benefit.

- Backfill teachers are beneficial but greater flexibility is needed - one year contracts with options.
- Difficult to identify the benefits other than the fact that more teachers are employed.

70. Theme 3:   Innovative ideas to support effective delivery of the Programmes

- Ideas to support effective delivery should have been included in a consultation process.
- Silos of government are ineffective – this is a cross cutting initiative and should have been planned with stakeholders
- Need for flexibility on how resources are used, particularly in year two.
- Emphasis should be on best practice
- Important for schools to reflect on the value of the Programme
- Need to focus on what is measurable.
- Appropriate assessment tools need to be developed for each type of resource
- There should be 'good practice champions' from whom teachers could seek advice on best practice in dealing with literacy and numeracy issues.
- Regarding legacy, officials advised that the long term benefit on key stage 2, key stage 4 and GCSE results should inform Programme for Government targets for the next government term.
- Stakeholders felt that measurement using the Programme for Government target of 5 GCSEs etc. is a blunt instrument – a cultural shift of moving away from targets is needed.
- Teachers will benefit from the experience of taking part in this pilot Programme.
- Some schools need specialist teachers, any support is good but it needs to be targeted.

71. Theme 4:   Suggestions for future Signature Programmes

- Programmes which involve both older people and young people
- Children are getting bored of straight literacy and numeracy teaching
- Greater focus on early years intervention
- Focus should be between primary and post primary
- Important to evaluate the current Programme
- Programmes need to be longer term in order to reap results

Family support hubs: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

72. Theme 1:   Experience of delivery and implementation to date

- There is a real lack of understanding of what a hub actually is – there are many different interpretations
- Key issue of coordination –there should be a focus on groups coming together to discuss their knowledge and experience of communities and of the different approaches used.
- Hubs have a vital role in gathering information on material poverty and deprivation in communities which can inform development of services which can effect change in these communities and to improve outcomes for children and families.
- The role of a coordinator is key to the success of the hubs in providing a link between different groups and service providers and identifying areas of common interest and knowledge.
- A service deficit still exists with specific needs in particular hubs.
- A key benefit of hubs is in relation to sharing good practice.
- Concerns were expressed in relation to evaluation and how outcomes would be measured. Some stakeholders queries how can you tie the varied outcomes on community planning, child poverty together.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the evaluation and its impact on implementation and delivery, where analysis of a survey can take a year while families are still in need.
- Some groups are working on a resilience framework which is focused on building the resilience and capacity of parents who are worn down by difficult challenges and have low self-esteem and confidence.

73. Theme 2:   Challenges and opportunities of the Programme delivery mechanisms

- Information sharing is a huge challenge.
- Not at all participants in the hubs are relevant
- If the funding is spread across five services, momentum can be lost.
- Hubs can be like a safety net – they present a vital opportunity to collaborate on service provision, particularly at a time of austerity.
- The creation of the hubs has meant that statutory agencies are realising the wealth of expertise and knowledge which is available in local communities.
- The networking opportunities are very valuable – large scale events where varieties of agencies get together allows groups to find out about the work of others and learn about complementary services. Getting together in this way also helps to identify what services are missing in large geographical areas.
- The confusion about the nature of the hubs has meant that sometimes families feel that nothing has come out of the hub when the services aren't actually being delivered by the hub. On the other hand, the hubs often don't get credit for their good work.
- Issues about the branding of the hubs and understanding of the functions of the hubs.

- The hubs can be used as a catalyst to mainstream particular Programmes.
- There were issues about the lack of feedback to the lead department about the high quality work being done.
- Vital to nurture the hubs and to support them in growing and developing.
- Outcomes will be longitudinal and patience is required to see these outcomes.
- Important to nurture the families involved to the point where they can make the call themselves to avail of the hub services – the relationships with the families and individuals is key, it must be nurtured.
- Challenges of covering large geographical rural areas – how local should a hub be?
- Important to nurture young people over the long term – encouraging them to get into employment or start businesses which support the community and bring income into the community.
- Gathering information and communicating the information is a challenge – how can this information be used to inform future Signature Programmes.
- Sharing of information across other departments is also important – need to be aware of what other departments are doing with their respective Signature Programmes.
- The influence of hubs on family support was noted.

74. Theme 3:   Innovative ideas to support effective delivery of the Programmes

- Further branding of the hubs is vital
- The promotion of hubs is very important – about what's happening, how they work, about the services they can provide.
- Important to have a safeguarding agenda which is robust
- Success is very dependent on knowing the services available in the community and knowing the individuals or groups who have the capacity and expertise to deliver Programmes.

75. Theme 4:   Suggestions for future Signature Programmes

- Departmental officials highlighted that there are a large number of proposals for further Programmes and highlighted that these ideas don't need to be new Programmes – they can extend existing Programmes.
- The involvement of the outcomes group at an early stage in the planning cycle is important
- Need to have visibility within communities as a one stop shop for services. The hubs are a vital resource for everyone – including for MLAs as somewhere to signpost people to. Vital that we raise awareness of hubs. The fact that the hubs don't have a physical space emphasises the need for effective branding.
- The role of the councils is crucial – there were queries as to how the new council structures will impact on community planning.
- The necessity of joined up working is vital for any future Programmes.
- Vital role in building resilience in communities and families.

Positive parenting programmes: **Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety**

76. Theme 1: Experience of delivery and implementation to date

- Desire not to replace existing schemes, but to add to them and complement, as well as seek better integration into current Programmes.
- Differentiating the value added is very important.
- Sector has expressed a willingness to move forward with successful Programmes, but were asking for assistance, particularly from government bodies to improve quality and expand
- Intervention at all stages is agreed to be important, but particular emphasis should be placed on the earliest development from birth, with a strong view to breaking the cyclical continuation of deprivation in health and wellbeing in families.
- Issue of communication, particularly around raising awareness of the Programmes to those most vulnerable and in need of assistance.
- Support is needed to help interpret and negotiate for families in this area.
- Although the area is strongly related to the DHSSPS remit, there had been little interaction between their Programmes and the departmental Committee.

77. Theme 2: Challenges and opportunities of the Programme delivery mechanisms

- Listening to stakeholders is the critical issue
- Need to integrate services
- Focus needs to be on implementation.
- A balanced approach is need – looking at the new evidence balanced with what services are already in place.
- Problem of resources for the operation of government programmes
- Concerns around getting commitment from parents to follow Programmes over the long term.
- Programme take up can be an issue - communication is only effective towards more affluent social classes, with those most in need opting not to take up assistance.
- Perceived lack of long term planning from government
- Too much government focus on short-term programmes that produced immediately visible results.
- Lack of departmental cooperation, and programmes were often constrained to the remit of their funding department.

78. Theme 3: Innovative ideas to support effective delivery of the Programmes

- Central to listen continually to stakeholders during and after the delivery of Programmes to ensure effective measure of their success and highlight problem areas.
- Clarity of message for the public – both at a public information level but also with the individuals involved.

- Early intervention is the key and the wider Delivering Social Change framework is important in highlighting the importance of early year's development.
- Regarding targeting of the Programmes, it was clarified that the Programmes are intended for all in society but particularly focussed on areas of deprivation and vulnerable families.
- Need for greater and more effective supervision of Programmes, which standardised training and standards
- More cross cutting discussion and working – the agenda of early intervention should be across all sectors and departments.
- Greater standardisation and training of professionals who can identify vulnerabilities is necessary.
- Positive Parenting Programme should be implemented across Northern Ireland.

79. Theme 4:   Suggestions for future Signature Programmes

- It was thought that there was a need for a more systematic approach, and government needs to work on constructing a more appropriate framework for such Programmes.
- Avoid 'negative labelling' – i.e. that parenting is either right or wrong – it can make parents feel that going on a course means you're wrong.
- Greater focus on public information and being clear about the delivery mechanisms.

Nurture units: Department of Education and Department of Social Development

80. Theme 1:   Experience of delivery and implementation to date

- Largely positive response
- Weaknesses attributable to time pressure; schools under pressure to meet Programme time-scales.
- Already positive responses from children and parents

81. Theme 2:   Challenges and opportunities of the Programme delivery mechanisms

- The quick announcement of nurture units meant a lot of pressure for those involved.
- More consultation was needed
- The short-term nature of funding was a big challenge as it takes more than two years to demonstrate worth and at least five years to really take effect
- Disconnect between initiatives was a challenge – particularly between nurture and early years.
- Ministers and departments demonstrate a 'silo mentality' which is limiting.
- Evidence base needs to be right to support the main-streaming of intervention/policy. This is lacking and will continue to be lacking due to short-term funding.
- Area-based approach does not allow for inclusivity of all pupils in need, e.g. not only children entitled to free-school meals, not all children in need of a nurture unit have access to school with one.
- Area-based approach also focuses more on output. It was believed the Programme should have more focus on input.
- There are already many initiatives in schools, this can make it difficult to discern whether the nurture unit, individually, is making a positive impact
- A lot of bureaucracy and reporting is involved.
- How will the new units link in with the existing units?

82. Theme 3:   Innovative ideas to support effective delivery of the Programmes

- Bringing all the nurture units together – this would allow for schools new to nurture units to learn from those already functioning
- Bureaucracy needs to be reduced
- There should be opportunities for integrated interventions and an outcome driven approach
- Allow experts the freedom to do the work.
- In the longer terms, need to move away from narrow initiatives to an integrated approach.

83. Theme 4:   Suggestions for future Signature Programmes

- More notification needs to be given in the future, with sufficient time provided to set up and begin

- There should be a 'first 1000 days' report and, a joined up approach in terms of department involvement. A join between the Department of Education and Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety was the most favourable
- Do not just focus on 'free school meals' as a criteria
- RPA and community planning would allow for better seizure of opportunities – intervention from birth
- Share information between nurture units, preferably online through a platform similar to C2K. However, the importance of 'face-to-face' training was heavily stressed.
- Speak to experts, such as Stewart Shanker, on self-regulation

Social enterprise incubation hubs: Department of Social Development and Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

84. Theme 1: Experience of delivery and implementation to date

- Only Signature Programme which has not yet been implemented.
- DSD and Invest NI officials provided an update on progress and advised that premises for the hubs where being identified and that there would be one in each Social Investment Zone. Officials advised that there had been delays as it was proving difficult to identify suitable premises.
- Officials advised that delivery agents where going to be identified through tender and that the tender process was due to finish in December, with contracts awarded early in the New Year.
- Stakeholders expressed concern that there was no consultation prior to the announcement with the sector
- How was expertise sought in a relatively new and innovative sector?
- Since the announcement there has been little engagement
- Concerns that DSD are currently running a social enterprise pilot and there had been limited engagement and there were concerns of duplication.
- Need to establish a baseline and seek to identify gaps

85. Theme 2: Challenges and opportunities of the Programme delivery mechanisms

- Stakeholders haven't been listened to or consulted.
- Need to explain to the public the purpose of Social Enterprise and how it can help and benefit local communities.
- Greater engagement with voluntary sector is needed.
- A big challenge was the need to ensure that the hubs add value to what is already happening on the ground and to avoid duplication. One stakeholder had concern that he was Director of a successful social enterprise premises employing over 70 people, but that one of the hubs was being earmarked close to that location. Officials advised that the hub will provide expertise to the whole investment zone.
- Need for the hubs to work together and share good practice. Invest NI advised that they had a separate delivery team working on the delivery of the hubs and that collaboration is key to delivery.
- Transfer of responsibility for social enterprise through the reform of public administration (RPA) provided both challenges and opportunities for social enterprise.

86. Theme 3: Innovative ideas to support effective delivery of the Programmes

- Wider representation needed on the hubs

- Need for collaboration across the sector, with the hubs engaging and working with other social enterprises and other public bodies to ensure a joined up process and lessen possible duplication.
- There were some ideas in relation to the format of this – working groups and through overarching bodies such as Social Enterprise Northern Ireland.
- The upcoming change in the EU procurement process may provide opportunities for Social enterprises to be successful in tendering.
- No need to 'reinvent the wheel' – there are lots of examples of existing good practice and innovation.
- Look towards best practice and encourage mentoring.
- Encourage training through small grants.

87. Theme 4:   Suggestions for future Signature Programmes

- With RPA and public sector reform there may be opportunities for Social Enterprise in relation to the delivery of services.
- Need to support social innovation and encourage social enterprises to move into areas of growth.
- Opportunities for social enterprise in relation to childcare/playgroups through the Bright Start strategy and credit unions and possibly lending.
- Opportunities in relation to community interest hubs, community energy and renewable energy.
- Establishing social enterprises in line with EU targets, such as recycling.
- Focus on expanding existing services beyond urban communities and expand into rural communities.

Community family support programme: Department of Employment and Learning

88. Theme 1:   Experience of delivery and implementation to date

- There was an acknowledgement of the significant work which is involved in this Programme and there was recognition that the Programme was aimed at being an innovative 'one stop shop' initiative for families, particularly those facing intergenerational unemployment.
- There is a focus on both hard and soft outcomes which were identified through evaluation of the initial pilot Programme rolled out.
- Funding methodology ensures payment by results (several output related measures including non-payment of final instalment should criterion not be met)
- The Programme can act as a pathway provision for specialist support e.g. addiction in family.
- DEL were very pleased with the retention rate; only two families dropped out of the pilot

89. Theme 2:   Challenges and opportunities of the Programme delivery mechanisms

- Cross-departmental working opportunities are limited and the 'silo' mentality could be perceived as an obstruction
- Identification of the 'right' families who can benefit most from the Programmes can be difficult.
- DEL found it difficult to look beyond employability and to take a broader view
- Providers have had to incentivise participation (i.e. material benefit such as cinema tickets to coax participation)
- There is a certain degree of apathy amongst some groups and a recurring difficulties in transferring skills to employment due to various lifestyle factors such as addiction and dependence on benefits
- Families need to commit to participating in the entire Programme and this can be challenging.
- This was a welcome 'infill' Programme: for young people there is substantial mainstream provision but not fringe provision
- 'Low hanging fruit' issue - family selection is overwhelmingly due to either 'self-referral;' or the use of contractor networks for supply; JobCentrePlus has also provided some referrals which will allow for 'hard to reach' groups to be engaged
- The system has been able to adapt to individual needs i.e. diagnostic dimension and face to face contact with support officer
- DEL is having to cope with a different culture of provision model
- Maintaining the moral of young people in the current economic climate and job market is a challenge.

90. Theme 3:   Innovative ideas to support effective delivery of the Programmes

- In future it will be essential to have a conversation between practitioners and participant families.

- Further thought needs to be given on how to engage hard to reach family units and those most in need of intervention.
- Targeting families where all the participants are willing participants
- Challenges of keeping engaged with the Programme and keeping the good retention rate – i.e. keeping up the 'peer pressure' within the family
- Engaging with the criminal justice system and the Department of Justice in future
- Learning as the pilot goes along.
- Incentivisation for participation can be explored further.

91. Theme 4:   Suggestions for future Signature Programmes

- Rolling out a wider intervention Programme
- Similar scheme for young people not in education, employment or training who have identified drug problems
- Programmes for mentors for young people
- Programmes for individuals rather than just for families
- Similar Signature Programmes (of a similar vein) should not 'reinvent the wheel' but instead spread the success of existing Programme to new groups and localities

CONCLUSIONS

92. While there was a general welcome among stakeholders for the Executive's focus on social inclusion and poverty and for the substantial budget allocations for the Signature Programmes, it is evident that stakeholders feel there has been an absence of a joined-up approach to these issues. The stakeholders clearly expressed a desire for a much more coherent, strategic and collaborative approach to address what are undoubtedly complex and cross cutting issues.

93. There was a clear message from stakeholders that a much greater degree of consultation by Executive departments with stakeholder and practitioners in these fields was necessary in order to inform policy development at an early stage. Such consultation would also ensure clarity of purpose and early identification of where value could be added by such Programmes and avoid the potential for duplication of existing services.

94. Looking to the future, stakeholders expressed concerns about the perceived short term nature of the Signature Programmes in addressing what are long term and often intergenerational issues. Concerns were also expressed that definition of expected outcomes and measurements of these outcomes and therefore the success or otherwise of the Programmes had not been fully developed in advance of implementation. Without defined measures of success, stakeholders were concerns that any future mainstreaming of these Programmes with core funding from Executive departments would be uncertain.

95. Capturing the learning from these Programmes and recording of best practice models was identified a key issue in order to inform policy development in this area.

96. These key issues identified by stakeholders across all of the Signature Programmes certainly have the potential to negatively impact on the effectiveness and success of these Programmes in the desired outcomes of tackling social exclusion and poverty. The Committee would urge OFMDFM to consider how to resolve these issues with stakeholder involvement where necessary in order to ensure positive outcomes.

97. The Committee would also urge the lead departments on the Signature Programmes to consider the views expressed by the stakeholders on each specific Programme in order to support more effective delivery of these current Programmes.

98. In addition, as OFMDFM has already indicated that a range of possible initiatives are currently under consideration for future Signature Programmes, the Committee hopes that the suggestions which stakeholders have put forward will be carefully considered by OFMDFM as potential options for a future tranche of Signature Programmes under the Delivering Social Change framework.

Attendees at Delivering Social Change Signature Projects Event - 13 November 2013

Association of Infant Mental Health	Eamon McMahon
Barnardos	Clare McCaughey
Bryson Charitable Group	Siobhan Caulfield
Building Change Trust	Bill Osborne
Building Change Trust	Nigel McKinney
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	Jim Clarke
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	Terry Murphy
Department of Employment and Learning	Colin Jack
Department of Employment and Learning	Damian McCann
Department of Education	Alan Boyd
Department of Education	Deborah Frost
Department of Education	Caroline Gillan
Department of Education	David Hughes
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	Eilis McDaniel
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	Maureen McCartney
Department of Social Development	Alison Chambers
Department of Social Development	Gerry McKibben
Development Trusts Northern Ireland	Lauri McCusker
Dry Arch Family Support Hub	Brenda MacQueen
Early Years	Siobhan Fitzpatrick
Harmony Primary School	Alison Hutchinson
Harmony Primary School	Karen Rea
Health and Social Care Board	Anne Hardy
Invest Northern Ireland	Sharon Polson
National Children's Bureau Northern Ireland	Celine McStravick
Northern Ireland Teachers' Council	Karen Sims
Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People	Alex Tennant
Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People	Christine Irvine
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action	Eoin Rooney
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action	Jenna Maghie
Northern Ireland Nurture Group Network	Roisin Treacy
Northern Ireland Youth Forum	Joe Hamill
Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Ciarrai Conlon
Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Henry Johnston
Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Grainne Killen
Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Lucy Marten
Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Denis McMahon
Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Michael Mulholland
Parenting Northern Ireland	Pip Jaffa
Public Health Agency	Mary Black
Public Health Agency	Maurice Meehan
Resurgam Trust	Adrian Bird
Save the Children	Anne Moore
Social Enterprise Northern Ireland	Juliet Cornford
South Down Family Health Initiative Hub	Jacinta Linden

Surestart South Belfast	Joy Poots
Transferor Representatives Council	Jim Bunting
Western Education and Library Board	Alison Smyth
Western Education and Library Board	Clare McCusker
Western Trust Outcomes Group	Pat Armstrong