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Generating our Success:
The Northern Ireland
Strategy for Youth Training

June 2015

Contents

Foreword	2
Executive Summary	5
1. Introduction	16
2. The Strategic, Economic and Social Rationale for Youth Training	19
3. Theme One: Core Features of the Youth Training System	28
4. Theme Two: Supporting Young People	42
5. Theme Three: Delivery and Employer Engagement Structures	49
6. Theme Four: Ensuring Quality	61
7. Way Forward	71
Annex A: Shared Future Proofing	74
Annex B: Implementation Plan	79

Foreword

This strategy for youth training underpins our wider education and skills landscape and seeks to tackle disengagement and promote greater social mobility by preparing our young people for the jobs of the future.

Rebuilding and rebalancing our economy are key strategic priorities for the Executive. My Department makes a key contribution to achieving these outcomes by improving young peoples' skills and, in so doing, providing a route into sustained employment. This can act as a valuable lever to improved social status, by helping young people to access better jobs and higher levels of education.

As our economy changes, employers will increasingly require higher skills from their employees if they are to compete and succeed in the global economy. Through investing in the skills of our young people, integrating them into real working environments and developing their knowledge and understanding of occupational areas, employers can grow their businesses and contribute to greater economic participation in our society. Training at level 2 has a critical role to play in this respect.

In February 2013, I announced the reviews of apprenticeships and youth training. The review of apprenticeships culminated in June 2014, with the publication of 'Securing our Success: the Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships'. In November 2014, I published the Interim Report and Consultation Document outlining the proposed way forward for youth training.

This strategy sets out our future direction of travel through a series of policy commitments and an implementation plan.

These policy commitments will secure a step change in professional and technical training which will culminate in the establishment of a new system of learning open to all young people aged 16–24, who require training at level 2, which is accessible to those new to the labour market, already in employment and those not yet in employment.

The new youth training system will have a dual purpose, providing young people with a solid foundation of skills, experience and qualifications that are recognised and valued by employers and relevant to opportunities in today's labour market. It will also provide them with a broad-based knowledge and skills as the basis from which they can access future opportunities for employment or further study at a higher level.

The new system will deliver structured work-based learning for all participants, including those already in employment, together with qualifications valued by employers through a new baccalaureate-style award, equating to a minimum of 5 GCSEs at grades A*–C, including English and mathematics. This breadth of achievement at level 2 will provide a solid foundation to help young people progress to better employment or further learning opportunities.

All participants will be supported to achieve at this level through impartial careers advice and guidance, dedicated pastoral support, a workplace buddy, financial support and flexible approaches for those with additional needs.

Employers will be integral to the success and relevance of the new system. Through a Strategic Advisory Forum and new sectoral partnerships, they will help to design a curriculum and structure for training that meets their needs. A new central service will help to connect young people with relevant employers. It will be supported by dedicated industry consultants tasked with establishing links with employers across all sectors of the Northern Ireland economy. Support will be available for small and micro businesses to get involved, and the system as a whole will be supported by clear branding and marketing.

To underpin the quality of training for all participants, a new register for employers will recognise their commitment and investment in youth training, and quality standards will be set for providers and tutors delivering the training. The views of young people will be captured to continually help to inform the approach going forward, and will contribute to a new focus on robust data collection, analysis and evaluation.

It is expected that the new system will be fully operational by September 2016. Among the key early actions to be taken forward in implementing the strategy will be piloting the new curriculum and linking the structures for governance and oversight with those already being established through the apprenticeship strategy.

Throughout the review process, I have been very grateful for the views and advice of the review's Expert Panel and the Assembly's Committee for Employment and Learning. I am also grateful for the feedback and suggestions received through the consultation process, which provided stakeholders with an interest in youth training, including young people, an opportunity to share their views and, in so doing, to inform policy thinking.

In the context of the challenging financial circumstances faced by the Executive, it is even more important to ensure that we help develop our young people's skills so that they can fulfil their potential and contribute to a growing and sustainable economy. These reforms, which constitute a major investment in our young peoples' futures, will contribute to a vibrant, productive and successful Northern Ireland and as such will constitute a major priority for my Department going forward.

Dr Stephen Farry MLA
Minister for Employment and Learning

Executive Summary

This strategy outlines the future direction for youth training in Northern Ireland and sets out the new policy commitments and an implementation plan to ensure their delivery.

It builds on the Interim Report of the review of youth training, published in November 2014 (<http://www.delni.gov.uk/del-youth-training-report.pdf>) and complements 'Securing our Success: the Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships' (<http://www.delni.gov.uk/interim-report-review-of-apprenticeships.pdf>), published in June 2014.

Vision

The new youth training system will form a key part of the wider education and skills landscape. It will better match the needs of young people, employers and the wider economy.

Youth training will provide a high quality parallel route to the traditional academic pathway, with opportunities for professional education and training that will facilitate progression to sustained employment, an apprenticeship or further education.

It will be centred on the career aspirations and needs of young people, offering an innovative and engaging curriculum, and will be a conduit to support their ongoing career development.

Employers will actively engage in the system, through designing its content and delivery, to support the development of well-qualified and skilled workforce that can facilitate business and economic growth.

Our aspiration is that this new system will be recognised both nationally and internationally by employers, further and higher education providers, young people, parents and guardians, for its quality, flexibility and relevance.

Our vision for youth training will be secured through the delivery of 22 policy commitments, summarised under four themes. These commitments have consolidated the proposals outlined in the Interim Report, and represent the final policy position for youth training.

Theme One: Core Features of the Youth Training System	
This theme outlines the core features that will underpin the new youth training system, highlighting how young people can access a new baccalaureate-style curriculum that delivers a breadth of skills and knowledge at level 2 and integrates structured work-based learning.	
Policy Commitment 1	All young people aged 16–24 who require training at level 2 will have the opportunity to participate. It will be open to those starting a new job, those in existing roles, and those not yet in employment.
Policy Commitment 2	Upon entry, young people will progress through two routes: an employed and a non-employed route. A common curriculum will allow young people to pursue both routes to accommodate changes in employment status.
Policy Commitment 3	The youth training system will provide a new broad-based baccalaureate-style professional and technical award at level 2, equating to a minimum of five GCSEs at grades A*–C. It will include English and mathematics qualifications at level 2 and additional qualifications deemed relevant to the needs of individual sectors.
Policy Commitment 4	Structured work-based learning will be integral to the youth training system, and will be the primary method for developing skills. Online technologies will be used to prepare young people for the workplace and facilitate international knowledge exchange. Work inspiration activities will be offered to those not in employment to inform their choice of occupational area.
Policy Commitment 5	Young people will be supported to reach a full standard of achievement at level 1 (defined as four GCSEs at grades D–G including English and mathematics or equivalent), before commencing youth training.

Policy Commitment 6	The youth training system will normally be designed to take two years to complete.
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Theme Two: Supporting Young People	
This theme highlights support measures to help young people successfully complete their training and progress into employment or professional and technical training at a higher level.	
Policy Commitment 7	The Careers Service will provide impartial careers advice and guidance to young people before starting training and upon completion.
Policy Commitment 8	Comprehensive pastoral support, including a workplace buddy, will be made available to support all participants.
Policy Commitment 9	A system of financial support will be developed for young people participating in the youth training system.
Policy Commitment 10	Support and flexibility will be provided for young people with additional requirements (including, but not limited to, individuals with a disability, caring commitments or those leaving care).

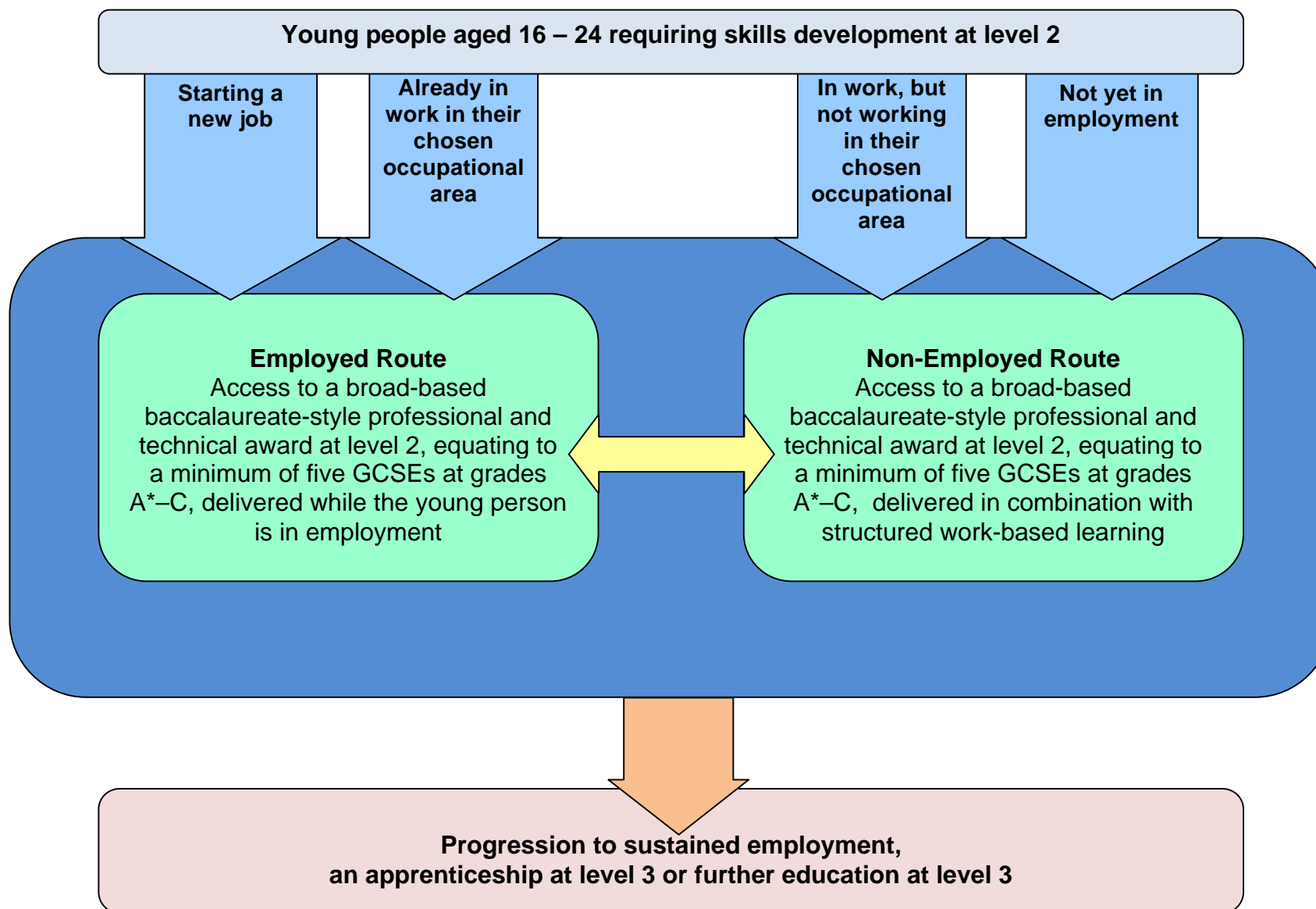
Theme Three: Delivery and Employer Engagement Structures	
This theme sets out proposals for delivering the new youth training system, including new structures to allow employers to inform curriculum content for their sector.	
Policy Commitment 11	A Strategic Advisory Forum, based on a partnership comprising employers, government, trade unions, providers of training and representatives of young people, will be established to advise government on the youth training system.
Policy Commitment 12	Sectoral partnerships will determine the youth training curriculum for their sector, including the overarching outcomes for work-based learning and the qualifications to be delivered.
Policy Commitment 13	A central service will facilitate the sourcing and managing of work-based learning opportunities across all sectors of the Northern Ireland economy.
Policy Commitment 14	Dedicated industry consultants will assist the central service by providing practical support to employers to encourage and sustain their engagement.
Policy Commitment 15	Funding mechanisms and incentives will be considered to promote participation by small and micro businesses, encourage positive employment outcomes for young people, and align the youth training system with the opportunities that exist in the economy.
Policy Commitment 16	Youth training will be supported by clear branding and marketing to employers, young people and parents/guardians.

Theme Four: Ensuring Quality	
This theme sets out a range of measures designed to ensure that the highest standards of quality for training are maintained.	
Policy Commitment 17	Only providers that achieve prescribed quality standards will be funded to deliver youth training.
Policy Commitment 18	Tutors delivering the non-work-based elements of youth training will be required to have recent experience of their industry and relevant occupational and pedagogical qualifications.
Policy Commitment 19	All work-based learning will be underpinned by a clear tripartite agreement between the young person, host employer and the training provider.
Policy Commitment 20	A registration and approval process will be introduced for employers participating in the youth training system, and hosted via the central service.
Policy Commitment 21	Workplace buddies will be required to have appropriate recent experience of their industry and undertake introductory training.
Policy Commitment 22	The youth training system will be underpinned by ongoing robust data collection, analysis and evaluation. It will facilitate regular feedback from participants regarding their experiences of youth training.

The next steps to be taken in terms of implementation of these policy commitments are set out in the Way Forward section.

Figure E.1 overleaf outlines how the new youth training system can be accessed, and the two routes for participation.

Figure E.1: The New Youth Training System



Although the new system will replace the current options for training at level 2 (Training for Success – Skills for Work Level 2, ApprenticeshipsNI at level 2 and level 2 mainstream further education), it is not simply a replacement for these existing programmes. Rather, it will be an innovative system that will transition youth training at level 2 into a new, more broad-based approach. Figure E.2 below outlines how the policy commitments detailed in the strategy reform current provision to ensure high quality training is delivered to all participants.

Figure E.2: Changes in the New System

Features	Old System			New Youth Training System
	Training for Success: Skills for Work Level 2	ApprenticeshipsNI at level 2	Mainstream Further Education	
Theme One: Core Features of the Youth Training System				
Available to young people aged 16-24 requiring skills development at level 2?	X	✓	✓	✓
Available for both employed and unemployed young people?	X	X	X	✓
Offers GCSEs in English and mathematics in addition to professional and technical qualifications?	X	X	✓	✓
Delivers integral structured work-based learning for participants?	✓	✓	X	✓
Clearly defines common entry criteria for all participants?	✓	X	X	✓
Sets a duration for participants that is flexible to meet their needs?	✓	✓	X	✓
Theme Two: Supporting Young People				
Provides independent careers advice and guidance before participants begin training and at the end of training?	X	X	X	✓
Provides comprehensive pastoral support for all participants?	X	X	X	✓
Provides financial support for participants?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Supports those with additional requirements?	✓	✓	✓	✓

Features	Old System			New Youth Training System
	Training for Success: Skills for Work Level 2	ApprenticeshipsNI at level 2	Mainstream Further Education	
Theme Three: Delivery and Employer Engagement Structures				
Engages key stakeholders to advise government at a strategic level?	X	X	X	✓
Engages employers and curriculum experts to define the curriculum for each sector?	X	X	X	✓
Provides a central service to engage and support employers to participate?	X	X	X	✓
Uses industry consultants to provide practical support for employers?	X	X	X	✓
Delivers incentives to engage small and micro businesses, encourage positive employment outcomes and align provision with the opportunities in the Northern Ireland economy?	X	X	X	✓
Provides singular unified brand for level 2 provision that engages employers, young people and parents/guardians?	X	X	X	✓
Theme Four: Ensuring Quality				
Approves employers to participate through a registration process?	X	X	X	✓
Underpins work-based learning through a clear tripartite agreement?	✓	✓	X	✓
Sets new quality standards for providers, tutors and workplace buddies?	X	X	X	✓
Gathers comparative data for all participants that includes regular feedback on their experiences?	X	X	X	✓

1. Introduction

The outworking of this strategy will be the creation of a new youth training system in Northern Ireland which will better meet the needs of young people, employers and the wider economy.

This strategy radically transforms existing provision to create a new professional and technical offer at level 2, which provides a high quality parallel route to the traditional academic pathway and gives fresh impetus to skills development for young people in Northern Ireland.

The actions as outlined in this strategy will form a key part of a new skills landscape. This strategy is not just focused on amending parts of the present system but rather on a systemic change.

This radical new youth training system takes into account the very best practice from across the globe. It supports the development of a skilled workforce as articulated through our skills strategy 'Success through Skills – Transforming Futures', in recognising the need to remain competitive and productive and that, through the development of skills, we can encourage greater social inclusion for all in our society.

This strategy will address the specific needs of young people through a renewed focus on professional and technical training at level 2 (GCSE level), to help young people transition into employment and to access higher levels of education and training, including in particular apprenticeships. The new youth training system will engage young people and employers in structured work-based learning and deliver an industry-focused broad-based baccalaureate-style award at level 2 for all participants. This award will deliver on the needs of each sector and on the breadth of learning that young people require. In so doing, the new system will widen the youth training offering from its present restraints, and

consequently replace Training for Success - Skills for Work Level 2, ApprenticeshipsNI at level 2 and level 2 mainstream further education, as well as expanding the system to cover previously uncovered situations.

The Department's goal is to build a system of youth training that will be recognised both nationally and internationally by employers, further and higher education providers, young people and parents/guardians for its quality, flexibility and transferability. The system will be centred on the career aspirations and needs of young people and will be a conduit to support their ongoing career development.

Young people in this training will be sought after by prospective employers, and the system will be respected by young people and parents/guardians as an alternative progression route to the traditional academic pathway. By linking the new baccalaureate-style professional and technical award to the needs of employers and the wider economy, the youth training system will better match demand and supply, and provide a seamless progression route for young people to a breadth of professional and technical occupations.

To contribute to this goal, this strategy outlines the definitive way forward for youth training through 22 key policy commitments that fall under the following four themes:

Theme One: Core Features of the Youth Training System

Theme Two: Supporting Young People

Theme Three: Delivery and Employer Engagement Structures

Theme Four: Ensuring Quality

The policy commitments that sit under each theme will be delivered through a series of cross-cutting projects that will align with the delivery of the apprenticeships strategy. Details for each of the projects are included in Annex B.

The remainder of this document is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides further information regarding the strategic, economic and social rationale for the new system;
- Sections 3–6 outline the four Themes, providing some background information to summarise the focus of each theme before listing each theme’s commitments with explanatory information and case studies to illustrate how it is envisaged the system will work in practice;
- Section 7 outlines the next steps, including piloting arrangements;
- Annex A is the Shared Future Proofing for the strategy; and
- Annex B sets out the Implementation Plan.

2. The Strategic, Economic and Social Rationale for Youth Training

The Role of Youth Training in a Modern Skills Landscape

Across Europe and the rest of the world, a strong vocational education and training (VET) system has been identified as a key enabler of successful transitions for young people from education into employment.¹

As the Northern Ireland economy and labour market develops, young people will require increasingly higher skill levels to access jobs of the future. Over the next decade, more than seven in ten vacancies will require qualifications at level 2 or above,² while employment opportunities for individuals with low skills (level 1 and below) are predicted to decline. In addition to improving job prospects for young people, achievement at level 2 has also been demonstrated to result in positive impacts on potential earnings³ and to open pathways for achieving higher level qualifications.

Reflecting these wider trends in our skills landscape, the review of youth training focused on all young people aged 16–24 who have left school and do not currently hold a full level 2 qualification (defined as five GCSEs at grades A*–C, including English and mathematics). In 2014, almost 69,000 16–24 year olds did

¹ European Commission (EC), Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Study on a comprehensive overview on traineeship arrangements in Member States: Final Synthesis Report, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, May 2012, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=6717>, p. 114. (download required)

² Oxford Economics for Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), Preparing for a lower corporation tax environment, June 2012, <http://www.delni.gov.uk/lower-corporation-tax-environment.pdf>, p. 30.

³ Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS), Research Paper Number 47: The Long Term Effect of Vocational Qualifications on Labour Market Outcomes, London Economics, June 2011, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/32326/11-1035-long-term-effect-of-vocational-qualifications.pdf, p. 12.

not hold qualifications at level 2 and, of these, approximately 20,000 were in employment, while 39,000 were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). Similarly, for the 2013/14 academic year, 36.5% of young people in Northern Ireland left school without achieving five GCSEs at grades A*–C, including English and mathematics.⁴

Given the increased demand for higher level skills in the Northern Ireland economy, young people who leave school without achieving at level 2 can be at risk of disengaging from the labour market, with no route into higher level education and training options, including apprenticeships. Failing to address this gap between supply and demand in our skills economy could have wider implications for social mobility, social cohesion and the quality of life for a generation of young people.

This strategy will directly address this gap through fundamentally reforming youth training at level 2, greatly expanding its present parameters. The review of youth training's Interim Report highlighted how the current options for professional and technical training in Northern Ireland at level 2 (Training for Success – Skills for Work Level 2, ApprenticeshipsNI at level 2 and mainstream further education at level 2) faced challenges in delivering training that could both respond to industry needs and deliver the breadth of skills, knowledge and experience that young people require. In particular, the review noted that current provision in many cases did not provide appropriate qualifications in numeracy and literacy to enable progression, while in other routes there was insufficient emphasis on the key role of work-based learning. Drawing from evidence of international best practice in the delivery of professional and technical education and training, the review proposed an entirely new and comprehensive system of training at level 2, to supersede the current options to fully address the needs of young people leaving school without level 2 qualifications.

⁴ Department of Education (DENI), Statistical Bulletin 5/2015: Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2013/14, 21 May 2015, http://www.deni.gov.uk/qualifications_and_destinations_1314.pdf

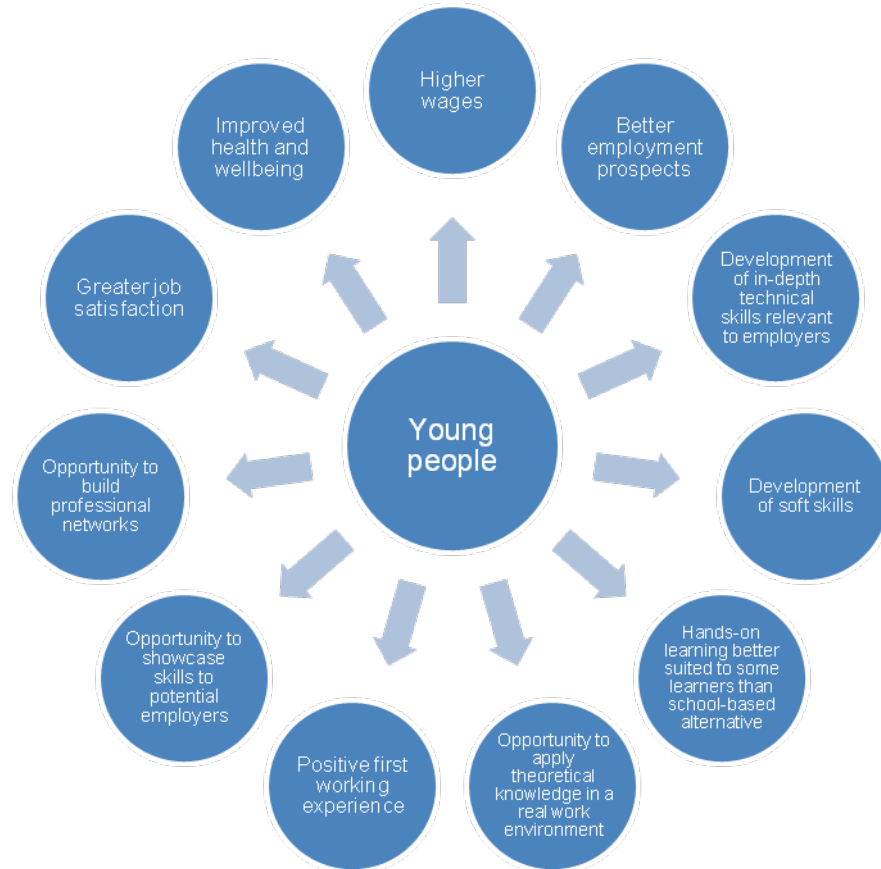
The Benefits of Vocational Education and Training

Benefits to Young People

The policy articulated in the later chapters of this document draws from extensive research on VET systems for young people. This research identified the combination of theoretical study with work-related training as a crucial aspect of effective systems which deliver benefits for all key stakeholders, most notably the young people.⁵ The key benefits to young people are highlighted in Figure 2.1.

⁵ EC, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Study on a comprehensive overview on traineeship arrangements in Member States: Final Synthesis Report, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, May 2012, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=6717>, p. 114. (download required)

Figure 2.1: Summary of Benefits to Young People



When delivered well, VET systems help young people orient themselves in the labour market and ensure their choices match their wider career aspirations to gain a positive first experience of the workplace. High quality training encourages greater social mobility by helping young people to progress in their chosen occupational area to higher value opportunities. Immersion in real working environments can also develop essential softer skills ranging from time management to communication and team-working.⁶

⁶ EC, Work-Based Learning in Europe: Practices and Policy Pointers, June 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/alliance/work-based-learning-in-europe_en.pdf, p. 11.

Benefits to Employers

Employers participating in VET systems have the opportunity to train young people in line with their organisational culture and the exact requirements of the role. This can lead to a number of business benefits, highlighted in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Summary of Benefits to Employers



Participation in VET can help to improve performance by addressing skills shortages or gaps faced by the employer, a benefit which is further enhanced when employers are given a role in informing the curriculum content for training in their sector. Employers offering young people training opportunities have also reported wider benefits through bringing new ideas and fresh thinking to their organisation.⁷ More widely, this investment in the next generation is a clear

⁷ EC, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Study on a comprehensive overview on traineeship arrangements in Member States: Final Synthesis Report, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, May 2012, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=6717>, p. 112. (download required)

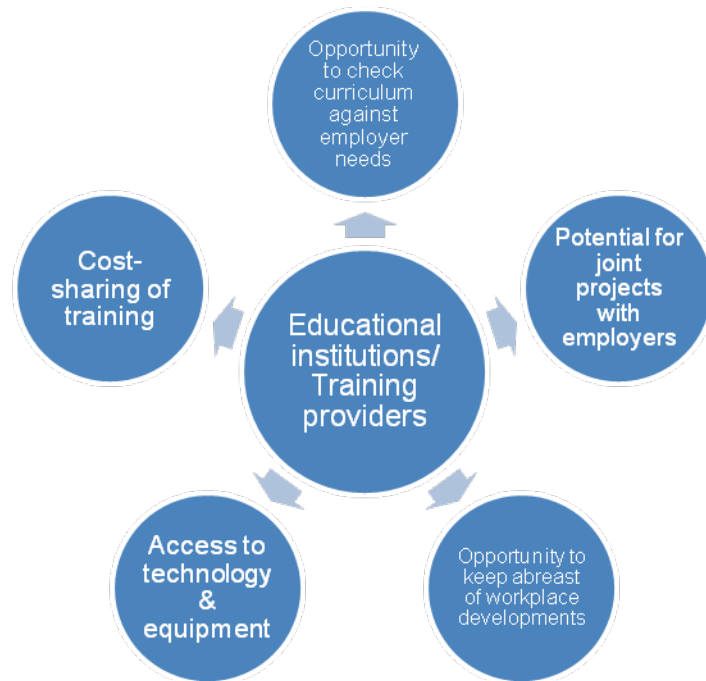
demonstration of corporate social responsibility, which can improve the brand or image of the employer's business.

Benefits to Educational Institutions and Providers of Training

Beyond the key benefits of VET to employers and young people, the creation of effective links between educational institutions and industry has wider benefits for providers. As Figure 2.3 highlights, engagement with VET enables providers of training to match their curricula to the needs of local employers and incorporate relevant new skills and knowledge into their organisations. This will result in cost-effective training that leads to better outcomes for young people, improves the reputation of the provider, and improves training in general.⁸

⁸ EC, Work-Based Learning in Europe: Practices and Policy Pointers, June 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/alliance/work-based-learning-in-europe_en.pdf , p. 10; EC, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Study on a comprehensive overview on traineeship arrangements in Member States: Final Synthesis Report, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, May 2012, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=6717> , p. 114.

Figure 2.3: Summary of Benefits Tor Educational Institutions and Providers of Training



Benefits to the Economy and Society

The long-term benefits of VET systems can be seen at a national level, where countries such as Germany and the Netherlands are equipped with a workforce with the right skills and qualifications to meet current and future needs. This contributes to both economic growth and social integration, as countries with well-developed VET systems have maintained comparatively low youth unemployment rates throughout the period following the 2008 downturn.⁹ As detailed in Figure 2.4, a good VET system can support social inclusion, by helping tackle the problems of motivation and alienation. In addition, a positive VET experience enables individuals to have success and mobility in the labour

⁹ House of Lords, European Union Committee, Youth unemployment in the EU: a scarred generation? April 2014, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201314/ldselect/ldcom/164/164.pdf> , p. 16.

market, both in terms of promotion within their occupation, and in terms of job change due to the transferability of skills.

Figure 2.4: Summary of Benefits to the Economy and Society



Policy Context

In seeking to deliver these benefits of VET in Northern Ireland, the new youth training system will sit within a wider landscape of connected policy initiatives. The Interim Report of the review of youth training highlighted the key supporting initiatives that will inform the delivery of youth training going forward. These include:

- **Success through Skills – Transforming Futures**
<http://www.delni.gov.uk/success-through-skills-transforming-futures.pdf>
- **Securing our Success: the Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships**
<http://www.delni.gov.uk/securing-our-success-the-ni-strategy-on-apprenticeships.pdf>
- **The Careers Review**
<http://www.delni.gov.uk/review-of-careers>
- **The Professional and Technical Qualifications Strategy (currently under development)**
- **The new Further Education Strategy (currently under development)**
- **The United Youth Programme**
<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/together-building-a-united-community>
- **The Disability Employment and Skills Strategy (currently under development)**

In aligning with these key strategic initiatives, the new youth training system will form the key intervention for young people in Northern Ireland, promoting progression into employment, apprenticeships or further education.

3. Theme One: Core Features of the Youth Training System

The new youth training system will be innovative in its approach, preparing young people for the world of work and sustained employment by investing directly in them and providing opportunities for personal development and fulfilment. It will be flexible and supportive in order to reflect the starting point and specific needs of each young person.

Knowledge, skills and experience will be fundamental elements of the new system, and the curriculum will provide a high quality parallel route to the traditional academic pathway. This system will enable progression, with a rigour valued by employers, and will align with wider labour market trends in Northern Ireland.

The new youth training system will be underpinned by a set of core features. These features define who the target group will be, the curriculum that will be offered, and the expected duration.

An Accessible and Flexible System

Policy Commitment 1	All young people aged 16–24 who require training at level 2 will have the opportunity to participate. It will be open to those starting a new job, those in existing roles, and those not yet in employment.
This will be delivered through Project A: Legislation and Guidance	

Access to youth training will create new opportunities for young people. Moving forward, all young people aged 16–24 who require skills development at level 2 will be offered the opportunity to participate. This is a significant departure from the existing training programme, Training for Success, which is limited to 16 and 17 year-old school leavers. To facilitate and encourage participation the youth training system will be accessible to those entering the labour market for the first time, those already in employment within their chosen occupational area, those already employed but not yet working in their chosen occupational area, and those who have not yet secured employment.

Two Routes

Policy Commitment 2	Upon entry, young people will progress through two routes: an employed and a non-employed route. A common curriculum will allow young people to pursue both routes to accommodate changes in employment status.
This will be delivered through Project A: Legislation and Guidance and Project M: Curriculum	

For young people requiring skills development at level 2, there will be two distinct routes to follow: the employed route and the non-employed route.

Employed Route

The employed route will be open to those entering the labour market for the first time who will be able to avail of the youth training system (on a similar basis to Apprenticeships NI) to gain a full level 2 qualification. Unlike previous models, the youth training system will also provide young people already in employment in their chosen occupational area with an opportunity to gain a full level 2 qualification, allowing them to progress further in their employment and learning journey.

Non-Employed Route

The non-employed route will be open to all those young people who have not yet secured employment, including those who are as yet undecided about their preferred occupational route. It will also facilitate young people who are in work but not yet working in their chosen occupational area to access training and work placements that are relevant to their future career aspirations. This will facilitate

young people currently in employment, who are not in their preferred occupational area, an opportunity to gain a full level 2 qualification in their career of choice, while remaining in their current job role.

These two routes are illustrated through case studies at the end of each Theme.

The introduction of one accessible system with two flexible routes to follow represents a distinct change from the current range of professional and technical education and training options at level 2. Through both the employed and non-employed routes the youth training system will ensure that young people can access high quality training, regardless of their employment status. Crucially, with the benefit of a shared curriculum across both routes, the youth training system will also provide flexibility for the young person to move from the non-employed route to the employed route and vice versa, thereby accommodating changes in a young person's employment status throughout their participation in training. The curriculum content will also be sufficiently broad to facilitate movement between sectors, being mindful that young people are not always sure of their preferred occupational area.

Allowing all young people aged 16–24, regardless of their economic or employment status, to have equal opportunity to access the youth training system, recognises the importance of upskilling the future workforce, which is vital for the ongoing development of the Northern Ireland economy. The youth training system will form part of a continuum of support to develop skills from entry level to level 8, facilitating lifelong learning and allowing participants to move in and out of professional education and training at their own pace.

A New Curriculum

<p>Policy Commitment 3</p>	<p>The youth training system will provide a new broad-based baccalaureate-style professional and technical award at level 2, equating to a minimum of five GCSEs at grades A*–C. It will include English and mathematics qualifications at level 2 and additional qualifications deemed relevant to the needs of individual sectors.</p>
<p>This will be delivered through Project M: Curriculum</p>	

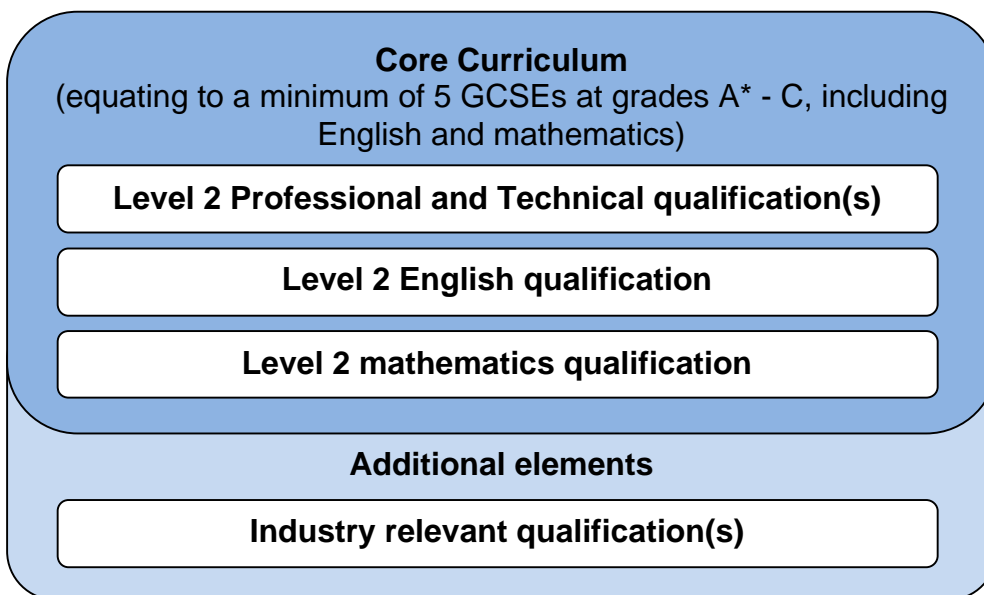
A core component of the new system will be the curriculum for participants. A relevant broad-based professional and technical curriculum has a dual purpose. Firstly, it ensures that young people have knowledge and skills that can help them access current opportunities for employment. Secondly, it provides participants with the broad-based knowledge and skills to progress in their employment and study at a higher level.

The Department’s Skills Strategy highlighted that the proportion of employed individuals with qualifications below level 2 is set to fall from 29% in 2005 to 16% (baseline estimate) or 12% (aspirational estimate) by 2020.¹⁰ Five GCSEs at grades A*-C is a commonly recognised measure of full achievement at this level. This measure of achievement will become the minimum standard for the youth training curriculum across every sector through the introduction of a new baccalaureate-style award (in the main comprising of professional and technical knowledge and skills, with level 2 English and mathematics qualifications). It will be a grouped award, with a core curriculum that combines broad-based

¹⁰ Oxford Economics in Association with FGS Consulting, Forecasting Future Skills Needs in Northern Ireland – Final Report, Department for Employment and Learning, April 2009, http://www.delni.gov.uk/del_future_skill_needs_final_report_june_09_v4_no_links.pdf, p. xi.

professional and technical qualifications in the young person's chosen occupational area with transferable academic qualifications in the key skills of numeracy and literacy. It will also include additional qualifications that are relevant to the needs of each sector. Figure 3.1 below summarises the key elements of the curriculum.

Figure 3.1: The Curriculum for Youth Training



This baccalaureate-style professional and technical award raises the standard from the present level 2 youth training options (reflecting the minimum requirements of many employers and the entry criteria for progression routes into further education at level 3). It will be a recognised mark of achievement for young people, providing a passport to employment opportunities, including apprenticeships, and will facilitate seamless progression into level 3 and up to level 8.

The exact composition of the baccalaureate for each sector will be determined through the medium of sectoral partnerships, discussed in Theme Three.

Getting Ready for the Workplace

<p>Policy Commitment 4</p>	<p>Structured work-based learning will be integral to the youth training system, and will be the primary method for developing skills. Online technologies will be used to prepare young people for the workplace and facilitate international knowledge exchange. Work inspiration activities will be offered to those not in employment to inform their choice of occupational area.</p>
<p>This will be delivered through Project M: Curriculum and Project N: Work-Based Learning</p>	

To ensure that the system delivers relevant knowledge and skills for participants, structured work-based learning will be integrated into delivery. Work-based learning will deliver a holistic approach to cater for the skills development needs of each young person and will develop wider employability skills such as time management, communication and confidence. It will be the key contributing factor to successful employment outcomes.

Young people can prepare for the workplace through both sustained immersion in a working environment and more innovative methods, including short project-based work tasters and the use of immersive technology. Immersive technologies will be used to help engage young people by making learning about the workplace dynamic and attractive. Where practical, technology will also enable international exchange opportunities, for example through video conferencing with trainees or apprentices in other countries, with a particular focus on countries with well developed professional and technical education and training systems. In addition, online technologies will assist all young people to

sustain their participation in youth training, for example through enabling flexible patterns of study.

Recognising that not all young people will be certain of the path they will want to follow, work inspiration activities will be a feature of the new system. Work inspiration activities will give young people participating in the youth training system positive experiences, introducing them to the world of work, and assisting them to make an informed decision regarding their course of study and potential future career. Such work inspiration activities might include, but will not be limited to, activities such as employer site visits, employer/careers presentations, employer video conferencing, enterprise competitions, employee shadowing and project-based work tasters.

Together, these aspects of work-based learning will seek to ensure that every young person engaged in youth training is provided with an immersive experience of the real working environment in their chosen sector, which helps to develop their skills, raise their career aspirations and set them on a path to achievement and full-time employment.

Supporting Development

Policy Commitment 5	Young people will be supported to reach a full standard of achievement at level 1 (defined as four GCSEs at grades D–G including English and mathematics, or equivalent), before commencing youth training.
This will be delivered through Project A: Legislation and Guidance	

To ensure that the young person is ready for a full level 2 programme and to better align provision and set clear requirements for skills programmes at entry level and level 1, moving forward, there will be one common minimum entry requirement for the youth training system.

Achievement of a full level 1 (defined as four GCSEs at grades D–G, including English and mathematics at grades D–F) will normally be the minimum entry criteria for a young person seeking to progress into the youth training system. This minimum entry criterion will replace the current significant variation in entry criteria for skills development at level 2, ensuring clarity for young people, their parents and guardians. Recognition will also be given to equivalent qualifications or alternative evidence regarding a young person’s potential to achieve at level 2.

Currently, 95.2% of school leavers leave school with five GCSEs at grades A*–G, and 88.6% leave with GCSEs at grades D–G, including English and mathematics. For the minority who do not achieve a full standard of achievement at level 1 before leaving school, or for those who are not yet ready to complete a full level 2, the Department will continue to provide targeted support to assist their progression into youth training. With the age range for the new system becoming 16–24, young people at this level will now benefit from a longer timeframe in which to achieve at level 1 before entering the youth training

system. This will be met through a range of targeted initiatives¹¹ and through mainstream further education.

The pastoral support delivered through youth training (detailed further in Theme Two) will focus on ensuring that those leaving school and those progressing from wider provision can all access youth training.

¹¹ Including European Social Fund (ESF) projects and the United Youth Programme

Flexible Duration

Policy Commitment 6	The youth training system will normally be designed to take two years to complete.
This will be delivered through Project M: Curriculum	

To ensure that participants progress as quickly as possible according to their ability and needs, allowing attainment of all elements of the bacculaureate-style award, they will be afforded the opportunity to complete a two-year programme.

However, appreciating that individual sectors have different requirements, there will be some flexibility for specific sectors to propose a shorter duration, where justified and endorsed by the relevant sectoral partnership (outlined in Theme Three).

As young people on the employed route will be subject to commercial work pressures, further participation time beyond the two years will be considered. The new offering also recognises that young people aged 16–24 sometimes face challenges and changes in circumstances, and extended duration will also be facilitated for those with additional requirements (such as those with a disability, caring commitments or leaving care), where required. This provides young people with a greater window of opportunity to access provision and progress.

Although it is expected that the two years will normally be completed concurrently, the new youth training system acknowledges that young people can face a range of personal issues which may cause them to drop out of training before completion. Flexibility will be granted for temporary breaks in training. Such flexibilities will facilitate young people who have had to withdraw from training the opportunity to return and complete the full two-year programme. Encouragement and support to return to training will be offered through the

pastoral care aspects of the system (as outlined in Theme Two). This wraparound support will seek to reduce interruption in training, or when it is unavoidable, to ensure that training is reinstated as soon as possible.

Core Features of the Youth Training System: Case Studies

A series of case studies have been developed to illustrate how the policy commitments detailed in this theme interact to contribute to the overall system and support young people's engagement. Later themes will build on these case studies with relevant examples for each theme.

Case study 1: Carál – an Unemployed Young Person

Carál is 16 and has just left school with 4 GCSEs at grades D–G (full standard of achievement at level 1). Carál is offered access to the non-employed youth training route for two years to gain professional and technical training at level 2 in her chosen area of business and administration. Carál completes youth training within two years, receiving extensive work experience and achieving the full baccalaureate-style award including GCSE English and mathematics. Following completion at age 18, Carál secures a level 3 apprenticeship in business and administration to continue to develop her skills in employment.

Case study 2: Michael – an Unemployed Young Person

Michael is 19 and left school with 4 GCSEs at grades D–G (full standard of achievement at level 1). After some short temporary periods in differing employment Michael is now unemployed. After being unsuccessful in securing employment he decides to take up the offer of youth training and enrolls on the non-employed route to undertake professional and technical training at level 2 in retail. After being involved in some work inspiration activities, including demonstrations from local employers, Michael decides that he would instead prefer to undertake his youth training in Information Technology. Michael then completes his two years' youth training, receiving extensive work experience and achieving a full-baccalaureate style award, which includes GCSE English and mathematics. Following completion, Michael is offered permanent employment with his work placement employer.

Case study 3: Jia – a Young Person in Employment

Jia is 22 and left school with 4 GCSEs at grades D – G (full standard of achievement at level 1). She has been employed for three years and now wishes to progress in her career. Recognising that to move up the employment ladder she will require GCSE English and mathematics, and professional and technical training, she enrolls on youth training with the full backing of her employer. Unfortunately, 13 months into her training her employer is forced to close. However, Jia is able to transfer across into the non-employed route to continue and complete her youth training. She completes her training and secures another job shortly after completion.

4. Theme Two: Supporting Young People

It is important that every young person is given the opportunity to prepare themselves for the workplace by developing the relevant skills for their chosen occupation. However, many young people do not meet their full potential in a school environment doing academic subjects, as their learning style is better suited to the more applied and contextualised style of professional and technical training.

The new youth training system will be centred on the career aspirations and needs of young people and will be a conduit to supporting their ongoing career development. It is envisaged that young people in youth training will be sought after by prospective employers, and the system will be respected by young people, parents and guardians as an alternative and equivalent progression route to the traditional academic pathway.

Theme One outlined how the new system will challenge the preference for academic qualifications by offering an innovative and engaging curriculum to facilitate the acquisition of skills for the workplace, which will complement the work-based learning, and, therefore, make the learning more meaningful to the young person through high quality work experience. The young person will see the benefits of participation through their ongoing progression and employment opportunities.

With the core features of the youth training system established, Theme Two highlights the support measures that will be put in place to help young people successfully complete their training and progress into employment or professional and technical training at a higher level.

Informing Career Choices

Policy Commitment 7	The Careers Service will provide impartial careers advice and guidance to young people before starting training and upon completion.
This will be delivered through Project D: Central Service	

A discussion with the young person regarding their qualifications, interests and career aspirations, before embarking on youth training, will form a key stage in the youth training system.

The importance of effective, informed and high quality careers advice has been highlighted both internationally by the OECD¹² and in Northern Ireland through the joint Review of Careers Education and Guidance undertaken by the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Education. The Careers Review recommended that, before embarking upon a publicly funded course, young people aged 16–18 years should receive impartial careers advice to improve outcomes and align their decisions with wider labour market trends.¹³

The review of youth training has built upon this recommendation by committing the Careers Service to provide impartial advice to all youth training system participants, regardless of age, both before engaging in training and upon completion. The careers advice will be informed by a project the Department is taking forward to develop a Northern Ireland Skills Barometer. This tool will provide the youth training system with an indication of current, emerging and long-term skills shortages. Acting as a driver for the further development of

¹² OECD, Skills Beyond School: A Review of Postsecondary Vocational Education and Training, April 2014, pp. 11-12.

¹³ Ambrose B, et al., Careers Review 2014: A report by an independent panel of experts from education and employers on careers education and guidance in Northern Ireland, DEL and DE, October 2014, <http://www.delni.gov.uk/careers-review-2014-final.pdf> p,9.

careers education, information, advice and guidance it will also allow participants to make fully informed career choices, including informing future study options or possible changes to training in their professional and technical area.

Supporting Participation

Policy Commitment 8	Comprehensive pastoral support, including a workplace buddy, will be made available to support all participants.
This will be delivered through Project O: Pastoral Support	

A dual mentoring approach will be a feature of the system, delivered through a workplace buddy and the pastoral support mechanisms offered by providers of training. This dual system will assist all participants with issues unrelated to their course of study, while also helping them integrate into the workplace and achieve their learning outcomes.

The buddy and pastoral care roles are closely related. Workplace buddies will primarily give advice and assistance concerning technical issues surrounding career and skills development during periods of workplace learning. Pastoral care will focus on non-workplace related issues (including such elements as counselling, signposting to support services, assistance in dispute resolution or support with life skills such as budgeting). Both types of support will be vital aspects of the youth training system, to support participants and thus reduce non completion.

Designating a workplace buddy to support the learner and their progression is essential. The buddy will have a crucial mentoring role to play, helping the learner make sense of the different components of the learning programme and ensuring that they do not feel isolated or unsupported. An employer may therefore also gain from greater productivity in the workplace, as participants turn to their buddies for practical advice and make fewer mistakes on the job.

Financial Support

Policy Commitment 9	A system of financial support will be developed for young people participating in the youth training system.
This will be delivered through Project E: Funding Model	

The financial support available to young people while in training is an important element, whether learners follow the employed route or the non-employed route. It is essential that financial support is provided to contribute to the costs of transportation, equipment and living expenses.

Current funding arrangements at level 2 provide a range of support measures for participants, including a means tested Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of £30 per week for those in further education; a non-means tested EMA of £40 per week for those in training; and additional funding for travel costs, childcare or for individuals with disabilities. Individuals receiving training at level 2 through ApprenticeshipsNI receive financial support through the wage paid by their employer.

This level of funding will be the starting point in developing an appropriate level of financial support for those participating in the youth training system non-employed route. Those in the employed route will receive at least the age-appropriate national minimum wage from their employer.

Support and flexibility

Policy Commitment 10	Support and flexibility will be provided for young people with additional requirements (including, but not limited to, individuals with a disability, caring commitments or those leaving care).
This will be delivered through Project G: Widening Access	

A final key aspect of support is meeting the needs of young people with additional requirements. For these individuals, current training programmes allow for extended duration beyond two years, provide targeted additional funding and specialist support services, and offer assistance with travel costs where required. These provisions will be retained within the new youth training system.

Complementing these provisions, many commitments contained within this strategy will also help those with additional requirements via: providing additional pastoral support; through workplace buddies supporting their skills development and facilitating any additional support requirement at the employer's premises; giving the flexibility to permit temporary breaks in training; facilitating use of online technologies to assist in sustaining participation and through data collection specifically recording how the youth training system is working for young people with additional needs; and, via expecting participating providers to demonstrate quality of opportunity and commitment to giving staff appropriate training (such as disability awareness).

Supporting Young People: Case Study

Kieran's story demonstrates how the policy commitments detailed in this theme interact to contribute to the overall system by helping young people to sustain their engagement in youth training.

Case study 4: Kieran – an Unemployed Young Person

Kieran is 20 and left school with 4 GCSEs at grades A–G (full level 1 qualification). For the last three years he has been the lead carer for his father and during this time he has been unable to sustain any significant length of employment in various jobs. Kieran now wishes to enrol in youth training, but is undecided between options in hospitality or motor vehicle maintenance and repair. At his meeting with his careers advisor, which he must undertake before entering the youth training system, he discusses his interests and career aspirations. The careers advisor outlines the likelihood of employment in his local area for both occupations, and together they decide that he should train in hospitality. Kieran enrolls on the non-employed youth training route, but in his first meeting with his training provider, he admits he is feeling stressed as a result of both starting training and his caring commitments at home. The training provider and his workplace buddy work with Kieran to ensure that he is supported throughout all aspects of his training. Kieran outlines that he is not confident in workplace environments so his buddy offers assistance, advice and support throughout his placement. However, 18 months into his training, owing to his ongoing caring commitments, Kieran feels that he is starting to fall behind, and discusses this with his training provider. Consequently, Kieran is afforded an extra six months to complete the youth training system. Kieran successfully completes youth training and is considering his options.

5. Theme Three: Delivery and Employer Engagement Structures

In the new youth training system, employers will be able to articulate the skills required for their workforce and in particular the rigour and relevance of the professional and technical qualifications to be delivered. It is vitally important to the Northern Ireland economy that employers have access to skilled employees, particularly young people, so that they can sustain and grow their businesses.

This theme details the structures which will deliver the new youth training system, including mechanisms to engage all key stakeholders, including employers, in its design and delivery. It also details how the system will match supply and demand within the Northern Ireland economy.

A Strategic Approach

Policy Commitment 11	A Strategic Advisory Forum, based on a partnership comprising employers, government, trade unions, providers of training and representatives of young people, will be established to advise government on the youth training system.
This will be delivered through Project I: Governance and Oversight	

Recognising that engagement of stakeholders is a core feature of successful VET systems, it is vital that the active participation of key stakeholders is secured in the new youth training system. This will ensure that the new system meets the needs of all parties, is effectively future-proofed and is adaptable to changes over time. There is therefore a clear rationale for establishing an overarching body to advise government on the new system at a strategic level.

As such, the role of the interim Strategic Advisory Forum established to advise government, as part of the implementation of the Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships, will be developed to incorporate youth training.

This will ensure that the youth training system delivers for industry in Northern Ireland, whilst also ensuring that the focus on young people's requirements remains at the forefront. It will also ensure that the key strategic linkages between the new youth training system and our new apprenticeship system are developed. The interim forum, comprising employers, government representatives, trade unions providers of training and young people representatives, will advise government across all aspects of the implementation of the new youth training system. When the new forum is put on a permanent basis, its role could include:

- providing strategic oversight of youth training provision;
- advising on supply and demand issues;
- advising on appropriate support vehicles for particular sectors or types of employer;
- commissioning research to develop awareness of best practice from across the world;
- contributing to the effectiveness of the system by analysing the progression and recruitment levels of young people completing training;
- promoting youth training to employers and encouraging work-based learning opportunities;
- developing the linkages between the youth training system and progression opportunities available in the UK and internationally; and
- advising on the balance between the specific training required for preparation for employment in a given sector and broader transferable skills that can be developed by all young people in training.

Employer Ownership

Policy Commitment 12	Sectoral partnerships will determine the youth training curriculum for their sector, including the overarching outcomes for work-based learning and the qualifications to be delivered.
This will be delivered through Project I: Governance and Oversight	

An analysis of international best practice undertaken as part of the youth training review highlighted the critical role of individual trade committees in designing a high quality training offer, including determining the curriculum content for each sector. Going forward, partnerships containing industry representatives and curriculum experts will determine the broad curriculum content for youth training for each occupational area, thereby ensuring that the needs of different sectors are met. These sectoral partnerships, whilst recognising the need for flexibilities, will also set high-level expectations for the duration, structure and timing of work placements for all trainees in their sector.

For the youth training system, the sectoral partnerships' responsibilities could include:

- defining qualifications to be delivered as part of the youth training award for their sector;
- defining expected duration, structure and timing of work placements for young people undertaking training in their sector;
- building capacity within their sector for the increased provision of work-based learning and recruitment opportunities for young people;

- advising on interventions within sectors to increase, where appropriate, participation numbers;
- achieving the necessary balance of skills between the needs of particular employers, those of the wider sector and broader transferable skills required by the young person; and
- informing forecasts for jobs growth and aggregate sectoral demand for new employees with level 2 skills.

Supporting Delivery

Policy Commitment 13	A central service will facilitate the sourcing and managing of work-based learning opportunities across all sectors of the Northern Ireland economy.
This will be delivered through Project D: Central Service	

A new central service will be established to engage young people, employers and parents / guardians. With regard to employers in particular, this will help source and manage opportunities for work-based learning for participants, and be developed to minimise bureaucracy, thus ensuring participation appeals to employers. While the central service will seek opportunities across all sectors of the Northern Ireland economy, particular focus will be on engaging the public sector to provide opportunities for young people through both the employed and non-employed routes.

The central service's responsibilities will include:

- providing a central online location to advertise training opportunities for young people on a local basis;
- providing a matching service between employers, providers of training and young people;
- administering subsidies and other support;
- signposting to impartial careers advice and guidance for young people before accessing and upon completion of training;
- hosting a central register of participating employers; and

- acting as a promotional tool to highlight the benefits of the new youth training system to employers.

Industry Consultants

Policy Commitment 14	Dedicated industry consultants will assist the central service by providing practical support to employers to encourage and sustain their engagement.
This will be delivered through Project D: Central Service	

In conjunction with the central service, industry consultants will liaise with employers to encourage their engagement. These consultants must possess extensive knowledge of local employment opportunities, alongside good relationships with local councils, chambers of commerce and other key organisations. As a minimum, industry consultants will also be tasked with:

- sourcing work placements for all youth training participants by continually engaging with local employers and industry, building upon existing positive relationships and establishing new ones;
- continually seeking to raise the profile and awareness of the youth training system and its benefits to employers;
- providing practical support to employers in their engagement with the youth training system (including registration requirements), so as to reduce red tape and help address the barriers of lack of available time and resource costs that may prevent some employers from offering placements;
- acting as a liaison between the employers and providers of training; and
- feeding opportunities back into the central service.

Through the central service and industry consultants working in tandem, the youth training system will endeavour to keep bureaucracy to a minimum for all employers wishing to engage in the system, at the same time recognising, maintaining and supporting, where required, existing good relationships between local employers and providers of training.

Incentives for Engagement

Policy Commitment 15	Funding mechanisms and incentives will be developed to promote participation by small and micro businesses, encourage positive employment outcomes for young people, and align the youth training system with the opportunities that exist in the economy.
This will be delivered through Project E: Funding Model	

Employer participation will be a critical factor in driving forward the new youth training system. Therefore, both financial and non-financial incentives for employers will be vitally important to ensure that the youth training system delivers for all key stakeholders and makes a valuable contribution to the wider skills landscape. Incentives can be used both to motivate employers to offer training opportunities to young people, and to encourage successful employment outcomes for participants.

Potential financial and non-financial incentives could include, but not be limited to:

- providing administrative support to reduce bureaucracy;
- outcome-related payments;
- tax rebates;
- National Insurance relief; and
- establishing group training arrangements.

Helping secure the engagement of micro businesses in Northern Ireland through such incentives is crucial. Such businesses are vital contributors to the economy with turnover of almost £14 billion a year, representing 17% of turnover from all private sector companies.

Building a Quality Brand

Policy Commitment 16	Youth training will be supported by clear branding and marketing to employers, young people and parents/guardians.
This will be delivered through Project P: Branding and Marketing	

The use of effective branding and marketing to engage employers and other key stakeholders is a further vital element, raising awareness of the new system and encouraging and rewarding participation. Consultation and market research conducted to inform the review highlighted that an important consideration for future marketing is a focus on the new youth training offering as a ‘system’ of learning – a comprehensive option and a route to progression which links into other provision. Feedback indicated that youth training must have a new brand and that marketing should communicate the multi-faceted nature of the new system. In addition, the term ‘broad-based baccalaureate-style professional and technical award’ requires a clear identity which has currency with both employers and young people.

Seeking employer buy-in and endorsement through effective branding and marketing is a critical factor of implementation. The promotion of the new youth training system will be fully inclusive for all young people, including those with additional requirements. This work will clearly situate the new system within the wider offer of employment and skills development options provided by the Department, and will be developed in conjunction with all key stakeholders, including young people.

Delivery and Employer Engagement Structures: Case Study

The case study below demonstrates how the policy commitments detailed in this theme interact to contribute to the overall system by supporting employer engagement.

Case study 5: Caroline – an Employer

Caroline runs a successful small company and is looking to expand in the near future. Having seen the marketing for the youth training system, she is considering offering a training opportunity. Caroline contacts the youth training and apprenticeship central service to enquire about her company's participation in the youth training system. The central service subsequently arranges for the local industry consultant to visit her and explain in detail what the youth training system can offer both her and her business, including the available incentives. The industry consultant also outlines how employers from her sector drive the choice of qualifications, the work-based learning requirements and the make-up of the award, and, offers assistance with the administration to help ensure her participation is as seamless as possible. Caroline agrees to offer a work placement to a youth training participant, and the industry consultant feeds this opportunity back to the central service to advertise. Several enquiries are received and a young person is confirmed for the placement through liaison with a local training provider. After a few months on placement, Caroline offers the young person a permanent job, and offers a further work placement opportunity to another participant.

6. Theme Four: Ensuring Quality

Previous themes highlighted the core features, support measures and delivery structures for the new youth training system. This theme sets out a range of policy commitments to ensure that the highest standards of quality are established and maintained for the youth training system.

Quality will be the foundation of the new youth training system. Embedding quality standards and processes will ensure that it is recognised both nationally and internationally by employers, further and higher education providers, young people, parents and guardians for its quality, flexibility and transferability.

The quality model that will underpin the new system will ensure that only providers who achieve prescribed quality standards will be funded to deliver youth training. The system will also be informed by robust data collection analysis and evaluation, and will provide mechanisms for young people to provide qualitative feedback on their experience of training. All commitments outlined here will ensure that the system can be monitored and improved as necessary to serve the needs of young people, employers and the Northern Ireland economy.

A Quality System

Policy Commitment 17	Only providers who achieve prescribed quality standards will be funded to deliver youth training.
This will be delivered through Project K: Quality Assurance Model and Project Q: Delivery Model	

Rigorous quality standards for the providers of training delivering the curriculum are critical for effective professional and technical education and training systems. Such standards set the requirements for engaging young people in a programme of study that is tailored to their needs, integrating their programme of study to the local labour market and securing relevant work-based learning opportunities.

In line with the quality assurance model being established to underpin the new apprenticeships model, all providers of youth training will need to meet set quality standards, demonstrating their ability to deliver all aspects of the youth training system. This quality assurance model may include checking a provider's efforts to ensure equality of opportunity (such as equal access, reasonable adjustments to training delivery and equality of outcomes for young people with disabilities) and a commitment to giving staff appropriate training (for example in disability awareness, potential reasonable adjustments and teaching strategies for engaging with young people with disabilities).

Teaching Standards

Policy Commitment 18	Tutors delivering the non-work-based elements of youth training will be required to have recent experience of their industry and relevant occupational and pedagogical qualifications.
This will be delivered through Project K: Quality Assurance Model	

In addition to providing a robust framework for providers of training, setting clear standards for tutors delivering professional and technical training is fundamental to a high quality system. This relates both to tutors' pedagogical training, as well as to their experience and knowledge in their chosen specialism.

Such an expectation will recognise that requirements for each sector may differ. While some sectors may change at a quicker pace than others, all tutors will still be expected to spend periods of time updating their skills and knowledge of their industry. This will be defined by the relevant sectoral partnership and will ensure that young people receive the best quality teaching, based upon up-to-date knowledge and experience.

A Shared Commitment

Policy Commitment 19	All work-based learning will be underpinned by a clear tripartite agreement between the young person, host employer and the training provider.
This will be delivered through Project K: Quality Assurance Model	

A further key aspect of maintaining consistent high quality in the delivery of work-based learning is that a clear contractual agreement should underpin the relationship between the young person, the training provider and the employer. Employers may make demands on learners' time which will be difficult to manage alongside their training. The new youth training system will use a well-defined contract to resolve issues such as this and also clearly delineate responsibilities to the young person required by both the training provider and the host employer.

This tripartite agreement will not be particularly onerous upon any of the parties, but will be specific and easily understood by all. As a minimum, it may include such information as contact details, rights and responsibilities of each party, agreed hours of attendance, holidays, health and safety requirements, equipment requirements, disciplinary procedures, complaints procedures and identified learning outcomes. The contractual agreement must also ensure that the requirement for flexibility and the need for any required reasonable adjustments for those with additional requirements are included.

Recognising Quality

Policy Commitment 20	A registration and approval process will be introduced for employers participating in the youth training system, and hosted via the central service.
This will be delivered through Project K: Quality Assurance Model	

The youth training system will only be successful if it is recognised as a high quality parallel route to the traditional academic pathway, providing a clear progression route into sustained employment, full-time education and/or training at a higher level.

An essential aspect of maintaining high quality is to make certain that the work-based learning element of youth training meets the requirements of all involved in the system. Following international best practice, employers who agree to offer work-based learning opportunities will be expected to meet and maintain minimum quality standards before they may register with the Department. This will ensure minimum requirements such as employers' liability insurance and health and safety requirements are in place. In addition, it will ensure that the employer understands the expectations upon him/her in relation to the young person's training experience, and that such expectations are met throughout the placement.

The registration process will be supported by industry consultants to help safeguard against it becoming an onerous process for employers, especially small and micro businesses. The central service will then publicise, as a recognised mark of quality, the list of employers delivering all aspects of the youth training system to the required quality. This provides all young people, their

parents and guardians, with reassurance that their work placement is of a high standard and focused on supporting them to achieve their full potential.

This process will increase employers' awareness regarding their responsibilities and clarify the expectations upon them. It will promote best practice, while conferring positive status on quality employers. Additionally, as a continually evolving process, it will also help employers on the list to maintain the high quality standards required by the Department on an ongoing basis.

A Guide to the Workplace

Policy Commitment 21	Workplace buddies will be required to have appropriate recent experience of their industry and undertake introductory training.
This will be delivered through Project K: Quality Assurance Model	

Research has indicated that one-to-one support for a young person while they are in the workplace is vital, with dual mentoring (in both the workplace and training environment) identified as a key ingredient in successful professional and technical education and training systems.

The provision of a workplace buddy is a core component of the new youth training system. At a minimum, every young person in training will have a named individual who is responsible for their development.

Quality standards will be developed for those providing the buddy role to young people in the workplace, both in terms of the introductory training required and their industry experience. The new youth training system will ensure these requirements do not discourage potential host employers or workplace buddies.

Measuring Success

Policy Commitment 22	The youth training system will be underpinned by ongoing robust data collection, analysis and evaluation. It will facilitate regular feedback from participants regarding their experiences of youth training.
This will be delivered through Project R: Data	

The final element of quality assurance, that of data collection and analysis, is key to the on-going monitoring and evaluation, and improvement of the youth training system. Data collection and monitoring will accurately analyse how the new youth training system is working for different groups of young people. This will include specific data collection for young people who face barriers to engagement and progression, such as those leaving care, young people with caring commitments and young people living with disabilities.

Data collection will be directly comparable across all providers. It will include quantitative analysis of qualifications achieved, measurement of employment outcomes and levels of progression into higher level options and a follow-up mechanism to collect data from participants who complete the youth training system, so as to confirm its success for individuals over time.

In addition, qualitative research into the training experiences of young people will be an integral part of the new youth training system. In order to encourage as many young people as possible to provide feedback, in addition to traditional forms of information gathering (such as form completion and workshops), new and innovative methods, such as applications for mobile phones and tablets, will be used.

A new project on data will be established to deliver on the requirements for the new youth training system.

Ensuring Quality: Case Study

The case study below demonstrates how the policy commitments detailed in this theme interact to underpin the quality of the youth training system.

Case study 6: Jeff – a Parent

Jeff's daughter is aged 16 and about to start youth training. Based on his own negative experiences of training when he was younger, Jeff is concerned that the new youth training system represents a 'second-best option' or a 'last resort' and is not convinced of its benefits for his daughter. Jeff researches youth training online and is directed to the central service for apprenticeships and youth training. Clearly shown on the central service is the quality list of employers who have chosen to participate in the youth training system and who endorse the curriculum, many of which Jeff recognises as well-known employers with good reputations. Reading further, he is reassured to note that only providers who have achieved prescribed quality standards are taking part and that his daughter will receive training from qualified tutors with recent experience in their field. Finally, Jeff looks at statistics published by the Department and is encouraged that the system is continually seeking to improve.

7. Way Forward

Next Steps

The new youth training system will form a key part of the wider education and skills landscape in Northern Ireland. Moving forward, the implementation of the strategy will seek to ensure that there are appropriate transitional arrangements between old and new provision across all aspects of implementation. In this way youth training will form part of a seamless range of opportunities for professional education and training that will facilitate progression for all young people.

Enterprise is at the heart of both the new youth training system and the new model of apprenticeships in Northern Ireland. ‘Securing our Success: The Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships’ established a number of key projects to pilot and test the new apprenticeship model, for the purpose of securing implementation by 2016. Many of these projects are equally relevant to the implementation of this youth training strategy, and will be expanded to incorporate and deliver on youth training commitments. This joint implementation across youth training and apprenticeships will ensure best use of the resources available for delivery and will reinforce our focus on seamless progression. These projects are outlined in the implementation plan in the Annex.

In implementing the new system, projects will take into account changes in welfare provision and ensure that their application to Northern Ireland does not distract from our vision, strategy and outcomes, or from our focus on economic growth, integration into the labour market and greater prosperity.

Funding

The Department's 2015/16 budget allocation for its existing youth training programmes at level 2, is approximately £55 million. The Department will seek to maintain this level of funding moving forward.

The Department will continue to fund youth training from its programme funds and is proposing to allocate 40% of its expected European Social Fund allocation for 2014-2020 to the thematic objective 10 – Investing in Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning (approximately €82 million), for apprenticeships and youth training. Total funding of apprenticeships and youth training is projected to be in the region of €205 million for that period, with the Department providing the remaining 60% funding.

To ensure maximum value for money and efficiency the Department will develop a new financial model to underpin the implementation of the new youth training system in 2016.

Key Early Actions: Youth Training Pilots

Delivering a new youth training system is a significant task that will require specialist areas across government, the private sector and the voluntary sector to work together. Given the scale of change, the Department will pilot the key aspects of the new youth training system in advance of formal implementation in September 2016. To deliver this, the Youth Policy and Strategy Division has been successful in securing £7.5 million from the Executive Change Fund to pilot and so test the new apprenticeship and youth training systems in 2015/16.

Youth training pilots will facilitate the testing of our concepts and will ensure that there is integration and cohesiveness between different elements. Pilots will also start the important work of creating new and exciting opportunities for our young people that support the needs of business.

Preliminary pilot activity is advanced in relation to curriculum development. This strategy introduces major changes for the curriculum in terms of content and the key role that employers will play in its formation. Under the new model, the curriculum is fundamental to supporting:

- breadth and rigour to enable labour market portability and progression;
- greater relevance to our economy through employer ownership; and
- simplification of the awards landscape.

In September 2015, pilots will commence to test the formation of the key features articulated in this strategy. The lessons learned from these pilots will help inform the new curriculum design process at level 2 and support the wider introduction of the new youth training system.

Impact Assessments

A Shared Future proofing is attached at Annex A. All projects will factor in a Preliminary Equality Impact Assessment, with a full Equality Impact Assessment and consultation being carried out where appropriate. Policy proofing (for example, in respect of rural proofing and shared future proofing) will also be conducted on projects, where appropriate.

ANNEX A

SHARED FUTURE PROOFING

1. Does the proposed policy promote individuals from different religious, political, racial or other Section 75(1) backgrounds sharing or engaging together?	
Impact: Positive/ Negative/ None	Positive impact.
Qualitative Evidence	<p>Under Priority 1, Growing a Sustainable Economy and Investing in the Future, of the NI Executive’s Programme for Government 2011-15, there is a commitment to “support people (with an emphasis on young people) into employment by providing skills and training”.</p> <p>The youth training system will be open to all young people throughout Northern Ireland regardless of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, marital status and sexual orientation.</p> <p>It will be designed for young people aged 16–24. However, this provision will be an element of the Department for Employment and Learning’s (DEL’s) wider support for all age groups.</p> <p>Structured work-based learning will be an integral element of the youth training system. This will allow young people to engage earlier with shared workplaces.</p> <p>Youth training will be offered across a wide range of occupations to ensure appeal to both male and female participants.</p>

	<p>Incentives will be designed to promote engagement with small and micro businesses which will encourage diversity in the workforce and boost shared workplaces.</p> <p>Specialist support and flexibility will be integrated into the youth training system for individuals with disabilities and those with dependants.</p> <p>The provision of training will be in an integrated setting, both in the workplace and in the training provider’s premises.</p>
<p>Quantitative Evidence</p>	<p>By helping young people transition into sustained employment, youth training will help to promote engagement and sharing by individuals from different backgrounds.</p> <p>Research from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) points to increased numbers of people working in integrated workplaces¹⁴ and increased public support for employers taking steps to engage with sections of the community currently under-represented in their workforce.¹⁵</p>
<p>Possible Mitigating Measures</p>	<p>None required.</p>

¹⁴ Osborne, B. and Shuttleworth, I., Fair Employment in Northern Ireland: a Generation On, Equality Commission, 2004.

¹⁵ Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Do You Mean Me? Discrimination: attitudes and experience in Northern Ireland – Equality Awareness Survey, 2011

2. Does the proposed policy inadvertently create a situation where people categorised in different groups under Section 75(1) backgrounds will be accessing services or facilities on a segregated or separate basis?

<p>Impact: Positive/ Negative/ None</p>	<p>Positive impact</p>
<p>Qualitative Evidence</p>	<p>Access to the youth training system will be open to young people 16–24 years old and inclusive of: religious belief, political opinion, racial group, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, those with dependants and men and women.</p> <p>Additional support will be provided to individuals with barriers to engagement (e.g. young people leaving care, those with caring commitments or those with a disability).</p>
<p>Quantitative Evidence</p>	<p>Currently, only 38% of people with a disability are in employment, compared to 76.4% of those without.¹⁶ Women account for the majority of those unable to engage with the labour market due to caring commitments (60.5% of carers and 97.8% of lone parents).¹⁷ ECNI survey has found strong support (65% of respondents) for increasing the representation of disabled people in the workplace, and similar support for increasing female representation in key roles.¹⁸</p>

¹⁶ Department of Finance and Personnel, Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey, January–March 2014 http://www.detini.gov.uk/lfs_quarterly_supplement_january-march_2014.pdf?rev=0

¹⁷ Department of Finance and Personnel, Client Group Analysis – Summary of Statistics: February 2013, Department for Social Development, 2013

¹⁸ Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Do You Mean Me? Discrimination: attitudes and experience in Northern Ireland – Equality Awareness Survey, 2011

Possible Mitigating Measures	None required.
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3. Does the proposed policy remove or address any barriers to people sharing?	
Impact: Positive/ Negative/ None	Positive impact.
Qualitative Evidence	The youth training system will have additional support and flexibility for individuals with disabilities and those with dependants. Youth training will be offered across a wide range of occupations to ensure appeal to both male and female participants.
Quantitative Evidence	The proportion of total employment in Northern Ireland with low skills (below level 2) is set to fall from a level of 29% in 2005 to 16% (baseline) or 12% (aspirational) by 2020. ¹⁹ By helping young people to achieve at level 2 and progress into higher-level options, youth training will promote greater integration into the labour market for all young people.
Possible Mitigating Measures	Not applicable.

¹⁹ Ibid, page xii

4. Does the proposed policy inadvertently erect any barriers to people sharing?	
Impact: Positive/ Negative/ None	No impact
Qualitative Evidence	The eligibility criteria for the youth training system will be restricted to 16–24 year olds. This will be part of a wider range of interventions to help people enhance skills and gain employment.
Quantitative Evidence	There is evidence that the challenges faced by young people are different from other unemployed groups, and require a primary focus on skills development rather than immediate transition into employment. ²⁰
Possible Mitigating Measures	Provision for alternative age groups such as Steps to Success, mainstream further education and customised training.

²⁰ Gorlich D. et al., Kiel Policy Brief: Youth Unemployment in Europe and the World: Causes, Consequences and Solutions, Kiel Institute for the World Economy, January 2013, http://www.ifw-kiel.de/wirtschaftspolitik/politikberatung/kiel-policy-brief/kpb-2013/KPB_59.pdf , page 2.

ANNEX B: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

It is envisaged that a number of youth training policy commitments will be delivered through existing projects established through 'Securing our Success: The Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships',. These projects will be augmented with new projects designed to deliver on unique aspects of the youth training system.

This table lists the projects for both this strategy and the apprenticeships strategy and illustrates where projects are cross-cutting.

The apprenticeships strategy's projects comprise Projects A–K, along with an additional project that has been commissioned as part of its implementation (Project L – Transitions from current arrangements to the new systems). Projects M – R are new projects and will be established specifically to deliver the new youth training system.

As outlined in the table, the new youth training system will therefore be delivered through a combination of existing projects (A, D, E, G, I and K) with the addition of new projects (M, N, O, P, Q and R).

The objectives and timelines for each of the projects relevant to youth training are outlined below.

Project	July 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – August 2016	September 2016
Theme One: Core Features of the Youth Training System			
A. Legislation and Guidance (previously Components)	Objectives		
	This project will explore the potential policy levers to ensure that the core features defined in the respective reviews of youth training and apprenticeships are secured.		
Policy Commitments	Formulate guidelines and underpinning legislation as appropriate.	Guidelines and legislation as appropriate put in place.	Implementation of guidelines and legislation.
1, 2 and 5			

Project B – Awards/Qualifications – This project was set up to explore options for providing a single award/qualification for apprenticeships for each occupation at each level, ensuring progression to higher-level education and training options, portability within a sector and mobility within the wider economy. This project is now largely being delivered forward through Project M.

Project C – Internationalisation – This project will provide opportunities for placement and exchanges for apprentices by ensuring that international dimensions are considered as apprenticeship awards/qualifications are developed and that links with partner countries across Europe and further afield are established. Whilst the youth training system will include international knowledge exchange opportunities, it is envisaged that they will be through video conferencing and similar facilities, rather than the international placements and exchanges being made available to apprentices. As such, this project does not extend to the youth training system.

Project	July 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – August 2016	September 2016
Theme Two: Supporting Young People			
D. Central Service	<p>Objectives</p> <p>This project will establish a central service, supported by industry consultants, to market, promote and support youth training and apprenticeship provision. It will include an online service to advertise youth training work placements and apprenticeship vacancies, an online portal to inform young people about the range of opportunities available which includes a list of employers who are registered with the youth training system and meet requisite quality standards to deliver work placements. . Building upon the ongoing review of careers, the Careers Service will work in tandem with the new central service to provide impartial advice and guidance for young people considering the youth training and apprenticeship pathway.</p>		
<p>Policy Commitments</p> <p>7, 13 and 14</p>	<p>Central service piloted in tandem with interim Strategic Advisory Forum and sectoral partnerships for youth training and apprenticeships.</p>	<p>Service reviewed to refine new model.</p>	<p>Introduction of central service.</p>

Project	July 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – August 2016	September 2016
Theme Two: Supporting Young People & Theme Three: Delivery and Employer Engagement Structures			
E. Funding Model	Objectives		
	This project will develop the funding model, including the testing of incentives and support for small and micro businesses, the testing of provision of financial support to young people on the youth training system and the wider development of the financial model for the full implementation and launch of the new youth training and apprenticeships models.		
Policy Commitments	Financial model developed, including consideration of tax incentives and HM Revenue and Customs model for youth training and apprenticeships.	New financial model in place for youth training and apprenticeships across all sectors.	Refinement of financial model.
9 and 15	Incentives for small and micro businesses for both youth training and apprenticeships, together with financial support mechanisms for young people on the youth training system, developed, piloted and evaluated.	Incentives for small and micro-businesses and young people piloted, evaluated and established.	Refinement of incentive package for small and micro businesses and young people.
	Support vehicles relevant to youth training and apprenticeships for small and micro businesses and young people developed, piloted and evaluated.	Support vehicles for small and micro-businesses and young people piloted, evaluated and established.	Refinement of support vehicles for small and micro businesses.

Project F – Public Sector - This project will actively seek to open up professional and technical occupations to apprenticeships in the public sector. All youth training work placements fall to Project N (Work-Based Learning) below.

			September 2016
Theme Two: Supporting Young People			
G. Widening Access	Objectives		
	This project will explore support arrangements to assist individuals for transition into youth training at level 2 and apprenticeships at level 3 and examine the potential mechanisms to widen access to youth training and apprenticeships for individuals with disabilities or additional needs.		
Policy Commitments			
10	Support and potential options for widening participation developed and piloted.	Full range of support in place for new model.	Roll-out of new support mechanisms.

Project H – Higher Level Apprenticeships - This project will expand the level at which apprenticeships are offered (levels 3–8) in order to meet the specific needs of employers. This project does not extend to the youth training system as youth training is at level 2.

Project	July 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – August 2016	September 2016
Theme Three: Delivery and Employer Engagement Structures			
I. Governance and Oversight	Objectives		
	This project will expand the Strategic Advisory Forum and sectoral partnerships structures for apprenticeships to include youth training, introducing additional mechanisms where deemed appropriate.		
Policy Commitments	Review current arrangements for the interim Strategic Advisory Forum and establish appropriate youth training arrangements.	Engagement with pilot operation of the forum.	Final arrangements for Strategic Advisory Forum in place.
11 and 12	Review current arrangements for sectoral partnerships and make additions as required by youth training.	New baccalaureate style youth training award and apprenticeships awards/qualifications piloted and further awards/qualifications developed for wider sectors.	Full model in place including new awards/qualifications operating model in place across key sectors informed by demand.

Project J – Developing a Northern Ireland Skills Barometer –This project will develop a skills barometer which will support better matching of skills supply and demand, by providing an indication of future skills shortages. The youth training system and its participants will benefit from the new Northern Ireland Skills Barometer being developed and applied Department-wide. It is not, however, a project that falls to the new youth training system.

Project	July 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – August 2016	September 2016
Theme Four: Ensuring Quality			
K. Quality Assurance Model	Objectives		
	<p>This project will develop and implement a quality assurance model to ensure high quality youth training provision through inspection, rigorous assessment, established criteria for teaching and workplace buddies, and for continuous professional development and ongoing performance monitoring, ensuring complementarity with the apprenticeship quality assurance model. The project will be extended to include a registration and approval process for participating employers, and contractual agreements with participants in the youth training system.</p>		
Policy Commitments 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21	Terms of reference established for youth training and project extended. Quality assurance model established and piloted for both youth training and apprenticeships.	Quality assurance model in place.	Quality assurance implemented.

Project L – Transitions – The objective of this project is to inform the development of appropriate transitional arrangements from the current provision. As it does not deliver policy commitments for the new youth training system it is not included as a youth training project.

The following projects are new projects introduced in light of the outcomes of the youth training review.

Project	July 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – August 2016	September 2016
Theme One: Core Features of the Youth Training System			
M. Curriculum	Objectives		
	This project will explore options for providing a new baccalaureate-style professional and technical award at level 2 equating to a minimum of five GCSEs at Grades A*–C, including English and mathematics qualifications. It will enable progression to sustained employment, higher-level training and education options at level 3, including apprenticeships, portability within a sector and mobility within the wider economy. This project is closely linked with Project I.		
Policy Commitments	Pilot components of the new youth training level 2 awards. Establish the design process for new awards informed by engagement with the Strategic Advisory Forum and sectoral partnership groups.	Further develop new youth training level 2 awards for wider implementation.	Establish new awards for youth training across key sectors that are informed by demand.
2, 3, 4 and 6			

Project	July 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – August 2016	September 2016
Theme One: Core Features of the Youth Training System			
N. Work-Based Learning	<p>Objectives</p> <p>This project will explore options for providing integral structured quality work-based learning to develop skills. It will also explore opportunities for young people on the non employed route to obtain information about different work areas and/or participate in work inspiration activities before selecting an occupational area.</p>		
Policy Commitments 4	Skills requirements developed with the Strategic Advisory Forum and sectoral partnership groups, informed by demand. Potential arrangements for implementation of structured work placements explored and piloted.	New operating model for work placements in place across key sectors, informed by demand linked to central service.	Full range of work based learning opportunities in place.

Project	July 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – August 2016	September 2016
Theme Two: Supporting Young People			
O. Pastoral Support	<p>Objectives</p> <p>This project will devise options for providing support for individuals through pastoral support, which will include a workplace buddy for all participants. This project is closely linked with Project G.</p>		
Policy Commitments 8	<p>Pastoral support mechanisms (including workplace buddies) developed with the Strategic Advisory Forum and sectoral partnership groups. Potential arrangements for implementation of pastoral support explored and piloted.</p>	<p>New pastoral support (including mentoring) model in place.</p>	<p>Full range of pastoral support and mentoring mechanisms in place.</p>

Project	July 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – August 2016	September 2016
Theme Three: Delivery and Employer Engagement Structures			
P. Branding and Marketing	Objectives This project will develop targeted branding and marketing of the new youth training system, with appropriate links to apprenticeships and higher level education.		
Policy Commitments	Branding/marketing options developed with input from the Strategic Advisory Forum and sectoral partnership groups. Testing undertaken and feedback analysed and incorporated where appropriate.	Further feedback analysed and branding rolled out through an advertising campaign.	Review of success of branding and advertising mechanism chosen.
16			

Project	July 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – August 2016	September 2016
Theme Four: Ensuring Quality			
Q. Delivery Model	Objectives		
	This project will analyse and compare the delivery options available to the Department, in order to consider and recommend the most appropriate mechanism for determining the provider base and will establish this high quality provider network by September 2016.		
Policy Commitments	Identification and options analysis to determine preferred delivery model.	Implementation of delivery model.	Provider base established.
17			

Project	July 2015 – March 2016	April 2016 – August 2016	September 2016
Theme Four: Ensuring Quality			
R. Data	Objectives		
	This project will explore options for providing robust data collection, analysis and evaluation including regular feedback from participants of their experiences of training and work-based learning.		
Policy Commitments	Reviewing data requirements and establishing forums and mechanisms for data collection, analysis and evaluation.	New data collection, analysis and evaluation arrangements in place.	Collection, analysis and evaluation of data begins.
22			

THE DEPARTMENT:

Our aim is to promote learning and skills, to prepare people for work and to support the economy.

This document is available in other formats upon request.

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