

## DEL QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE – A REFRESHED ACTION PLAN (2016)

### A response to the key issues raised in the DEL Performance Report

1. Annually, the Department for Employment and Learning (the Department) publishes a detailed quantitative assessment of performance across its key programmes and provision. The latest report, the sixth annual Performance Analysis report, was published in January 2016. The Department also publishes a Quality and Performance Action Plan to complement its annual performance report. The following Action Plan monitors the progress that is being made by the Department against the actions identified as a consequence of previous Performance Analysis reports but also updates and refreshes those actions so that they remain fully focused on the enhancement of performance. This body of work is an important element of the Department's quality improvement strategy, '*Success through Excellence*', which sets out its commitment to evidence based policy development and high quality service delivery. The Department is committed to ensuring that the provision it funds is of a high quality, and that those who provide these services on its behalf deliver high performance standards.
2. The Department has put in place an extensive framework for monitoring and delivering quality and performance across its programmes. A number of key examples are set out below:
  - a) Quality and Performance Monitoring in Further Education

In the Further Education Sector, the main components of the Department's performance monitoring are: quarterly health checks; the annual production of learner retention and achievement data, down to individual course level; the annual College Development Planning process; and the Quality Managers' Forum. The quality of each college's provision is subject to inspections carried out by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) as commissioned by the Department. Where poor provision is identified, progress towards improvement is monitored through a series of follow-up inspection activities. Each college is also required to submit to the Department an annual self-evaluation report and quality improvement plan, the accuracy of which is confirmed through a short inspection, also by the Education and Training Inspectorate.
  - b) Quality and Performance Monitoring in Higher Education

The Department charges the independent Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) to undertake the quality assurance of Higher Education in Northern Ireland including that delivered through the six Further Education Colleges (HE in FE). The QAA's core business is to

externally review the quality and standards of UK higher education. It does this by auditing the way in which each university and college manages the overall quality and standards of its provision. It reviews the academic standards, academic quality and the quality of learning opportunities. The focused work of the QAA is further complemented by regular accountability meetings between senior staff in the Department and the local higher education institutions. These provide an opportunity to discuss issues on the performance, operation and accountability of each institution.

c) Quality and Performance Monitoring of Training and Employment Programmes

The Department monitors contracts on a regular basis to ensure training suppliers (and lead contractors for Steps 2 Success) are adhering to the terms of their contract and to the operational guidelines for the programme. It also works closely with the ETI to schedule inspection activities on an annual basis, with the aim of having each supplier inspected in a three year cycle. As with further education, poor provision is subject to a series of follow up inspection activity. Each supplier is also required to submit an annual self evaluation report and quality improvement plan, to which the Inspectorate award a level of confidence.

3. The Department places a high priority on the quality of provision across further education, training and employment programmes. Where poor provision is identified, each provider is afforded an opportunity to improve. They must submit a detailed improvement plan to the Department outlining how they intend to address the areas of weakness identified. Improvement plans are monitored by the Inspectorate, and follow up inspection activities are undertaken to re-grade any substandard areas of provision. As a result of these processes, almost all colleges and suppliers address effectively weaknesses in provision and most demonstrate improvement. The Department monitors the sustainability of improvement through the annual self-evaluation process, referred to above, and through contract monitoring activities, where appropriate. Where a provider fails to make the necessary improvements within the agreed timescale, the Department considers terminating the contract.
4. The latest DEL Performance Analysis report provides an update on a range of important performance indicators right across the spectrum of DEL provision, reflecting its commitments around skills, employment and innovation. It highlights that outputs on measures such as, for example, participation on DEL programmes overall, 'Narrow' STEM participation in HE, FE college performance on retention, achievement and success rates, Essential Skills Level 2 enrolments and DEL innovation measures have been favourable, but challenges remain. It is in response to these challenges that the Department has developed this action plan, to complement and strengthen its existing quality and performance framework. This action plan monitors progress on the implementation of actions already identified and sets out the work the Department will take forward to address remaining challenges.

5. The Quality and Performance Action Plan will continue to be monitored regularly and an update on progress will be published as part of the Department's annual performance reporting cycle.

## A. Skills

### A.1. Meeting the skill needs of the local economy

Key Issue	Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report	Progress Against 2014 planned action	Further Actions Planned from 2015	Timescale	Responsible Divisions
<p>The 'Success through Skills' strategic targets are unlikely to be met.</p> <p>There is an issue of progression mainly from Level 1-2 to Level 3-4.</p> <p>For Essentials Skills, the achievement rate across all subjects is averaging 70%, lower than other areas but has been lower at 60% for ICT.</p>	<p>Introduce through the next (2013/14) College Development Planning (CDP) process a Quality Performance Adjustment process that penalises colleges financially for poor retention and achievement performance.</p> <p>Project 10 of the Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland - 'Graduating to Success' – will include a pilot to increase part time provision in bachelor degrees at selected colleges.</p> <p>The Department is currently developing a revised strategy for further education in Northern Ireland, and quality and performance will be one of</p>	<p>QPA fully implemented as part of the CDP process for the 2013/14 and 2014/15 years.</p> <p>During 2014 and 2015 two colleges (SRC and SWC) conducted pilot exercises to develop on-line learning materials to deliver provision at level 4 and above in a blended way.</p> <p>The new FE strategy was the subject of public consultation between July and October 2015.</p>	<p>The QPA is applied to all areas of funded college provision, with the exception of Essential Skills enrolments. It will be used in all future annual CDP processes.</p> <p>The final FE strategy, which takes account of comments received through the consultation, will be published in January 2016. The strategy includes an 'Excellence' section which deals with a number of aspects of quality, and which includes four policy commitments. The strategy emphasises the importance of learner progression, including the need to monitor more closely learner progression and destinations.</p> <p>In December 2015, the</p>	<p>2015/16 CDP process</p> <p>January 2016 onwards</p>	<p>Further Education</p> <p>Further Education &amp; Youth Policy and Strategy</p>

Key Issue	Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report	Progress Against 2014 planned action	Further Actions Planned from 2015	Timescale	Responsible Divisions
	<p>the main themes in the strategy.</p> <p>DEL has been managing a media campaign to promote Foundation Degrees. Aimed in particular at employers and those already employed to encourage up-skilling in the workforce by undertaking a Foundation degree on a part-time basis.</p>	<p>Foundation Degree campaign has ended. It was successful in promoting additional enrolments and exceeded its target for 2015.</p>	<p>Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) published the first annual Further Education Leavers Survey.</p> <p>The introduction of the new youth training system at level 2, and the new apprenticeship system, will create a clearer progression route from level 2 to level 3 learning and beyond.</p> <p>The Essential Skills strategy, which is aimed at improving levels of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in the Northern Ireland population, is being refreshed. In addition, the Department of Education is reviewing GCSEs in English and mathematics.</p> <p>Updating Departmental Skills Barometer to identify future skill needs for the economy</p>	<p>April 2016</p>	<p>Strategy European &amp; Employment Relations</p>

## A.2. STEM – Building the Supply of STEM skills

Key Issue	Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report	Progress Against 2014 planned action	Further Actions Planned from 2015	Timescale	Responsible Divisions
<p>The Northern Ireland Executive is committed, through its STEM Strategy - <i>Success through STEM</i>, to building the supply of STEM skills. This commitment is reflected also in the Executive's Programme for Government and forms a central aspect of its Economic and Skills Strategies. Nevertheless, the latest DEL Annual Performance report indicated that more remains to be done to achieve the Executive's ambitions in this important area.</p> <p>There is a gender imbalance in 'Narrow' STEM subjects which tend to be more male dominated with no discernible trend in the proportion of women enrolments in 'Narrow' STEM over the last decade in HE. The gender imbalance is also apparent in FE.</p> <p>There looks to be a gender imbalance across subjects chosen by students enrolled in HE in FE.</p>	<p>The Department is implementing a number of actions outlined within the STEM strategy. These actions are complemented by the actions contained within the Department's sectoral action plans in ICT, Advanced Manufacturing and Food and Drink Processing.</p> <p>Actions currently being taken forward as a result of this work include the continuation of the 'Bring IT On' campaign and 'Tasty Careers', the provision of 1,350 additional undergraduate and 350 PhD places in areas of economic relevance, including STEM, by 2015/16, creation of industry backed STEM scholarships and further tranches of the software</p>	<p>The Food and Drink Skills Group has taken forward the Tasty Careers promotional campaign to inform parents, young people and teachers about the careers opportunities available across the sector.</p> <p>A pilot Food Engineering Apprenticeship was developed and launched in January 2014 to help address the lack of engineering skills in the industry. A Leaders in Industry for Food and Drink programme was developed in conjunction with the William J Clinton Leadership Institute at QUB and launched in February 2014.</p> <p>The Food and Drink Skills Group widened its membership to include the farming sector in line with the recommendations in</p>	<p>The Department is currently undertaking a stock take and refresh of the STEM Strategy. It is anticipated that findings will be presented to the Minister in early 2016.</p>	Early 2016	Skills & Industry
			<p>A further iteration of the Bring It On campaign is planned.</p>	March 2016	Skills & Industry
			<p>The 4<sup>th</sup> cohort of the public/private sector ICT Apprenticeship will take place from September.</p>	January 2016	Youth Policy & Strategy
			<p>Maintain the level of additional PhD places at 234 for 2015/16. Due to budgetary constraints it will not be possible to increase these any further during Academic Year 2015/16.</p>	Academic Year 2015/16	Higher Education
			<p>While, due to budgetary constraints, 540 undergraduate places were subsequently cut in 2015/16, the majority of these were not in STEM</p>	Academic Year 2016/17	Higher Education

Key Issue	Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report	Progress Against 2014 planned action	Further Actions Planned from 2015	Timescale	Responsible Divisions
	<p>Testers Academy, Higher Level Apprentices in ICT and Engineering and the public/ private sector ICT Apprenticeship.</p> <p>The Department will consider if, and how, further education colleges could be incentivised to increase the number of enrolments in STEM areas.</p> <p>Roll out STEM USA pilot scheme</p>	<p>the Going for Growth strategy.</p> <p>With regard to the 350 PhD places in areas of economic relevance by 2015/16, the Department introduced 234 places by 2014/15. In addition, 1,419 additional undergraduate places were provided by academic year 2014/15.</p> <p>A STEM funding weighting of 0.5 was introduced for the 2014/15 academic year. This weighting was to highlight the importance the Department places on STEM subjects. This provides a further incentive for colleges to ensure students have sufficient opportunities in provision which includes science, technology, engineering and mathematics.</p> <p>Unable to progress due to budget restrictions.</p>	<p>subjects. Bids for funding to reverse these cuts will be made in the new Spending Review period.</p> <p>The further education funding model will be reviewed as part of the implementation of the new further education strategy.</p>	<p>Implementation of the strategy will commence in 2016.</p>	<p>Further Education</p>

Key Issue	Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report	Progress Against 2014 planned action	Further Actions Planned from 2015	Timescale	Responsible Divisions
	<p>During financial year 2014/15 Assured Skills will work in support of Invest NI's Investment Strategy by contributing to 1,100 jobs, through the provision of bespoke training support, by March 2015.</p> <p>Over the next 2 years we will deliver a number of actions to ensure the new system of apprenticeships is in place by September 2016. This will include the establishment of sector partnerships to develop and agree new content/curriculum and the piloting of new Higher Level Apprenticeships in priority economic areas including STEM occupations.</p> <p>Following a period of public consultation, a</p>	<p>During 2014/15 a total of 2,073 jobs were promoted through the Assured Skills programme.</p> <p>In advance of implementation of the new system, the Department is undertaking a series of higher level and level 3 apprenticeship pilots to test the high level components of the new system, including the development of new curriculum.</p> <p>'Generating our Success: The Northern Ireland</p>	<p>During financial year 2015/16 Assured Skills will work in support of Invest NI's Investment Strategy by contributing to 830 jobs, through the provision of bespoke training support, by March 2016</p>	<p>31 March 2016</p>	<p>Further Education</p>



Key Issue	Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report	Progress Against 2014 planned action	Further Actions Planned from 2015	Timescale	Responsible Divisions
	<p>final strategy document and implementation plan for a new youth training system will be published in early 2015. The system will be fully operational by 2016.</p>	<p>Strategy for Youth Training', published June 2015, aims to establish a new system of professional and technical learning for all young people, aged 16-24, requiring training at level 2 (broadly equivalent to GCSE).</p> <p>In advance of the new system being introduced from September 2016, the Department is currently undertaking a series of youth training pilots to test the high level components of the new system, including the development of new curriculum.</p>			

### A.3. Tackling variability in retention, achievement and course completion rates.

Key Issue	Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report	Progress Against 2014 planned action	Further Actions Planned from 2015	Timescale	Responsible Divisions
<p>Retention, achievement and course completion rates across the Department's skills and training provision are a key indicator of wider quality and performance. There has been significant and sustained improvement in this area yet some variability remains in performance across providers.</p> <p>AppsNI achievement rates at 72% (level 2) and 66% (level 3) look lower than other areas (e.g. HE in FE and FE).</p> <p>DEL clients from deprived areas are more represented in work related provision and underrepresented in HE provision.</p>	<p>The Department will continue to challenge colleges to improve their retention and achievement performance, through, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• annual CDP process;</li> <li>• annual quality performance adjustment (financial);</li> <li>• annual publication of colleges' retention and achievement performance;</li> <li>• benchmarking between 6 FE colleges in Northern Ireland; and</li> <li>• consider how to benchmark with FE colleges in the rest of the UK.</li> </ul> <p>The Quality Performance Adjustment process outlined under A.1. is designed specifically to encourage and reward</p>	<p>QPA fully implemented. Annual college performance reviewed through CDP process. The Departments Statisticians produce annual published reports on learner retention and achievement.</p> <p>The QPA has now been fully implemented in a majority of areas in further education and is now an integral part of the budget</p>	<p>The Department will continue to challenge colleges to improve their retention and achievement performance, through the annual CDP process; annual quality performance adjustment (financial); and annual publication of colleges' retention and achievement performance.</p>	On going	Further Education
			<p>The Department will require all providers of higher education to provide annual Widening Access and Participation Plans regardless of whether the higher level fees are charged or not.</p>	2015/16	Higher Education
			<p>Institutions will be required to undertake formal evaluation of their WP activities using the Kirkpatrick Model or similar.</p>	2016	Higher Education

Key Issue	Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report	Progress Against 2014 planned action	Further Actions Planned from 2015	Timescale	Responsible Divisions
	<p>colleges to increase further their already high levels of retention and achievement. As indicated above, the Department is currently developing a revised strategy for further education in Northern Ireland, and quality and performance will be one of the main themes in the strategy.</p> <p><i>Access to Success</i> – the integrated regional strategy for widening participation in Higher Education – will require each of Northern Ireland’s higher education providers, (including HE in FE), to produce a detailed annual Widening Access and Participation Plan (WAPP). The strategy seeks to put in place a student centred approach with tailored support mechanisms to ensure</p>	<p>setting and college development planning process.</p> <p>WAPP approved for all six FE Colleges for 2016-17.</p>			

Key Issue	Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report	Progress Against 2014 planned action	Further Actions Planned from 2015	Timescale	Responsible Divisions
	the successful retention and progression of students from widening participation backgrounds.				
	<p>Training Programmes - To use the individual supplier performance data more effectively to monitor key performance indicators and ensure suppliers are meeting and exceeding targets.</p> <p>Address recurrent theme of weaknesses in leadership and management through requesting individual suppliers to present action plan to SID representatives outlining how they will address issues and improve performance.</p>	<p>Individual monitoring data, prepared by PIAB, used to inform Case Conference process and follow-up discussions with individual suppliers.</p> <p>Leadership and management deficiencies are identified through inspection mechanisms and where identified must be addressed in the quality improvement plan submitted to the Department. This is reviewed through subsequent follow up inspection work and annual scrutiny inspections.</p>	<p>Further refinement of monitoring data format.</p> <p>Case Conferences.</p> <p>Revision of 'Improving Quality: Raising Standards.'</p> <p>Revision of Departmental Quality Improvement Strategy.</p>	<p>Dec 2015</p> <p>April 2016</p> <p>April 2016</p> <p>December 2016</p>	<p>Skills and Industry Division</p>

## B. The Employment Agenda

### B.1. Supporting people into employment by providing skills and training

Key Issue	Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report	Progress Against 2014 planned action	Further Actions Planned from 2015	Timescale	Responsible Divisions
<p>The desire to increase employment is central to the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy which sets a longer term strategic goal of increasing the employment rate in Northern Ireland so that, by 2030, it exceeds the average for the UK regions. In response to the downturn and to evidence from the Annual Performance report there is a particular need to focus on keeping young people close to the labour market and to move them into employment.</p> <p>Youth unemployment remains a problem for NI as a whole.</p>	<p>The Steps 2 Success programme to 'go live'</p> <p>The Department is currently developing the specification for an 'Into Work Skills Support Contract' for use by Employment Service front line staff providing flexible external provision to that will help job ready clients find work before they become mandated to enter Steps 2 Success.</p>	<p>The Steps 2 Success employment programme was launched on 20 October 2014. Delivery is ongoing.</p> <p>The renamed Into Work Training Support provision was launched in April 2015. This provision is being delivered by the 6 FE Colleges.</p> <p>At the end of November 2014 and in light of the funding pressures estimated at that time, the Minister took the decision to pause entry to the scheme with the effect of ceasing new starts at the end of February 2015.</p>	<p>Continue to implement Steps 2 Success.</p> <p>The Youth Employment Scheme Work Experience Programme was introduced on 3 August 2015. It will offer 2517 high quality work experience placement opportunities to job ready unemployed 18-24 year olds across private, public and community and voluntary sectors in 2015/16.</p> <p>A 26 week Employer Subsidy payable to employers who recruit a young person aged 18-24 who has been unemployed for more than thirteen weeks was introduced for eligible young people who start work from the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015.</p>	<p>2015/16</p> <p>To end March 2015</p>	<p>Employment Service</p> <p>Employment Service</p>

Key Issue	Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report	Progress Against 2014 planned action	Further Actions Planned from 2015	Timescale	Responsible Divisions
	<p>The Youth Employment Scheme was launched in July 2012. Backed by a 3 year investment of £31 million, the Scheme will provide work experience, skills development and employment opportunities for 18 to 24 year old unemployed young people.</p> <p>During the financial year 2014/15 we intend to undertake further academies in DATA, software professional course, analytical training and sales &amp; marketing.</p>	<p>The 3 year target (12,600) to secure opportunities was exceeded by 25% (15,720).</p> <p>Almost 7,600 young people started the scheme with over 3,400 progressing into employment.</p> <p>During 2014/15 a total of 6 capacity building academies were undertaken in the following areas, Data Analytics, Software Professional, Software Testers and Export Sales &amp; Marketing</p>	<p>During the financial year 2015/16 we intend to undertake 7 academies in export sales &amp; marketing, welding, animation, gaming and financial services.</p> <p>The Enterprise Allowance Scheme, that was paused in July 2015, was unpaused with effect from 30 November 2015. This will offer clients aged 18 and over an allowance of £65 a week for 52 weeks to commence self employment provided they leave the unemployed register.</p>	<p>31 March 2016</p> <p>March 2016</p>	<p>Further Education</p> <p>SEERD</p>

Key Issue	Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report	Progress Against 2014 planned action	Further Actions Planned from 2015	Timescale	Responsible Divisions
European Social Fund Programme is designed to increase the employability of those most marginalised from the labour force.	No actions included in 2014 Action Plan.	No actions included in 2014 Action Plan.	<p>Introduction of DB2014 database, to monitor participation and progress rates</p> <p>Rolling programme of ETI inspections to assess quality of provision.</p>	Ongoing. Inspections began in October 2015.	Skills and Industry

## B.2. Supporting people in employment by providing skills and training

Key Issue	Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report	Progress Against 2014 planned action	Further Actions Planned from 2015	Timescale	Responsible Divisions
<p>Participation levels in Management and Leadership programmes have fallen and the MAP scheme has not taken on cases since April 2015. Funding has been reduced.</p>	<p>New key issue so no planned action from 2014.</p>	<p>New key issue so no planned action from 2014.</p>	<p>The fall in participation reflects an agreed change in the level of funding support from 100% to 50% with consequent anticipated drop in demand. In addition, it has been agreed that existing arrangements for the delivery of programmes such as MAP, INTRO and MLDP are coming to an end, or have ended.</p> <p>This is set within the context of the Department having commenced a broad Review of Management and Leadership provision in Northern Ireland, and also the creation of the new Department for the Economy. As a result no new contractual arrangements for management and leadership training have been entered</p>	<p>Review to complete by end of March 2016.</p>	<p>Skills and Industry</p>



Key Issue	Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report	Progress Against 2014 planned action	Further Actions Planned from 2015	Timescale	Responsible Divisions
			into.		

**B.3. Tackling economic inactivity through skills and training**

<b>Key Issue</b>	<b>Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report</b>	<b>Progress Against 2014 planned action</b>	<b>Further Actions Planned from 2015</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsible Divisions</b>
<p>The Executive has committed to develop and implement a strategy to reduce economic inactivity in Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>A revised draft Economic Inactivity Strategy will be presented to the Executive for approval later this year.</p>	<p>'Enabling Success' strategy was published on 20 April 2015</p>	<p>The implementation of the strategy, over the proposed 15 year period, is based on 11 key projects, to be managed and resourced on a cross-departmental basis. However, due to the ongoing pressure on budgets, and the subsequent absorption of these pressures through Departmental baselines, The Enabling Success strategy remains largely unresourced and implementation cannot commence until adequate resources are secured.</p>	<p>Awaiting resources.</p>	<p>Youth Policy and Strategy</p>

## C. The Innovation Agenda

### C.1. Support Knowledge Transfer from the NI Research Base

Key Issue	Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report	Progress Against 2014 planned action	Further Actions Planned from 2015	Timescale	Responsible Divisions
The higher education and further education sectors have the potential to significantly affect the level of innovative capacity through their role as knowledge-generators.	The Department will continue to support the Northern Ireland universities' engagement with business and the wider community through the implementation of NI HEIF 4. The new FE strategy will provide an opportunity to review FE colleges' contribution in this area.	<p>Increased funding for NI HEIF was secured in full from the start of Academic Year 14/15 i.e. from August 2014 and is continuing to be implemented.</p> <p>In the most recent academic year for which data is available (AY 14/15), NI HEIF funding enabled the universities, <i>inter alia</i>, to lever £5.949m through consultancy projects and a further £1.352m from Intellectual Property income through the licensing to companies of new technologies and know-how. With respect to the further</p>	The Department will continue to support the Northern Ireland universities' engagement with business and the wider community through the ongoing implementation of NI HEIF 4.	Academic Year 2015/16	Higher Education

Key Issue	Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report	Progress Against 2014 planned action	Further Actions Planned from 2015	Timescale	Responsible Divisions
		<p>metric of numbers of business interactions with SMEs, this data will be available after December 2015.</p> <p>In terms of overall impact, the most recent data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency show that Northern Ireland universities secured £93 million from business and community interaction in AY 2013/14 (representing 2.4% of the UK total). This is a strong performance considering the local economy represents 2.2% of UK economic output or Gross Value Added and accounts for 2% of full time equivalent academics in</p>			

Key Issue	Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report	Progress Against 2014 planned action	Further Actions Planned from 2015	Timescale	Responsible Divisions
		the UK.			

**C.2. Encourage increased HE / FE / business collaboration**

<b>Key Issue</b>	<b>Planned Action from 2014 Action Plan Report</b>	<b>Progress Against 2014 planned action</b>	<b>Further Actions Planned from 2015</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsible Divisions</b>
<p>The university sector, in collaboration with the further education sector should continue to offer access to technology and knowledge capital to meet the development needs of business.</p>	<p>The Department will continue to support coordinated knowledge transfer provision between the universities and further education colleges focussed on the meeting the needs of Northern Ireland businesses and the wider community through the implementation of Connected 3. The new FE strategy will provide an opportunity to review FE colleges' contribution in this area.</p>	<p>The Connected team achieved all its key targets for financial year 2014/15 (year 1), including generating 480 enquiries from business (against a target of 120), resulting in 147 completed projects (against a target of 103) with 95 of these projects having been undertaken with companies having no previous engagement with the universities or colleges (against a target of 23).</p>	<p>The Department will continue to support coordinated knowledge exchange activities between the universities and further education colleges focussed on the meeting the needs of Northern Ireland businesses and the wider community through the ongoing implementation of Connected 3.</p>	<p>Financial Year 2015/16</p>	<p>Higher Education &amp; Further Education</p>