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Preparing for Success
2015-2020
A Strategy for Careers
Education and Guidance

MARCH 2016



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FOREWORD

The employment opportunities in our community and our economy continue to widen, the levels of educational attainment rise, and the range and depth of the skills in our society continue to improve. But these factors need to work together if we are to see success. World-class careers education and guidance is central to that effort.

The vision for our education system is to support every young person to fulfil his or her potential, and that includes their potential as contributors to the economy and society. Work is rewarding, not just financially but in bringing purpose and focus to the individual. An education system that puts the learner at the centre of all provision must always bear in mind that it is in the best interests of young people that they find employment.

Economic growth comes about through our young people and our working-age population being ready and able to contribute to it. They need to be able to identify clear pathways that will take them through school to further study and training, and on to employment. Good careers provision will help them to know what routes are available to them, and what will be required of them to progress. They need to know what they aspire to do, what they can do, and what they need to do. Careers advisers and careers teachers have a pivotal role to play in ensuring that our young people are aware of qualifications and skills most needed for the 21st-century economy. As well as ensuring young people have knowledge about the world they live in and the employment opportunities available, teachers also have a key role in ensuring that young people develop the necessary skills required to understand and navigate the world of work throughout their life, and develop their knowledge of and understanding of themselves as individuals to allow them to learn how to make choices that enable them to meet their full potential.



Rebalancing and rebuilding the economy remains the Executive's top priority. In achieving these goals, we must recognise that our main asset is our people, and it is their talents and skills that will transform our economy, increase employment, improve social mobility and raise productivity. There is no doubt that equipping people with the skills they need is at the very heart of delivering a prosperous future for individuals, businesses and the economy. There is an ongoing imperative to closely match supply and demand for skills, to bring people closer to the labour market and to help them secure and sustain meaningful employment.

There has never before been such a depth and breadth of provision available to help every individual succeed. Over the past few years our Departments have extended the options and pathways available to young people through compulsory schooling and beyond. That richness of provision must not be lost to young people because they are not helped to access it; our careers teachers and careers advisers are there to open up opportunity.

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A high-quality careers education and guidance system is also crucial in helping young people emerge from school, college, university or training more fully rounded and ready for the world of work. They need to know what they can expect in the employment market, and to have confidence that they will be able to take their place there.

Good careers education and guidance also make a significant contribution to social mobility and social justice. One way we can help eradicate unfairness and disadvantage from our society is to ensure that individuals can identify and then overcome the barriers which might hinder them from progressing in education and employment.

We know that young people who are uncertain or unrealistic about career ambitions are three times more likely to spend significant periods of time not in education, employment or training (NEET). It is important to our society that we do not leave these young people behind, but instead make sure that they have the opportunity and guidance to make their way to the workplace.

While sound careers advice and guidance is undoubtedly crucial for young people, the right guidance is no less important to adults. The impact of changing economic circumstances means that there will be a change in the skills requirements of our workforce. We need to ensure that our workforce is appropriately skilled as this has a crucial role to play in raising employment, improving productivity and supporting the local economy.

Access to good careers guidance throughout adult life enables individuals to clarify their aspirations for work, to understand the options open to them and to take control of and make informed decisions in terms of job and career change, training, promotion, flexible working and retirement.



We are grateful to the teachers, principals, governors and careers advisers for the significant work done with both young people and adults since *Preparing for Success* was published in 2009.

The partnership working approach has been effective and now a great many more young people are availing of advice and guidance than ever before. The numbers of adults accessing the Careers Service has also increased considerably over this period.

We are also grateful to the Assembly Committee for Employment and Learning for the extensive report following its inquiry into careers which issued in October 2013. The findings of the Inquiry formed the basis of the independent review we commissioned during 2014. The refreshed strategy and action plan outlines how we intend to address the issues raised by the Committee report, the independent review report, and subsequent reports from employers' representatives bodies.

We have preserved the overarching strategy of having a shared careers system provided through schools and the Careers Service. And we have updated the action plan to deliver that strategy. Key commitments include the establishment of a Careers Advisory Forum; the development of an accountability and quality assurance system so that individuals, parents, employers and other stakeholders know what they can expect from the careers system; the development of a central work experience website and advertising system; the development of delivery mechanisms to make the best use of technology; and fully supporting teachers and advisers to develop the skills and knowledge needed to deliver an effective and efficient careers education and guidance system.

We both believe that careers education and guidance is at the heart of what both our Departments are striving to achieve. We seek to promote social renewal by enabling more young people and adults to realise their aspirations of getting on in life, and to support growth and productivity at every level. Effective, high-quality careers education and guidance is indispensable to achieving these aims.



Stephen Farry, MLA

MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING



John O'Dowd, MLA

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This refreshed strategy provides the future direction of Careers education and guidance for the next five years and sets out the vision, aims, policy commitments and key actions to ensure delivery.

It builds on the Preparing for Success Strategy 2009 – 2014, published on 27th January 2009: <https://www.delni.gov.uk/publications/preparing-success>

The overall vision is that through the implementation of the Careers Strategy and associated action plan young people and adults are able to develop the skills and confidence to realise their potential and follow the career path which suits them best, enabling them to contribute to their community and to support economic development and social prosperity.

Aim

The overall aim of the strategy is to support individuals to make appropriate decisions, through developing them as effective careers decision-makers, leading to increased and appropriate participation in education, training and employment, and thereby contributing both to the fulfilment of the individual's potential and to a rebalancing of labour market supply and demand.

Policy Commitments

Building on progress made under the joint DEL and DE Careers strategy 2009-2014, both Departments will work in partnership to improve the careers system.



The strategy is summarised under five policy commitments.

Policy Commitment 1 - Accountability and Quality Assurance Framework

The careers system will have an accountability and quality assurance framework to ensure delivery of high quality careers services and improve transparency. This includes the introduction of a statutory duty to ensure the provision of impartial careers guidance.

Policy Commitment 2 - E-delivery and Labour Market Information

Access to careers services will be improved through the use of new and innovative delivery channels, including online web chat and social media to allow clients to access services at a time and place that meets their needs, improving customer satisfaction and cost efficiency. This will include on line robust user friendly and up to date labour market information.

Policy Commitment 3 - Work Experience

Work experience for young people, schools and employers will be improved to ensure equality of opportunity and improve the administrative process of organising work experience opportunities.

Policy Commitment 4 - Accessing Impartial Advice

Access to impartial advice will be maintained and improved, including offering face to face impartial advice to young people at key transition stages, providing additional support to those at risk of becoming disengaged and those with barriers; and providing more advice to parents.

Policy Commitment 5 – Recording Achievements and Experience (e-portfolio)

Young people should have access to an e-portfolio to record activities undertaken to improve their employability including work experience, voluntary and part-time work, careers learning, sporting achievements, and other relevant extra-curricular activities alongside educational qualifications.



Key Actions 2015-2017

To deliver against the five policy commitments DEL and DE have developed a joint action plan. The action plan details the key actions to be taken forward over the next two years (Annex B).

This action plan will be reviewed, extended and developed over the lifetime of the Strategy.

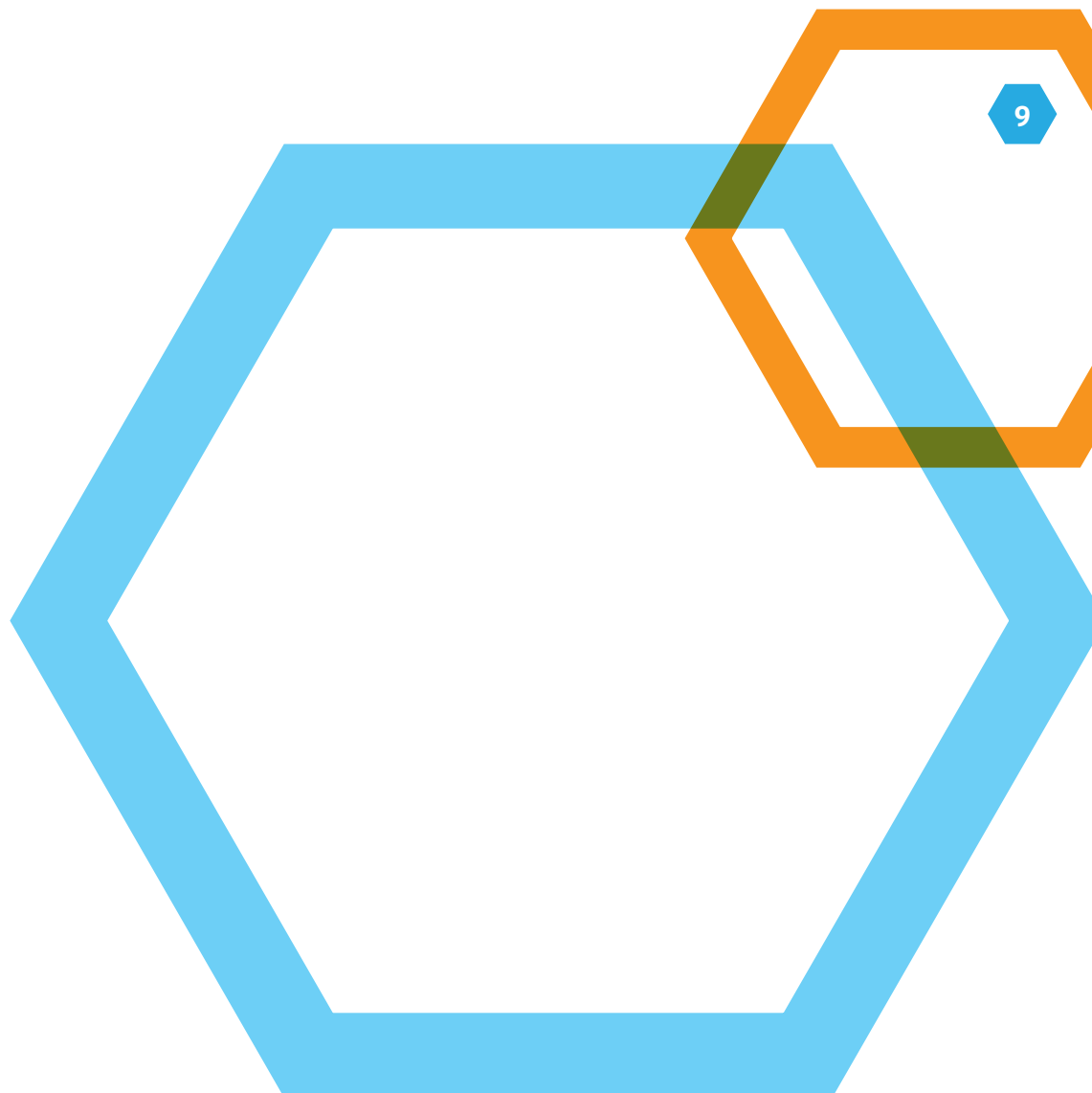


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1. INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the strategy for Careers Education and Guidance for the next five years, taking into account the recommendations arising from the Independent Careers Review (2014)¹, the Assembly Committee Inquiry into Careers in Northern Ireland (2013)² and other recent publications³.

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It considers the policy context and changes in the economic environment, progresses the key aspects of the strategy for 2009-2014, and sets out the refreshed vision, aims and policy commitments for 2015-2020.

- 1 Committee for Employment and Learning (2013). *Inquiry into Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance in Northern Ireland*. NIA Employment and Learning Committee Report 141/11-15. <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Committees/Employment-and-Learning/Reports/Inquiry-into-Careers-Education-Information-Advice-and-Guidance-in-Northern-Ireland/>
- 2 Careers Review (2014). A report by an independent panel of experts from education and employers on careers education and guidance in Northern Ireland www.delni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/Careers%20Review%202014%20Final.pdf
- 3 CBI (2013). *Changing the Pace*. CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey 2013. CBI (2014). Evaluation of Education and Employer Partnerships in Northern Ireland. Confederation of British Industry NI. http://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2119176/education_and_skills_survey_2013.pdf

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2 PREPARING FOR SUCCESS 2009-2014

In January 2009, after a comprehensive public consultation, the Department of Education (DE) and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) published *Preparing for Success – A Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy*⁴ to cover the period 2009-2014. The aim of the strategy was to develop effective career decision-makers leading to increased and appropriate participation in education, training and employment, and to support the implementation of DE's Entitlement Framework policy and DEL's Skills Strategy *Success through Skills – Transforming Futures*⁵.

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Preparing for Success 2009-2014 was a joint strategy, as the responsibility for the policy and delivery of the career system is shared between DE and DEL.

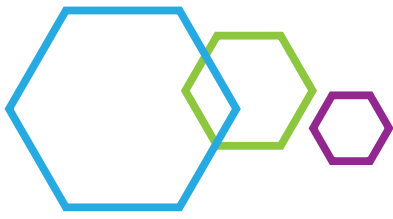
DE is responsible for the policy and delivery of **careers education**⁶:

- Careers Education is the discrete provision which enables learners to develop their knowledge, understanding, skills and experience of opportunities, to manage their career development, and make relevant informed choices, ensuring successful transition into education, training or employment and become lifelong learners. Careers education includes taught timetabled provision which includes meaningful opportunities for progressive personal career planning; realistic and meaningful cross curricular opportunities for development of employability skills; and opportunities for planned and relevant work-related learning experience.

4 Department of Education & Department for Employment and Learning (2009). *Preparing for Success: Career Education, Information, Advice and Guidance*. <https://www.delni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/Preparing%20for%20Success-Strategy%20and%20Implementation%20Plan.pdf>

5 Department for Employment and Learning (2011). *Skills Strategy Success through Skills – Transforming Futures* <https://www.delni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/Success%20through%20Skills%20Transforming%20Futures.pdf>

6 Department of Education & Department for Employment and Learning (2009). *Preparing for Success: Career Education, Information, Advice and Guidance*, definition of careers guidance page 4



DEL through its Careers Service is responsible for the policy and delivery of **careers guidance**⁷:

- Career guidance refers to services intended to assist people, of any age and at any point throughout their lives to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. Career guidance helps people to reflect on their ambitions, interests, qualifications and abilities. It helps them to understand the labour market and education systems, and to relate this to what they know about themselves. Comprehensive career guidance tries to teach people to plan and make decisions about work and learning. Career guidance makes information about the labour market and about educational opportunities more accessible by organising it, systematising it, and making it available when and where people need it.

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The Careers Strategy outlined actions to enable young people to develop the skills to make informed decisions about their education, training and employment options. In addition, the strategy also sets in place a framework to ensure people of all ages have access to good quality careers advice so that they are able to make informed choices and achieve their potential to become effective citizens and employees.

The actions within the strategy were grouped within five key themes:

- improving careers education;
- improving access to careers information;
- improving careers advice and guidance;
- improving quality; and
- improving professional development.

Overall the strategy has effected a positive change in the delivery of careers education and guidance with noticeable improvements in: the partnership arrangements between schools and the Careers Service; delivery of impartial careers advice and guidance in relation to key growth areas such as science, technology,

7 OECD (2004). Career Guidance and Public Policy: *Bridging the Gap*, page 19. <http://www.oecd.org/education/innovation-education/34050171.pdf>



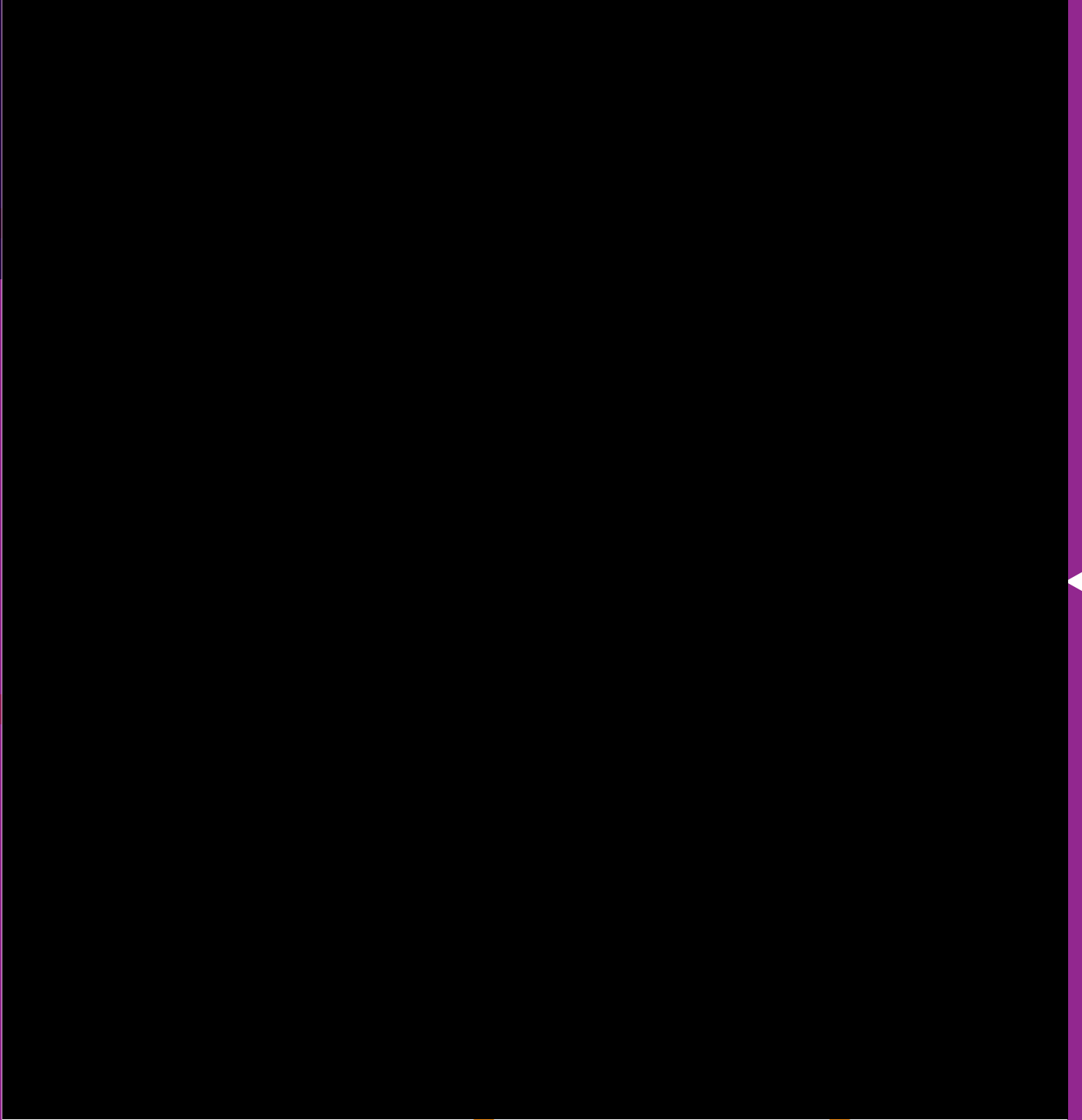
engineering and mathematics (STEM); business engagement and work-related learning; the availability of more coherent and accessible LMI; improved partnership arrangements with key stakeholders; improved information for parents; improved facilities; and increased uptake of careers advice and guidance by adult clients. The Preparing for Success Implementation Plan Progress Report 2013⁸ provides further detail of the actions completed.

While significant progress has been made as a result of the *Preparing for Success* strategy, both departments are committed to continuing the process of development and improvement through the partnership approach which underpinned the first phase of the strategy. The refreshed strategy for 2015-2020 sets out a range of policy commitments in key areas which will be further developed throughout the lifetime of the strategy.



8 Department for Employment and Learning & Department of Education (2013). *Preparing for Success Implementation Plan: Progress Report*. <https://www.delni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/Preparing%20for%20Success%20Implementation%20Report%20Dec%202013.pdf>

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3. STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Policy Context

The *Preparing for Success Careers Strategy 2015-2020* sits within a wider landscape of connected strategy, policy and programme initiatives. A list of the key strategy, policy and programme initiatives, and related hyperlinks, is attached at Annex C.

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Overarching these policies and strategies, the Executive's Programme for Government 2011-2015 identified economic prosperity as its number one priority. It recognised that we need to rebalance the economy to improve the competitiveness and productivity needed in a global economy and, in so doing, improve the living standards of everyone. Key to this is the need to improve the skills and employability of the current and future workforce so that people can access, sustain and progress in fulfilling employment, thereby delivering higher productivity, economic growth and increased social inclusion.

Both DE and DEL play a key role in delivering the objectives of the Executive's Economic Strategy, which aims to rebalance the economy by stimulating innovation, research and development; improving workforce skills and employability; and encouraging business growth.

The Skills Strategy, '*Success through Skills – Transforming Futures*', articulates the overarching vision for the development of skills in the local economy. Its aim is "to enable people to access and progress up the skills ladder, in order to:

- raise the skills levels of the whole workforce;
- raise productivity;
- increase levels of social inclusion by enhancing the employability of those currently excluded from the labour market; and
- secure Northern Ireland's future in a global marketplace".



This will be achieved by focusing on those entering the labour force for the first time, up-skilling the existing workforce and ensuring those currently excluded from the labour force are provided with the skills to compete for jobs, retain jobs and progress up the skills ladder.

The implementation of the vision and aim of the Careers strategy is critical to the successful implementation of Economic and Skills policies, and there is a high level of mutual dependency. Raising awareness of the various routes to the world of work will ensure young people get the skills employers are looking for in our modern economy.

By reaching a greater number of adults, providing guidance on upskilling and reskilling will in turn make a positive contribution to productivity and prosperity levels.

Both general and professional/technical courses and qualifications are becoming more responsive to the fresh skills required in employment.

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Changes since 2009

Since the *Preparing for Success Careers Strategy* was developed in 2009 a number of significant changes in the policy and economic environment have taken place which will be taken into account in implementing the refreshed strategy.

Changes in the Economic Environment

Since 2009, the global economy has suffered a major economic downturn and it is only over the last year that the local economy is starting to witness sustained evidence of a recovery, particularly in terms of our labour market. Unemployment continues to fall and the employment rate and business confidence is continuing to grow which is a positive sign that the local economy is in a much stronger economic position. Rapid changes have also been taking place in the labour market driven by technological advances and the demands of the economy. Labour markets are moving away from traditional occupations of the past, and as employment in these areas decreases, employment in new areas has increased.

In addition, a number of economically important sectors have been identified as priority sectors in terms of skill needs. These sectors include Business Services (specifically ICT), Financial Services, Manufacturing (including agri-food, advanced manufacturing and advanced engineering), Retail, Hotels and Catering (in support of the tourism industry), and the emerging sectors of Life and Health Sciences and the Creative Industries. Individuals who have qualifications in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) are also in demand and are in a stronger position in today's competitive job market.

As the economy and labour market develop, increasingly higher skill levels will be required to access the jobs of the future. There is also a need and an opportunity for people to re-skill to take advantage of the jobs on offer both now and in the coming years.



Young people now face challenges and choices that are very different from those faced by previous generations. In the modern world of employment, people will change jobs, work in different sectors and even careers, on a much more frequent basis. They will need to acquire and continually update their knowledge and skills in order to remain in employment and to progress their careers. There is no longer the expectation of a job for life or one direct pathway into a career, so people will therefore need support to develop the necessary career management skills⁹ and to navigate the various career pathways throughout their working life.

Changes to School Education

The Department sets a common curriculum to be taught in all grant-aided schools to pupils of compulsory school age which aims to prepare our young people for all aspects of life and work. A revised curriculum was rolled out across all schools on a phased basis from September 2007 and has been taught at all Key Stages since September 2009. The curriculum is skills- rather than knowledge-based, and being less prescriptive than the previous curriculum, has a flexibility that enables teachers and schools to tailor their teaching better to meet the needs of their pupils.

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Employability is a key theme underpinning the new statutory curriculum and there is a greater emphasis on developing a range of cross-curricular skills that employers have told us they need including communication, using ICT, and using maths. Pupils develop other skills highly valued by employers such as thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills; working with others; self management; and being creative.

Curriculum guidance provided by the Department to schools highlights that while career management is now embedded in the Employability strand of the curriculum, schools will need to augment this provision with timetabled careers education classes in order to fully meet all the aims and objectives of a high quality careers programme. A schools careers programme will include careers education, information, advice and guidance, work-related learning, and the development of employability skills.

Around the same time as introducing the new statutory curriculum the Department launched the Entitlement Framework (EF). All schools are required to provide access to a minimum number of courses from age 14, with at least one-third being general and at least one-third applied. The EF became statutory in September 2013, and required the full complement of courses (24 at Key Stage 4, and 27 post-16) to be offered from September 2015.

9 Sultana, R.G. (2009). European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network. Work Package 1: Career Management Skills Reflection Note. <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications/browse-by-language/english/european-lifelong-guidance-policies-work-in-progress.-a-report-on-the-work-of-the-european-lifelong-guidance-policy-network-2009201310/>



The EF is about every school putting the needs and aspirations of pupils first and ensuring that pupils have access to a minimum number and range of engaging and economically relevant courses with clear progression pathways, no matter what school they attend or where they live.

Recognising that not all schools could necessarily deliver the minimum number of courses to which all pupils are entitled, the Entitlement Framework has encouraged the establishment of Area Learning Communities (ALCs). These are voluntary coalitions of schools and FE Colleges and act as a forum for planning the delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils in an area. Every post-primary school – including every special school – is now a member of an ALC of which there are 30.

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The introduction of the school improvement policy (*Every School a Good School*) has changed the impact of inspection upon schools. *Every School a Good School* sets out the vision for a high-quality education system with a focus on raising standards across all schools and addressing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged. It places self-evaluation and self-improvement at the heart of improving educational outcomes and focuses on promoting the core characteristics that evidence shows make for a good school – good teaching and good leadership with strong community engagement and a clear focus on the needs of the pupil.

A central element of the policy has been the introduction of procedures to follow up on all published school inspection reports, including the introduction of a formal intervention process (FIP) to ensure schools identified through the inspection process as needing to address urgently significant areas for improvement, receive the necessary support to address the areas for improvement identified.

Changes to Post-16 options in education and training

Since 2009, both DE and DEL have enhanced significantly the post-16 options available to young people which are also relevant for the refreshed Careers Strategy.

DE Entitlement Framework

Under the EF, schools are required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and must offer their post-16 pupils access to at least 27 courses, of which at least a third must be applied courses, and a third general. All courses should be relevant to young people, engaging and motivating with clear progression pathways to continue in education, or move into training or employment. Schools plan their curricular offer taking account of the most up-to-date LMI, areas of economic growth, and the needs and interests of their pupils. In the best practice careers teachers are involved from the outset in all curricular planning.



The introduction of the Entitlement Framework has brought about a marked transformation in the breadth of curriculum choice available for post-16 pupils from the previous limited range of subject choices in some schools prior to its implementation.

DEL post-16 provision

DEL has undertaken a number of fundamental policy reviews in relation to post-16 provision including Apprenticeships, Youth Training and Further Education, all of which are vital to ensuring that both individuals and businesses value and, ultimately, invest in skills. The resultant strategies each play a key part in the development of the local education and skills landscape.

• Youth Training

From September 2016, a new system of education and training will be launched in Northern Ireland for those young people aged 16-24, requiring professional and technical training at level 2 (broadly equivalent to GCSE).

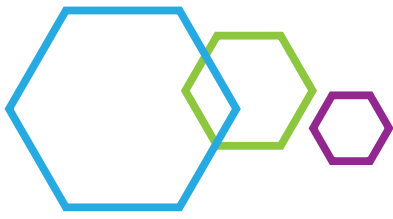
This new youth training system will be an innovative education and training programme, incorporating relevant high quality work experience throughout, which will support young people's ongoing education and training through several routes and across a range of occupational areas.

The youth training system will offer an ideal opportunity for young people aged 16-24, who are motivated to progress into employment or higher learning, but who lack the skills and experience that employers are looking for. It will offer:

- an **employed route** with employment opportunities across a range of occupational areas, providing both on and off-the-job training to develop the specific skills required for the job and broader training to support continued development and progression; and
- a **non-employed route** presenting a range of new opportunities to provide training to support progression into specific occupational areas alongside broader training that will support broader progression into employment, an apprenticeship or further education.

Participants on both these routes will study recognised qualifications by working towards a new baccalaureate-style professional and technical award equating to a minimum of 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C, including level 2 English and maths qualifications.

Trainees will have a flexible environment in which to learn skills for their future, while developing their confidence. As part of the professional and technical award they will have the opportunity to develop specific work-based skills through their existing employment or a high quality work placement.



Employers will be at the heart of the system, making sure that trainees study qualifications that employers value most, find the best matched work experience, and that full support is provided for all trainees in the workplace.

The new system aims to prepare trainees for their future. On successful completion of youth training, trainees will be able to progress into a level 3 apprenticeship, further education or work.

• *Apprenticeships*

Securing our Success, the Strategy on Apprenticeships, published in June 2014 outlines the future direction of apprenticeships. The new apprenticeship model is driven by strategic partnership; puts employers at its very heart; aligns supply with demand; affords opportunities in a wider range of occupations and offers a flexible progression pathway across professional education and training.

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The new employer led model will provide an alternative pathway to recruit and train skilled individuals and will extend apprenticeships into a wider range of occupational areas. Apprenticeships will be offered from skills level 3 to 8 and provide a pathway to higher level qualifications including at degree level and above.

Apprenticeships will deliver a range of benefits to participants by supporting a variety of learning preferences through both on-the-job and off-the-job training, and affording opportunities for well-paid jobs and sustainable employment.

• *Further Education*

Further Education Means Success, the new further education strategy for Northern Ireland was published in January 2016. The vision is that further education colleges will be recognised locally, nationally and internationally for high quality and economically relevant education and training provision. Colleges will be focussed on achieving excellence in delivering the skills needed for the economy of today and tomorrow, and will be ambitious for their learners and for the contribution they make to improving the competitiveness of the economy of Northern Ireland.

The new further education strategy highlights the challenging dual role that colleges play. They are pivotal to the development of strong and vibrant economies through the provision of professional and technical skills, increasingly at higher levels, and through the many ways they help employers to innovate and to develop new products and markets. They also have an important responsibility to help to fight poverty and support social inclusion by providing those with low or no qualifications, or who have barriers to learning, with the skills and



qualifications they need to find employment – in particular the essential skills of literacy and numeracy.

- *Higher Education*

Graduating to Success, the Higher Education Strategy, published in 2012, sets out a vision of a higher education sector which is vibrant and of international calibre; which pursues excellence in teaching and research; which plays a pivotal role in the development of a modern, sustainable, knowledge-based economy; which supports a confident, shared society and which recognises and values diversity. In addition, the local higher education providers have an increasingly crucial and integral role to play in meeting the current and future skills needs of the local economy.

Graduating to Success is supported by *Access to Success*, DEL's regional strategy for widening participation in higher education by students from disadvantaged backgrounds and students with learning difficulties and disabilities. The vision is that any qualified individual should be able to gain access to higher education, irrespective of their personal or social background.

- *Not in Education, Training or Employment*

For those needing additional help, the Pathways to Success strategy¹⁰ is the Executive's agreed approach to addressing the needs of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The Strategy has a particular focus on helping those young people who face barriers to participation (including those with disabilities), while also complementing DEL's initiatives to tackle the wider problem of youth unemployment

- *Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities*

A key proposal of the DEL's Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities is to provide high quality, personalised, and often long-term support to people with significant disabilities to secure, maintain and progress in paid employment.

Newly appointed Supported Employment Officers will provide appropriate and timely advice about all of the available options open to the disabled person. They will work very closely and in collaboration with staff from the Careers Service to help individuals to realise his/her full potential, with the ultimate aim of securing rewarding and sustainable employment. Together they will assess his/her achievements to date, identify areas for development and programmes or services that will help them achieve these life changing goals.

¹⁰ Department for Employment and Learning (2012). Pathways to Success: Preventing exclusion and promoting participation of young people. <https://www.delni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/del-pathways-to-success-v6.pdf>



While the strategy will help people of all ages with disability related barriers, who want to work, there will be a particular focus on young people with a disability who are transitioning through other services, such as further and higher education, skills training, apprenticeships and employability programmes.

The aim is to make a real difference to the hopes, aspirations, career ambitions and future lives of young disabled people, and their families.

These strategies and initiatives, underpinned by impartial, accessible and well informed careers guidance, aim to ensure that every individual is supported to achieve his or her full potential, and that employers have access to a suitable skills pool of potential employees.

Future Skills and Labour Market Information (LMI)

As an appropriately skilled workforce has a crucial role to play in raising employment, improving productivity and supporting the local economy, communication of the existing and future skills of the labour market is essential.

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Local employers have a vital role to play in articulating their skill needs and employment opportunities and ensuring that young people have ongoing exposure to the world of work through provision of meaningful work experiences and mentoring programmes.

Young people need to be supported by high quality, impartial and timely careers advice to make informed course choices that keep their educational and employment options open for the future. In addition, as over 75% of the 2020 workforce has already completed compulsory education, it is vitally important that existing employees are supported and encouraged to upskill appropriately. It is essential, in this constantly evolving labour market, that LMI is at the forefront of careers advice to ensure that both our current and future workforce is aware of labour market opportunities.

DEL in association with Ulster University (UU) has developed a Skills Barometer which provides a clear indication of where the skills gaps/shortages are currently (by occupation/sector/business size/skills level), where they are emerging, and where they are likely to emerge over the longer term.

Ultimately, the Barometer will provide the local economy with a detailed picture of current skills demand by sector and occupation. It will also identify the skills areas where interventions require further targeting, or more flexible responses are required, in order to aid government, and indeed other key stakeholders, in meeting the skill needs of the NI economy.



The barometer will act as a driver for the further development of careers education and guidance as it will provide students and their parents with information on the current and future labour market opportunities, as well as employment prospects by level of education and by course.

The Careers Service will work with UU and NI Direct to present the information in the skills barometer in a format which will appeal to young people, parents and other users.

The Role of Careers Education and Guidance

The changes in the economic outlook and post-16 provision including the Entitlement Framework, further and higher education, apprenticeships and training, mean that there are more career options and pathways than ever before. However, this increased choice has made decisions more complex and has increased the need for sound, timely and impartial advice.

The careers system has a key role to play in ensuring that all individuals, regardless of age, ability or circumstances, particularly young people and their parents, are fully informed of the range of career opportunities and pathways available, are supported to maximise the options open to them, and are encouraged to make career decisions which will lead to sustained employment and increased economic prosperity.

In aligning with the key strategies mentioned above and situating itself within the prevailing economic context, the *Preparing for Success Careers Strategy 2015-2020* will aim to ensure young people and adults are able to develop the skills and confidence to realise their potential, and follow the career path which suits them best, enabling them to contribute to their community and to support social and economic prosperity.

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4. PREPARING FOR SUCCESS 2015-2020

The *Preparing for Success* Careers Strategy initially covered the period 2009-2014 and in line with best practice the strategy included a formal review at the end of this five-year period. Accordingly DE and DEL Ministers commissioned an independent review in April 2014 to take account of progress made. The Review was also tasked with considering the Assembly's Employment and Learning Committee inquiry report¹¹, published in November 2013, which made recommendations for both Departments to consider, including the need to improve the quality and consistency of the careers system, and its responsiveness to the needs of the labour market.

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The independent review panel reported in October 2014¹² and found that the partnership model as established through *Preparing for Success*, by which both Departments work together to deliver an effective and joined up careers education and guidance service, is 'probably the strongest model for the delivery of careers services, and while there are lessons to be learned from other countries in relation to particular practices, they should be viewed as desirable enhancements of a basically sound model'.

The overall conclusion of the review panel was that the existing strategic framework is a robust foundation on which to build improvements. The broad vision, partnership approach and key messages as established through *Preparing for Success* therefore remain valid and will continue to be the foundation for the delivery of careers education and guidance by both Departments.

11 Committee for Employment and Learning (2013). *Inquiry into Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance in Northern Ireland*. NIA Employment and Learning Committee Report 141/11-15. <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Committees/Employment-and-Learning/Reports/Inquiry-into-Careers-Education-Information-Advice-and-Guidance-in-Northern-Ireland/>

12 Careers Review (2014). A report by an independent panel of experts from education and employers on careers education and guidance in Northern Ireland. <https://www.delni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/Careers%20Review%202014%20Final.pdf>



Building on *Preparing for Success* 2009-2014, the strategy has been refreshed to cover the period 2015-2020, setting out the policy commitments and associated actions that the two departments will take in response to the recommendations from the Independent Careers Review and Assembly Committee Inquiry into Careers. These are outlined in Section 7.

The *Preparing for Success* Strategy 2015-2020 policy commitments cross-referenced with *Preparing for Success* Strategy 2009-2014 key themes, are set out in Annex D.





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5. VISION AND AIMS

While the overall vision as articulated in the *Preparing for Success Strategy 2009-2014* remains valid this refresh provides an opportunity to articulate the vision and aims anew to take on board the changes and achievements since 2009.

Vision 2015-2020

The overall vision is that through the implementation of the Careers Strategy and associated action plan young people and adults are able to develop the skills and confidence to realise their potential and follow the career path which suits them best, enabling them to contribute to their community and to support social and economic prosperity.

Aim

The overall aim of the 2015-2020 strategy is to support individuals to make appropriate decisions, through developing them as effective careers decision-makers, leading to increased and appropriate participation in education and training and employment, and thereby contributing to both the fulfilment of the individuals' potential and to a rebalancing of labour market supply and demand.

All young people and adults will:

- have access to good quality careers education provision, up-to-date LMI, and impartial careers information, advice and guidance, to assist them to make well-informed career choices, to achieve their potential and prosper in employment;
- be lifelong learners and be motivated to pursue continuous professional development to achieve their own potential, to become effective employees and to make a valuable contribution to the local economy;
- develop the skills to plan their career, and manage planned and unplanned career change; and



- have a clear understanding of the impact of their education, training and employment choices and make career choices which are informed and well thought through and based on self awareness; understand the relevance of their education, skills and experience; and be aware of the opportunities and pathways available.

Guiding principles

The guiding principles for the delivery of careers are:

- Careers services should be impartial and of a high quality, irrespective of who is receiving the service, or where and by whom the services are delivered.
- Careers services should support those in education, those about to enter the labour market, those temporarily excluded from the labour market, and those in work.
- Individuals should become “career aware” and “own” their career development; they should maximise all opportunities to explore future employment opportunities and the various career pathways.
- Decisions about education, training and employment need to be underpinned by sound and impartial careers advice; in order to derive the maximum benefit from investment in training and employment opportunities.
- Partnership between employers, schools, families and communities should be fostered and all key stakeholders should be encouraged to engage actively in the careers process.
- The entire system should be innovative and delivered in a way that is cost-effective, makes best use of technology and is easily accessed by all who would benefit from it.
- Careers education and guidance should be informed by the current and future needs of the labour market.

Impact

The impact of the Strategy needs to be felt in educational, training and employment outcomes. It will contribute to improved attainment outcomes on leaving school, as choices are better informed by the consideration of pathways through education to training and employment. It will especially impact upon the attainment of those key attainment thresholds that allow for progression to positive destinations after school – at levels 1, 2 or 3 – and will improve the chances for young people to make that progression. The success of the strategy will therefore be illustrated through indicators across the education, training and employment domains.



Strategic Approach

Our overarching strategy of having a shared careers system provided through schools and the Careers Service will continue. Building on the existing strong foundation of partnership and continuous improvement, by 2020 we will ensure that access to impartial advice for all has been improved through the use of innovative delivery methods and underpinned by reliable and up-to-date LMI. Through the partnership approach between the Careers Service and the school system, young people facing key career decisions will be encouraged to access impartial careers guidance before they progress into education, training, apprenticeships or employment. There will be a particular focus on those who have most barriers to continuing in education, employment and training. The Careers Service will continue to be available on an all-age basis supporting those wanting to upskill or facing a career change to make informed decisions.

Working with Individuals

We will:

- Review the support available to primary schools to deliver the employability aspects of the KS1 and KS2 curriculum, including exposure to the world of work through employer-led work experience activities.
- Work closely with employers to develop a work experience system that is based on a partnership approach and agreed principles, standards and quality measures.
- Review existing systems whereby young people can keep an online comprehensive record of career related learning and experiences of work, with a view to developing an enduring solution.
- Establish improved ways of informing and including parents in the careers education and guidance process.
- Maximise the use of social media and technology in the provision of careers guidance for all ages and in particular to reach a much greater number of the working age population needing help to access, sustain and progress in employment.
- Establish a new, transparent quality and accountability framework for careers education and guidance which will outline what we do and outcomes achieved including the contribution made to balancing labour market supply and demand.

Working with Employers

A key feature of the careers system going forward will be to secure a balance between the needs of the individual, employers and the wider economy within the guidance process.



We will:

- ensure that all career advisers continue to have a number of placements with employers in growth sectors each year.
- Through the Careers Advisory Forum (CAF), develop strategic and local partnerships to better understand the employability skills, qualifications and attributes needed by employers to grow their business.
- With the support of the CAF, facilitate better links between schools, colleges, local businesses, local councils and enterprise agencies.
- Engage employers' support in attracting more people, and in particular young people, to consider careers in priority, growth and emerging sectors.
- Encourage and increase employer participation, providing support and guidance to employers in the delivery of work experiences; and explore how teachers can access relevant work placements to help them better understand current and future local labour market opportunities.

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Careers Provision in Schools

To support schools to review and enhance their existing careers provision we will:

- Deliver phase 2 of the bespoke Careers CPD programme to teachers and evaluate the effectiveness of this programme.
- Review the support provided to Governors in their role of ensuring that their school has a clear strategic vision for its careers programme and that the careers education in their school is of a high quality.
- Help schools to improve the quality of career learning opportunities and encourage greater cohesion of provision by re-issuing the Preparing for Success Guide to Developing Effective Career Decision Makers that provides a framework, including a Map identifying opportunities for career-related learning in the 4-19 curriculum and outlines opportunities for the development of employability skills.
- Through the Education Authority, provide additional support to schools to enhance their ability to use this guide.
- Give additional focus to Curriculum and Careers delivery in post-primary inspection.
- Encourage schools to involve careers teachers in curricular planning and to plan their curricular offer taking account of the most up-to-date LMI, areas of economic growth, and the needs and interests of their pupils.
- Review the work of ALCs in supporting the delivery of careers programmes across the ALC.
- With the support of the CAF, explore with schools and employers how teachers can be encouraged and supported to spend time with employers to better understand their needs.



- Consider ways of further enhancing and promoting existing systems used by young people for the recording of achievements and experience and ensure examples of best-practice are provided to schools on how young people can use these systems.
- Working with the CAF consider how work-related learning opportunities and young people's experiences of work can be enhanced to ensure that all pupils have had good-quality work-related learning experiences including work placements .

The work of the Careers Service

The Careers Service will continue to reach out to all young people in school facing key career decisions to help them make informed decisions which will lead to a rewarding and successful working life. In addition, it will support adults to upskill and reskill, and to benefit from the opportunities available in the growth and emerging employment sectors in a high performing economy.

- We will introduce a robust and clear accountability and quality assurance system which allows individuals to understand what they can expect from the service.
- The career system will have performance measures which demonstrate the impact of careers guidance on education, training and employment outcomes.
- A statutory duty will be introduced to ensure that individuals can access impartial careers support from appropriately qualified practitioners.
- We will establish a careers advisory forum to advise both Departments on the future direction of careers and how we can meaningfully engage with employers both at a strategic and local level.
- New delivery mechanisms, making the best use of technology, will be introduced to provide high quality, accessible and cost effective careers support for all individuals, including parents.

The Careers Advisory Forum

The Careers Advisory Forum (CAF) is being established which will include representatives from business, education, and key stakeholders.

The role of the CAF will be to:

- Advise both Departments on current and future Careers provision in the context of the refreshed Careers Strategy 2015-2020.
- Facilitate system level engagement between employers, educators and other key stakeholders, including parents, to support them in their advisory role.
- Support local level stakeholder involvement with service users and the education and business sectors.

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6. POLICY COMMITMENTS AND KEY ACTIONS

To achieve the vision for the careers system, as established in the refreshed strategy 2015-2020, five policy commitments have been agreed, related to:

- Accountability and Quality Assurance Framework
- E-delivery and Labour Market Information
- Work Experience
- Accessing Impartial Advice
- E-portfolio

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The following section outlines the five policy commitments and associated actions which will be taken forward over the period of the strategy in support of the strategic vision.

Policy Commitment 1 - Accountability and Quality Assurance Framework

The careers system will have an accountability and quality assurance framework to ensure delivery of high quality careers services and improve transparency. This includes the introduction of a statutory duty to ensure the provision of impartial careers guidance.

Accountability and Quality Assurance Framework

All parts of the careers system, like the wider public sector, need to be accountable to stakeholders including employers and parents, as well as to young people and job-seeking or career-changing adults. Greater transparency and clear accountability measures are needed to demonstrate good practice throughout the system.

Central to the Careers Strategy 2015-2020 will be the development of an accountability and quality assurance framework which will put in place a system to monitor key areas of service delivery for both careers education and careers guidance. This will include both performance and quality measures which will be published in a user-friendly format. It is intended that the new framework will improve



transparency, ensure consistency of service and provide further data to illustrate, as far as possible, the longer term impact of careers education and guidance on individuals' learning and employment outcomes.

A key aspect of the quality assurance framework will be the use of independent, external assessment. The Careers Service currently uses the internationally recognised Matrix standard to assess the quality of provision. It will also consider collaborating with other relevant organisations to undertake evaluation and quality assurance exercises as part of continuous improvement. Careers education is externally assessed by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) as part of the school inspection process.

Statutory duty

Impartial and professional careers guidance is vital at key decision points in an individual's career pathway to ensure that they are aware of the full range of options available to them.

A key recommendation of the Employment and Learning Committee report was that this should be enshrined in law with a duty to provide impartial careers advice placed on DEL. It is accepted that a legislative footing for the provision of impartial careers guidance would improve the current careers system therefore DEL will enshrine in statute arrangements to ensure the impartial delivery of careers guidance by appropriately qualified advisers.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

All careers practitioners throughout the system will be professionally qualified and obliged to maintain their professional competence through continuing professional development and adherence to professional standards.

Careers Teachers

All careers teachers hold a professional teaching qualification. In addition, DE has commissioned the development of a bespoke CPD programme for all careers teachers which is being rolled out to all post-primary schools. Teachers need to spend time with employers to better understand their needs, which in turn will inform the design and delivery of the careers education programmes in schools. The Departments will explore with schools and employers how this can be encouraged and supported.

Careers Advisers

The Careers Service will continue to ensure that all advisers are professionally qualified to postgraduate level or equivalent and are members of the Careers Development Institute, the main UK wide professional body for careers practitioners. A requirement of this membership is adherence to the Institute's code of ethics which includes a commitment to continuous professional development and accountability for their actions and advice to the public.



Further to their professional qualification, each careers adviser is also required to undertake CPD to ensure that his or her knowledge and skills are fully up-to-date. CPD requirements are reviewed on an annual basis and tailored to meet the needs of the adviser and Careers Service. Careers advisers will continue to update their knowledge on employer needs through employer placements and visits.

Policy Commitment 2 - E-delivery and Labour Market Information

Access to careers services will be improved through the use of new and innovative delivery channels, including online web chat and social media to allow clients to access services at a time and place that meets their needs, improving customer satisfaction and cost efficiency. This will include online robust user friendly and up to date labour market information.

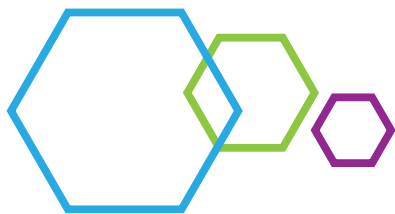
E-delivery of Careers Services and Labour Market Information (LMI)

In terms of the supporting infrastructure, a key feature of the delivery mechanism will be making the best use of technology. Professional and personalised guidance will be available to all via webchat and telephony services improving access to clients who would prefer this mode of delivery and making the service more cost efficient.

Expectations of how services are offered and delivered have changed. Young people have grown up with the internet, using social media and mobile technology as their main communication tool. In addition, adults increasingly are shifting to the internet as a source of information and advice.

Given the importance of careers information and guidance in the modern economy it is therefore essential that the way services are delivered and accessed is transformed to meet the changing demands of customers. While there will always be a need to provide face-to-face careers guidance, in order to ensure equality of access for all, new and innovative delivery channels will be developed. These will include online web-chat and social media, allowing clients to access services at a time and place that meets their needs, while improving both customer satisfaction and cost efficiency.

By maximising the use of technology, all individuals at all stages in their career pathway - in education or training, in work, unemployed, those with disabilities or special circumstances - should be able to find the information and support they need when they need it.



Up-to-date and accurate information is essential for a high quality careers system. It enables informed decisions and supports the match between labour market supply and labour demand. However, the labour market is constantly changing and has become so complex that it is often difficult for both individuals and careers practitioners to keep up-to-date with the volume and range of information available.

The Skills Barometer will provide reliable and user friendly labour market information updated annually and will be used by the individual, parents teachers and advisers. The key focus will be to ensure that those making careers decisions are fully informed about trends in employment, the importance of STEM subjects, the promotion and progression opportunities available in specific occupational areas, the skills and attributes most valued by employers and the correlation between skills, qualifications and earnings. It is our intention that these key messages will be conveyed through a series of interactive occupational applications (apps) which young people will be encouraged to access.

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Robust, up-to-date LMI which is easy to understand and provides a 'single line of sight' will be available online. The aim is that the careers website will be the first port of call for reliable, relevant and user-friendly careers information, including LMI, and advice for all.

Policy Commitment 3 - Work Experience

Work experience for young people, schools and employers will be improved to ensure equality of opportunity and improve the administrative process of organising work experience opportunities.

Work experience website and central system

Work experience has a key role to play in ensuring that individuals are well connected to the labour market and in helping employers to communicate their skills needs to young people. It has a key role in broadening awareness and knowledge of alternative career opportunities and can often motivate young people to succeed. It is therefore important that all young people in school irrespective of ability or background should have equal access to work experience opportunities.

It is essential that young people have the opportunities in post-primary school to experience a number of planned and appropriate learning experiences of the world of work including work placements. Working with the Careers Advisory Forum Departments will consider how work-related learning opportunities and young people's experiences of work can be enhanced to ensure that by the age of 16 all pupils have had good-quality work-related learning experiences including work placements for a range of occupations, including in sectors that are predicted to grow. In light of progress, the Departments will



consider setting a minimum number of days' experience for each child to have received before leaving school and consult on these proposals.

DEL will put in place work experience webpages which will provide pupils, parents and employers with information and advice on researching, securing and organising work experience opportunities.

Employers are essential to this process and need to be encouraged and offered structured support to enable them to provide meaningful work experience opportunities. Consideration will be given to the development of a central system for the advertisement and management of work experience opportunities. This has the potential to improve the administrative process of organising work experience opportunities for employers and schools and provide equality of opportunity for young people. Consideration will also be given to establishing an awards scheme or kitemark type system to recognise those employers that invest in the provision of work experience / meaningful experiences of work for young people.

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The development of a central system for work experience would align with the policy commitments in *Securing our Success: the Strategy on Apprenticeships*, and *Generating our Success: the Youth Training Strategy*, to establish a central online location to advertise and promote apprenticeship and training opportunities.

Policy Commitment 4 - Accessing Impartial Advice

Access to impartial advice will be maintained and improved, including offering face to face impartial advice to young people at key transition stages, providing additional support to those at risk of becoming disengaged and those with barriers; and providing more advice to parents.

Working with Individuals

In the final year of compulsory education all young people will have access to impartial professional guidance from the Careers Service and have access to a range of post 16 provision. At 18, when leaving school, or on completing training, all young people will again be encouraged to avail of impartial advice to ensure they maximise the opportunities available. Throughout this period and beyond, careers advice will be available online and face to face on an all age basis.



This commitment supports the policy commitments in *Securing our Success: the Strategy on Apprenticeships* and *Generating our Success: the Youth Training Strategy* to provide impartial advice and guidance for young people considering the apprenticeship pathway and to all youth training participants both before engaging in training and upon completion.

Careers Advisers, working in conjunction alongside teachers in schools, will support young people and adults to determine the occupations that best suit their personal aptitudes, interests and skills; help them access and analyse relevant LMI about current and future employment opportunities; ensure they have a clear understanding of the impact of their education, training and employment choices; make career choices which are informed and well thought through based on self awareness; understand the relevance of their education, skills and experience and understand the various routes to the world of work and opportunities and pathways available.

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The support provided through careers education and guidance will be underpinned by robust and up to date LMI provided through the Skills Barometer.

Careers advice and guidance will continue to have an important role in supporting school careers teachers and STEM subject teachers in the promotion of STEM careers and addressing gender imbalance by ensuring that all young people in schools, in particular females, are fully aware of the opportunities available and the potential for career progression.

While sound careers advice and guidance is undoubtedly crucial for young people, the right guidance is no less important to adults. The development of a multi-channel delivery mechanism to include e-delivery, telephony and face-to-face services will ensure that individuals are able to access impartial advice at a time and in a way that best suits their needs. Although face-to-face guidance will continue to be available, it is anticipated that by maximising the use of social media and technology the service will be able to reach a much greater number of adults. The needs of the labour market are constantly changing and individuals will face a range of careers decisions throughout their lives. The Careers Service will provide advice and guidance to those looking to upskill to improve their chances of securing, retaining or progressing in employment. This will ensure that the working age population continue to develop the skills most needed by employers.

The careers education and guidance system will continue to work in partnership with other organisations to ensure that those with disabilities or learning difficulties are fully supported to achieve their full potential.



The *Pathways to Success* strategy highlighted the key role that the Careers Service has to play in supporting young people to develop effective career plans and signposting them to provision that meets their needs. Young people at risk of not progressing will be identified early and offered the help they need to access and sustain education training or employment.

The Careers Service will continue to build on the work started through *Preparing for Success 2009-2014* in working with schools to identify at an early stage young people at risk of disengagement and providing additional careers support until they are settled in a positive destination. The Careers Service is often the first point of contact for young people with disabilities in school hoping to move into work. Careers advisers will continue to be actively involved in the transition planning process ensuring that young people and their parents are appropriately supported to make informed decisions about post-school options.

The Careers Service will also play a key role in DEL's *Employment and Skills Strategy for People with Disabilities* to ensure a seamless transition for those who need support from school age right through to adulthood.

Through the proposed model outlined in the *Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities*, the combined support provided through careers advice, the Supported Employment Officers, specialist staff from the Disability Employment Service and its partners in the disability sector, more appropriate, seamless and personalised support will be available to young people.

Working with Parents

Parents are a key influencer in young people's future study and career choices. It is, therefore, vital that parents are encouraged to develop their knowledge of current and future career paths and opportunities. However, in the rapidly changing world of work, it is difficult to keep up-to-date with developments.

In order to support young people with their decision-making, parents need access to accurate information. As outlined in Policy Commitment 2 the careers website will provide parents with a valuable source of information and support, including robust and accurate LMI developed through the Skills Barometer. The Careers Service will also actively engage with parents to ensure that they are aware of the support, advice and information available.



Working with Employers

Employers have a key role to play in motivating and inspiring young people to maximise their potential and to increase their understanding of the world of work, it is therefore essential that employers are encouraged to become involved. In addition, to ensure that the careers education and guidance system is responsive to the needs of individual employers and the wider economy and that young people and adults are aware of the current and future employment opportunities and skill requirements, engagement with employers is required.

The Careers Service will engage more with employers specifically to:

- Better understand their needs in terms of employability skills, qualifications and attributes.
- Engage their support in attracting more people, and in particular young people, to consider careers in priority and emerging sectors.
- Provide careers advice and guidance on upskilling and reskilling.

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Policy Commitment 5 – E-portfolio

Young people should have access to an e-portfolio to record activities undertaken to improve their employability including work experience, voluntary and part-time work, careers learning, sporting achievements, and other relevant extra-curricular activities alongside educational qualifications.

Recording Achievements and Experience

DE and DEL recognise that it is beneficial for young people to record activities undertaken to improve their employability including work experience, voluntary and part-time work, careers learning, and relevant extra-curricular activities alongside educational qualifications.

All of this experience, both formal and informal, should be chronicled in an appropriate format and this record should be owned by the young person. This should be linked to the Unique Learner Number (ULN) and Learner Record (LR) and may be used by parents, teachers, and careers advisers to support young people to make informed decisions.

The ULN and LR systems will be developed to ensure that we can track all young people from year 11 to adulthood to monitor progress, provide tailored support and measure the impact and value of career choices on employment outcomes.



Rather than building a new bespoke system, in the first instance consideration should be given to enhancing existing systems such as e-progress files and promoting their use across all post-primary schools. Consideration should also be given to exemplifying how young people can use these systems to record their achievements and experiences. In addition, when new systems are introduced, such as the planned roll out of ULNs to pupils for use within school systems to record examination entries and achievements, options for expanding the system to record additional information could be explored.

The roll out of ULNs will commence during the 2015-16 academic year with ULNs being allocated to pupils in year 11 and above. ULNs will be used to create Learning Records for pupils. These will potentially allow individual learners access to achievement records for examinations taken from summer 2016 onwards. With the permission of the learner, these can then be shared with schools, colleges, further education, training providers, universities or employers when making an application.

The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) maintains LR in England and is taking the lead in further enhancing LR to include, for example, the recording of additional information such as voluntary work.

DE and DEL will engage with the SFA to consider how these enhanced LR will be made available to learners here and how they relate to other systems such as the e-progress file.

In addition, it will be important to ensure that appropriate guidance is provided to schools on how systems for recording achievements and experience can be utilized.



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7. WAY FORWARD

The Preparing for Success strategy 2015-2020 establishes a strong basis for the delivery of careers education and guidance, building on existing achievements and incorporating improvements to how we deliver the service. The policy commitments focus on key aspects of the careers education and guidance system and when fully implemented as a package of change should improve both the quality and delivery of careers services.

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The strategy provides a framework for a careers system which will support individuals to acquire the necessary skills to plan and manage their career in the new and changing economic and technological context, to participate in appropriate education and/or training and to prepare for the world of work, so that they can contribute effectively to their community and support social and economic prosperity.

In order to deliver against the five policy commitments DEL and DE have agreed a joint action plan for 2015-17.

The 5 projects are set out in the table below:

Project A	Accountability and Quality Assurance Framework
Project B	E-delivery and Labour Market Information
Project C	Work Experience
Project D	Accessing Impartial Advice
Project E	Recording Achievements



The action plan and key actions will be reviewed over the period of the strategy dependent on government policy and changes in the economy and further actions will be developed as appropriate.

The action plan is attached in Annex B.

Careers Strategy Steering Group

An important feature of the *Preparing for Success Careers Strategy 2009-2014* was the establishment of a careers advisory steering group to guide the implementation process and review progress. The diverse membership of the group created effective partnership working and proved to be a successful mechanism for overseeing the implementation of the strategy.

Therefore, in addition to the establishment of an external Careers Advisory Forum, through Policy Commitment 1, which comprises representatives from business, education and key stakeholders, an internal joint steering group will be established for the refreshed strategy to oversee the implementation of the Ministerial policy commitments and actions.

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Conclusion

As highlighted throughout this report, the careers system has a key role to play in supporting individuals of all ages and abilities to fulfil their potential both in education and beyond through their working lives.

The vision and aspiration for the careers system agreed by both Departments will be realised through a series of policy commitments which will be developed and delivered over the period 2015-2020. The economic context, labour market changes and public funding position are factors which are constantly changing and significantly impact on this agenda so work will be taken forward in stages with key actions identified and implemented each year on a progressive basis.

Throughout this process consultation and stakeholder engagement will be critical to ensure all changes made to the careers education and guidance system through implementation of the strategy meet the needs of customers.





Annex A

Preparing for Success 2009–2014 Actions and Achievements

The main developments resulting from the implementation of *Preparing for Success* 2009–2014 are summarised below under the strategy's five key themes.

Theme 1 Improving Careers Education

- **Careers Education in the Curriculum**

Careers-related learning is a compulsory element of the current curriculum under "Learning for Life and Work" which has been taught to all pupils since 2009/10. Under "Learning for Life and Work" pupils in post-primary schools learn about work in the local and global economy, career management, and enterprise and entrepreneurship. In the primary curriculum, under the Areas of Learning of "the World Around Us", and "Personal Development and Mutual Understanding", there are many opportunities for children to learn about the world of work, career pathways and develop careers-related skills. Careers Education at this stage is not about choosing a career but helping children to raise their aspirations and make connections between their learning and the world of work. As set out in the following sections the implementation of the Careers Strategy has been a key driving force in driving up standards for the delivery of careers education. In particular, there has been improvement in the quality and effectiveness of schools careers programmes and how careers education is monitored and reported across schools

- **Preparing for Success, A guide to developing effective decision makers (Map and Guide)**

*Preparing for Success, A guide to developing effective decision makers*¹³ was developed and published in 2012. The guide provides a framework for schools to review and enhance careers provision. It defines the aims and key features of a careers programme and provides a map which sets out the expected learning intentions and potential learning opportunities for young people from age 4–19. Feedback from schools on the use of the guide has been very positive. Inspections undertaken by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) show that, where careers provision is good or better, the schools have used the map and guide to inform improvement of provision.

13 Department of Education (2012). *Preparing for Success, A Guide to Developing Effective Decision Makers*. <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/guide-to-developing-effective-career-decision-makers-english-version.pdf>



Theme 2 Improving access to Careers Information

- **Careers Website**

The design and content of the Careers Service website was refreshed during 2014 to ensure that content was both accessible and up-to-date. The refreshed careers website www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers provides a central source of career information, including education and training, career planning, career events, information about occupations, current and future labour market trends, and career software tools to assist users in making informed career decisions. Hosted on the NI Direct platform, the careers portal remains the second most visited section of the NI Direct website, with nearly 360,000 hits in the year 2014/15.

- **Labour Market Information (LMI)**

Access to relevant and up-to-date careers information, including LMI, was a key theme of the Careers Strategy. DEL, in conjunction with the Sector Skills Councils, developed 24 Industry Fact Sheets¹⁴ which included information about job prospects in the local market, relevant skills and entry requirements as well as highlighting career opportunities in each industry.

The factsheets complement existing careers resources, providing job trend information specific to the local economy, which can be used by careers teachers and others involved in providing advice and guidance to support adults and young people making career decisions.

Theme 3 Improving the provision of Careers Advice and Guidance

- **Improved Partnership Working between Schools and Careers Service**

One of the benefits of the *Preparing for Success* Strategy has been the joint ownership of the strategy by DE and DEL, the departments responsible for education, employment and skills.

The partnership model of careers guidance provision, as adopted by both Departments through the strategy, provided a framework to ensure all learners in post-primary education have access to high-quality and impartial careers services.

To support this model, formal Partnership Agreements which focus on how the Careers Service and schools work together to support young people are now in place. In the remainder of post-primary schools (2%) effective partnership arrangements have been established to ensure pupils are aware of the careers services available.



In addition, improvements have been made to data sharing arrangements between schools and DEL, enabling the secure and confidential sharing of client identifiable data. This guarantees that DEL receives a comprehensive and accurate list of all pupils in year 10, each year, which is a vital component in ensuring that all pupils are fully supported into a positive destination after compulsory schooling, especially those at risk of dropping out of school early.

- **Work with Parents**

The Careers Service developed *A Guide for Parents – How to help your child with their future careers plans*¹⁵ which was distributed to all post-primary schools for the parents/guardians of all Year 10 and 12 pupils during 2013. The guide aims to assist parents/guardians to support their children in future planning and to provide information on the different aspects of careers information, advice and guidance. It is now available online through the parents' section on the NI Direct/Education works/Teenagers.

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- **Support for those vulnerable to social exclusion**

The Careers Service developed and implemented a social inclusion policy and practice which focuses on addressing the needs of young people and adults facing, or vulnerable to, social exclusion, including young people with a disability.

Careers advisers offer additional support to those young people vulnerable to social exclusion. Those most at risk of leaving school early or at risk of not successfully transferring to education, training or employment are identified early in school, and actively supported until they are settled in a positive destination. To facilitate this process, the service has established working relationships with the relevant statutory, voluntary and community sector bodies with a shared interest in supporting clients vulnerable to social exclusion.

Theme 4 Improving Quality

- **Careers Education – Accountability and Quality Assurance**

Through the implementation of the Careers Strategy both the quality and effectiveness of schools' careers programmes, and the monitoring and reporting of careers education across schools has improved. From April 2010, ETI has inspected and reported on the quality of careers in all standard post-primary inspections, informed by a tailored set of careers quality indicators. Evidence indicates that this and other Careers Strategy actions have led to significant improvement in post-primary schools from a low point, for the period of 2008-2010, when only 37% of careers in schools were assessed by ETI as good

¹⁵ Department for Employment and Learning (2013). *A Guide for Parents: How to help your child with their future career plans*
<https://www.delni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/Parental%20Guide.pdf>



or better, improving to 68% for the period of 2010-12. The most recent Chief Inspector's Report, November 2014, reported that the quality of the careers education provision has continued to improve significantly and in 86% of the post-primary schools inspected, it was evaluated as good or better.

- **Development of Quality Standard Indicators for Self-Evaluation**

ETI has developed quality assurance indicators for careers education to help ensure consistency of provision. These indicators were issued to all schools and colleges in 2010. Using this framework, schools and colleges can implement a rigorous and effective process of self-evaluation to identify their own strengths and areas for improvement in current practice and provision as part of their quality assurance arrangements.

- **Careers Guidance**

The Careers Service achieved Matrix¹⁶ accreditation in January 2013. The Matrix Standard is an externally assessed Crown copyright standard, approved by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills for the delivery of information, advice and guidance. Matrix is a unique quality standard for organisations to plan, deliver, review, evaluate and develop their advice and support services, which ultimately supports individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life goals and reassures people about the quality of advice they can expect to receive.

Theme 5 Improving Professional Development

- **Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Careers Teachers**

DE has funded the development of a bespoke Careers CPD programme for teachers consisting of four modules – Leading and Managing, Personal Career Planning, careers across the Curriculum, and Monitoring and Evaluation.

- **Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Careers Advisers**

All Careers advisers are recruited with a professional postgraduate (or equivalent) qualification in careers guidance. As civil servants they also adhere to the civil service code of ethics and standards of conduct. Improvements to CPD during the implementation of the Strategy include a minimum specification of at least five days per year spent in an industrial or workplace setting; mandatory training for all advisers in supporting people with disabilities; and all advisers and managers enrolled as members of the Career Development Institute.¹⁷

16 Matrix Standard, <http://matrixstandard.com/>

17 The CDI is the new single UK-wide professional organisation for everyone working in the fields of career education; career information, advice and guidance; career coaching and career management.



Preparing for Success 2009-2014 Progress Report

The full *Preparing for Success Careers Strategy 2009-2014 Implementation Progress Report* can be found at:

<https://www.delni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/Preparing%20for%20Success%20Implementation%20Report%20Dec%202013.pdf>



Annex B Careers Strategy Action Plan 2015 - 2017

	2015/16	2016/17
Project A:	1. DEL and DE will establish a careers advisory forum.	17. DEL will establish an Accountability and Quality Assurance Framework for the Careers Service.
Accountability and Quality Assurance	2. DEL will pilot the publication of key performance data for careers education and guidance in standardised format.	18. DEL will undertake a quality assurance exercise of the Careers Service including the consideration of external independent assessment.
Policy Commitment 1: The careers system will have an accountability and quality assurance framework to ensure delivery of high quality careers services and improve transparency. This includes the introduction of a statutory duty to ensure the provision of impartial careers guidance.	3. DEL will include a clause in the Employment Bill which will amend the Training and Employment Act (Northern Ireland) 1950 to enable a statutory duty to be placed on the Department.	19. DE will explore how careers teachers might avail of opportunities to spend time with employers.
	4. DE will roll out phase two of the bespoke Careers CPD programme.	



	2015/16	2016/17
<p>Project B: E-Delivery and LMI</p> <p>Policy Commitment 2: Access to careers services will be improved through the use of new and innovative delivery channels, including online web chat and social media to allow clients to access services at a time and place that meets their needs, improving customer satisfaction and cost efficiency. This will include on line robust user friendly and up to date labour market information.</p>	<p>5. DEL will introduce additional online careers resources and provision via web chat and extended use of social media.</p> <p>6. DEL will pilot the delivery of careers services in 1-2 schools using a multi-channel approach.</p> <p>7. DEL will promote areas of economic importance to NI and potential job growth online (via the Careers website) using the skills barometer.</p>	<p>20. Work with others to develop a range of interactive 'apps' promoting priority and emerging sectors using data sourced from the Skills Barometer.</p> <p>21. Development of digital forms for use during guidance process to minimise the need for paper records.</p> <p>22. Evaluation of webchat service and decision if provision will be maintained, including further expansion.</p> <p>23. Evaluation of laptop pilot.</p>
<p>Project C: Work Experience</p> <p>Policy Commitment 3: Work experience for young people, schools and employers will be improved to ensure equality of opportunity and improve the administrative process of organising work experience opportunities.</p>	<p>8. DEL will develop a central work experience website to provide guidance and information to pupils, schools, employers and parents on the benefits, selection and organisation of work experience.</p> <p>9. DEL will scope the potential development for a central web-based work experience portal for young people, schools and employers.</p>	<p>24. Establish the work experience section of the central database with links to wider post- 16 options available.</p> <p>25. DEL and DE will promote the central database to advertise work experience opportunities to schools, employers and parents.</p> <p>26. Working with the Careers Advisory Forum, develop local engagement between Area Learning Communities and employers.</p>



	2015/16	2016/17
<p>Project D: Accessing Impartial Advice</p> <p>Policy Commitment 4: Access to impartial advice will be maintained and improved, including offering face to face impartial advice to young people at key transition stages, providing additional support to those at risk of becoming disengaged and those with barriers; and providing more advice to parents.</p>	<p>10. DEL will deliver a region-wide series of information sessions to parents focusing on priority sectors, STEM, gender issues and support available to those with additional needs.</p> <p>11. DEL will further develop skills of staff to deal with people with additional needs.</p> <p>12. DEL will work closely with the Disability Employment Service to provide a seamless service for young people with disabilities and learning difficulties to ensure they are fully supported in the transition from school to adult provision and work.</p> <p>13. DEL will develop an in-house training scheme to maintain the supply of qualified careers advisers and careers managers.</p> <p>14. DEL will offer additional careers adviser support to those young people identified as at risk of becoming disengaged until they are settled in a positive destination. DEL</p>	<p>27. Enhance and develop provision of careers services to parents.</p> <p>28. DEL will review the offer of careers guidance to ensure that all young people access impartial professional careers guidance in the final year of compulsory education, at 18, when leaving school, or on completing training, to support them to make appropriate careers decisions and, ensure they maximise the opportunities available.</p> <p>29. DEL will scope how the Careers Service can better support employers and respond to their needs in terms of employability skills, qualifications and attributes.</p> <p>30. DEL to agree a process for backfilling careers advisers</p> <p>31. DEL to review the role of the Careers Service support staff.</p>



	2015/16	2016/17
	<p>will introduce measures to assess the effectiveness of this activity.</p> <p>15. DEL will continue to offer initial face-to-face individual careers guidance interviews to all year 12 pupils with an aim of accessing 100% of pupils and to other year groups if needed. All pupils will be supported by a named adviser until settled into a positive destination.</p>	
<p>Project E: E-Portfolio/PLR</p> <p>Policy Commitment 5: Young people should have access to an e-portfolio to record activities undertaken to improve their employability including work experience, voluntary and part-time work, careers learning, sporting achievements, and other relevant extra-curricular activities alongside educational qualifications.</p>	<p>16. DE will explore ways of further enhancing and promoting existing systems, such as e-progress files, across all post-primary schools.</p>	<p>32. DE will bring together development of the Unique Learner Number (ULN) with the consideration of the e-portfolio options.</p> <p>33. DE will examine how good practice in the use of the e-portfolio might be exemplified.</p>



Annex C

The key policy and programme initiatives include:

- Programme for Government (2011-15)
<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/pfg-2011-2015-final-report.pdf>
- Economic Strategy, Priorities for sustainable growth and prosperity, March 2012
<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/ni-economic-strategy-revised-130312.pdf>
- Success through Skills: Transforming Futures, The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland, 2011 **www.delni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/Success%20through%20Skills%20Transforming%20Futures.pdf**
- Success through STEM: The STEM Strategy, 2011
<https://www.delni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/STEM%20Strategy-Success%20through%20STEM.pdf>
- Generating Our Success: The Northern Ireland Youth Training Strategy, June 2015
<https://www.delni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/youth-training-strategy.pdf>
- Enabling Success: A strategy to tackle economic inactivity in Northern Ireland, April 2015
<https://www.delni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/enabling-success-economic-inactivity-strategy.pdf>
- Securing our Success: The Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships, June 2014
<https://www.delni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/Securing%20our%20Success%20The%20NI%20Strategy%20on%20Apprenticeships.pdf>
- The Statutory Curriculum: the current curriculum was introduced in the 2007/08 school year on a phased basis and now applies to all 12 years of compulsory education
<https://www.deni.gov.uk/articles/statutory-curriculum>
- The Entitlement Framework, statutory since September 2013
<https://www.deni.gov.uk/articles/entitlement-framework>
- Access to Success: An integrated regional strategy for widening participation in higher education, Sept 2012
https://www.delni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/Access%20to%20Success-An%20integrated%20regional%20strategy%20for%20widening%20participation%20in%20HE_0.pdf



- Pathways to Success: Preventing exclusion and promoting participation of young people, May 2012
<https://www.delni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/del-pathways-to-success-v6.pdf>
- Graduating to Success: the Higher Education Strategy, April 2012
<https://www.delni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/Graduating%20to%20Success-Higher%20Education%20Strategy.pdf>
- Count, Read: Succeed – A Strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy, March 2011 **<https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/count-read-succeed-a-strategy-to-improve-outcomes-in-literacy-and-numeracy.pdf>**
- Every School a Good School - a Policy for School Improvement, April 2009
<https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/ESAGS%20Policy%20for%20School%20Improvement%20-%20Final%20Version%2005-05-2009.pdf>
- Further Education Means Success – the Northern Ireland Strategy for Further Education, January 2016
<https://www.delni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/FE%20Strategy%20-%20FE%20Means%20Business.pdf>
- Employment and Skills Strategy for people with disabilities – (currently under development)



Annex D
Preparing for Success Careers Strategy 2009/14 Key Themes
Cross-referenced against the Careers Strategy 2015-2020
Policy Commitments

Policy Commitments	Preparing for Success Key Themes				
	Theme 1 Improving Careers Education	Theme 2 Improving access to Careers Information	Theme 3 Improving the provision of Careers Advice and Guidance	Theme 4 Improving Quality	Theme 5 Improving Professional Development
1. Accountability and Quality Assurance Framework	√			√	√
2. E-delivery and Labour Market Information		√	√		
3. Work Experience	√	√			
4. Accessing Impartial Advice			√		√
5. Recording Achievements and Experience (e-portfolio)	√		√		

