

NICCY Summary: Written Assembly Questions week ending 29th January, 2016

Statutory obligations to support young people with learning disabilities to transition (i) into further education: and (ii) from further education into employment.

<p>AQW 52970/11-16</p>	<p>Ms Claire Sugden (IND - East Londonderry)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister for Employment and Learning what statutory obligations exist to support young people with learning disabilities to transition (i) into further education: and (ii) from further education into employment.</p> <p>Whilst there are no direct statutory obligations placed on my Department to support such transitions, there are related statutory obligations placed upon further education (FE) colleges under the Further Education Order (Northern Ireland) 1997 (FE Order) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (SENDO).</p> <p>The FE Order requires colleges to ‘have regard to the requirements of persons over compulsory school leaving age who have learning difficulties’ while SENDO makes it unlawful for institutions of further and higher education to treat students with disabilities less favourably, without justification, for a reason which relates to their disability. It also places a duty on institutions to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that people who have a disability are not put at a substantial disadvantage (compared to people who do not have a disability) in accessing further education. My Department assists FE colleges fulfil these statutory obligations by providing £4.5 million per annum in ring-fenced funding through the Additional Support Fund to provide additional support to students with learning difficulties or disabilities to help meet their goals in education, progression to employment or towards independent living.</p> <p>In addition to direct support within further education, my Department also provides support to those with learning difficulties or disabilities with transition into FE and from FE into employment, through the Careers Service and the Disability Employment Service.</p> <p>Careers Service Support</p> <p>As part of Partnership Agreements between the Careers Service and post-primary schools, including Special Schools, to support the schools’</p>
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careers education programme, careers advisers are invited to attend Transition Plan Meetings of Year 10 pupils and their subsequent Annual Reviews. This allows young people and their parents/guardians to make informed decisions about the range of educational, training and employment opportunities available to them.

Disability Employment Service Support and Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities

In 2012, my Department established a pilot project with three FE colleges and the Department’s Disability Employment Service (DES) to enhance the transition between the colleges’ vocational programmes, delivered through discrete provision for students with learning difficulties or disabilities. It is anticipated that the success of the pilot will be built upon through the forthcoming Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities and through improved partnership work between the Careers Service, disability employment organisations, and the FE college staff and students. Further information on the Employment and Skills Strategy consultation is available from:

<https://www.delni.gov.uk/consultations/employment-strategy-people-disabilities-consultation>

Transitions Action Plan

My Department also chairs a cross-departmental group which has been considering current gaps in provision and opportunities for making improvement to services for young people with severe learning difficulties or disabilities making the transition from school into adult services, and an action plan was published in November 2015.

Its aim is to assist young people with severe learning difficulties who are making the transition from school into adult services and sets out a range of actions across government that aim to deliver improved support for this group of young people throughout Northern Ireland. Progress on the action plan will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the Inter Ministerial Group on Mental Health and Learning Disability, with my Department being responsible for collating information and updates from relevant lead departments. Further information on the Transitions Action Plan is available from: <https://www.delni.gov.uk/publications/transitions-action-plan>

Support to young people with disabilities to help them secure employment.

<p>AQW 52775/11- 16</p>	<p>Mr Gary Middleton (DUP - Foyle)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister for Employment and Learning what support his Department can give to young people with disabilities to help them secure employment.</p> <p>My Department's Disability Employment Service (DES) provides a comprehensive package of support measures aimed at helping people with disability related barriers to employment, including young people, to progress towards, move into and sustain paid employment.</p> <p>This range of specialist disability employment provision includes pre-employment programmes such as Work Connect, the Job Introduction Scheme and the Condition Management Programme (CMP), and medium to long term in-work support through Workable and Access to Work. This menu of specialist support is provided in partnership with the local disability sector and, in the case of CMP, teams of health professionals in each of the five Health Trusts.</p> <p>DES also has a dedicated Occupational Psychology Service which offers an all age advice, guidance and assessment service in areas relating to disability and employment.</p> <p>My Department's mainstream employment programmes and services are also available to young people with disabilities, and can support them to find and retain suitable employment. Steps 2 Success is delivered throughout Northern Ireland and can be accessed via the 35 Jobs and Benefits offices and Job centres.</p> <p>Through the Youth Employment Scheme Work Experience Programme, the Department offers work placement opportunities to unemployed 18-24 year olds. Participants have the opportunity to learn and apply the skills, behaviours and attitudes, increasingly valued by prospective employers.</p> <p>My Department also offers an Employer Subsidy, an incentive targeted at 18-24 year olds who have been unemployed for 13 weeks or more, whilst the Enterprise Allowance Scheme provides financial support for unemployed people aged 18 and over to help individuals establish and build their own business. All of these options are open to young disabled people.</p> <p>In addition, the European Social Fund (ESF), which is administered by my Department, is also helping to fund 25 local disability projects, all of which</p>
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are aimed at improving the employability and employment prospects of people with a wide range of disability related barriers. The Department is also supporting 13 ESF projects, specifically for young people classified as “Not in Employment, Education or Training”. Due to the multiple barriers faced by young people with disabilities, it is likely that these projects will be supporting young people who have health and disability related barriers. My Department has also been working with the representatives of many local disability organisations and other relevant stakeholders on the development of a new ‘Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities’ which is due to launch in February 2016.

One of the key aims of the strategy is to provide a clear transitions pathway for young people with significant disability related barriers, to assist them in their pursuit of new skills, employment opportunities and career development.

Officials from DES are working in partnership with the Further Education colleges the Northern, Southern and North West regions, in order to increase the employment opportunities and outcomes for students in the Discrete Learning Units. This partnership approach commenced in 2013, and during this time, 62 young disabled people have secured employment. My Department also provides an all-age, all-ability Careers Service that provides impartial guidance on career planning to people in education, employment, training and to the unemployed, including those with a disability. This is delivered through a network of professionally qualified careers advisers who are based in Careers Resource Centres, JobCentres and Jobs and Benefit Offices throughout Northern Ireland.

The Careers Service will contribute directly to the delivery of the new “Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities”, working with other support workers to ensure that every young person with a disability who wishes to progress into further education, training and employment, will be case loaded and supported through the transition process.

Through its Training for Success (TfS) programme, the Department provides a guaranteed training place for all unemployed young people in the 16-17 year old age group. For young people with a disability, this age limit is extended up to the age of 22, and additional tailored support is provided by a number of local disability organisations. This aims to ensure that any specific support needs are addressed as soon as possible, and the young

		disabled trainees on TfS can achieve new skills and qualifications that will help the to secure employment on completion of their time on the programme.
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United Youth pilot schemes

<p>AQW 52926/11-16</p>	<p>Mr Peter Weir (DUP - North Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister for Employment and Learning what actions are being taken to retain people employed to deliver the United Youth pilot schemes until the roll out of the United Youth project.</p> <p>The current Together Building a United Community (T:BUC) United Youth Pilot Phase will conclude on 31 March 2016. No contractual commitment has been made beyond this date.</p>
<p>AQW 52917/11-16</p>	<p>Mr Peter Weir (DUP - North Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister for Employment and Learning when the roll out the United Youth project will begin following the completion of the United Youth pilot schemes.</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Executive has committed to utilise EU PEACE IV funding (Children and Young People - Priority 2.1) to deliver a cross-border Youth Initiative programme. The PEACE IV Programme (2014 – 2020) was formally adopted by the European Commission towards the end of last year.</p> <p>A total potential allocation of up to €42.5m ERDF will be available over two phases for the cross-border Youth Initiative programme that will comprise elements of the Together Building a United Community (TBUC) United Youth vision, focusing primarily on good relations, personal development and citizenship.</p> <p>The current United Youth Pilot Phase will end on 31 March 2016. It is currently anticipated that the relevant PEACE IV call will go live in September 2016.</p>

Support pupils diagnosed with dyslexia

<p>AQW 53165/11- 16</p>	<p>Mr Jim Allister (TUV - North Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education, given over 9,000 local pupils have been diagnosed with dyslexia, for his assessment of the support being provided to address this issue.</p> <p>The Education Authority (EA) has advised that a range of special education support and provision is available to parents and schools for a child identified with dyslexia, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> dyslexia awareness training for schools (and parents) as requested by schools to enhance the capacity of teachers to identify and respond appropriately in addressing dyslexia; all Educational Psychologists (EPs) are trained and skilled in the assessment and identification of dyslexia. Following the identification of dyslexia EPs provide a comprehensive range of support including recommendations and resources to parents and schools to assist the pupil achieve his/her potential; a range of innovative strategies, resources and computer assisted programmes are available to pupils with dyslexia for whom more traditional methods are unsuccessful; some schools have achieved or are working towards achievement of Dyslexia Friendly status usually in association with the British Dyslexia Association (BDA). Schools are supported by the EA in achieving this award; a range of measures to help those children and young people identified as having dyslexia under examination conditions. <p>In addition a range of capacity building projects have been provided specifically to assist teachers to identify dyslexia including:</p> <p>Report of the Task Group on Dyslexia</p> <p>DE provided all schools with copies of the following materials to develop their understanding of dyslexia and provide them with guidelines on identifying and meeting the needs of pupils in their school in relation to dyslexia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding Dyslexia: (A guide for schools) CD-ROM; Understanding Dyslexia: Challenges and Opportunities Video; Dyslexia Friendly Learning Environment: Booklet outlining indicators and strategies; <p>Dyslexia awareness training was also developed on a regional basis and made available to schools on request.</p> <p>Good Practice Guidelines Booklet</p>
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		<p>This booklet provides guidelines on relevant and purposeful measures and adjustments to the classroom environment for pupils experiencing literacy difficulties, including dyslexia.</p> <p>SEN Resource File</p> <p>This provides teaching staff with details of support for SEN, including a section on reading, writing and spelling.</p> <p>Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing [CCET] Training</p> <p>Training was made available to enable schools to carry out a range of assessments on pupils with SEN, including the detection of dyslexia type difficulties.</p> <p>5. SEN Literacy Project:</p> <p>A three year project delivered jointly by Stranmillis and St Mary's College, funded by the DE, provided schools with online and centre based training on the identification, assessment and the teaching of pupils with literacy difficulties in primary schools across the north of Ireland.</p>
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Early intervention in relation to mental health issues in schools. (same answer to the 3 questions)

AQW 53149/11-16	Mr Peter Weir (DUP - North Down)	To ask the Minister of Education what action his Department is taking to enable greater early intervention in relation to mental health issues in schools.
AQW 53148/11-16	Mr Peter Weir (DUP - North Down)	To ask the Minister of Education to detail the action his Department is taking to increase consistency in the provision of pastoral care and care for pupils with mental health issues in schools.
AQW 53147/11-16	Mr Peter Weir (DUP - North Down)	<p>To ask the Minister of Education what action his Department is taking to encourage greater awareness of mental health issues in schools.</p> <p>When I responded to your question about mental health issues within schools last June (AQW 47440/11-15 refers) I explained about the range of</p>

		<p>provision that the Department has put in place to support pupil emotional health and well-being. These resources continue to be supplemented and updated as additional material becomes available.</p> <p>I have since, as an active member of the Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group (IDMG) on Mental Health and Learning Disability, agreed to my Department playing its part in a review of the Bamford Action Plan. The review is currently at public consultation stage and the evaluation will consider what action Departments have taken to implement the Bamford vision, and what impact these actions have made on the lives of people with mental health problems. Although my Department has met all its commitments under the current Action Plan I recognise that we can always do more. The outcome of this review will offer an opportunity therefore to review the DE actions that contribute to the Bamford Action Plan.</p> <p>The legal responsibility for pastoral care in schools rests with Boards of Governors and it is for Governors to have written measures in place to meet this responsibility. Pastoral care provision will differ from school to school. The actual provision will include the way in which pupils are equipped to cope with personal challenges through the curriculum on offer, the systems for monitoring of pupils' academic progress and wellbeing and the range of support available within the school to pupils experiencing difficulties.</p> <p>In complying with their legal responsibility for pastoral care, schools will take on board advice and guidance issued by the Department. In addition, the school inspection process includes an assessment of the pastoral care and child protection arrangements. Where an unsatisfactory rating has been given, the Department will expect prompt action to rectify any deficiencies.</p>
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Educational experiences and outcomes for looked after children

<p>AQW 52945/11- 16</p>	<p>Ms Claire Sugden (IND - East Londonderry)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education for his assessment of current educational experiences and outcomes for looked after children.</p> <p>My aim is to create an education service which ensures that everyone receives a high-quality education, focussing on the needs of our young people.</p> <p>However, the evidence tells us that many looked-after children massively underachieve in education. The latest available figures for</p>
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		<p>2013/14 show that only 20.9% achieved 5 GCSEs grades A-C including English and Maths, compared to 63.8 % of non- looked after children in our schools. This is a marginal improvement on the previous year.</p> <p>My expectations for looked-after children are no less than for any other child. I want them to achieve to their full potential. I acknowledge however that they might need a bit of extra support to help them to do so. I have therefore provided an additional support factor of just over £1000 per year to schools for each Looked After Child on their register.</p> <p>In addition the Education Authority’s Education Welfare Service can offer advice and support to individual looked-after children and their carers to support them with their education.</p> <p>My officials are currently developing a policy to further support the educational experiences and outcomes for looked-after children. They are consulting with the Health Department and all other stakeholders, including looked-after children themselves. I expect the policy to be introduced during the 2016/17 school year.</p> <p>I await the final report on recent research conducted by OECD to consider ways to improve educational outcomes for looked-after children here. I will ensure that any appropriate recommendations are fully considered as the policy is developed.</p>
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Number of pupils with special educational needs in the Education Authority Southern Region

<p>AQW 53142/11-16</p>	<p>Mr Sydney Anderson (DUP - Upper Bann)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education to detail the number of pupils with special educational needs in the Education Authority Southern Region, in each of the last four years</p> <p>The most recent finalised data that the Department holds regarding SEN refers to the 2014/15 academic year. As this is prior to the establishment of the Education Authority, figures based on schools in the former Southern Education Library Board have been provided. A total number of pupils has been provided for context.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="577 1870 1396 1960"> <tr> <td data-bbox="577 1870 783 1960"></td> <td data-bbox="783 1870 1118 1960">SEN stages 1-5</td> <td data-bbox="1118 1870 1396 1960">Total pupils</td> </tr> </table>		SEN stages 1-5	Total pupils
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		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>2011/12</td> <td>12,419</td> <td>76,547</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2012/13</td> <td>12,656</td> <td>77,412</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2013/14</td> <td>13,075</td> <td>78,496</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014/15</td> <td>13,526</td> <td>79,495</td> </tr> </table> <p>Source: NI school census</p> <p>Notes:</p> <p>Figures relate to the 2014/15 academic year. While the 2015/16 school census took place on the 9th October this year, finalised figures will not be available until March 2016.</p> <p>Figures include pupils at stages 1 – 5 on the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.</p>	2011/12	12,419	76,547	2012/13	12,656	77,412	2013/14	13,075	78,496	2014/15	13,526	79,495
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Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Autism Assessment Service;

<p>AQW 52582/11-16</p>	<p>Ms Anna Lo MBE (APNI - South Belfast)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of (i) staff working on assessments in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Autism Assessment Service; (ii) children awaiting assessments; and (iii) people that have been waiting more than twelve months for an assessment.</p> <p>Table 1 below details the number of staff and whole time equivalent (WTE) working in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Autism Assessment Service at 13th January 2016.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Child Diagnostic Staffing</th> <th>WTE</th> <th>Headcount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Paediatricians</td> <td>0.4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Psychology</td> <td>0.4</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Child Adolescent Mental Health Service</td> <td>0.3</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Child Diagnostic Staffing	WTE	Headcount	Paediatricians	0.4	5	Psychology	0.4	1	Child Adolescent Mental Health Service	0.3	2
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		<p>Source: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust</p> <p>There were 882 children awaiting assessment for Autism Spectrum Disorder in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust at 30th November 2015. This is the latest available figure.</p> <p>Some 230 children had been waiting more than twelve months for an assessment for Autism Spectrum Disorder at 30th November 2015. This is the latest available figure.</p>									

Update on the pilot project recently introduced in courts to minimise unnecessary delays in care proceedings

AQO 9447/11-16	<p>Ms Michaela Boyle (SF - West Tyrone)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Justice for an update on the pilot project recently introduced in courts to minimise unnecessary delays in care proceedings.</p> <p>The Family Care Proceedings Pilot was launched on 30 December 2015 following a joint DHSPSS/DOJ scoping exercise on the operation of the family justice system in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The aim of the Family Care Proceedings Pilot is to promote good decision making and minimise unnecessary delay for children and young people subject to public law proceedings, specifically Article 50 Care Order and Supervision Order applications. Central to the programme is the aim of improving outcomes for children at the earliest possible opportunity.</p> <p>The objectives of the Care Proceedings Pilot are to identify the barriers to successful implementation and Develop solutions to address the barriers identified.</p> <p>The pilot validation phase will run for 12 months and will include all care order applications lodged by Western and South Eastern Health and Social Care Trusts at the Londonderry and Newtownards Family Proceedings Court. The Pilot will also track cases transferred from the Family Proceedings Court to</p>
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		<p>the relevant Family Care Centre or the High Court.</p> <p>To date, two cases have been received and data captured as part of this exercise.</p> <p>It is anticipated that a formal evaluation report will be produced by my Department's Analytical Services Group by May 2017.</p>
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Youth Justice Review

<p>AQW 52826/11- 16</p>	<p>Mr Alban Maginness (SDLP - North Belfast)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Justice, given the assessment of the Criminal Justice Inspectorate that only 59 per cent of the recommendations of the Youth Justice Review had been achieved by 2015 and considering his Department's target was 90 per cent by March 2014, how he intends to implement, monitor and report on those recommendations which fall outside the Scoping Study.</p> <p>I am content that the current Scoping Study will continue to address a significant number of the recommendations found in the Youth Justice Review and maintain momentum in shaping and improving our youth justice system.</p> <p>This is particularly true for those recommendations where co-operation and partnership across organisations and Departments are necessary for progress to take place. Commitment from both within and beyond the criminal justice system has been evident from the start of the Scoping Study, with key stakeholders fully engaged at both Steering group and Subgroup level. I am therefore confident that we can achieve significant progress in delivering on the remaining Youth Justice Review recommendations, either directly or indirectly, through this work.</p> <p>While I have yet to take receipt of the proposals of the Steering Group, I suspect that there will be few which fall outside the remit of the Scoping Study but we will take stock once the outcome of the current work is known and will address any remaining issues at that stage.</p> <p>There is, of course, the recommendation relating to raising the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility which we are being prevented from implementing due to the lack of political support. No amount of monitoring or reporting will make a difference in this case.</p>
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