

**UNITED KINGDOM – NORTHERN IRELAND**

**Summary**

**Country Report on the Vocational Education and  
Training system, REFERNET Cedefop**

**and**

**Summary report on Vocational Education and  
Training (VET) for learners with Special  
Educational Needs (SEN)**



## CONTENTS

<b>1 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM</b> .....	<b>4</b>
1.1 Diagram of the education and training system.....	4
1.2 Definitions.....	5
1.3 Objectives and priorities of the national policy development areas of VET .....	5
1.4 Institutional and legislative framework for IVET .....	6
1.5 Types of teacher and trainer occupations in VET .....	7
1.6 Systems and mechanisms for the anticipation of skill needs .....	7
1.7 Practices to match VET provision with skill needs .....	7
1.8 Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment in IVET.....	7
1.9 Funding for initial vocational education and training .....	8
1.10 References .....	8
<b>2 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS</b> .....	<b>9</b>
2.1 Population .....	9
2.2 Organisation and Provision of VET programmes.....	9
2.2.1 <i>IVET system options for SEN learners: lower and upper secondary levels, apprenticeship training and other youth programmes.</i> .....	9
2.2.2 <i>Different types of educational/VET settings</i> .....	9
2.2.3 <i>The curricula of VET programmes, the assessment procedures, types of qualifications and assessment criteria (e.g. flexibility on curricula composition and individual adaptations, diplomas etc.)</i> .....	10
2.3 VET programmes and employment .....	10
2.3.1 <i>Strategies and practices used to match the local labour market needs with the skills acquired by learners in the course of the VET programmes</i> .....	10
2.4 Data (relating to learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 years old and enrolled in VET programmes in the academic year 2010/2011 and relating to their transition to employment) 10	
2.4.1 <i>Data on the number of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 years old who are enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level.</i> .....	10
2.4.2 <i>Data on how many of these learners are enrolled in mainstream VET programmes, how many are enrolled in special units within mainstream VET settings and how many are enrolled in special VET programmes.</i> .....	11
2.4.3 <i>Data on the number and percentage of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the number and percentage of the general youth population of the same age enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level.</i> .....	11
2.4.4 <i>Brief definition and explanation of “drop out”. Data concerning the drop out rate of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the drop out rate of the general youth population, at national and/or local level</i> .....	11



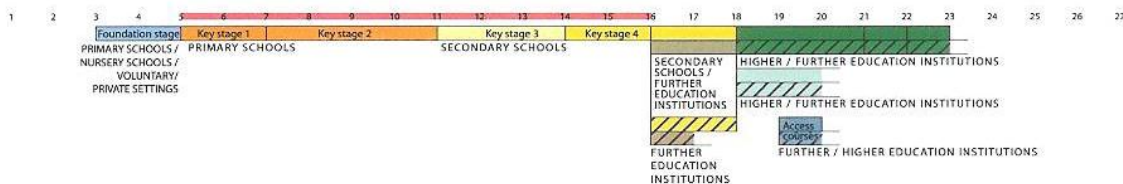
---

2.4.5 Data on the transition rate of learners with SEN from VET to employment in comparison with the transition rate of the general youth population from VET to employment at national and/or local level .....	12
2.5 Legislation and policy .....	12
2.5.1 Brief description of existing legislation .....	12
2.5.2 Main objectives and priorities of the national/regional policy relating to VET for learners with SEN and the transition from VET to employment .....	12
2.5.3 Roles and responsibilities within the institutional framework.....	13
2.5.4 The actors involved in improving standards and evaluating the VET programmes on offer for learners with SEN, relating to the job market.....	14
2.6. VET teachers, trainers and other professionals .....	14
2.6.1 Information on the VET staff (teachers, trainers, career counsellors, transition officers etc.) .....	14
2.6.2 Information on the careers/employment guidance and counselling services offered to learners with SEN who are enrolled in VET programmes .....	15
2.7 Funding .....	15

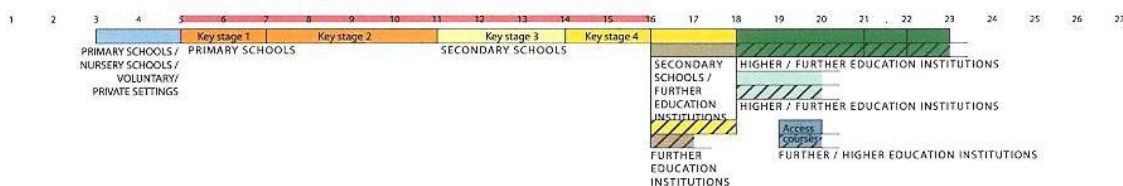
# 1 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

## 1.1 Diagram of the education and training system

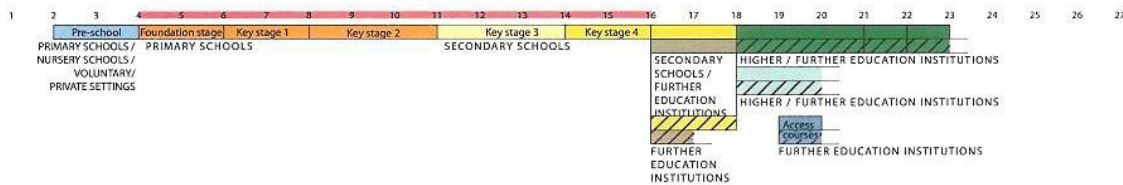
### The United Kingdom – England



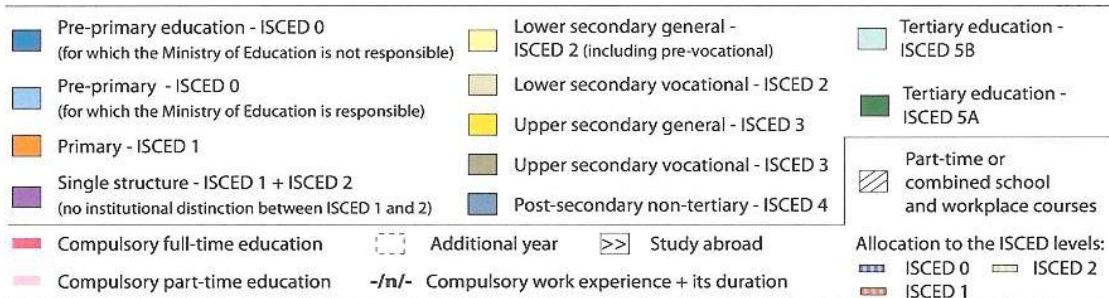
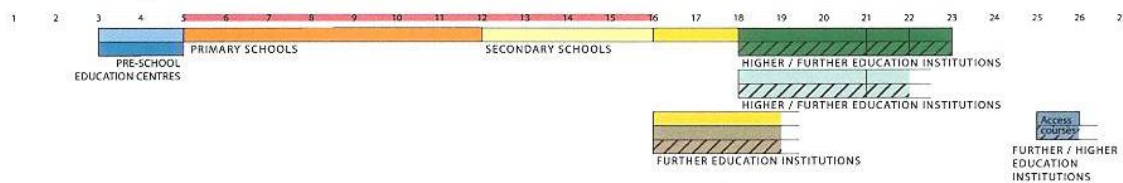
### The United Kingdom – Wales



### The United Kingdom – Northern Ireland



### The United Kingdom – Scotland





## 1.2 Definitions

**Pre-vocational education** – focuses on basic skills, such as numeracy and literacy and is below level 2. Vocational training may still contain general skills but would also include more vocation-specific training.

**Vocational education** – in general, the term VET is not widely used in the UK. The term 'vocational qualification' is more common. It is difficult to define VET in the UK context. The Future Skills Scotland defines it as a course of education usually in a school or a learning institution that is oriented towards specific job or element of work.

The Welsh government refers to academic and vocational learning, the latter is defined as learning related to a specific vocation, usually involving the development of specific technical or professional knowledge and skills.

**Further education** (FE/ post-16 education or post-16 learning) - is the type of learning or training that takes place after the age of 16, but before degree level. It can be full or part time, academic or vocational.

**Training** – there is no official definition, the notion of learning is more widely used. Future Skills Scotland defines training as the process of coaching in or accustoming an individual to a mode of behaviour or performance; or to make proficient with specialised instruction and practice and the Skills Strategy for Wales, define it as coaching, instruction or practice that makes someone proficient in a particular activity.

**Apprenticeship** – is a structured programme (a framework, Learning and Skills Council - LSC) of training which gives young people the opportunity to learn on the job and build up knowledge and transferable skills. More specifically, it is defined as work-based learning programmes combining paid employment or work experience with on-the-job and off-the-job learning.

## 1.3 Objectives and priorities of the national policy development areas of VET

- Meeting the targets of “Leitch Report 'Prosperity for all in the global economy’”(2006): publish legislation on funding entitlement to free training in basic skills and first full level 2 qualifications, a guarantee of free training up to level for those aged 19-25, and a legal right for suitably qualified young people to enter Apprenticeship.
- “Reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training, NEET” (2008): reduce the number of NEETs by building partnerships of schools, career services and families and providing attractive alternatives to post-compulsory education and throughout impending legislation to raise the education participation age to 18. Financial support (Education Maintenance Allowance -EMA) to those from poorer backgrounds to stay on in education or training
- Raise attainment and widen participation, especially among disadvantaged and disaffected young learners, the government is reforming 14 to 19 provisions, with increased flexibility in the last two years of compulsory education (work-related learning engagement programmes) and by introducing new Diplomas in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, which intend to provide a vocational alternative to general secondary education.
- Reforming the apprenticeship scheme by investing more resources, removing the age limit and opening up progression routes to those coming up through vocational route.
- Qualifications more flexible through the unit- and credit-based frameworks, which allows for better horizontal and vertical flexibility of the system.



## 1.4 Institutional and legislative framework for IVET

There is no clear cut off between the IVET and CVET. There is no official definition of IVET in the UK and it can take place in various settings, which are administered by different bodies. The government and institutional frameworks differ between England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales, and all of which have extensive autonomy.

The general pattern is as follows:

- Overall policy for vocational learning and skills is the responsibility of the Learning / Skills or Education Department of each national government, which also deals with school education.
- The funding, provision and management of learning opportunities within the learning and skills sector in each nation is delegated to a funding council, which determines priorities and the allocation of funding, as well as overseeing data collection.
- Regional and local bodies advise on the provision of learning opportunities to meet local needs, within the overall national policy and funding arrangements, but individual colleges have considerable autonomy.
- Inspection of the quality of provision is the responsibility of an independent body in each nation, as is research, evaluation of initiatives and staff development.
- Approval of qualifications for use in publicly funded provision is the responsibility of an 'accrediting body' for each nation, although those for England, Wales and Northern Ireland work closely on accreditation issues.
- Training programmes for the unemployed are the responsibility of the UK Department of Work and Pensions, working with the governments of the devolved administrations.
- Sector Skills Councils, responsible for identifying skills needs in economic sectors and for defining the occupational standards on which occupational qualifications are based, work across the UK, as does their co-ordinating body, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES).
- The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) was set up in April 2009 under the two departments (DBIS- and DCSF) that is totally responsible for the delivery of Apprenticeships.
- Awarding bodies develop and award a wide range of qualifications. Awarding bodies are private companies in their own right (with either commercial or charitable status), although they are subject to regulation by accreditation bodies, e.g. Ofqual (England), Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) (Wales), and Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) (Northern Ireland).
- The learning and skills sector comprises further education colleges (including both general and specialist colleges and also Sixth Form colleges), post-compulsory education in school sixth forms, government funded work-based learning for young people (including Apprenticeships) and adult and community learning.

### **Policies:**

There is not a single piece of legislation that provides the basis for the legal framework for education and training for all UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) instead there are different independent policies.





## **1.5 Types of teacher and trainer occupations in VET**

Categories of employment for teacher/trainers in each sector are:

- secondary schools: vocational subject teachers with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS); classroom assistants;
- Further Education colleges: vocational teachers, with part or full teaching qualification; learning support workers (with varying roles and qualifications); and
- Other training providers: vocational trainers, with or without part or full teaching qualification, but with an Assessor Award for those working in publicly-funded training enterprises.

## **1.6 Systems and mechanisms for the anticipation of skill needs**

The UK has an ambition of being in the top eight countries in the world for skills, jobs and productivity by 2020. Since 2002, with the introduction of the UK-wide Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), followed by creation of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) in 2008, the government has aimed to enhance employer understanding of their future labour market and skills requirements leading to improved employability and skills demand and supply. Relevant labour market data comes from a variety of national sources including the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Annual Employment Survey (AES), and from national, regional or sectoral surveys, and skill audits. The anticipation of skills needs is taken forward initially on a sectoral basis, followed by the regional and local dimension based on the sectoral needs analysis. The Skillsbase database provides a wide range of labour market information.

## **1.7 Practices to match VET provision with skill needs**

Vocational Qualifications (VQ): a flexible, responsive and easily understood VQ system to meet individual and employment needs should be in place by 2010, with a unit-based credit framework by 2007. The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) (England) was tested and trialled. It aims to make qualifications landscape more understandable to employers and learners while meeting the needs of both and providing clear and accessible routes to employability and learning progression. England includes the conversion of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) into the QCF, which is a credit-based and web-based regulated framework.

At regional level employers, education and training providers and government agencies come together to develop coordinated approaches to skills issues through Regional Skills Partnerships, and at local level Local Aimhigher Partnerships bring together partners to develop and coordinate initiatives to widen participation in higher education, including vocational routes.

## **1.8 Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment in IVET**

- In England, schools have a statutory obligation to provide a planned programme of career education within the national curriculum in years 7 to 11 (age 11 to 16). Schools are also required to work with careers services to ensure that pupils have access to materials providing careers guidance and to a wide range of up-to-date reference materials. There is also a statutory requirement for schools to include work-related learning within the curriculum for all students in years 10 and 11 (ages 14 to 16).



- In Wales, careers education and work-related education are statutory requirements, but are outside the Welsh National Curriculum and are not subject to statutory programmes of study or assessment arrangements.
- In Northern Ireland: Learning for Life and Work is a statutory part of the revised curriculum being phased in from 2007 to mid-2010. The aim is to ensure that all young people develop the personal qualities, skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes which will give them a strong foundation for life and work. The curriculum consists of statutory minimum content which is supplemented by additional non-statutory guidance. The Careers Service operates a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with schools.
- Careers Scotland's service is available to people of all ages through local Careers Centres or the interactive website at [www.careers-scotland.org.uk](http://www.careers-scotland.org.uk).
- Young people in transition are all expected to receive advice and guidance through facilities made available at the place of learning.
- All secondary schools must provide a careers programme for all their pupils as part of the national curriculum, and further education colleges and universities have advice centres and careers programmes available for their students.

### **1.9 Funding for initial vocational education and training**

Funding flows from the government departments (BIS and DCSF) to Learning and Skills Councils and then to training providers in England. The LSC funds post-16 education in secondary schools, via the LAs, and funds directly all other state-funded programmes. New funding models and methods are being introduced: 2009-2010 is the first year of aligning funding to qualifications nominated for public funding by the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)/Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) and the funding is being switched from NQF qualifications to QCF qualifications. As the new qualification system is unit-based, a unit-based funding approach is being trialled during this period to test whether unit funding can incentivise the completion of full qualifications.

### **1.10 References**

Cuddy, N, Ward, C and Cedefop Refernet United Kingdom (2009): VET in Europe. Country Report Thessaloniki: Cedefop.





## 2 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

### 2.1 Population

#### Legal Definition of SEN

Article 3 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 defines a child as having special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty that calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

There is a close match between the definition of learners with SEN and the target group of the project.

### 2.2 Organisation and Provision of VET programmes

#### 2.2.1 IVET system options for SEN learners: lower and upper secondary levels, apprenticeship training and other youth programmes.

The Entitlement Framework (EF) is a joint initiative across two government Departments, the Department of Education and The Department for Employment and Learning. The EF aims to widen access to, and participation in, vocational education and training for all young people. As a result Special Schools and Mainstream schools are working in collaboration with each other and with Training Organisations and Colleges of Further Education to provide opportunities for vocational training and learning for learners with a wide range of special education needs. As a result, from the age of 14 years, young people can engage in a broader curriculum which includes academic subjects and practical subjects such as business administration, a range of construction activities, hairdressing and beauty, childcare, motor vehicle repair and retail.

The Entitlement Framework is recognised by the two government departments as a positive policy for the inclusion of all young people with SEN in vocational education and training. The programme gives young people the opportunity to engage in, and sample, a range of vocational areas and contributes effectively to these young people remaining in education and training for longer by making more informed choices. The transition planning in school for individual young people with SEN at the age of 14 years, effectively involves all key stakeholders including the individual young person, their parents or carers, and objective careers officers.

In 2008 a total of 24091 young people left secondary level school - 3505 of the total school leaver population were designated as have a SEN. Of the school leavers with SEN, 1235 transferred to VET in a College of Further Education, 1136 transferred to a VET Training Organisation and 423 moved directly into supported employment.

#### 2.2.2 Different types of educational/VET settings

Overall the Entitlement framework widens opportunities for young people with SEN for participation and social and economic inclusion.

Almost all of the options for VET in Northern Ireland are within the public sector – schools and Colleges of Further Education are funded out of the public purse.

Training Organisations are mostly private sector organisations



*2.2.3 The curricula of VET programmes, the assessment procedures, types of qualifications and assessment criteria (e.g. flexibility on curricula composition and individual adaptations, diplomas etc.)*

Qualification framework: 95% of college and training courses need to be accredited and on the national qualification framework which is called the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). The QCF qualifications are made up of “bite sized” chunks which enable learners to build up credits towards a full qualification which can be an award, a certificate or a diploma depending on how much learning has taken place and how many credits have been achieved. The flexibility of the QCF meets the needs of a wide range of learners and in particular those learners with SEN.

## **2.3 VET programmes and employment**

*2.3.1 Strategies and practices used to match the local labour market needs with the skills acquired by learners in the course of the VET programmes*

Each school, College of Further Education and Training Organisation has a designated Careers Adviser employed by the department of Employment and Learning. This individual makes regular visits to the organisation and provides Local labour market information to inform careers guidance. This individual works to complement and supplement the work of careers staff in the organisation.

## **2.4 Data (relating to learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 years old and enrolled in VET programmes in the academic year 2010/2011 and relating to their transition to employment)**

*2.4.1 Data on the number of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 years old who are enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level.*

In Northern Ireland there is a total population of approximately 1.6 million people. There are 328 500 school aged children and of these 62415 (19%) have a SEN. Of this 19%, 58 046 (93%) attend mainstream schools and 4369 (7%) attend Special Schools. All of the children, from the age of 14 years, now have the opportunity to access VET through the Entitlement Framework. Mainstream and special schools work in collaboration with each other and with Colleges of Further Education and Training Organisations to provide young people with access to a vocational education and training curriculum in order for them to experience a range of occupational and technical areas. This opportunity helps the young people to make more informed decisions about their learning pathway when leaving the statutory school system.

- School population is approximately 330,000 pupils
- 63,400 pupils (19.2%) on SEN register
- 13,600 pupils (4.1%) with SEN statement
- 4,400 pupils in 42 special schools
- 1,810 pupils in special units (approx 100) attached to mainstream schools
- 58,340 (92% of SEN pupils) in mainstream classes
- Mild learning difficulties – 13,814
- General cognitive and learning difficulties – 9,559
- Moderate learning difficulties – 7,013
- Dyslexia/Specific learning difficulties – 5,769

- Speech and language difficulties – 5,167
- Social emotional and behavioural difficulties – 4,129
- Autism/Asperger's – 2986
- Severe Learning difficulties – 1,574

*2.4.2 Data on how many of these learners are enrolled in mainstream VET programmes, how many are enrolled in special units within mainstream VET settings and how many are enrolled in special VET programmes.*

The overall participation rate of 16 and 17 year olds in full-time education and vocational training in 2009/10 was 86.1% (83.6% for males and 88.8% for females) (Table 3). This is a slight reduction on the rate of 86.8% in 2008/09, though the rate for males rose slightly from 82.6%, while the rate for females reduced from 91.1%.

The participation rate for 16 year olds (89.3%) was higher than for 17 year olds (83.0%). The rate for female 16 year olds was 89.7% and for female 17 year olds was 87.8%. The rate for male 16 year olds was 88.9% and for male 17 year olds was 78.4%

Participation rates in Northern Ireland (86.1%) were higher than in England (85.5%). The difference between the two countries has narrowed since 2008/09 due to a combination of a fall in the rate in Northern Ireland from 86.8% in 2008/09 and an increase in the rate in England from 81.5% in 2008/09.

### **Approximately 25% of the learners engaged in full-time VET programmes have SEN**

In 2009/10, 65.4% of 16 and 17 year olds in full-time education and/or vocational training attended schools, whereas 21.0% were attending further education colleges, mainstream courses and 13.6% attended Jobskills/Training for success training programmes; the figures for 16 year olds were 68.1%, 19.1% and 12.8% respectively; and, the figures for 17 year olds were 62.4%, 23.0% and 14.5% respectively

*2.4.3 Data on the number and percentage of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the number and percentage of the general youth population of the same age enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level*

In 2008 the total number of school leavers = 24091 – 20586 (85%) of these leavers did not have SEN; 3505 (15%) leavers were designated as having SEN

19590 (95%) of the learners without SEN progressed to further or higher education, training or employment;

3167 (90%) of the learners with SEN progressed to further or higher education, training or employment.

*2.4.4 Brief definition and explanation of "drop out". Data concerning the drop out rate of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the drop out rate of the general youth population, at national and/or local level*

Of the total cohort of school leavers in 2008, 616 (3%) of leavers without SEN left school for unemployment and the destinations of 380 leavers (2%) are unknown.

Of the cohort of leavers with SEN in the same year, 226 (6%) left school for unemployment, and the destinations of 112 leavers (3%) are unknown

Of the total cohort of school leavers without SEN in 2008, 2045 leavers ( 10%) gained immediate employment



Of the cohort of leavers with SEN in the same year, 423 (12%) gained immediate employment.

#### *2.4.5 Data on the transition rate of learners with SEN from VET to employment in comparison with the transition rate of the general youth population from VET to employment at national and/or local level*

Not known specifically – this is most definitely an urgent area for improvement. Transition rates for both groups are believed to be comparable.

## **2.5 Legislation and policy**

### *2.5.1 Brief description of existing legislation*

The Education Order 1996 set down the duties of Education and Library Boards (ELBs), boards of governors of schools and health and social service authorities with regard to special education policy and provision;

- introduced a Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs;
- established an independent Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Northern Ireland, with defined grounds of appeal for parents.
- “a child has special educational needs if he has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him”.
- learning difficulty is defined as “a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his age”

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005 (SENDO) strengthened the rights of children with SEN to a place in a mainstream school;

### *2.5.2 Main objectives and priorities of the national/regional policy relating to VET for learners with SEN and the transition from VET to employment*

At national level there have been:

- Significant change in arrangements for the transfer of pupils at age 11 – from primary to post primary school.
- Wide range of school improvement initiatives.
- Excellent record of pupil achievement in academic public examinations.
- Excellent record of progression to higher education by these pupils.
- Too many pupils not staying on in full time education post 16.
- Too many pupils leaving school at 16 with poor levels of literacy and numeracy.
- Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum / Entitlement Framework.

Entitlement Framework 2013

- **Aims to:**
  - provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all 14-19 year olds
  - provide a better range of progression pathways
  - raise levels of pupil achievement
  - realise the potential of all young people
- **Entitlement Framework requires schools to:**



- provide a minimum of 24 courses for pupils 14-16
- provide a minimum of 27 courses for pupils 16-19
- one third must be academic
- one third must be vocational
- remaining one third at discretion of school
- **Area Learning Communities:**
- Established to enable collaboration between schools, and between schools and further education colleges, within a geographical area.

### *2.5.3 Roles and responsibilities within the institutional framework*

The Department of Education and The Department for Employment and Learning are working together to ensure the effective delivery of policies aimed at young people aged 14 to 19 years. Both Departments are committed to the development of a highly skilled, flexible and innovative workforce, which will contribute to the twin goals of social inclusion and economic success.

The key challenge is improved understanding, across all relevant Departments to facilitate intra-agency and inter-departmental communication, to increase, at both strategic and operational levels, the cohesion and coherence of provision for learners with special educational needs.

At Governmental level there is a need for collaborative working to ensure:

- recognition of scale and complexity of children's needs that require a flexible response;
- policy makers to engage education and other sector players collectively in the development of policies to ensure approaches are coherent and complementary;
- schools to accept that they have a role beyond the pure provision of knowledge and to recognise that addressing barriers to learning is essential to raise standards;
- adjusting the learning environment and teaching strategies to the child's requirements;
- well managed transition between pre-school and primary school and between primary school and post primary school;
- teacher training colleges to factor into training a broader view of the teacher's role and the skills to identify barriers to learning;
- a recognition that the school workforce as a whole (and those who work within the school environment e.g. counsellors and therapists) all contribute to the educational achievements of a child;
- service providers to work together across organisations and locations to ensure that the child or young person is supported as early as possible in the most effective way;
- parents to be better equipped to support the young people and to work with the relevant organisations;
- increased opportunities for diverse professionals to receive training together;
- success judged by the educational outcomes for all learners and particularly those with barriers to learning rather than the inputs in terms of volume of support.



#### *2.5.4 The actors involved in improving standards and evaluating the VET programmes on offer for learners with SEN, relating to the job market*

The main organisation involved in evaluating and reporting on standards of provision is the Education and Training Inspectorate.

A recent ETI report identified the following areas for development in relation to learners with SEN and the transition to employment: the need for

- Tracking of young people after leaving school to inform the effectiveness of school provision in meeting their needs.
- Additional support for young people taking up training placements to ensure they remain in training and to improve retention rates.
- More supported employment opportunities for young people.
- Identification of a wider range of additional appropriate work placements to meet the needs of the young people.
- Further staff development regarding careers and transitions

### **2.6. VET teachers, trainers and other professionals**

#### *2.6.1 Information on the VET staff (teachers, trainers, career counsellors, transition officers etc.)*

All staff in schools (statutory sector) must be trained teachers and recognised by the Department of education as such.

All staff in Colleges of Further Education and Training organisations must have a professional and technical background (relevant qualifications and experience) and must work towards a recognised teacher training qualification.

All staff across the sectors must engage in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to ensure that their skills remain current and up-to-date. CPD opportunities are available on designated training days during the school year and are also provided in “summer schools”.

A recent report from the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) identified that Colleges of Further Education and Training Organisations had the following strengths:

- Commitment of the organisations and staff to meeting the needs of learner with SEN, disabilities and additional learning needs;
- Improved focus on meeting and developing the employability skills of the learners;
- More rigorous initial assessment and personal training planning processes;
- Improved tracking of learner progress; and
- Strong working relationships developed with staff from statutory, voluntary and community agencies.

However the ETI also identified the need for:

- Training for TfS tutors in the use of specialist assistive technologies; and
- The development of a centralised bank of resources and expertise to support tutors delivering on TfS programmes.





### 2.6.2 Information on the careers/employment guidance and counselling services offered to learners with SEN who are enrolled in VET programmes

All learners receive structured Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance inputs alongside their VET programme. The Entitlement Framework provides learners with SEN to sample a range of VET programmes and this has resulted in many of them making more informed choices about their learning and career pathway.

All organisations are required to have a Pastoral Care and Safeguarding policy and procedure to ensure that the care and well being of learners are catered for within the organisation or that the organisation is able to signpost the learner to an appropriate external support provider.

## 2.7 Funding

Education resource budget                      £1.9 billion

Spend on special educational needs        £205 million

10.7% of resource budget spend on SEN

- Further Education – FE (NI) Order 1997 requires colleges to have regard to the needs of learners over compulsory school age who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities which impact on their learning;
- Principally the Department provides funding through the Additional Support Fund for colleges to support the enrolment and integration of such learners on mainstream courses through the provision of additional technical or human resource support; and
- The Department also provides colleges with additional funding to provide education to learners who require discrete learning environments.
- Training for Success (TfS)– in 2007 the Department developed the TfS professional and technical training provision to provide a flexible menu of training for 16-24 year olds;
- Revised again in 2008 learners can enter TfS training at an appropriate level and progress to a stage where they can maximise their potential through the achievement of qualifications, employment, personal development and employability skills; and
- Within TfS there are three strands: Skills for Your Life, Skills for Work Level 1, and Pre-Apprenticeship Level 2

Financial support and/or incentives for learners with SEN and families – families receive benefits for their children and can retain these as long as the young person remains in part – time work only (less than 16 hours per week). For some families this is a disincentive for their child to gain full-time employment.

Financial support and/or incentives for companies to employ young people with SEN – some funding is available from the Department of Employment and Learning for employers to provide subsidised or sheltered employment opportunities.