

Appendix 1

Facts & Figures - issues and outcomes for young people in the north of Ireland

1.1 This section highlights some of the outcomes for young people and some of the issues they are dealing with as they make the difficult transition to adulthood. Not all young people struggle with the context in which they find themselves and even when they do some will thrive despite the issues they face, others will not. For some young people, formalised processes are put in place to overcome specific difficulties, for others that support comes from their parents, teachers, peers and, for many young people, their youth worker.

1.2 Before deciding on priorities for a service to young people, it is important to quantify and better understand what some young people achieve in terms of educational, social and employment outcomes and the barriers they face to achieving their potential.

1.3 The information presents a context for intervention across a range of providers in response to a range of issues and demonstrates that, despite the array of services available, some young people are not afforded the opportunity to fulfil their potential. This presents a challenge for all those organisations concerned with improving outcomes for children and young people, not least education.

1.4 Department of Education policies and associated funding enable the delivery of services exclusively to children and young people and, as such, make a significant contribution to the achievement of Programme for Government targets and agreements. It is essential that education services are delivered efficiently and effectively so that resources are maximised to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

Population Trends

1.5 The north of Ireland has the second fastest growing and youngest population of all UK countries¹. The latest population estimates² indicate that just under one third (536,604) of our population are children and young people aged between 4 and 25, of which 51% are male and 49% are female. Just under two thirds of these children and young people (322,891) are enrolled in 1,210 schools³. The religious breakdown of pupils in schools is 51% Roman Catholic, 37% Protestant, 4% other Christian or non Christian and 8% other religion or no religion. The total number of children and young people aged between 4 and 25 is expected to fall to around 530,000 by 2021; the primary school aged population is expected to continue increasing until 2018; while the compulsory post primary school aged population is expected to decline over the next five years and then to increase for the following five years.

Population projections of those aged 4 to 25 – 2011 to 2021⁴

(PERSONS, thousands)

Year	Aged 4 to 10	Aged 11 to 16	Aged 17 to 18	Aged 19 to 25	Total
2011	160.3	145.3	49.3	179.0	533.9
2012	163.9	143.5	48.6	176.5	532.4
2013	167.5	141.1	48.6	173.6	530.8
2014	170.7	138.3	49.4	170.5	528.9
2015	173.5	136.8	49.0	168.7	528.0
2016	176.0	136.0	47.9	167.6	527.6
2017	178.3	136.5	46.6	166.1	527.5
2018	179.6	138.6	45.0	164.7	527.8
2019	179.3	142.2	44.2	162.6	528.4
2020	178.9	145.8	44.1	160.2	529.1
2021	178.7	148.4	44.7	158.3	530.1

¹ Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Mid Year Population Estimates 2010

² NISRA Population Estimates for Northern Ireland 2010

³ Department of Education School Census – figures relate to 2011/12 academic year

⁴ Source: Northern Ireland 2010 based population projections by ONS

Educational Outcomes

1.6 The education system in the north of Ireland serves some children very well, but there is a significant level of underachievement. As education plays a key role in determining life chances and opportunities in regard to economic and social mobility, those with fewer qualifications and skills are more likely to be disadvantaged when competing for available employment opportunities. The Department of Education is committed to tackling inequality throughout education and will continue to prioritise those children and young people that are at particular risk of underachieving, such as: traveller children; children from ethnic minorities; children with additional needs; or children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

1.7 Free School Meals (FSM) entitlement is an indicator of social deprivation and is highly correlated with lower levels of educational attainment, with pupils entitled to FSM being more likely to have special educational needs; be excluded from school; be persistent truants; at risk of becoming involved in anti social behaviour; and, as a consequence, when they leave school they are more likely to be unemployed or earning lower salaries. To put this in context, almost a quarter (23%) of all pupils in the north of Ireland are entitled to free schools meals⁵.

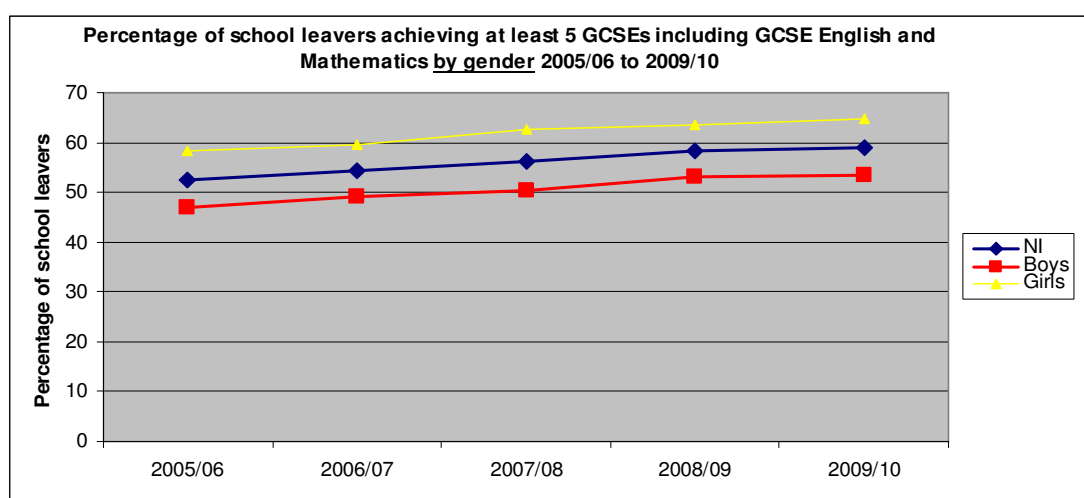
Qualifications of School Leavers⁶

1.8 While results from public examinations are only one measure of success, it is also widely accepted and understood that achievement of at least five GCSEs, including GCSE English and maths, grades A* - C (or equivalent) is, for the majority of young people, the key that unlocks the door to further and higher education and to well-paid jobs.

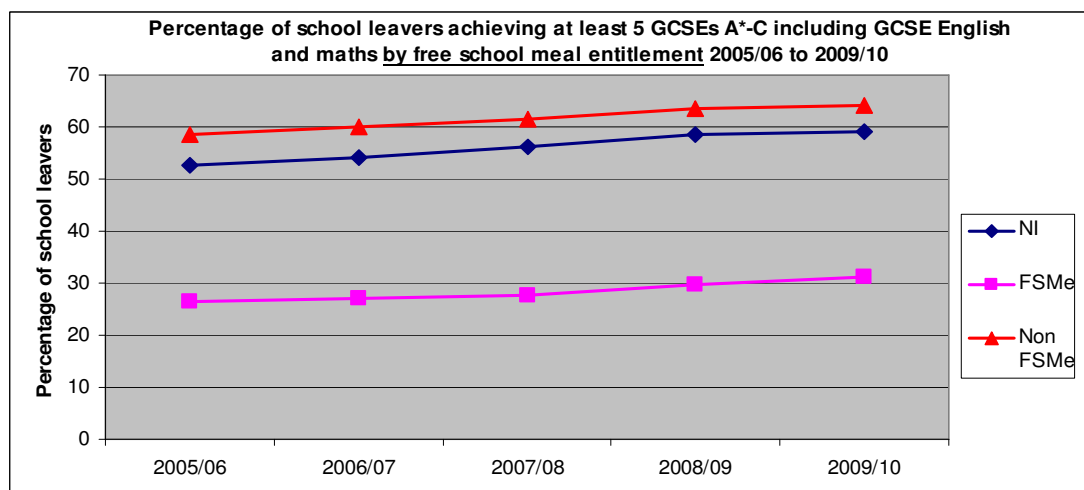
⁵ Department of Education School Census – figures relate to 2011/12 academic year

⁶ Northern Ireland School Leavers Survey 2009/10 – Department of Education Northern Ireland

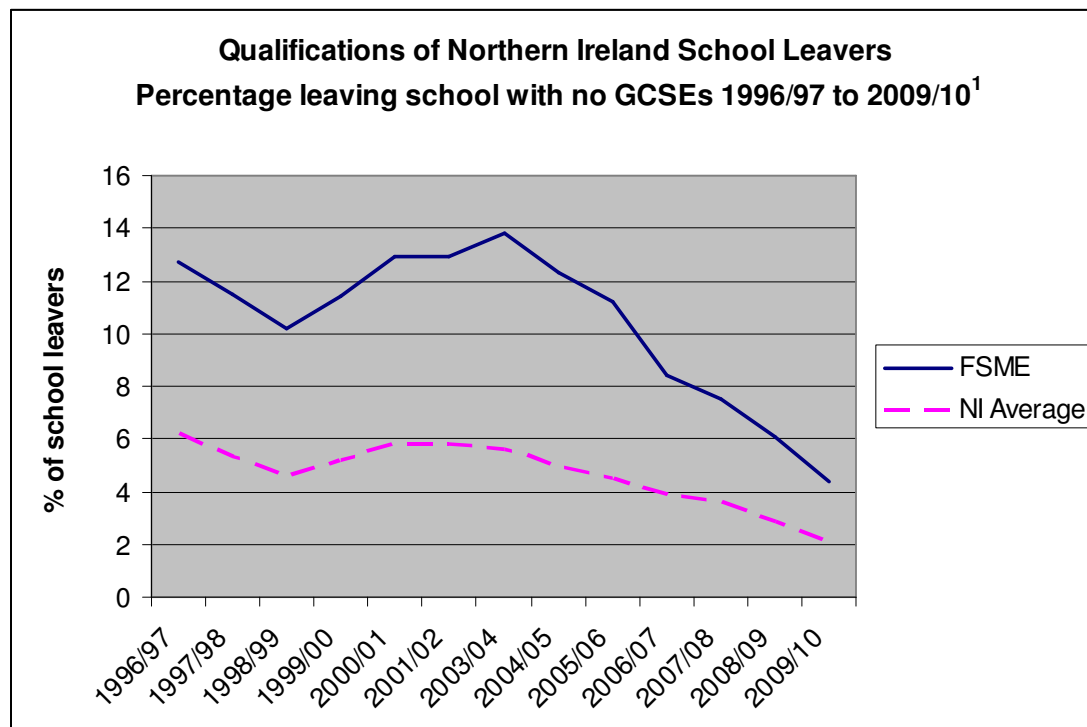
1.9 In 2009/10, 59% of school leavers in the north of Ireland achieved at least five GCSEs at grades A* - C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and maths. Girls outperformed boys with 64.7 % of girls achieving this standard compared to 53.4% of boys. However, 41% of school leavers, around 9,500 pupils, did not achieve at least five GCSE's at A* - C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and maths. Some 2,600 pupils failed to obtain at least 5 GCSE's at grades A* - G (or equivalent) including GCSE English and mathematics.



1.10 When FSM entitlement is considered, in 2009/10 only 31.3% of those entitled to FSM achieved this level of qualifications, compared to 64.3% for young people not entitled to FSM. Over 40% of all young people and almost 70% of young people entitled to FSM are leaving school not achieving this level of qualifications. With over one quarter (27%) of pupils in secondary (non grammar) schools entitled to FSM, this has significant implications for the outcomes for these young people.



1.11 The proportion of pupils leaving school in 2009/10 with no GCSEs was 2.1%. For young people entitled to FSM the figure was 4.4% compared to 1.7% of young people not entitled to FSM. Significant gaps exist for other particular groups. For example, for minority ethnic pupils 5.1% left school without any GCSEs compared to 2.0% for white pupils. Around one fifth of children in care leave school with no GCSEs and the majority of Traveller pupils leave without any GCSEs.



¹ Excludes special and independent schools. Data for 2002/03 is not available.

Source: DE School Leavers Survey

1.12 Children leaving school without a recognised standard of achievement could face significant barriers to employment and training, which then impacts on their overall outcomes and life chances. As part of '*Every School a Good School*' (ESaGS)⁷, the Department's flagship policy for raising standards in our educational system, targets have been set for school leavers by 2020:

⁷ http://www.deni.gov.uk/esags_policy_for_school_improvement_-_final_version_05-05-2009.pdf

- 70% of school leavers achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A* - C, including GCSE English (or Irish) & Mathematics
- 65% of school leavers entitled to free school meals achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A* - C, including GCSE English (or Irish) & Mathematics

1.13 The deficit in our education system is also evident in other ways. Around 4,000 children leave primary school without the basic literacy and numeracy skills they need⁸. Only 12% of people with a disability hold a qualification higher than A level, compared to 26% of people who have no disability⁹. A socially disadvantaged pupil in a Catholic managed school will have a 1 in 4 chance of going to University, while for those in controlled or non-denominational schools, it is 1 in 9¹⁰.

Destinations of School Leavers¹¹

1.14 Over 42% of school leavers in 2009/10 continued on to institutions of Higher Education and 33% continued on to institutions of Further Education. Around 4% became unemployed after leaving school. School leavers not entitled to free school meals are more likely to continue their education, with 78.1% entering institutions of Higher or Further Education compared to 60.0% of leavers who were entitled to free school meals.

School Attendance¹²

1.15 The overall attendance rate for primary, post-primary and special schools in 2010/11 was 93.8%, with 6.2% of the total half days missed due to absence. Of the total half days, 4.2% were recorded as authorised absence and 2.0% unauthorised absence. In primary schools 5.1% of all half days were missed due to absence, comprising 3.7% authorised and 1.4% unauthorised absence. Average overall absence rates were similar for boys

⁸ Key Stage 2 Results 2010/11

⁹ http://www.deni.gov.uk/ministers_speech_to_equality_commission_conference_-_121108.pdf

¹⁰ Northern Ireland School Leavers Survey 2009/10 – Department of Education Northern Ireland

¹¹ Northern Ireland School Leavers Survey 2009/10 – Department of Education Northern Ireland

¹² Attendance at Grant Aided Primary, Post Primary and Special Schools 2010/11 : Detailed Statistics (Department of Education)

http://www.deni.gov.uk/attendance_at_grant-aided_primary_post-primary_and_special_schools_2010_11_detailed_statistics.pdf

and girls of primary school age (5.2% and 5.1% of the total half days respectively). Of all pupils enrolled in primary schools in 2010/11, 6.7% had no absence throughout the year. Irish Traveller children attending primary school had a higher average overall absence rate than any other ethnic group. They missed 30.0% of the total half days, compared with 5.0% for white children and 7.3% for children from a minority ethnic background.

1.16 In post-primary schools 7.4% of all half days were missed due to absence, comprising 4.6% authorised and 2.8% unauthorised absence. At 9.1% of the total half days, average levels of overall absence in secondary schools were higher than in grammar schools (4.6%). There was a marked difference in the levels of unauthorised absence in secondary and grammar schools (4.0% and 0.8% of the total half days respectively). Average overall absence was similar for males and females (7.5% and 7.3% of total half days respectively). At 43.2% of their total half days, the average level of overall absence was higher for Irish Traveller children than for any other ethnic group. This compares with 7.3% for white children and 7.2% for children from a minority ethnic background. Absence rates are also generally higher for looked after children in post-primary schools, particularly unauthorised absence (6.5% of total half days compared with 2.8%) which in turn impacts on the overall absence (11.6% compared with 7.3%). 5% of pupils enrolled in Year 8 to Year 12 at post-primary schools had no absence during 2010/11.

1.17 Generally, absence levels increase in line with the percentage of pupils enrolled who are eligible for free school meals. For example, in post-primary schools where less than 10% of pupils enrolled were eligible for free school meals, the average overall absence level was 4.6% of the total half days. This compares with 11.7% of the total half days for post-primary schools with more than 50% of pupils enrolled eligible for free school meals.

Suspensions and Expulsions from school¹³

¹³ Education and Library Boards Suspension and Expulsion Statistics 2010/11
http://www.deni.gov.uk/suspension_statistics_2010-11_22.6kb.pdf
http://www.deni.gov.uk/expulsion_statistics_2010-11_9.83kb.pdf

1.18 Almost 4,200 pupils were suspended from school during the 2010/11 school year representing 1.5% of the school population. The main reason for suspension was persistent infringement of school rules (26.2%), verbal abuse of staff (22.8%) and physical attack on a pupil (22.2%).

1.19 A total of 38 pupils were expelled during the 2010/11 school year. Most of these pupils were male of post-primary age, with 50% of pupils expelled from Key Stage 4.

Participation in full-time education and vocational training by 16 and 17 year olds¹⁴

1.20 The participation rate of 16 and 17 year olds in full-time education and vocational training in 2010/11 was 90.0% (88.0% for males and 92.1% for females). 65.3% of 16 and 17 year olds in full-time education and/or vocational training attended schools, whereas 19.9% were attending further education colleges, mainstream courses and 14.8% attended Jobskills/Training for success training programmes.

Attitudes to further/higher education, training and employment¹⁵

1.21 Research carried out on the attitudes and perceptions of schools leavers reported that the preferred destination for pupils in year 12 after they finished their GCSEs were: 53% wanted to stay in school to take A-Levels, 16% wanted to go to further education, 24% wanted to get a job and 7% wanted to enter training. When asked what factors might influence young people leaving school after 16, the two main factors that emerged were the desire to get a job and the desire to avoid debt.

1.22 There was some evidence of the new funding system being a disincentive to higher education participation. Approximately one in five year

¹⁴ DE/DEL Press Release http://www.deni.gov.uk/participation_in_full-time_education_and_vocational_training_by_16_and_17_year_olds_in_northern_ireland__1011_-_statistical_release.docx

¹⁵ DEL Research Report June 2008 <http://www.delni.gov.uk/afterschool>

14 school respondents and a third of the year 14 FE respondents indicated that the new fees policy had acted as a deterrent to applying for higher education. A high proportion of respondents suggested that they would be unable to enter higher education without the availability of grants and bursaries.

1.23 A quarter of the respondents in the survey indicated that they did not intend to pursue further or higher education after their current course of study. Almost half (48.2%) suggested that it was 'too expensive to go to university or college' and 56.1% indicated that they did not want 'to get into debt'. Even if they achieve higher grades than they expect, 69.6% anticipate trying to get a job or enter training rather than going into further or higher education.

Literacy and numeracy

1.24 Our school system has many strengths, enabling many young people to develop good literacy and numeracy skills and achieve at or above the expected level. However, evidence suggests that performance could be much improved: we have too high a level of underachievement and too wide a variation in standards (including between schools facing similar circumstances). For example, while around 80% leave primary school having achieved at or above the expected level (level 4) in literacy (English) and numeracy (Maths), almost 1 child in every 5 (around 4,000) leaves primary school each year without having achieved the expected levels in literacy and numeracy.

1.25 Research has shown the long term economic costs of illiteracy (the Every Child a Chance Trust estimated that illiteracy could cost the public purse as much as £64k per person in their lifetime, with illiteracy costing the UK taxpayer as much as £2.5bn per annum) and the cost-effectiveness of early intervention to ensure young people develop good literacy and numeracy skills from an early age (most notably the work of Prof James Heckman). For example, DEL contends that it would not have to spend (as much) public money on remedial literacy and numeracy interventions for

those age 16+ if more young people left school with these basic skills¹⁶ (implying a saving to the public purse or money freed up for use in support of other priorities).

Youth Unemployment

1.26 The Labour Force Survey¹⁷ estimates the unemployment rate for the period July – September 2011 for 18-24 year olds at 19.1% – up 0.4 percentage points over the year. This equates to around 22,000 young people. This means that the rate of youth unemployment here is currently almost three times the overall unemployment rate and almost four times the rate for older workers (aged 25-49). Youth unemployment currently accounts for around a third of the total unemployment here.

1.27 Many young people disengage from education after completing the compulsory schooling requirement and do not progress with education, employment or training (NEET). Data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2011 (4th Quarter) shows that 14,000 or 14% of 16-19 year olds here were not in full-time education, employment or training. This compares with a rate of 15% for the UK. The LFS figures for 16-24 year olds show that the proportion stands at 21%. The comparable LFS figure (4th Quarter 2011) for the UK is 19%, with Scotland and Wales standing at 19% and 28% respectively. The Labour Force Survey estimates the unemployment rate for the period October - December 2011 for 18-24 year olds at 18.1% – down 4.4 percentage points over the year. This equates to around 19,000 young people. This means that the rate of youth unemployment here is more than two and a half times the overall unemployment rate and over three times the rate for older workers (aged 25-49). Youth unemployment currently accounts for around a third of the total unemployment here.

¹⁶ DEL consultation document: 'Success Through Skills 2: The Skills Strategy for NI' (June 2010).

¹⁷ Source: NISRA August monthly Labour Market report http://www.detini.gov.uk/lm_statistical_press_release_-_november_2011.pdf

1.28 The Audit Commission¹⁸ recently published estimates of the long-term effects of young people being NEET. The analysis shows that, compared with their peers who had been in education, employment or training throughout their late teens, young men who were NEET in their late teens were:

- four times more likely to be out of work at age 29 (costs of benefits and loss of NI contributions);
- five times more likely to have a criminal record (cost to criminal justice system);
- six times less likely to have qualifications (lower potential earnings; loss of tax revenue);
- three times more likely to have depression (cost to National Health Service).

1.29 Work undertaken by researchers at the University of York¹⁹ found that the average individual life-time public finance cost of an individual being NEET aged 16 – 18 was £56,300 (due, for example, to welfare payments; costs to health and criminal justice services; loss of tax and national insurance revenue). They also estimated that the average resource cost (due, for example, to losses to the economy and to the individual in subsequent lower earnings) of being NEET aged 16 – 18 is £104,300.

1.30 NEETs young people can be grouped into different categories²⁰. Just over half of the young people not in education, employment or training would be classed as an “intermediate” group of young people who had a negative view of school and were largely dissatisfied with what was on offer in terms of education, employment or training. These young people lack the resilience to overcome obstacles and tend to react by dropping out. They lack the skills to make choices or to plan for the future. A further 23% can be described as a “core” group with complex needs and many barriers to participation. Their

¹⁸ Audit Commission (2010) *Against the Odds – Re-engaging Young People in Education, Employment or Training*
Audit Commission <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/AuditCommissionReports/NationalStudies/NEETsAgainsttheodds.pdf>

¹⁹ Coles, B., Godfrey, C., Keung, A., Parrott, S. and Bradshaw, J. (2010) Estimating the life-time cost of NEET: 16-18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training, University of York, York.

²⁰ DEL - A Scoping Study of those young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in Northern Ireland

parents are typically unemployed and they have had negative experiences of school, often leaving with very little way of educational attainment. In many cases these young people had 'missed out' on careers advice.

1.31 A recent report by Barnardos²¹ identified a range of issues which may have contributed to this; disengagement from school, learning difficulties, poor relationships with teachers, boredom, or bullying can result in young people feeling isolated, with low or no self-confidence and few qualifications. Additionally, personal problems and difficult home circumstances all contribute to significant barriers to accessing further education, training or employment.

Employers concerns about basic skills²²

1.32 Many employers value personal and social skills alongside key cognitive skills such as basic literacy and numeracy. These behavioural attributes are frequently identified as the area of least satisfaction with young recruits. A recent report (2010) from the CBI reported that employers are concerned about the basic skills of their current workforce, with young people leaving school and college with serious weaknesses in their employability. Over half of employers (57%) are finding weaknesses in school leavers' self-management skills – such as time management – and two thirds (68%) believe they have inadequate business and customer awareness. A quarter of employers (24%) are dissatisfied with graduates' problem-solving skills, and 26% with their self-management skills. IT skills are also a major problem, where two-thirds (66%) of employers report concern. However, half of employers are also troubled by employees' basic literacy (52%) and numeracy (49%) skills, with a fifth of employers arranging remedial training for young people they have recruited from school or college, in literacy (18%), numeracy (18%), and IT (22%).

Child Protection and Looked after children^{23, 24}

²¹Barnardos: Lost in Transition

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/barnardos_lost_in_transition_briefing_sept_2009_2_-2.pdf

²² <http://www.cbi.org.uk/ndbs/press.nsf/0/835a38cc3458824280257722003ecd7a?OpenDocument>

1.33 Between 2005 and 2010, the number of children on the Child Protection Register increased by 48%, from 1,593 to 2,357 respectively. At 31st March 2010, there were 2,606 looked after children in the north of Ireland, an increase of 6% from 2009 (2,463). Of the 2,606 looked after children: 52% were boys and 48% were girls; 3% were aged under 1 year old, and 19% were aged 16 years or older. 65% were in foster care, 19% were placed with family, 11% were in residential care and 6% were in 'other' placement types.

1.34 In 2009/10 64% of looked after children eligible to sit GCSE/GNVQ examinations here attained at least 1 GCSE/GNVQ at grades A* - G, compared with 73% of looked after young people in England and 99% of the general school population in the north of Ireland. Almost 20% of children looked after attained 5 or more GCSE/GNVQs at grades A*-C, compared with 74% of the general school population in the north of Ireland, and 26% of looked after children in England.

Behaviours and Attitudes

1.35 Many children growing up, irrespective of their background, experience a range of pressures that impact on the quality of their lives and influence their behaviours and attitudes. The Young Persons Behaviour and Attitudes Survey explores the behaviour and attitudes of young people in years 8 to 12 of second level education. The results of the 2010 survey²⁵ reveal that 85% of pupils feel a certain amount of stress due to school work and 22% agree that they have difficulty falling asleep because they are thinking about school. One in six has skipped classes or school this term and 6% have been expelled or suspended from school. Almost one quarter of pupils (23%) are worried about being bullied and 15% have been bullied in the 12 months prior to the survey.

²³ DHSSPSNI: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/microsoft_word_-_1_children_order_statistical_tables_for_northern_ireland_2009-10_-_tab_a.pdf

²⁴ DHSSPSNI: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/microsoft_word_-_2_oc20910bulletin.pdf

²⁵ YPBAS Survey Bulletin October –November 2010
<http://www.csu.nisra.gov.uk/YPBAS%202010%20Headline%20bulletin.pdf>

1.36 The latest results also reveal that just under a fifth of pupils (19%) have smoked tobacco, with just over three fifths (62%) of those having smoked at age 13 or under. Just under half (46%) of pupils have taken an alcoholic drink. On at least one occasion, 13% of pupils have been offered solvents and 7% of pupils have inhaled solvents. A fifth (20%) of pupils have been offered drugs (not counting solvents) on at least one occasion, and 11% of pupils have used or tried drugs (not counting solvents) at some time. Eight percent of pupils have had sexual intercourse, with 80% of them having sexual intercourse for the first time between the ages of 13 and 15.

Health and Well-Being

1.37 In 2006/07, the NI Statistics & Research Agency published new figures for disability in the north of Ireland. Results from the NI Survey of People with Activity Limitations and Disabilities (NISALD)²⁶ show that 6% of children living in private households face limitations in their daily living as a consequence of a disability or long term condition. The prevalence of disability is higher amongst boys than amongst girls. Around 8% of boys aged 15 and under were found to have a disability, compared with 4% of girls of the same age. The most common number of disabilities for children was 1, however, a notable number of children across the north (almost 4%) are living with two or more disabilities. Amongst children, the most common types of disabilities were linked with chronic illnesses, learning difficulties and social / behavioural difficulties. Meanwhile the prevalence of disability amongst young adults aged 16-25 was 5%, with male prevalence rates (at 6%) higher than the equivalent for females (4%).

1.38 In 2011/12, the School Census²⁷ indicated that 21% of the school population had a special educational need, with 4% of pupils having a statement. In primary schools, 21% had a special educational need, with 26%

²⁶ <http://www.csu.nisra.gov.uk/NISALD%20Household%20Prevalence%20Report.pdf>

²⁷ Department of Education School Census 2011 – figures relate to 2011/12 academic year

in secondary (non-grammar) schools. The Belfast Education and Library Board had the highest proportion of pupils with a special education need, with 26% of pupils in primary schools and 40% of pupils in secondary (non-grammar) schools having specific needs.

1.39 Recent research²⁸ in which children and young people talked about issues that created stress in their lives identified a number of issues including: school work and exam pressure; lack of jobs; concerns about the future; parenting; family problems; witnessing and experiencing violence; appearance and feeling excluded; lack of identity and place; adults' negative responses towards young people. The two issues most frequently raised in discussions were depression and suicide, particularly related to those aged 16 and above. Some young teenagers felt that many of their friends and acquaintances, especially young adults, suffered depression. Many felt that issues relating to mental health, or "emotions and feelings", should have been discussed in schools and, where it had been discussed, none of the young people considered it informative.

1.40 The Young Life and Times (YLT) Survey has monitored the mental and emotional health of 16 year olds in the north of Ireland since 2004. A recent research paper reports findings from the 2009 survey relating to mental and emotional health of 16 year olds²⁹. This reports that 26% of respondents had experienced serious personal, emotional or mental health problems in the last year for which they felt they needed professional support. The figure was much higher among those from not well-off backgrounds (43%). The YLT survey also shows stress levels are much higher among 16 year old females than their male counterparts with 51% reporting that they get stressed often or very often, compared to 20% for males. The YLT survey in 2008 reported that 14% of respondents had seriously thought about self-harm and 10% had self-injured.

²⁸ <http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofLaw/Research/ResearchProjects/ChildhoodTransitionandSocialJusticeInitiative/FileStore/Fileupload,179670.en.pdf>

²⁹ The mental and emotional health of 16-year olds in Northern Ireland: Evidence from the Young Life and Times survey - Dirk Schubotz <http://www.ark.ac.uk/orb/childsummaries/SchubD10.htm>

1.41 In the last two decades, large increases in the rates of suicide among young people have been reported³⁰ across most regions of the world. Suicide is the third biggest cause of years of life lost after cardiovascular diseases and cancer. The north of Ireland has more suicides per 100,000 people (9.8) than England (8.6) and Wales but less than Scotland (15.9) and the south of Ireland (11.6). However, within the north there are stark regional variations, for example North and West Belfast have rates of 17.9 and 18.1. In recent years, there have been around 150 suicides each year in the north; 41% are single males and 22% are males aged between 25 and 34. Risk factors include depression, alcohol and drug misuse, personality disorder, hopelessness, low self-esteem, unemployment and social isolation. Mental illness (including substance misuse) can also play a role.

1.42 The 2007 UNICEF report 'Report Card 7, Child Poverty in Perspective: An Overview of Child Well-being in Rich Countries' assessed for the first time the well-being of children and young people in 21 industrialised countries; the UK ranks bottom in child wellbeing assessment. The study looked at a total of 40 indicators in six categories. European countries dominate the top half of the overall league table, with the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Finland claiming the top four places. The UK and United States are in the bottom third of the rankings for five of the six categories covered. The six categories are material well-being, family and peer relationships, health and safety, behaviour and risks, and children's own sense of well-being (educational and subjective). In the OECD countries as a whole, there is a slight trend towards decreasing life satisfaction between the ages of 11 and 15, particularly for girls.

Births to teenage mothers

1.43 In 2011 there were 1,170 births to teenage mothers, an 8% decrease on the 1,265 births in 2010, and a decrease of almost 35% from the recent high of 1,791 such births in 1999³¹. Rates are highest in areas of greatest

³⁰ <http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/Resources/mental/pdfs/Mental%20health%20attitudes.pdf>

³¹ NISRA statistical bulletin: Births in Northern Ireland 2010

http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/publications/births_deaths/births_2010.pdf

social and economic deprivation. In the most deprived areas around 6 girls in every 1,000 aged 13 to 16 give birth. In other areas, by contrast, just 2 such girls in every 1,000 give birth³².

1.44 For many of these teenagers, unplanned pregnancy and early motherhood is associated with poor educational achievement, poor physical and mental health, social isolation and poverty. They face limited prospects in the areas of education and training and are relegated to working in low paid, low status jobs or to unemployment and dependence on state benefits. Studies³³ have also highlighted that many of the poor outcomes associated with teenage pregnancy are preventable, if the appropriate support services are put in place.

Young Carers

1.45 The 2010 Young Life and Times Survey³⁴ reported that 10% of respondents said they had caring responsibilities in the past whilst 9% were currently caring for someone. The greatest proportion (29%) spent between 5 and 9 hours a week looking after someone followed by 21% who spent between 3 and 4 hours a week. Forty percent of young carers looked after the person every day of the week.

1.46 Around one half of respondents with a caring role said that they cared for someone living with them and a similar proportion were providing care for someone not living with them. Seventeen percent of respondents who say that their family is not at all well off have a caring role, compared with 5% of respondents from very well off families.

Social Disadvantage

1.47 The NI Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2010 comprises seven domains of deprivation, each developed to measure a distinct form or type of

³² <http://www.poverty.org.uk/i24/index.shtml>

³³ http://www.barnardos.org.uk/p_p_briefing_no_1-3.pdf

³⁴ 2010 Young Life and Times Survey Summary of Results

deprivation; income, employment, health, education, proximity to services, living environment and crime. The NIMDM identifies concentrations of deprivation at small area level. The NIMDM can be assigned to individual pupils based on their home address. An analysis of the 2010/11 school census data shows that 124,000 (39%) pupils either live in a neighbourhood renewal area or in one of the 30% most deprived areas in the north.³⁵

1.48 A 2010 policy briefing by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY)³⁶ presents statistics on child poverty from a range of sources indicating that around 117,000 children are living in poverty, around 91,000 are experiencing persistent poverty and around 44,000 are experiencing severe child poverty.

Young People and Criminal Justice

1.49 An evaluation of Youth Justice Agency Community Services³⁷ showed that just over one thousand young defendants proceeded against in magistrates' courts in the north of Ireland were juveniles. While this represents only a small proportion of all those charged, the probability that these young people will offend in later life is thought to be high. To counter this, it is argued that this probability of future offending can be reduced if children at risk are dealt with appropriately at this stage. For example, it appears that those placed in custody at this stage, are more likely to get into trouble again than those placed in an effective community care programme.

1.50 Findings from a recent NI Crime Survey³⁸ show that young men aged 16-24 (8.9%) were more at risk of violent crime than any other demographic group examined, and almost twice as likely to be victimised as their female counterparts (4.6%). The risk associated with violent crime victimisation has

³⁵ The NIMDM identifies spatial concentrations of deprivation. It should be noted that not all deprived people live in deprived areas and that not everyone living in a deprived area is deprived.

³⁶ NICCY Policy Briefing on Child Poverty <http://www.ark.ac.uk/orb/summaries/NICCY10.pdf>

³⁷ http://www.youthjusticeagency.ni.gov.uk/document_uploads/IRS_Report_-_Final_-_290704.pdf

³⁸ <http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications/northern-ireland-crime-survey-s-r/nics-2010-11-experience-of-crime.pdf>

an inverse relationship with age; the younger the respondent, the greater the likelihood of falling victim to violent crime.

Homelessness

1.51 In 2009/10, 19,000 households presented as homeless, 6,000 of whom had dependent children. Around one fifth (21%) of those presenters were single person households without children, aged less than 25³⁹. The greatest risk of becoming homeless is among those who have experienced multiple disadvantage⁴⁰. The two most significant factors for homelessness are those who had experienced family conflict and care leavers. A recent study (2008)⁴¹ identified a number of other groups of young people who are also particularly at risk of homelessness. This UK wide review of youth homelessness, the first study of its kind undertaken in the past ten years, included young offenders, young people from an ethnic minority background, gay and lesbian young people and runaways as groups also vulnerable to homelessness.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

1.52 Research⁴² has indicated that most lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) young people are aware of their sexuality/gender at an early age (12-14) but do not tell others until they are 17-19+. LGB&T young people are likely⁴³ to experience academic underachievement, bullying at school, low self-esteem and negative body image, isolation, fear of communicating and sharing feelings, above average use of drugs and alcohol, above average rates of suicide, self-harm and depression, and difficulties in starting employment. Research⁴⁴ undertaken in the south of Ireland found that 58% of respondents reported homophobic bullying in their school, 27% had self-harmed at least once, 25% were physically threatened by their school

³⁹ <http://www.poverty.org.uk/i81/index.shtml> Northern Ireland Housing Statistics

⁴⁰ http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/foi_publications/homelessness-5.htm

⁴¹ Quilgars, Johnsen and Pleace (2008)

⁴² Youthnet, 2003 ShOut Report

⁴³ [http://www.youthnetni.org.uk/Site/29/Documents/Section%203%20working%20with%20LGBT%20young%20people%20%20\(All%20Ireland\).pdf](http://www.youthnetni.org.uk/Site/29/Documents/Section%203%20working%20with%20LGBT%20young%20people%20%20(All%20Ireland).pdf)

⁴⁴ Mayock et al, (2009) Supporting LGBT Lives, a study of mental health and wellbeing, with a special emphasis on young people. Dublin: BeLonGTo/GLEN

peers, 20% skipped school because they felt threatened or afraid of getting hurt because they were LGB&T and 5% left school early due to homophobic bullying.

1.53 The four most widely cited⁴⁵ barriers in tackling homophobic bullying were parental disapproval (53%); a lack of confidence in developing and delivering resources (39%); student disapproval (35%) and school inexperience in dealing with these issues (29%).

Marginalisation, Conflict and Disengagement

1.54 Research shows that sectarianism continues to impact on the lives of young people growing up here, where they live, their school, their uniform and sporting activities define them within their cultural traditions. Maintaining segregation in particular communities has reinforced and exacerbated difference and the perception of difference had been formed by young people within their communities long before they were exposed to the “other religion”. Alongside existing divisions within and between communities, negative attitudes and feelings are emerging towards young people from other Section 75 groups.

Youth Volunteering⁴⁶

1.55 Of the respondents surveyed in the 2009 Young Life and Times Survey, 54% had volunteered in the past 12 months, 30% had done so formally through an organisation, 17% had volunteered informally in their community and 7% had volunteered both formally and informally. Mirroring general volunteering patterns, females were more likely to say that they volunteered (58%) than males (50%). Although overall, females were more likely to volunteer, males were slightly more likely to say that they volunteered informally (19% and 17% respectively).

⁴⁵ Beattie 2008 PRIDE (Promoting Respect, Inclusion and Diversity in Education) Evaluation

⁴⁶ ARK Research update: Youth Volunteering: Making a Difference to Community Relations
<http://www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update69.pdf>

1.56 Young people from less well-off backgrounds were much less likely to volunteer than respondents from better-off backgrounds. This reflects the general pattern of volunteering activity in the north of Ireland (Volunteer Development Agency, 2007). There was no difference between family financial background and the reported increase in respondents' network of friends. However, there was a significant difference with regards to contact with people from different backgrounds. Respondents who reported coming from not well-off backgrounds were much more likely to say that volunteering increased their contact with people from different community or religious backgrounds. There were differences between volunteering activity and the religious composition of the area that a young person lived in. Young people from Protestant or religiously mixed areas were more likely to say that their contact with people from different communities or backgrounds had increased due to their volunteering (44%) compared to those who lived in Catholic areas (37%).

1.57 There were also differences in volunteer involvement between respondents who attended different types of school, with grammar school students being significantly more likely to say that they volunteered in the past 12 months (67%) than respondents from integrated schools (51%) or secondary schools (40%). The difference was largest with regards to 'formal' volunteering. Grammar school students were over twice as likely as secondary school students to say that they had formally volunteered in the past year (40% and 19% respectively; integrated schools 24%).

Negative Views of Young People

1.58 Research conducted by YouGov⁴⁷ shows that the public holds a negative view of all children, despite the vast majority of children making positive contributions to their communities, attending school, taking part in activities and a significant number volunteering. The findings show:

⁴⁷ http://www.barnardos.org.uk/news_and_events/media_centre/press_releases.htm?ref=42088

- just under half (49%) of people agree that children are increasingly a danger to each other and adults
- 43% agree something has to be done to protect us from children
- more than a third (35%) of people agree that nowadays it feels like the streets are infested with children
- 45% agree that people refer to children as feral because they behave this way
- nearly half of people (49%) disagree with the statement that children who get into trouble are often misunderstood and in need of professional help.

