



Workshop 1
September
2016

Briefing Notes

Progress in Education Task and Finish Group

Chair: Clare O'Neill, Northern Regional College

“Developing educational achievement and aspirations”

1.1 Remit

To improve educational achievement and aspirations both pre, during and in-between employment.

1.2 Reporting arrangements

The Task & Finish Working Group reports directly to the Strategic Alliance in the first instance. The Chairperson of the Working Group will be appointed by the Strategic Alliance.

1.3 Frequency of meetings

The Working Group will meet at least monthly. The Chairperson may at any time convene additional meetings.

1.4 Operational arrangements

Administrative support will be agreed between the partners participating within the Task & Finish Working Group. All meetings require a quorum of five members.

Agenda and papers will be circulated at least five working days in advance. Notes and Action Points from meetings will be circulated within five working days after the meeting.

1.5 Work programme

The outputs from the TFWG will include the following:

1. A short statement (one or two sentences) setting out an ambitious aspiration for the theme which is consistent with the Strategic Alliance's Vision for Community Planning in Mid and East Antrim. This should set out the strategic direction for the theme over the next 5 to 10 years.
2. The strategies and objectives required to deliver the vision in this theme:
 - A. Initial objectives for the first 5 years
 - B. Longer term objectives to be achieved over the next 10-15 years

3. The top three priority strategic actions identified for implementation or significant advancement in the next 5 years.
4. A summary of how this theme can contribute towards other cross cutting themes such as good relations, infrastructure, sustainable development, rural development and communications etc.
5. In line with the DoE Guidance on the Operation of Community Planning¹ the TFWG will utilise an outcomes based approach in the development of their action plan. The facilitator for the TFWG will guide the working group members in this approach. At the end of the process the Chair of the TFWG will provide the Strategic Alliance with an action plan in an agreed format.
6. Recommendations for performance targets and key result areas including recommendations on how these will be measured.
7. A list of key stakeholders and other beneficiaries.
8. Any outstanding issues are not addressed within the action plan which have been identified as important within the Mid and East Antrim area and are needed for delivery of the Community Plan.

¹ Department of the Environment Statutory Guidance for the Operation of Community Planning - October 2015

1.6 Baseline Report Findings

1.6.1 Outline priorities

Section 4.1.3 of the Baseline Report states that although Mid and East Antrim has a relatively well educated workforce, it has higher than the NI average of unskilled residents. There are also a small number of comparatively large communities which have a high preponderance of low skills and intergenerational 'worklessness'.

Key priorities identified to date via stakeholder consultation (*Section 5.3 Baseline Report*) include:

- Targeted interventions to address the lifetime opportunities of the most vulnerable within society by addressing constraints affecting health and educational achievement;
- A need to ensure that the skillset of the (emerging) workforce reflects the needs of business.

1.6.2 Strategic Review

DE's Strategy 'Success through STEM' aims to increase the number of students in higher and further education coming out with Level 6-8 qualifications in economically relevant STEM subjects. DEL's strategy, Access to Success goes further and specifically aims to ensure that talented individuals from traditionally under-represented groups such as students from low participation/high deprivation neighbourhoods, young Protestant males and adult learners can have access to Higher Education in economically relevant subjects.

1.6.3 Evidence Base

Qualitative Information

As highlighted in the Baseline Report (Section 1.7), the Council is either close to the NI average or outperforms against five of the six community planning themes, the exception being education, where skills levels amongst school leavers and the wider workforce are slightly below the NI average. As would be expected, there is a greater variance between the performance of individual wards within the Council, than between the Council and wider NI performance. Although there are a significant number of wards which continue to outperform the NI average, there are a small number of wards which significantly underperform against a number of variables. Underperforming wards include:

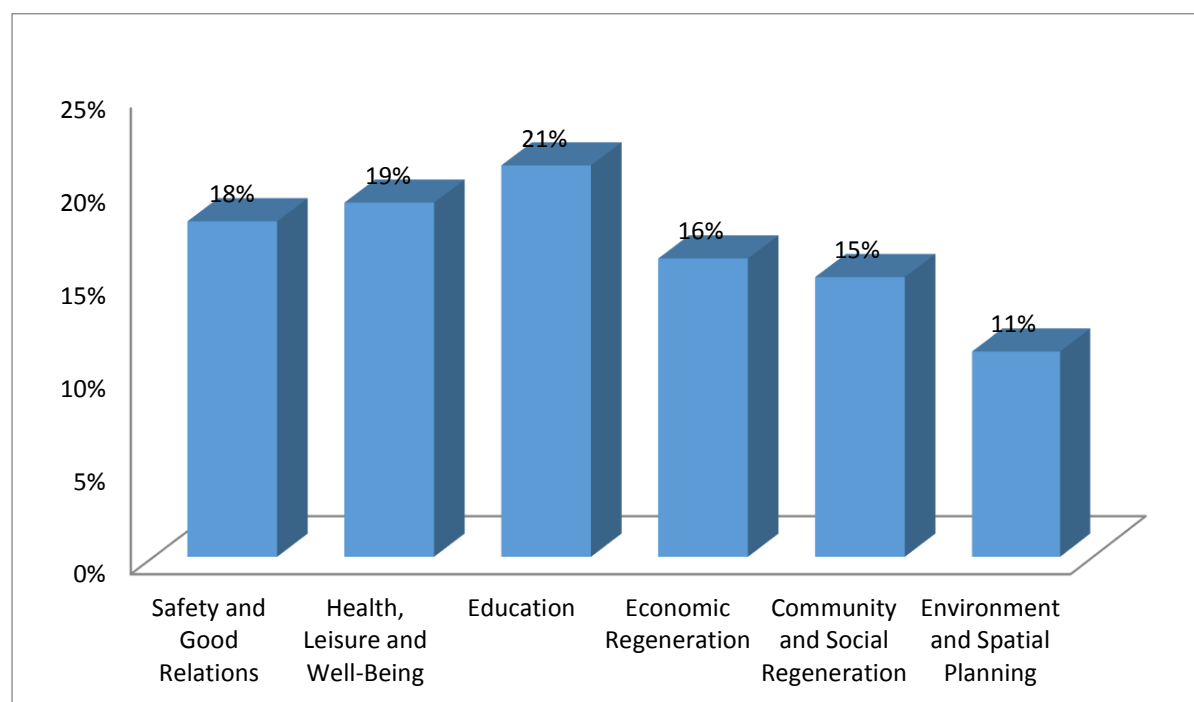
- Antiville (Health and Lifetime opportunities);

- Ballee (Education); and
- Castle Demesne (Housing).

The socio economic review has reaffirmed all of the issues identified at the strategic review and stakeholder consultation stages, but has identified a small number of wards where there is a discernible concentration of multiple need.

Although Mid and East Antrim has a relatively well educated workforce, it has higher than the NI average of unskilled residents. There are also a small number of comparatively large communities which have a high preponderance of low skills and intergenerational worklessness (Section 4.1.3).

Figure 5.3: What is the most important priority for the Council?



Source: Mid and East Antrim Council Area Resident's Survey 2015

Figure 5.3 highlights that education is the most important priority for residents and reflects ongoing concerns about employment and training opportunities for young people.

The table below highlights stakeholder and community perspectives on education:

Education	Stakeholder Perspective	Community Perspective
Significant proportion of school leavers with no or low qualifications;	X	X
Potential skills mismatch due to reduction of entry level jobs;	X	X
Intergenerational underperformance prevalent in specific communities;	X	
Deliver foundation degrees in non-academic subjects;	X	
Business in the community style programmes to mentor entrepreneurship;	X	
Think smarter and consider the other models (e.g. Ayrshire Model);	X	
Address the lack of rural transport to schools;	X	X
More integrated posts for post primary schools	X	
Community schools: use of facilities for weekend, evening and summer holidays.	X	X
Better use could be made of the libraries to promote non vocational/community led learning	X	
There is no specialist help for young people dealing with mental health issues.		X
Need for review of school placement policy for migrant children (More support for teachers and children).		X
Shortage of English lessons for parents at convenient times.		X
Problems of accessibility for further education for young people in smaller settlements.		X

Other evidence and issues:

The Residents Survey undertaken in July 2015 identified that education is the most important priority for the Community Planning. 21% of residents felt that education was the most important priority for residents and reflected the ongoing concerns about employment and training opportunities for young people.

1.7 The Big Picture Statistics

Deprivation *(Source: Demography and Methodology Branch, NISRA)*

- There is a clear link between areas of deprivation and low educational achievement.
- Of the 65 Super Output Areas making up the Mid & East Antrim LGD, 13 (20%) are classed as being in the 20% most deprived areas in NI when ranked by the Education, Skill and Training Domain.
- A quarter of the areas (16) lie within the 20% least deprived areas in NI.
- In terms of education Ballee, Northland, Love Lane, Dunclug and Ballyloran are the five most deprived areas in Mid and East Antrim.
- Galgorm 2, Knockagh, Ballyloughan, Academy and Bluefield 2 are the five least deprived areas in Mid and East Antrim.
- There is also some variation in areas when broken down by primary school, post-primary school and working age adults e.g. Ballykeel is deprived in terms of post-primary school and working age adults however not in terms of primary school.

Schools *(Source: Department of Education)*

Number of Schools and Pupils in Mid and East Antrim (2015/16)

School Type	Number of Schools	Number of Pupils
Nursery	4	339
Pre-school	35	681
Primary	58	11,804
Post-primary	14	10,601
Special	2	365
Total	113	23,790

- There are 113 schools in Mid and East Antrim with a total of almost 24,000 pupils. Half of these pupils are in primary school and 45% are in post-primary school.

Average Primary School Class Size (2013/14 - 2015/16)

	Mid and East Antrim	<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Rank
2013/14	24.4	<i>24.0</i>	5th largest
2014/15	24.5	<i>24.2</i>	5th largest
2015/16	24.9	<i>24.5</i>	5th largest

- The average class size has increased over the last 3 years in Mid and East Antrim and NI as a whole.
- In 2015/16 there were on average 24.9 children per class and ranked fifth largest across the 11 councils.

Newcomers (Source: Department of Education)

A newcomer pupil is one who has enrolled in a school but does not have the satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum, and the wider environment, and does not have a language in common with the teacher, whether that is English or Irish.

- In Mid and East Antrim the number of newcomers has increased by 27% from 525 in 2013/14 to 665 in 2015/16 compared to a 21% increase across NI. The council was third highest behind only Fermanagh and Omagh and Causeway Coast and Glens.
- The vast majority of these pupils were in primary school.
- In 2015/16 half of all the newcomer pupils were enrolled in schools in the 3 wards; Fair Green, Castle Demesne and Braidwater.

Attendance Rates (Source: Department of Education)

Primary School

- In 2014/15 Mid and East Antrim had 1.04% of days due to unauthorised absence (1.12% NI) and was ranked fourth highest out of the 11 councils.
- There was variation in attendance rates at ward level with Greenisland having 0.39% of days due to unauthorised absence compared to 1.92% in Victoria.

Post-Primary School

- In 2014/15 Mid and East Antrim had 2.25% of days due to unauthorised absence (2.07% NI) and was ranked fifth highest out of the 11 councils.
- Again there was variation in attendance rates at ward level with Galgorm having 0.67% of days due to unauthorised absence compared to 5.41% in Castle Demesne.

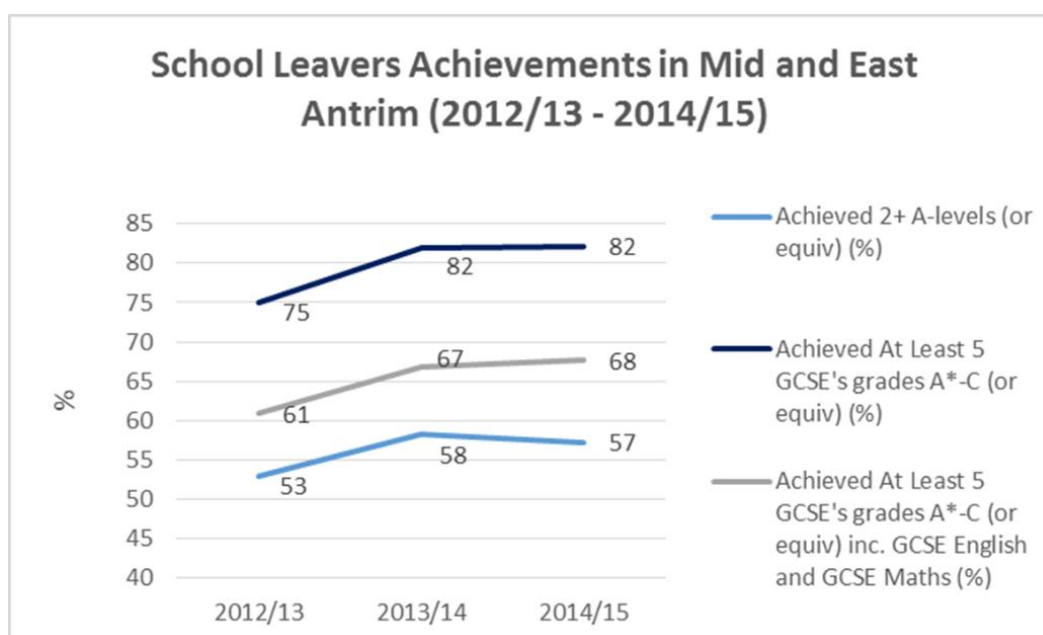
Achievement at Key Stage 2 (Source: Department of Education)

Achievement at Key Stage 2 - Years 5 to 7 (2012/13)

	Mid and East Antrim	<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Rank
Pupils achieving level 4 or above in Communication in English (%)	76.53	<i>77.15</i>	3rd lowest
Pupils achieving level 4 or above in Using Maths (%)	78.05	<i>78.53</i>	2nd lowest

- Achievements at Key Stage 2 for pupils in Mid and East Antrim were below the NI average for both English and Maths and ranked third and second lowest across the 11 councils, respectively.
- There was notable variation between the 3 main areas within Mid and East Antrim.
- The level of achievement in Carrickfergus was lower than the NI average for both English and Maths (67.9% and 71.4% respectively) while Ballymena (77.9% and 78.9%) and Larne (81.1% and 81.8%) outperformed NI as a whole.

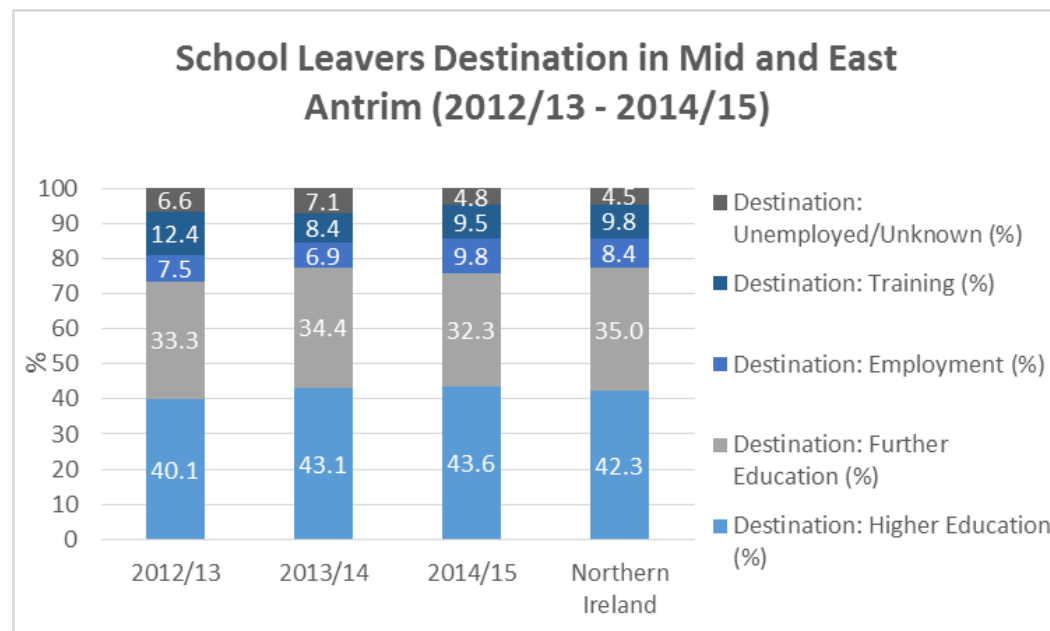
School Leavers Achievements (Source: Department of Education)



- In 2014/15, pupils in Mid and East Antrim outperformed the NI average for achievements in GCSEs and was ranked fourth and fifth lowest out of the 11 councils for achieving at least 5 GCSE's grades A*-C (or equiv) and achieving at least 5 GCSE's grades A*-C (or equiv) inc. GCSE English and GCSE Maths, respectively.
- In 2014/15 there was a 32% difference between the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals and those not entitled achieving 5+ GCSEs A*-C (including equivalents) including GCSE English and Maths.

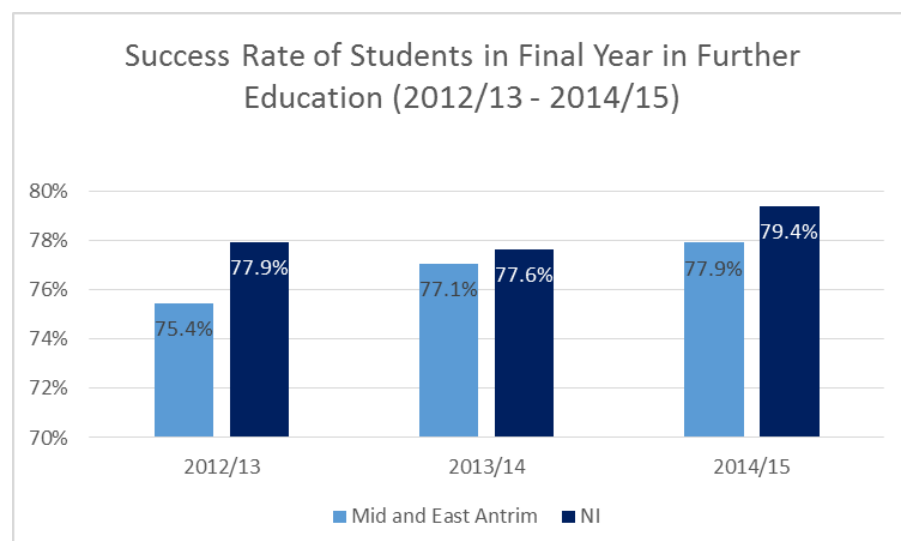
- The level of achievement in A-levels was slightly lower than the NI average and was ranked sixth lowest.

School Leavers Destination *(Source: Department of Education)*



- In 2014/15 three-quarters of school leavers in Mid and East Antrim went into Further or Higher Education compared to 77% in NI.
- Over the three year period between 2012/13 and 2014/15 the percentage of school leavers in Mid and East Antrim going into Higher Education, commencing employment or training has increased while those going into Further Education or unemployment has fallen.

Further Education *(Source: Department for the Economy)*

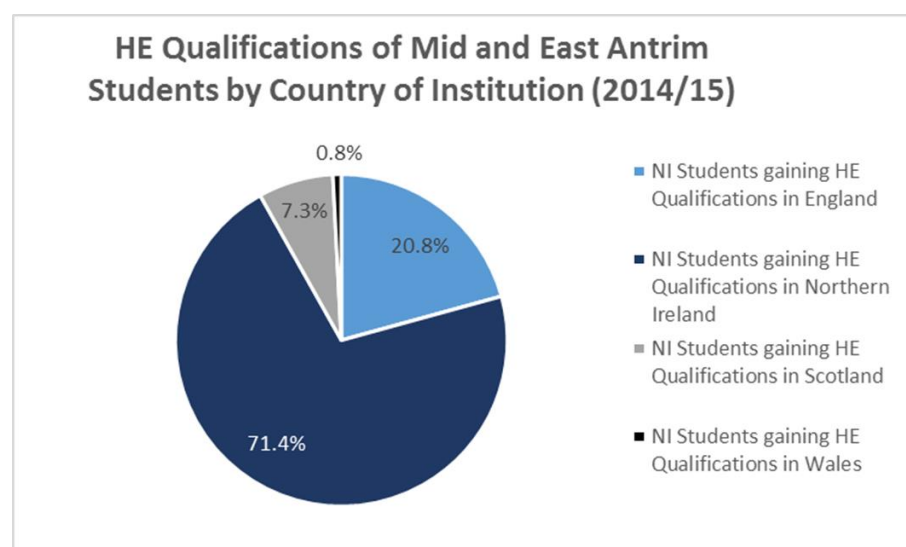


- In 2014/15, 78% of students in final year in Further Education were successful in gaining their qualification. This was lower than 79.4% in NI and ranked fourth lowest across the 11 councils.
- Between 2012/13 and 2014/15 the success rates in Mid and East Antrim have increased but remain lower than NI.

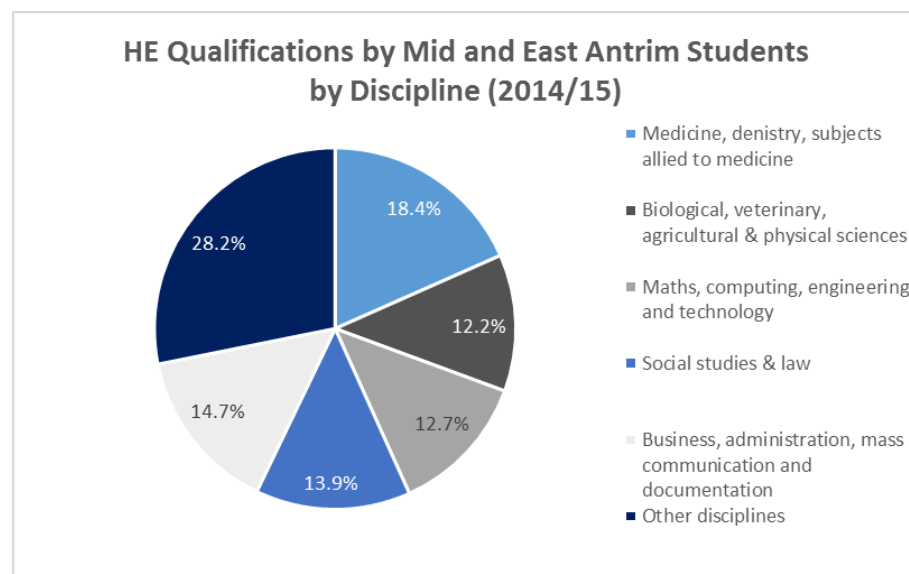
In terms of pupils from Mid and East Antrim achieving Further Education qualifications in 2014/15:

- The majority (60%) were aged 19 and under and part-time (83%).
- The level of study has increased over the past 3 years. In 2014/15 almost half (48%) were level 2 study compared to a third (33%) in 2012/13. Meanwhile entry and level 1 study has decreased.

Higher Education *(Source: Department for the Economy)*

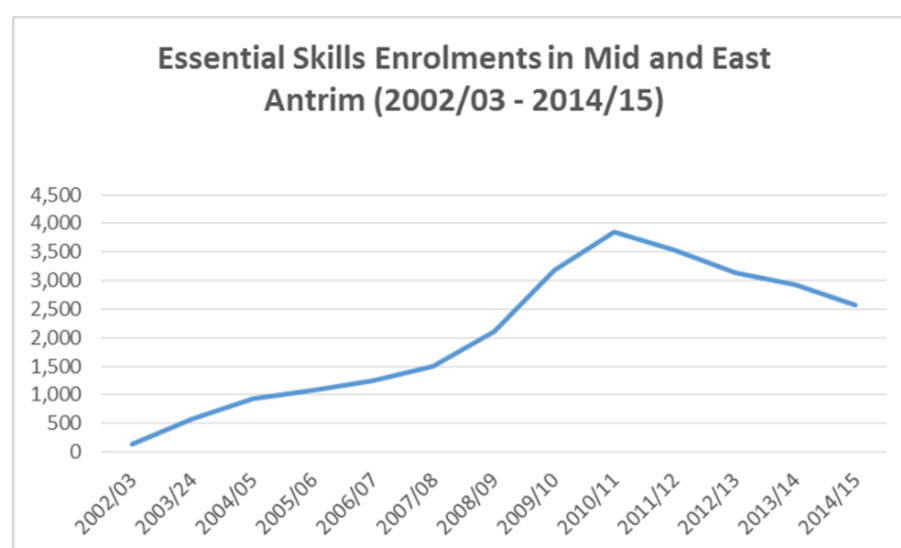


- In 2014/15, 1,255 students from Mid and East Antrim attained a Higher Education qualification. Almost three quarters (71.4%) of these students gained a qualification from a NI institution. This is comparable to NI overall (71.6%).
- The proportion of students from Mid and East Antrim gaining Higher Education qualifications in NI institutions has increased over the past 3 years from 68.1% in 2012/13 to 71.4% in 2014/15.



- The majority of students gained their qualification in subjects allied to medicine (18.4%), administration, business, administration, mass communication and documentation (14.7%) and social studies & law (13.9%). This was broadly similar to NI as a whole.

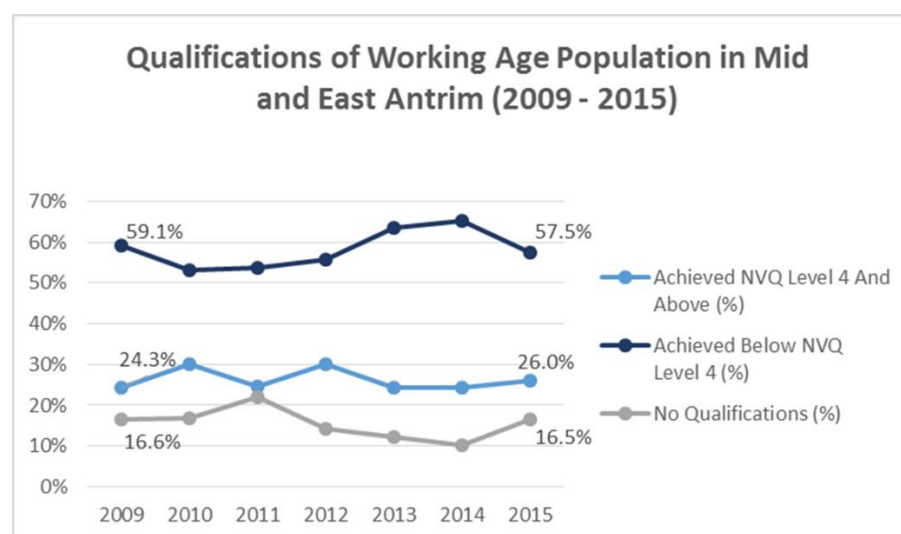
Essential Skills *(Source: Department for the Economy)*



Essential Skills are nationally accredited adult qualifications available throughout Northern Ireland in: Entry Level Literacy, Entry Level Numeracy, Level 1 & 2 Communication and Level 1 & 2 Application of Number.

- The number of essential skills enrolments rose to a high of almost 4,000 in 2010/11 but has since fallen to approximately 2,500 in 2014/15. This is consistent with the trend across the other councils.

Qualifications of Working Age Population (Source: Department of Finance, Labour Force Survey)



- While there has been some fluctuations in qualifications, the position in Mid and East Antrim in 2015 is comparable to that in 2009 with just over a quarter (26%) achieving NVQ level 4 and above, 57.5% achieving below level 4 and 16.5% with no qualifications.

Qualifications of Working Age Population (2015)

	Mid and East Antrim	<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Rank
Achieved NVQ Level 4 And Above (%)	26.0%	29.9%	9th highest
Achieved Below NVQ Level 4 (%)	57.5%	53.6%	8th highest
No Qualifications (%)	16.5%	16.5%	7th highest

- Compared to NI as a whole, in 2015 the working age population in Mid and East Antrim had lower levels of qualifications, however the proportion with no qualifications was the same.
- Mid and East Antrim was ranked third lowest across the councils in achieving NVQ level 4 and above qualifications.

Summary

- Link between areas of deprivation and low educational achievement.
- In 2014/15 there was a 32% difference between the percentage of pupils entitled to FSM and those not entitled achieving 5+ GCSEs A*-C (including equivalents) including GCSE English and maths.
- Third highest increase in newcomer pupils across the 11 councils.

- Below average achievements in key stage 2 in Maths and English in Carrickfergus.
- Below average achievements in gaining 2+ A-levels.
- Success rate of students in final year in Further Education consistently lower than NI average and ranked fourth lowest out of the 11 councils.
- Compared to NI as a whole, the working age population in Mid and East Antrim have lower levels of qualifications.

1.8 'Putting People First' Findings (March 2015)

Progress in Education was about developing educational achievement and aspirations both pre, during and in-between employment.

Things to Stop Doing

The discussion focussed on stopping segregation from an early age and thus improving community integration. A key issue was to stop seeing education as the sole responsibility of trainers, teachers and lecturers but instead create a wider learning and education culture with employers and in the community more generally.

Things to stop doing relates to a Community Planning process which embeds a learning culture throughout statutory partner activity and points toward an education sub group which enjoys a wide set of partners to strategically direct this shift in education culture.

- > Stop segregating provision at early age and beyond
- > Stop seeing education as responsibility ONLY of schools/teachers/lecturers
- > Stop seeing education as offered only in classrooms
- > Redefine parent expectations of role of teachers
- > Stop seeing education as age related stopping at 16/18
- > Stop inward looking (for economy of our society) and look at countries that are doing well - Japan/China etc

Things to Start Doing

A range of things to start doing were highlighted as key. This included:

- > Provide training and education where people want it
- > What they want and need and can access
- > Broaden the definition of education, training, academic, vocational, life-skills and look at new environments and places which offer training
- > Use more role models
- > Emphasise value of integrated education

- > Provide education where people want it
- > Research where and what people want/need
- > Offer more vocational training
- > Emphasise value of integrated education in the widest sense
- > Look at innovative ways and environments to offer training, ie intergenerational /community based
- > Broaden definition of education - academic/vocational/life-skills
- > Develop range of training matched to need and abilities across the ages
- > Use role models e.g. business people/entrepreneurs etc/outside school hours/local champions
- > Stem skills to drive learning
- > Mental health promotion in schools/promote self-confidence and esteem
- > Start mentoring/supporting for special needs of all ages

Key Issues

Key issues included the need for improving perceptions of education with the wider environment seen as the classroom more. In addition, the need to improve outreach and extending the physical access to education opportunities were discussed.

- > Lack of joined up thinking from the top down across organisations
- > Perception of education environment as only classroom or formal environment (should be also community/peer groups/intergenerational
- > Lack of championing education/training for all ages
- > Providing skills training matched to employment opportunities
- > Access to information/adult and others (what EGSA used to do)
- > Outreach/physical access
- > Impact of austerity/affordability
- > Better design and use of facilities to incorporate school/community needs
- > Aspirations for education from pupils/parents

1.9 Other Relevant Information

The Equality Commission has reported that inequality in education has become worse in Northern Ireland since 2007. In a Draft Statement on Key Inequalities in Education, they highlight continuing, persistent underachievement by working class Protestant children, and wider male underachievement in education.

The commission's Draft Statement is their assessment of inequalities faced by those in education in Northern Ireland. The key findings are as follows:

- Males have persistently low levels of attainment than females throughout primary and post-primary education;

- Protestants have persistently lower levels of attainment than Catholics at GCSE and A-Level, and the gap has widened in recent years;
- There are fewer male school leavers entering higher education than females and this has an impact on the make-up of the graduate workforce;
- Minority ethnic school leavers are more than twice as likely to enter unemployment as their white peers;
- Many schools are not effectively tackling racist bullying.

The report also points out that while overall levels of educational attainment are increasing, “many inequalities remain persistent and hard to tackle”. These persistent inequalities are because of barriers linked to disability, gender, religion and their socio-economic background.

Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-34445359> and
<http://www.equalityni.org/KeyInequalities-Education>

The Draft Programme for Government highlights several outcomes directly relating to this theme, namely:

- 5. We are an innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential.
- 11. We give our children and young people the best start in life.
- 13. We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest.