



Workshop 2  
September  
2016

# Progress in Education Task and Finish Group

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This is a working document and will be subject to future re-drafts and augmentation as the work of the Task and Finish group progresses. As such, none of the content should be read as the official and agreed position or view of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, the MEA Community Planning Partnerships or any Community Planning Partner.

This report has been produced as a follow up to the first workshop for each for each of the Task and Finish Groups, which took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2016. These workshops brought together a range of stakeholders from across the sectors to discuss the priorities for the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Community Plan.

The objective for this task and finish group is:

*‘Developing educational achievement and aspirations’*

By the end of the task and finish process the group will produce a paper detailing the strategic priorities and actions in this theme over the next 10-15 years and a summary of how this theme can contribute to other cross cutting themes such as good relations, infrastructure, sustainable development, environment, etc.

This paper will be forwarded to the Community Planning Strategic Alliance who will use it to inform the priorities and actions within the final Community Plan for Mid and East Antrim.

This paper outlines the key priority areas which were identified by the Task and Finish Group in the first workshop. It is important to note here that the focus of the Task and Finish Groups is around collaborative gain; what can be achieved through working together, or that is not already being done well by other agencies, and that this has shaped the selection of priorities.

The paper will present each priority individually and with the following structure, which reflects the evidence based approach taken:

- A statement of the priority;
- A description of the current situation;
- Statistical evidence to support the selection of this issue as a priority (much of the evidence can be applied across each of the issues raised); and
- Some initial thoughts around indicators and proxies for each measure.

## 1 INEQUALITIES IN EDUCATION

### 1.1 The challenge

There are significant inequalities in educational attainment at a variety of levels in Mid and East Antrim. For example, there is a clear link between deprivation and educational attainment, and geographical inequalities persist, with Carrickfergus showing lower rates of attainment for key subjects than elsewhere in the borough. In addition, there is a retained legacy with the working class communities, with significant pockets of educational deprivation within Protestant and Catholic communities which links to neighbourhood renewal areas and areas at risk.

This issue was considered vital, as good quality education impacts across the themes of the five task and finish groups and is a critical life opportunity issue. The challenge will be to ensure that all children and adults are provided with an enabling environment in which to learn. Finally, there needs to be consideration as to whether the education system is set up to allow newcomer children to integrate and reach their potential.

### 1.2 The evidence

#### Deprivation

- 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 5 most deprived areas in Mid and East Antrim.
- Galgorm 2, Knockagh, Ballyloughan, Academy and Bluefield 2 are the 5 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.
- In 2014/15, there was a 32% difference between the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) and those not entitled to FSM, achieving 5+ GCSEs A\*-C (including equivalents) including GCSE English and Maths.

#### Newcomer pupils

There were questions raised around the quality of the support on offer for newcomer children, and the degree to which they are able to integrate and thrive in the local education system.



*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; this compared to a 21% increase across NI, and 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.
- The council was 3<sup>rd</sup> highest behind only Fermanagh and Omagh and Causeway Coast and Glens in terms of the number of newcomer children.

### Geographical inequalities

Achievements at key stage 2 for pupils in Mid and East Antrim were below the NI average for both English and Maths and ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest across the 11 councils (see table below)

There was notable variation between the 3 main areas within Mid and East Antrim. The level of achievement in Carrickfergus was significantly 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.

### Attainment in Mid and East Antrim

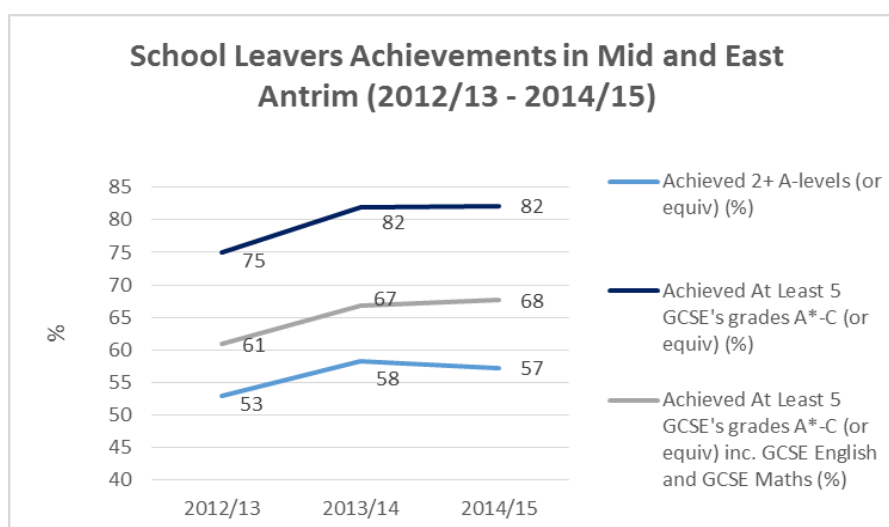
The level of educational attainment in the borough is a mixed picture when compared to the Northern Ireland averages. As the table below shows, for Key stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving level 4 or above in communication in English or Using Maths, were slightly down on national figures.

**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

For school leavers in 2014/15, pupils in Mid and East Antrim outperformed the national average for achievements in GCSEs but was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> lowest out of the 11 councils, with 82% achieving at least 5 GCSE's grades A\*-C (or equivalent) and 68% achieving at least 5 GCSE's grades A\*-C (or equivalent) including 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 6<sup>th</sup> lowest.



### 1.3 Gaps in the evidence base

To gauge inequalities in education data have been requested from the Department of Education on the qualifications and destinations of school leavers in Mid and East Antrim by ward, religion and free school meal entitlement. This will help address the gap in terms geography, religion and socio-economic status. Please note however that this information may not be available until the end of September.

As previously stated, 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. Starting with the most deprived these are:

Super Output Area	Education, Skills and Training Domain Rank
Ballee	32
Northland	40
Love Lane	61
Dunclug	73
Ballyloran	74
Ballykeel	84
Moat	91
Antiville	97
Clipperstown	117
Sunnylands	125
Blackcave	154
Gortalee	161
Fair Green	174

*With 1 being the most deprived to 890 being the least deprived.*

## 1.4 Indicator development

## 2 QUALIFICATIONS OF THE WORKING AGE POPULATION

### 2.1 The challenge

There are issues around the low proportion of the working age population of Mid and East Antrim who hold a higher education qualification, and also with the relatively high proportion who hold no qualifications. This can have profound impacts on individual's ability to find and sustain employment, and also to adapt to the changing nature of contemporary skills requirements. At present, there is a misconception that education is a formal activity that must take place in a traditional learning environment; however, more people must be made aware of the variety of educational opportunities that are on offer in the borough. There is also a challenge to have education viewed as a lifelong process which is valued throughout the community; current evidence suggests this is not the case, as the area has high rates of unauthorized absences from school and a low take up of places on adult education courses.

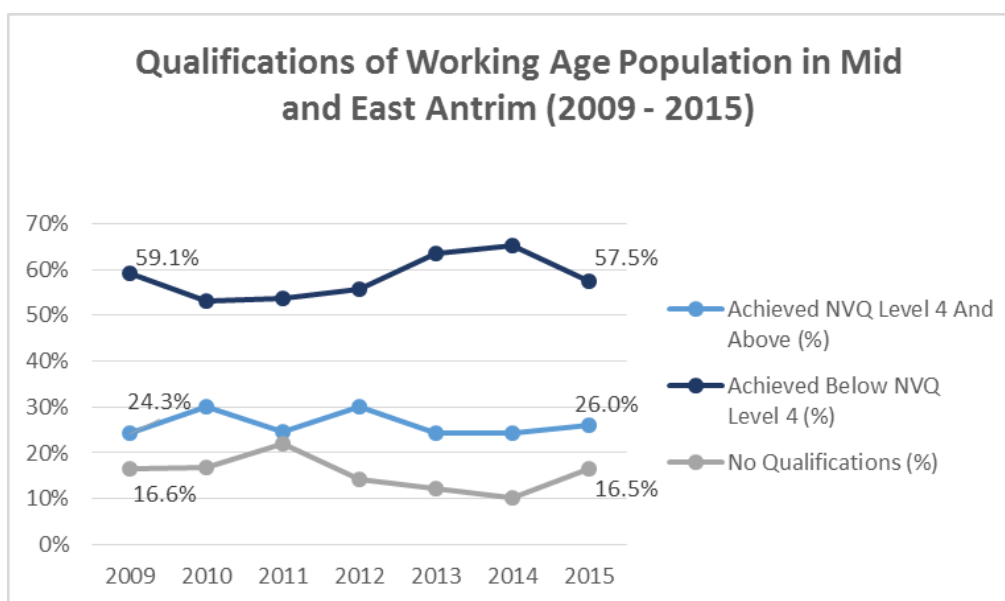
### 2.2 The evidence

#### Qualifications of the working age population in Mid and East Antrim

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 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest across the councils in achieving NVQ level 4 and above 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

The graph shows that while there have been some fluctuations in qualifications over the last 7 years, the position in Mid and East Antrim in 2015 is comparable to that in 2009. With just over a quarter achieving NVQ level 4 and above, 57.5% achieving below level 4 and 16.5% with no qualifications.



### The value placed on education

Whilst there are many factors that influence rates of unauthorised absence from school, it does give an indication as to the importance that families place on education.

For primary schools:

- In 2014/15, Mid and East Antrim had 1.04% of days due to unauthorised absence (1.12% NI) and was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> highest out of the 11 councils.
- There was variation in attendance rates at ward level with Green island having 0.39% of days due to unauthorised absence compared to 1.92% in Victoria.

At post-primary school age:

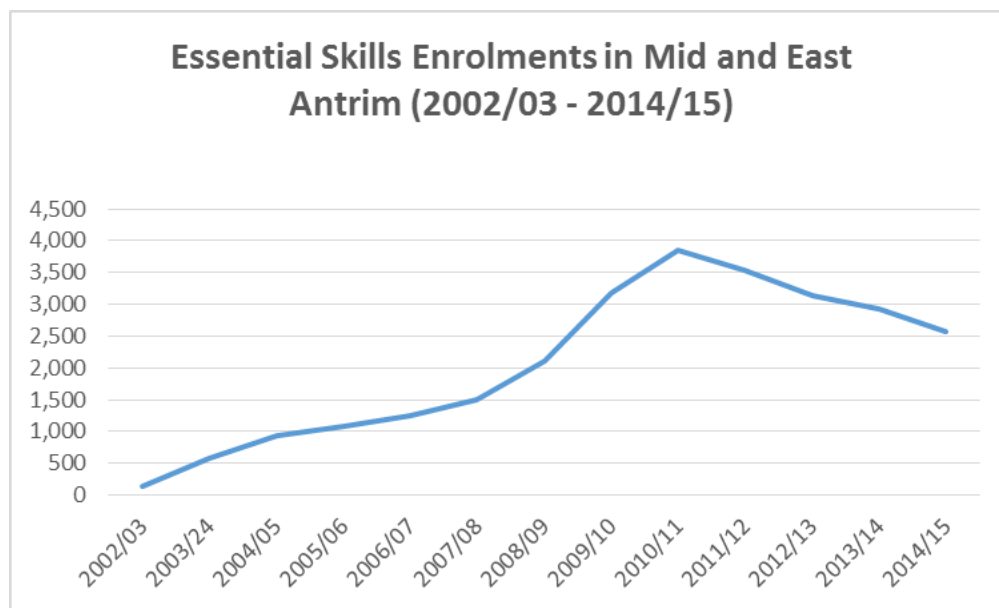
- In 2014/15 Mid and East Antrim had 2.25% of days due to unauthorised absence (2.07% NI) and was ranked 5<sup>th</sup> highest out of the 11 councils
- Again there was variation in attendance rates at ward level, with Galgorm having 0.67% of days due to unauthorised absence, compared to 5.41% in Castle Demesne.

### Adult skills development and training

The demand for adult skills courses also gives an indication as to the importance placed on education by the working age population of Mid and East Antrim. 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 (see graph below). This is consistent with the trend across the other councils.



## 2.3 Gaps in the evidence base

## 2.4 Indicator development

### 3 DELIVERING THE SKILLS FOR FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### 3.1 The challenge

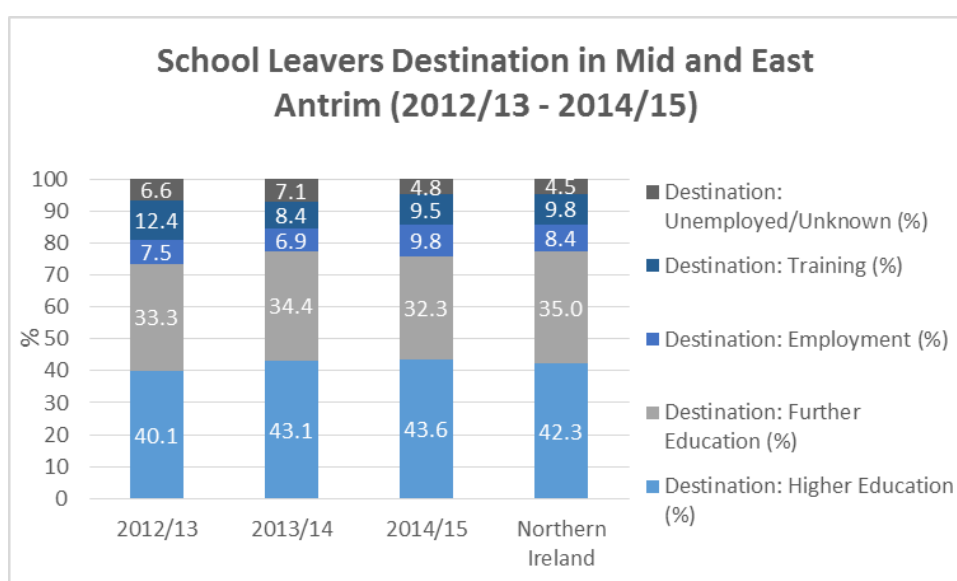
There has, and will continue to be a shift towards a knowledge based economy in Northern Ireland. However, the NI skills barometer indicates that there is a mismatch between the skills needs of the economy and the current supply of skilled individuals. The skills barometer research analyses where the skills gaps are currently, where they are emerging and where they are likely to emerge in future. The implications for Mid and East Antrim need to be explored.

There has been a recent improvement in higher education at a national level, which has seen a larger proportion of graduates remain in Northern Ireland to study; however, continued revision of provision in this sector will be necessary. In terms of softer skills, there is also a weakness in the work readiness and life skills of young people in the area, which is exacerbated by the lack of an employability and skills strategy with a suitable long-term vision.

#### 3.2 The evidence

##### Next steps for school leavers

In 2014/15, three-quarters of school leavers in Mid and East Antrim went into Higher or Further Education, compared to 77% in NI (see graph below). 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.

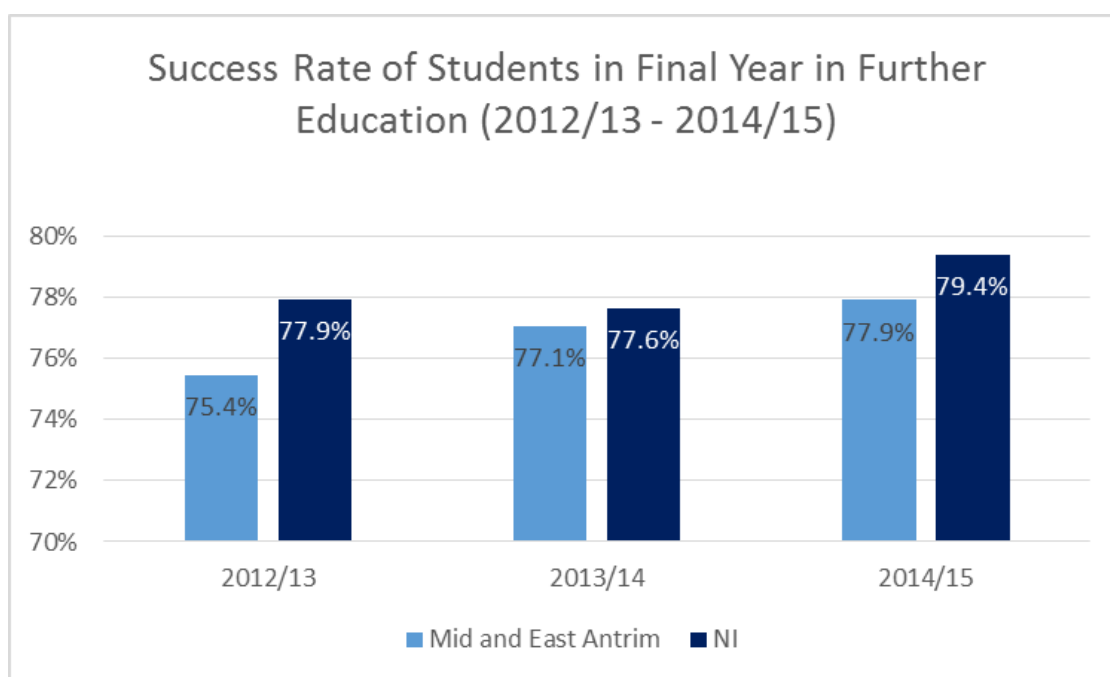


### Success in further and higher education

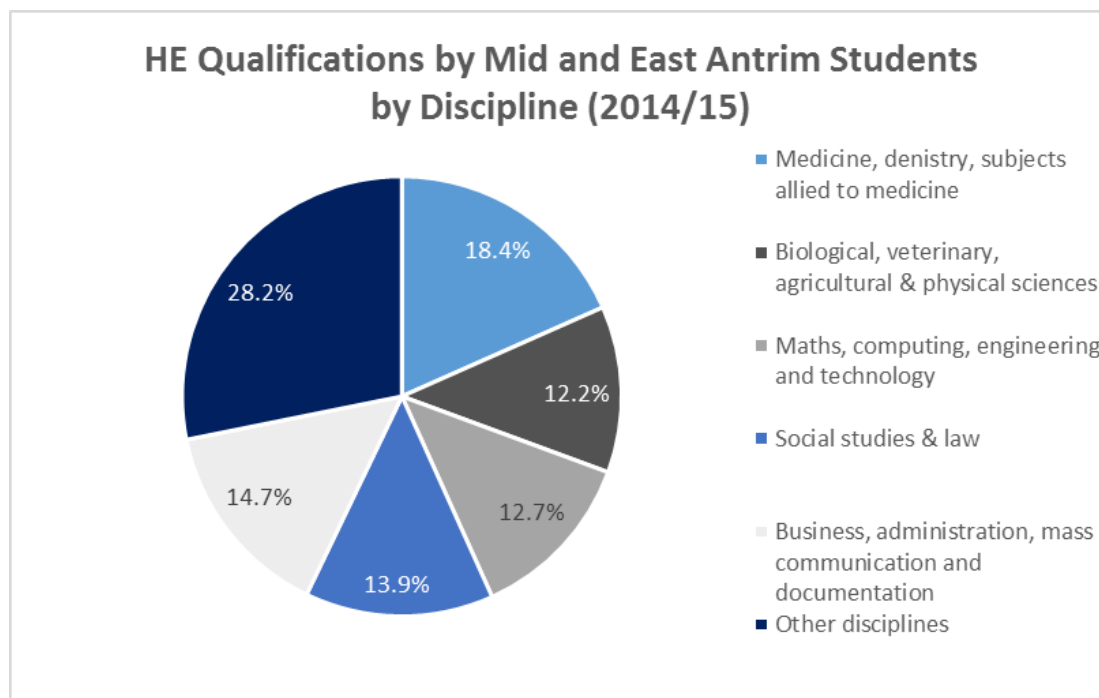
In 2014/15, 77.9% of students in final year in Further Education were successful in gaining their qualification (see graph below). This was lower than 79.4% in NI and ranked 4<sup>th</sup> lowest across the 11 councils. Between 2012/13 and 2014/15 the success rates in Mid and East Antrim have increased, 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.



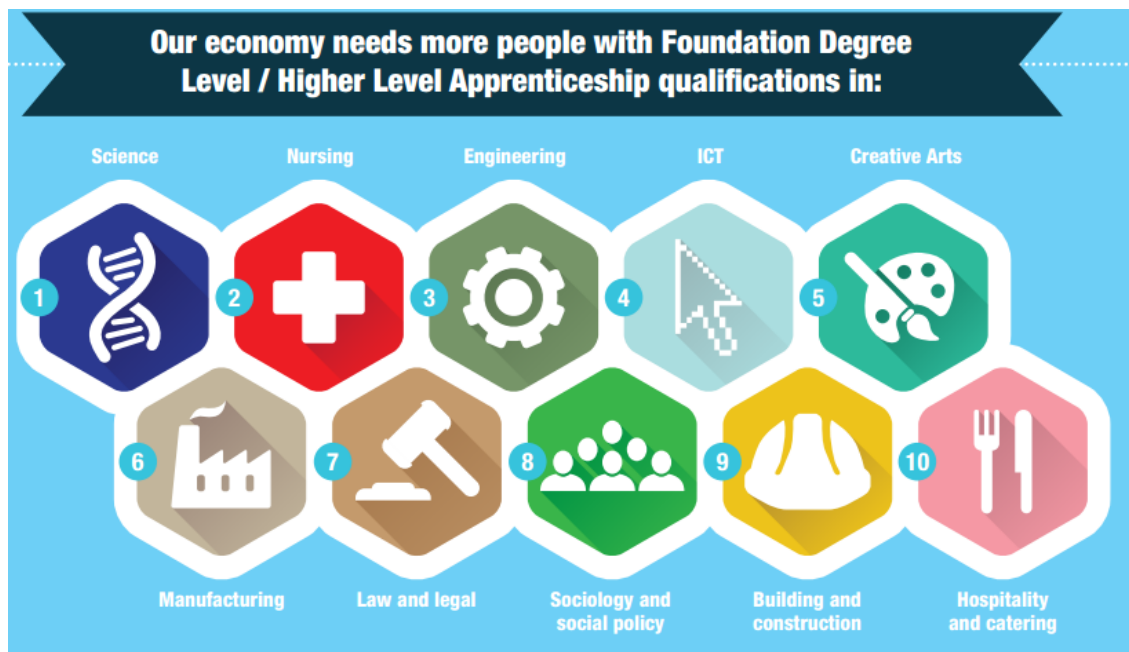
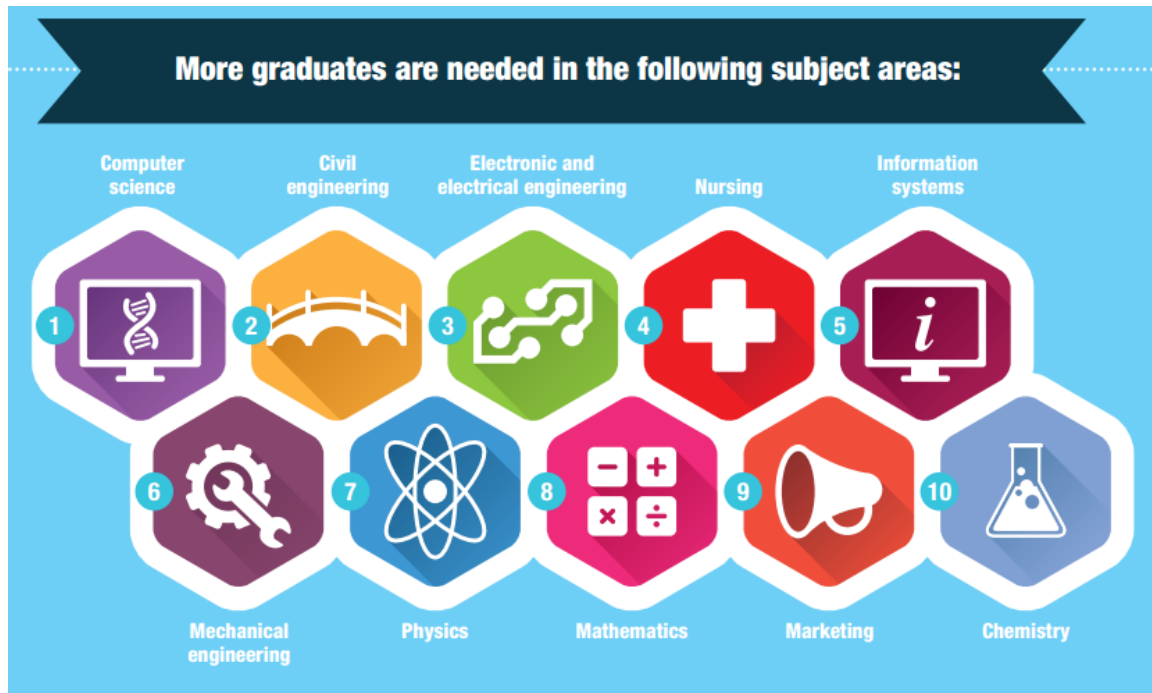
The majority of students gained their qualification in subjects allied to medicine (18.4%), administration, business, administration, mass communication and documentation (14.7%) and social studies & law (13.9%). This was broadly similar to NI as a whole.



### 3.3 Gaps in the evidence base

Data has been requested from the Northern Regional College on enrolment figures and completion rates for students in the Ballymena, Newtownabbey and Larne campuses by discipline. If available, this will include data for the last 3 academic years to assist with identifying any trends. This will enable the group to identify gaps in the skills of our future workforce.

In addition, the 'Skills in Demand' report produced by the Department for the economy gives a clear indication as to the subjects in which more graduates are required (these are listed by priority of demand):



### 3.4 Indicator development



Mid and East Antrim Borough Council would like to acknowledge the support from CLES in the production of this document. CLES has been retained by the Council to support the task and finish working group process.

