

Annual Review

2015



From the Chairman

As in previous years, Enterprise Northern Ireland spent 2015 working on behalf of the enterprise support sector across Northern Ireland to support the growth and development of the private and social economy sectors.

As a group, Enterprise Northern Ireland's network of LEAs have long been firmly established as the lead agencies for promoting local economic growth. Through their delivery of programmes and financial interventions, the LEA network have demonstrated that they can make - and have made - a difference, with evidence of crucial strategic input into local economies in terms of driving local growth and ensuring that areas make the most of their strengths.

However, the changes to local government as a result of the Review of Public Administration, with the transfer of further economic development functions, has made the enterprise sector a much more complex and uncertain place to be.

There has never been a greater need for local Councils and Local Enterprise Agencies to work together. Neither Councils, Enterprise Northern Ireland nor the regional network of LEAs can solve all the problems facing local economies alone; but, as a group, there is the real potential that we can make a difference. The track record of Enterprise Northern Ireland and the LEA network demonstrates the economically important strategic role that we have played in local areas across Northern Ireland. By working together, the Councils, Enterprise Northern Ireland and the LEA network can drive activity to support business growth, create jobs and help people realise their potential.

I would like to thank our Board members for supporting both myself and the organisation in moving forward.

John D'Arcy

Chief Executive Report

A year ago, I presented the three core strands of work that Enterprise Northern Ireland routinely undertakes on behalf of its members, namely supporting, networking and delivery. Reflecting back on these activities and a year which presented the organisation and our members with many challenges and complexities, it is clear that the Local Enterprise Agencies represented by Enterprise Northern Ireland, are to be commended for continuing to provide their clients with quality business support interventions during a time of huge financial and economic uncertainty.

As we move into 2016, Enterprise Northern Ireland has an ever-increasingly important role to play in acting as a powerful voice to engage with government and help them develop economic priorities for the region. With Assembly elections and a restructure of Executive departments both scheduled to take place in 2016, Enterprise Northern Ireland will be working to ensure that the crucial role played by the enterprise support sector in providing interventions which tackle barriers to entrepreneurship and business growth is recognised in the development of local economic strategies. Enterprise Northern Ireland pledges to ensure that the LEA network remain to be seen as a visible force for good in terms of delivering economic growth. Political stakeholders need to be reminded that the knowledge and potential offered by Enterprise Northern Ireland and the LEA network should be harnessed and supported.

While external relationships are important and critical to Enterprise Northern Ireland's success, I also want to acknowledge the role played by the Board members who served during 2015, and who offered both support and wisdom at decisive moments, working incredibly hard to help us deliver.

I firmly believe that Enterprise Northern Ireland has demonstrated that it can make a significant contribution to the growth of the economy, and commit to being ready for action in 2016.

Gordon Gough



Board of Directors

In 2014, the Board of Directors of Enterprise Northern Ireland decided to restructure in order to match the new political governance structures in place following the Review of Public Administration. As a result, the Enterprise Northern Ireland Board is now comprised of one LEA member from each of the new Council areas.

Moving forward, the Board of Directors is comprised of the following:

Enterprise Northern Ireland Board members (2015/16)

John D'Arcy, Open University
(Chair)

Kelli Bagchus, Carrickfergus Enterprise
(Mid & East Antrim Borough Council area)

Mark Brotherston, Inspire Business Centre
(Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area)

Charles Kennedy, Enterprise North West
(Derry City & Strabane District Council area)

Brian Murray, The Workspace Group
(Mid Ulster District Council area)

Jennifer McWilliams, Antrim Enterprise Agency
(Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council area)

Seamus O'Prey, Ortus - The Business Development Agency
(Belfast City Council area)

Conor Patterson, Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency
(Newry, Mourne & Down District Council area)

Eileen Stewart, Armagh Business Centre
(Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council area)

Jayne Taggart, Causeway Enterprise Agency
(Causeway Coast & Glens District Council area)

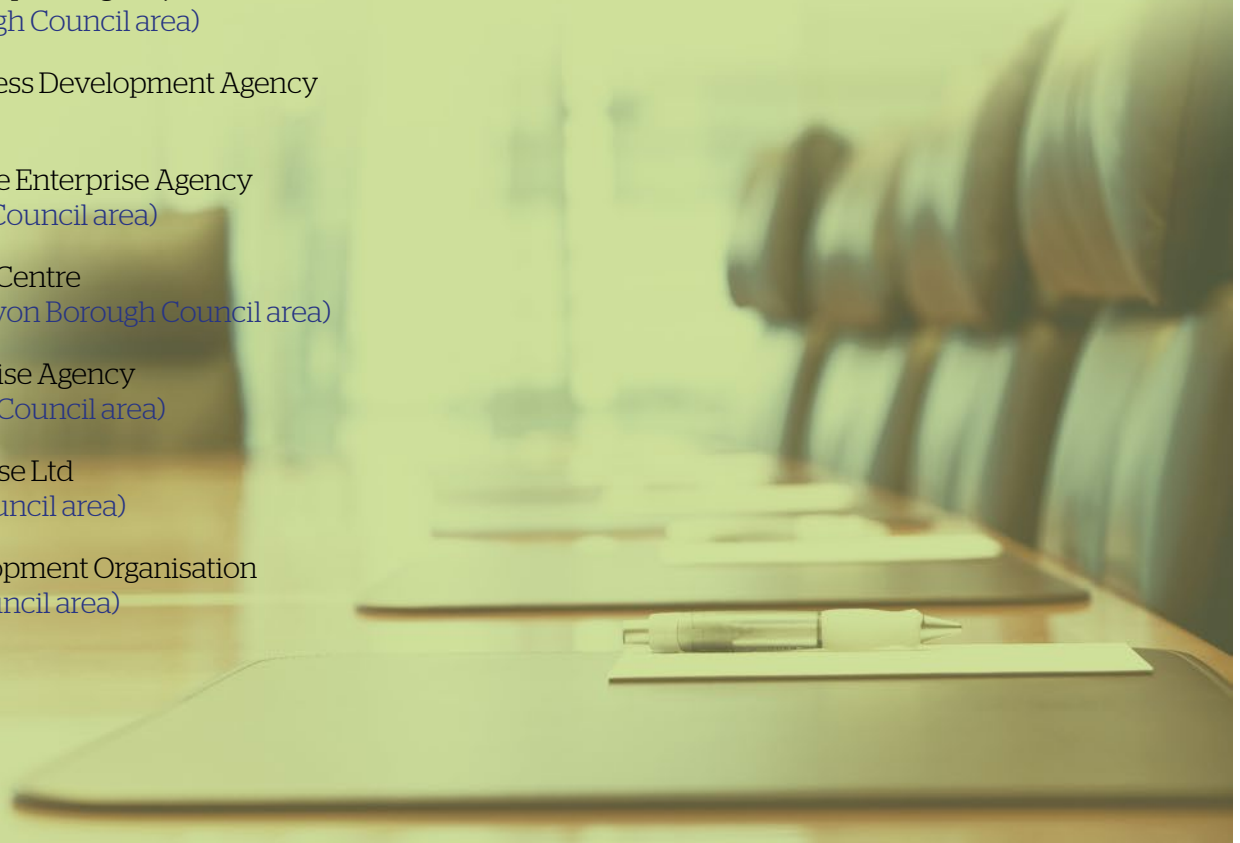
John Treacy, Fermanagh Enterprise Ltd
(Fermanagh & Omagh District Council area)

Lynne Vance, North Down Development Organisation
(Ards & North Down Borough Council area)

A number of independent Board members have also been confirmed. Enterprise Northern Ireland is delighted to announce the recent appointment of Maureen O'Reilly and Michael McDonnell to the Board of Directors.

Maureen O'Reilly is an independent Economist with over 20 years experience in managing research, policy evaluation and statistics projects. Previously, Maureen was Northern Ireland co-ordinator of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor which is the world's largest entrepreneurship study.

Michael McDonnell is Chief Executive with Helm Housing. Michael has significant leadership experience and has provided strategic and operational support at Board and senior management level to large corporates, government departments and small and medium sized enterprises as a business adviser.



News from Enterprise Northern Ireland

Exploring Enterprise Programme

Enterprise Northern Ireland's Exploring Enterprise² Programme successfully concluded on 31st March 2015, with the following outcomes:

- 2655 participants taking part and completing Pre-Training Personal Development Assessments;
- 1781 participants completing the training element of the programme, with 1738 of them achieving the CCEA QCF Level 2 Understanding Business Enterprise qualification;
- 407 participants undertaking self-employment, 299 gaining either full or part-time employment and 421 continuing on further education and training.

Its successor, the Exploring Enterprise³ programme (EE³p), was launched on 1st April 2015.

An Enterprise Northern Ireland initiative, EE³p is a pre-start enterprise programme targeting individuals who are unemployed, economically inactive or are working less than 16 hours per week. It provides them with the opportunity to explore self-employment as a career, or return to the labour market. EE³p is designed to fill a gap in the provision of enterprise support by addressing deprivation and employability barriers. Participants do not need to have a specific business idea to join; the programme provides an insight into starting a business whilst allowing participants to work towards achieving an accredited CCEA QCF Level I in Understanding Business Enterprise qualification. Additional programme outcomes include enhancing participants' 'soft' skills and equipping them with the attributes, capabilities and skills that progress them into employment or self-employment. There is also an emphasis on signposting individuals to relevant training and labour market support and resources.

This includes providing access to mainstream business support and further education options, and mentors with skills and expertise in relevant areas.

Each course consists of the following components:

- Pre-Training Personal Development Assessment - provided through 1-1 business mentor support;
- Training, to include the opportunity to work towards a QCF Level 1 in Understanding Business Enterprise;
- Work study visit to local businesses;
- Post Training Personal Development Assessment to include business advisory support in improving participant's skills and employability prospects.

The network of Local Enterprise Agencies aim to deliver 143 courses throughout Northern Ireland between 1st April 2015-31st March 2018, with the programme components and outcomes detailed below:

Programme Components	Number of Participants
Pre-Assessment	
Pre Training Personal Development Assessments	1716
Training	
QCF Level I in Understanding Business Enterprise	1001
Study visits	715
Post Training	
Post Training Personal Development Assessments to include business advisory support in improving participant's skills and employability prospects	1001
Post Programme Outcomes	
Into employment	137
Into self - employment	154



Shirelle McIvor, EE³ Programme Manager with Dr Nick O'Shiel (Omagh Enterprise Company) and John Treacy (Fermanagh Enterprise Ltd)



EE³p is part-funded through the Northern Ireland European Social Fund's Investment for Jobs and Growth Programme, the Department for Employment & Learning, Enterprise Northern Ireland and the Local Enterprise Agencies. At date of publication the following Councils have also agreed to provide some or all of the 35% cash match-funding requirement -

- Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council;
- Causeway Coast & Glens District Council;
- Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council;
- Mid & East Antrim Borough Council;
- Mid Ulster District Council;
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

Exploring Enterprise²

2665
participants taking part

407
undertaking self-employment

299
in full or part-time employment

421
continuing education or training

NI Small Business Loan Fund reaches £4M mark

The Northern Ireland Small Business Loan Fund had another successful year, and up until 31st October 2015, had disbursed approximately £4m of debt funding to over 180 clients. The fund is in its third year and is currently delivering around £1.7m of loans per year to clients who cannot access or who have exhausted traditional banking facilities.

As part of Invest NI's Access to Finance Strategy, the Northern Ireland Small Business Loan Fund is managed and delivered by the partnership of Enterprise Northern Ireland and Ulster Community Investment Trust.

The Fund has supported businesses across a wide range of sectors including IT, food production, construction, leisure and tourism, engineering and

manufacturing as well as a range of home-based and personal service businesses.

A wide range of projects and growth plans have been undertaken that would not have been possible without this fund. Businesses have used the loans to invest in capital equipment, digital marketing strategies, new product development, increasing staff and pursuing export opportunities.

As the fund has matured, we have also seen an increase in clients from the earlier stages returning for further finance to expand operations. With these cases, we can see clearly the benefits our funding has brought, with key targets and historic milestones being achieved.

One business to benefit recently from the Fund is Titanic Creative Management. According to Managing Director, Nuala Campbell, "The loan we secured has allowed us to open Northern Ireland's first training and management agency for costumiers and hair and make-up artists. I have been a professional make-up artist in TV and film for many years and spotted

William McCulla from Invest NI, Nuala Campbell from Titanic Creative Management and Gordon Gough from Enterprise Northern Ireland give Barry Connolly from UCIT a makeover



a gap in the market to up-skill local employees to meet the demand for skilled artists in the ever-growing entertainment production industry in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Small Business Loan Fund has been incredibly supportive in helping me kickstart the business."

William McCulla, Director of Corporate Finance with Invest Northern Ireland, said: "The Small Business Loan Fund has been a real success to date. It has provided much-needed access to funds to a wide range of businesses across all of Northern Ireland. The fund continues to attract strong interest and remains an important part of our Access to Finance portfolio."

Gordon Gough, Chief Executive of Enterprise Northern Ireland, added: "The Northern Ireland Small Business Loan Fund has been a very welcome addition to the funding environment within the region. The activity to date has clearly shown that the fund is filling a gap in the market. It is very encouraging that we have seen so many success stories recently from clients supported by the fund and we aim for this to continue over the coming years."

The partnership between UCIT and Enterprise Northern Ireland has become a very robust method of delivering funds on the ground and we are confident of continued success in the delivery of this key contract over the coming years

Anyone interested in finding out more about the Fund can visit www.nisblf.com or can speak to one of our Loan Executives by calling 0800 988 2879.

UCIT
Financing Social Enterprise



Enterprise Northern Ireland Start Up Loans

The Enterprise Northern Ireland Start Up Loan Fund is another way in which would-be entrepreneurs are able to get round difficulties accessing finance.

The Start Up Loan Company is a UK-wide initiative and Enterprise Northern Ireland delivers the scheme in Northern Ireland, allowing new businesses to access start-up capital and get their business ideas off the ground. As of 31st October 2015, Start up Loans through Enterprise Northern Ireland had issued 325 loans to the value of £1.8m, with 258 loan recipients accepting mentoring on the scheme.

The £1 million loan milestone was passed in March 2015, when the Enterprise Northern

Ireland Start Up Loan Fund provided a loan to a specialist sports injury company based in Jordanstown, county Antrim.

Established by Irish Premier League footballers Nathan Hanley, who plays for Ballymena United, and Ross Glendinning, who plays for Linfield, Jordanstown Sports Clinic helps treat and prevent sports injuries using an innovative cryotherapy device called a CET CryoSpa.

Nathan Hanley said, “We decided to apply for a Start Up Loan from Enterprise Northern Ireland as we wanted to be able to combine our sporting knowledge to create a new business venture. Big clubs such as AC Milan and Manchester City are using this kind of technology but there is nothing like it locally. Recovery is an important part of any sport and we believe we have identified a gap in the market for a business such as this to thrive”.

Ross Glendinning added, “The loan from Enterprise Northern Ireland has allowed us to get this business off the ground and the mentoring we have received has been invaluable. We will primarily

be focusing our business on the footballing sector but have plans in the future to broaden to incorporate other sports”.

Gordon Gough, Chief Executive of Enterprise Northern Ireland, said, “Nathan and Ross have a clear business plan, combining their professional careers, and with the assistance of mentoring, have created a viable business. We look forward to watching the business expand”.

He continued, “Post loan mentoring support is a unique offering with the Start Up Loans product and really makes a difference as business owners value a business adviser to share ideas with. We offer a maximum of 15 hours support in the 12 month period following the disbursement of the loan. The loans we offer allow new businesses access to start up capital, which is crucial as we try to grow the private sector”.

For more information on eligibility and the application process, visit www.eniloans.com



L-R, Nathan Hanley, Gordon Gough (Enterprise Northern Ireland) and Ross Glendinning

The Regional Start Initiative

The Regional Start Initiative is the national business start-up programme for Northern Ireland. It has been delivered by Enterprise Northern Ireland and the network of Local Enterprise Agencies since it began in October 2012.

Responsibility for the provision of business start-up support was one of the economic development functions to be transferred from Invest NI to the new Councils as a result of the Review of Public Administration. The responsibility for Regional Start transferred to councils on 1st April 2015; however, it was decided for operational reasons that Invest NI would continue to manage the programme and for Enterprise Northern Ireland and its network of LEAs to

continue to deliver up until October 2015 and then again to 31st March 2016. Enterprise Northern Ireland will continue its work to ensure that the voice of the LEA network is heard in all debates and consultations regarding the future of business start-up support for both the private and social economy sectors.

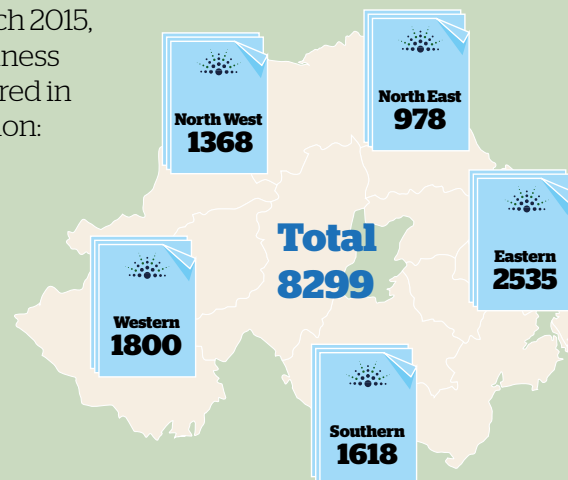
Conversion

Aggregate data on conversion rates through the customer journey - from initial enquiry, through assessment and on to Business Plan Approvals (BPAs) - demonstrate that over the October 2012-March 2015 period there were:

- c **20,450** enquiries to RSI, leading to
- c **13,500** initial assessments (conversion ratio of 66%), leading to
- **8,299** BPAs (conversion ratio from initial assessment of 65%)

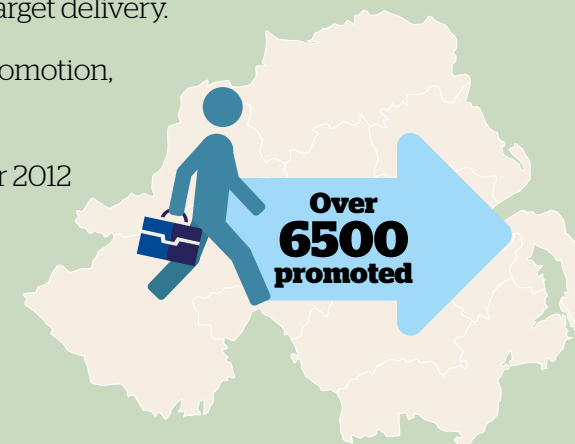
Outputs

At the end of March 2015, the following business plans were delivered in each delivery region:



The Regional Start Initiative is therefore well on schedule to meet its overall target delivery.

In terms of job promotion, over 6500 jobs were promoted between October 2012 and March 2015 through RSI:



In terms of **referrals to other Invest NI supports**, monitoring data revealed that the target to refer 50 new clients each year to the Invest NI client bank was met in the first two years, with 112 referrals as potential clients to Invest NI delivered by April 2015, of which 35 have subsequently received investment from other Invest NI supports, worth in total c£580k, with an average per firm of £16.5k.

Assessments have also been positive in terms of value for money. Evaluation has shown that over the period October 2012-March 2015, a GVA (through the turnover of firms starting up) of an estimated £18m was generated through the Programme.

Against input expenditure of approximately £4.4m, the Return on Investment (RoI) ratios are positive, suggesting reasonable Value for Money on Invest NI's investment, at around four to one.

Including forecasts for the final seven months of delivery increases the GVA effect by around a further £3.5m, proving a total of approximately £20-22m (including and excluding an adjustment for attribution) for the whole programme.

Simple living 'By the Sea'

Tracy McAllister started her own business after redundancy struck in late 2013. With a degree in Business Studies, experience in event organisation, advertising and branding and a love of interiors, Tracy decided to utilise her skills, knowledge and contacts to drive her business idea forward.

Tracy's business is called 'bts' - short for 'By the Sea' - and is a non-prescriptive interiors and lifestyle store offering a carefully curated range of homeware, gifts, accessories and lifestyle items sourced from around the world which compliment coastal living.

Launched originally as a web store in May 2014, 'bts' demonstrates how a successful business should grow organically. 'Bts' has morphed naturally over the past year from a pop-up store on the run-up to Christmas 2014, to the static store today situated on Queen Street, Coleraine.

Tracy is an avid interiors fan with an appetite for home magazines and lifestyle blogs. Her inspiration for the development of a simple, coastal lifestyle boutique is drawn from the Nordic perspective of living - simple and cosy. The combination of Tracy's business and marketing background has meant that she has the perfect blend of talent and inspiration to make a truly successful interiors and lifestyle business.

Having invested her redundancy into getting the business off the ground, Tracy also utilised the services of Causeway Enterprise Agency and attended the Invest Northern Ireland's Regional Start Initiative which proved beneficial in terms of support and advice. Having completed Regional Start, Tracy was also given the opportunity to successfully apply for a Start Up Loan through Enterprise Northern Ireland in order to grow the business from a web-only store to the static store it is today.

Tracy said, *'Receiving the Enterprise Northern Ireland funding was a great boost as I could take my business to the next level. A year on and the business is doing really well. I have plans to expand my store to make it bigger in early 2016 as well as take forward the interiors side of my business.'*



Tracy McAllister

Policy and engagement

The Information & Policy unit within Enterprise Northern Ireland was active on a number of fronts this during 2015.

Westminster 2015: What next for Northern Ireland?

On 19th June, Enterprise Northern Ireland in partnership with Resolute Public Affairs hosted 'Westminster 2015: What Next for Northern Ireland' in the Linenhall Library, Belfast. The event was organised to explore the implications of the 2015 General Election for people and political parties in Northern Ireland.

Bill White of Lucid Talk took to the podium to give an excellent presentation analysing the local and national results using a variety of demographic measures.

Next was Neil Johnston, Vice Chair of the Conservative Party NI, who outlined the priorities of the new government and the implications of various policy positions and decisions for Northern Ireland.

The main event was a Question & Answer session featuring three local MPs who responded to questions from the audience on a variety of issues including economic development, welfare reform and the social economy.

We are grateful to Dr Alasdair McDonnell MP, Paul Maskey MP and Gavin Robinson MP for taking the time to attend and to participate, and for demonstrating their support for the LEA network in working to boost the private and social economy sectors by promoting business start-up and growth.

Thanks go to all those who attended the event - feedback revealed that participants found the session to be interesting and engaging, with good networking opportunities. Our thanks go also to the Linenhall Library, who displayed items from their political collection and provided attendees with the opportunity to go on a guided tour of their wonderful building.

Small Business Summit: What next for SME Support

Enterprise Northern Ireland played a key role in delivering the first major event of the Northern Ireland European Entrepreneurial Region of 2015 programme of activities as joint organisers with NILGA of the 'Small Business Summit: What next for SME Support'. The conference was also supported by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.

With a key focus on supporting the growth and development of our small and medium-sized enterprises, the Small Business Summit brought together a range of industry experts to share their experiences with around 100 delegates in the Lisburn Civic Centre.

Speaking at the Small Business Summit, Enterprise Northern Ireland's Chief Executive, Gordon Gough, said: *"The new 11 district councils will have greater economic development powers and the Local Enterprise Agency network, with its wealth of experience in business start-up support, will be a key strategic partner going forward. Small businesses are the life-blood of the Northern Ireland economy and it is vital that all enterprise support providers are working together to grow the private sector in Northern Ireland and to re-balance the economy"*.

Former Enterprise Northern Ireland Board member Angela McGowan (Danske Bank) and Chief Executive of LEDCOM, Ken Nelson, were amongst the keynote speakers. Ken and Gordon were also members of the panel discussion and Q&A session.

Promoting Second Chance Entrepreneurship

Value of Failure is a EU-funded initiative to create and deliver a better framework for second chance entrepreneurs, by highlighting and addressing key structural and cultural barriers which exist. By working to improve the business and cultural environment for second chance entrepreneurs, the Erasmus + project aims to encourage those who have previously tried, but failed, to start and run their own business to try again.



Gordon Gough and Ken Nelson represent Enterprise Northern Ireland and the LEA network at the Small Business Summit



Enterprise Northern Ireland are working with partners in Poland, Germany and Northern Ireland - the University of Szczecin, Creo Mind, thevisionworks and Canice Consulting - to improve the environment for second chance entrepreneurs in each region.

As a key first step of the project, Enterprise Northern Ireland identified three action areas which we believed were priority challenges to be addressed in order to encourage greater levels of entrepreneurial activity and private sector growth through the promotion of second chance entrepreneurship:

- in order to address negative social attitudes and stigma, **change attitudes to business failure;**
- recognising that education is a key shaper of attitudes and influencer of future career aspirations, **adapt education offerings** to include more information on the value of business failure; and
- recognising that access to finance can be even more difficult for second-time entrepreneurs than first time start-ups, **provide finance products and services to second chance entrepreneurs.**

Enterprise Northern Ireland held a series of plenary meetings to which key stakeholders representing enterprise support, education, financial providers and entrepreneurs were invited to attend. Stakeholders were encouraged to join the Northern Ireland Alliance and pledge their support for the project.

An Action Plan will be developed which highlights the various ways in which key challenges will be tackled and identifies the anticipated outcomes of the project. In addition, educational and training materials will be made available to assist enterprise support and higher education providers to help secure a brighter outcome for second chance entrepreneurs.

For further information on the Value of Failure project, contact caroline.o'kane@enterpriseni.com or visit the website www.valueoffailure.com

Partnership with Ulster Bank

Ulster Bank

Enterprise Northern Ireland this year forged a corporate relationship with Ulster Bank, which saw the two organisations embark upon a regional series of Access finance meetings, designed to introduce pre-startups, microbusiness owners and the LEA network to the range of Ulster Bank services and facilities available to the small business sector.

Further elements of the partnership include an e-zine and a key policy/research paper, both of which will be coming soon!

Enterprise Northern Ireland is also delighted to have the support of Ulster Bank as sponsor of the Business Start-Up of the Year category at the 2015 Northern Ireland Enterprise Awards. We look forward to strengthening this relationship, and continuing to work closely with Ulster Bank, in 2016.

Enterprise Northern Ireland hosts MEP briefing on EU Funding

Local and national government funding cuts means that organisations are increasingly looking towards the European Union for financial support. However, the funding streams on offer can be difficult to access and the application process can be complicated.

To support the Local Enterprise Agency network and the small business sector in accessing European funding streams, Enterprise Northern Ireland hosted an event in January 2015 giving attendees an insight into the options available and the application process.

Keynote speaker was Diane Dodds MEP, who spoke knowledgably about the various EU funding opportunities available. Dr Nick O'Shiel, Chief Executive of Omagh Enterprise Company, also spoke, reporting on an EU-funded initiative which had enhanced his LEA's ability to support business start-up and growth in the Omagh area by enabling the construction of the Company's state-of-the-art, purpose built innovation centre.



Supporting Small Business Saturday

Enterprise Northern Ireland attended the launch of the 2015 Small Business Saturday campaign, demonstrating the organisation's support for the grassroots, non-political, non-commercial campaign that encourages people to support small businesses in their communities, both on a set Saturday each December in the lead up to Christmas and beyond. In 2015, the Saturday chosen for the campaign focus was 5th December with hundreds of business related events taking place all over the UK. The campaign also aims to support, inspire and promote small business all year round.

The initiative started in 2010 in the US, and has generated a lot of custom for small businesses. The Campaign is now in its third year in the UK. The Northern Ireland campaign launch took place at the Harbour Commissioner's Office in Belfast with local Councillors, business support organisations including Enterprise Northern Ireland and a wealth of home grown businesses showcasing their products and services.

In the lead up to Small Business Saturday on 5th December, the Small Business Saturday bus made its way to Northern Ireland on 4th-5th November, travelling through Belfast, Derry/Londonderry and Banbridge, providing free business help, support and guidance to small businesses or inspired entrepreneurs in need.

Enterprise Northern Ireland Members' Forum

The first Enterprise Northern Ireland Members' Forum was held at the Tullylagan Country House Hotel, Cookstown, in May 2015. With a good representation of Chief Executives, Chairs and Board members from a large number of Local Enterprise Agencies in attendance, there was the opportunity for networking and debate around key issues facing Enterprise Northern Ireland and the wider LEA network moving forward.

Participants were asked to discuss two key topics:

1. What can we do and how do we make the most impact in stimulating demand for our products and services?
2. How do we position the enterprise network in the new economic landscape, which will be impacted by factors such as the emergence of the new councils, potential cuts in public sector activities, forthcoming elections and restructuring of the NI Assembly?

The event raised a number of issues and identified key pieces of work for both Enterprise Northern Ireland and the wider LEA network in order to ensure that both remain key players in the new economic development landscape.

A follow-up event will be organised for 2016, looking at specific issues with a more focused and targeted approach.



L-R Cara Dallat, Michelle Ovens MBE (Small Business Saturday) and Gordon Gough

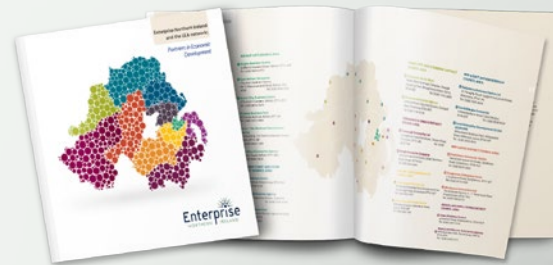
Enterprise Northern Ireland publications

Three key publications were launched in 2015:

Enterprise Northern Ireland and the Regional Start Initiative: Launching Business, Creating Jobs celebrated the outputs of the Regional Start Initiative as delivered by the network of Local Enterprise Agencies. As the national business start-up programme for Northern Ireland, Regional Start has made a key contribution to the NI Executive's business and job creation targets. This publication highlighted the key role played by Enterprise Northern Ireland and the LEA network in helping aspirant business owners take the first steps to starting, developing and growing their new business ventures. Each new Council area was represented in the form of a case study of a successful business person who has succeeded in making their entrepreneurial dream a reality with the support of the Regional Start Initiative and a Local Enterprise Agency within that area.

Enterprise Northern Ireland's members, the regional network of Local Enterprise Agencies, have long been embedded into, and are at the heart of, their local business communities. **Enterprise Northern Ireland and the LEA Network: Partners in Economic Development** detailed the important contribution that the LEA network has achieved in all eleven new Council areas in terms of developing entrepreneurship, business start-up, job creation and wealth generation, with the aim of rebuilding and rebalancing the Northern Ireland economy. The publication also outlined the vital role that Enterprise Northern Ireland has played, through the management of key programmes, in addressing economic and social problems such as economic inactivity, long-term and youth unemployment by encouraging new business creation, developing entrepreneurship and addressing access to finance as a barrier to start-up.

Enterprise Northern Ireland and the LEA Network: Social Entrepreneurship Programme - Developing Social Enterprises across Northern Ireland celebrated the successes achieved by Enterprise Northern Ireland and the LEA network in addressing difficulties and inefficiencies faced by businesses operating within the social economy. The document highlighted our achievements in boosting the social economy by identifying eleven success stories - social enterprises from each new Council area were profiled, demonstrating the vibrant and dynamic nature of the social economy sector. Each social economy business profiled started with the support of the Enterprise Northern Ireland network of Local Enterprise Agencies and the Social Entrepreneurship Programme.



The Northern Ireland Enterprise Awards

Following on from the success of the inaugural Northern Ireland Enterprise Awards in 2013, last year's event once again showcased best practice by the small business community and enterprise support providers across the region.

Key government speaker was Jonathan Bell MLA, the current Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Investment. Special guest at the Awards, sponsored by Legacy Wealth, was Fraser Doherty MBE, founder and Chief Executive of Super Jam.

The 2015 Northern Ireland Enterprise Awards will be bigger and better! Once again to be held at the Hilton Hotel in Belfast on 26th November, the keynote speaker will be serial entrepreneur and ideas generator Tom Griffiths, founder of gapyear.com and currently heading up the Acorn Incubator, a business he founded to help entrepreneurs with a passion find their path and begin their own journey.

L-R Fraser Doherty MBE (Super Jam), Minister Jonathan Bell, Sarah Travers (compere) and John D'Arcy at the 2014 Northern Ireland Enterprise Awards



LEGACY
WEALTH

NEWS FROM THE LOCAL ENTERPRISE AGENCY NETWORK

Carrickfergus Enterprise launch the Coastal Tourism Hub

Carrickfergus Enterprise were one of only seven projects in Northern Ireland to receive funding from the Big Lottery Fund's Coastal Communities Fund, and in 2015, launched the Coastal Tourism Hub, an innovative package of support to assist local tourism providers along the coastal route of Newtownabbey, Carrickfergus and Larne boost their business.

Kelli Bagchus, Manager of Carrickfergus Enterprise said *"the support offered through the programme will help local businesses capitalise on the opportunities that tourism can bring and encourage more visitors to stop off at key points along the route. Programme participants benefit from support which includes*



Anna Arnold of Billy Andys and Kelli Bagchus, Carrickfergus Enterprise

skills development and training in areas such as marketing, finance and social media. This will help them develop their business in order to grow and survive. A joint marketing approach will be developed to allow local providers to raise their profile as a quality tourist destination".

One participant on the programme, which is delivered in conjunction with Northern Regional College, is Billy Andys, a 19th century traditional pub situated near Glenoe, between Larne and Carrickfergus. Anna Arnold of Billy Andys is optimistic about the many opportunities tourism can bring her business, particularly with the opening of the Gobbins. Billy Andys offers visitors food, music and B & B accommodation in a traditional Irish pub setting which is fast declining elsewhere. She hopes that by participating in the Coastal Tourism Hub she can improve her knowledge of her target market and assist her to grow and develop the business.

Another participant is Fools Haven, a thatched cottage that is over 250 years old and is available as a holiday let. The cottage is situated at the start of the Causeway Coast and Glens route, and opposite the Andrew Jackson cottage on the shores of Belfast Lough. Owner Alison Brennen is excited by the current buzz within the tourism sector, particularly with the increase in visitors who are coming to the area to visit the Gobbins. Alison believes that the quirky nature of the self-catering accommodation, which has been awarded a Historic Blue Plaque and is on the Titanic trail, can really take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Coastal Tourism Hub.

Fermanagh Enterprise Ltd launch Killyhevlin Business Centre

Fermanagh Enterprise Ltd launched the latest addition to its services for small businesses this year with the official opening of a three acre site in Enniskillen's Killyhevlin Industrial Estate, providing both office and industrial workspace.

This ambitious project is all the more remarkable as it involved the regeneration of a previously derelict site, abandoned as public sector jobs were moved out of the county. Fermanagh Enterprise Ltd have given the former NI Water premises, which was vacated in 2009, a new lease of life and have restored this once-busy site to a prosperous hub of activity.

With a long and successful track record in delivering business start-up support, training and advice to small businesses in the county, Fermanagh Enterprise is confident that the latest project to extend its services will be a huge success. John Treacy, Manager, said, *"A key aspect of developing our local economy is supporting and encouraging local people to start their own businesses and grow existing businesses. The extension of our services to the Killyhevlin Industrial Estate will provide additional small units suited to anyone starting out in business, creating a supportive environment where new businesses can share and learn from each other, minimising risk and financial exposure whilst having access to experienced business mentors."*

LEO unlocks entrepreneurial potential of school children

Over 270 primary 6 and 7 pupils across 10 primary schools in the Lisburn area participated in the pilot of an exciting new Biz Cubs programme – created, funded and supported by Lisburn Enterprise Organisation (LEO).

The Biz Cubs programme for local primary schools assists in promoting entrepreneurship to the younger generation; it helps develop their individual skills set and assists with their curriculum based learning. It provides participants with the opportunity to set up and run their own mini enterprise with their class colleagues, giving them a taste for enterprise.

The 10 local primary schools involved each used a £100 capital investment grant to generate as much profit as possible through various enterprising ideas, such as smoothies, personalised water bottles, car washes, jewellery and penalty shootouts.

The 2015 Biz Cubs overall winner was McKinney Primary School who generated an overall profit of £541 after expenses. With 28 pupils involved, this equates to £22.54 of income generated per pupil.

Special recognition also goes to Ballymacward Primary School who used the Biz Cubs programme as a basis to enter the Sentinus Junior Industry Challenge and were successfully awarded a Gold Award. They have now subsequently been



invited to attend an event at Ulster University.

Nick Fenton, former chairman of LEO, said, *"It is essential that the seed of enterprise is sown in the very young at the earliest opportunity while at the same time making it fun both for the kids and teaching staff involved. I think this Biz Cub Programme achieves that"*.

Dungannon Enterprise Centre

Dungannon Enterprise Centre this year launched its 'TEN' initiative – an exciting campaign to encourage ten local businesses to create ten jobs in ten weeks in the local council area.

According to Brian MacAuley, Chief Executive of Dungannon Enterprise Centre, ten local businesses pledged in week one of the initiative to each create a new job over the ten week timescale. Whilst acknowledging that the modest ten jobs' strategy won't have much effect on the high unemployment figures in the province, Mr MacAuley is hopeful that, if replicated throughout all Council areas, the initiative would gather momentum.



He said, *"Our objective was to identify business owners and convince them to pledge that they would create a new job in 10 weeks. In return, we offered them a programme of support through networking, mentoring and workshops, which in turn provided them with the confidence to recruit."*

"I would like to acknowledge the support of the accountancy, business consultancy, banking, web and graphic design advisers who all volunteered to support the businesses that signed the jobs' pledge".

Mr MacAuley added: *"It was a simple formula which worked. We now have to widen our initiative and perhaps increase our target by building on this success to secure more jobs for this area"*.

The ten jobs were created in a range of sectors including retail, administration, engineering, architecture and catering.

The imaginative pilot initiative was supported by the Tyrone Times and the former Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council.

Co-working craze boosted by LEAs

The Foundry at East Belfast Enterprise

The co-working craze, a hugely popular trend sweeping across business communities in North America and Europe has come to Belfast, with the launch of The Foundry, located at East Belfast Enterprise Ltd's City East Business Centre.

Co-working - the sharing of one space by many independent workers - removes the isolation that can come with working from home or in a lone office and fosters collaborative work relations and builds a community amongst workers.

The Foundry provides more than just a desk and internet access - City East have specifically designed a stylishly functional environment that blends privacy with collaboration. There is space for 15 hot



desks and two bespoke offices, making this an incredible space for start ups, entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Test-driving The Foundry were Aaron Taylor and Jim Fitzpatrick, the men behind the ICONS Festival, which took place in Belfast in September. The team of salespeople, designers, marketers and technical brainboxes who brought the ICONS Festival to life worked comfortably between The Foundry's hot-desks, workbench, offices and meeting room.

Anyone joining the Foundry as a co-worker will also have the benefits of having the City East Business Centre as a base - a hub of business events, specialist advisors and four

floors of tenants who work in everything from accounting to graphic design - and you will also be welcomed (if not expected!) to join everyone at our fortnightly coffee mornings.

The Foundry has a range of co-working options designed to facilitate part time and full time entrepreneurs, as well as options to work off-peak hours for those who continue to work elsewhere or have family commitments during peak times.

East Belfast Enterprise Ltd are excited to see the talent The Foundry brings together and how it contributes to the sense of community and collaboration in the business network that has grown at City East. If you are interested in how The Foundry could

help your business please contact 028 9094 2010.

The Hatchery NI at Antrim Enterprise Agency

The co-working option is also supported at Antrim Enterprise Agency, with the Hatchery NI offering an office environment without

the commitment and costs of renting premises permanently.

A variety of options are available at The Hatchery NI, starting with a virtual business environment for those who require a business address, telephone number



and mail handling service. The next level of service available at The Hatchery NI features hot-desking facilities, ideal for those who wish to work in a professional office environment at a low cost. Dedicated desk facilities are also available for those who seek a permanent solution and want a base from which to start or develop their business.

The bright and spacious facility benefits from a cafe feeling, with urban art and funky furniture, whilst users also have access to meeting and training areas.

The Hatchery NI is proving very popular with virtual clients from both mainland UK and the Republic of Ireland using the facility. The micro-offices are currently fully occupied with a growing waiting list.

Hard work pays off with the Work4UPlus programme

Young people on the Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency's Work4UPlus programme, funded by the Big Lottery's Reaching Out: Empowering Young People programme, celebrated their achievements during a graduation and activity day held during 2015.

The Work4UPlus programme aims to improve the lives of young people who are at risk of becoming disengaged from education or training, or who are at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour.

Chief Executive of Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency, Dr Conor Patterson, said, *"There is a great need for this type of support, as a recent survey showed that a high number of young people between 16 - 20 years old in the Newry area have no qualifications and low self-esteem. We want to show them that with help, support and a re-orientation by them, their futures can be bright"*.

BIG lottery confirmed that the Work4UPlus programme had been extended for a further two years.

LEA success at Social Enterprise NI Awards

Social Enterprise NI hosted the 2015 Social Enterprise awards on Thursday 22 October, at the Dunadry Hotel, Antrim, with a double celebration for the Enterprise Northern Ireland LEA network.

The **Workspace Group** from Draperstown was named as **Social Enterprise of the Year**. A 'profit for purpose' social enterprise set up in 1985 in Draperstown by the local community, Workspace was set up in response to endemic local decline, disadvantage, unemployment, underemployment and limited local opportunities. The initial Workspace 'business' model was to generate rental income from the units to provide free business advice to help local people start up in business and help create local jobs. 170 local people provided £44,000 to create business incubation units, along with a £16,000 bank loan for their first project.

Since then, Workspace has developed a diverse organisation generating profits from commercial activities and using the profits for the benefit of their local area and all the other areas where they now have enterprises. Workspace has grown to operate across 15 locations (13 NI, one ROI, one England), employ 172 staff, and generate income of £11,389,869 - with a healthy balance sheet and assets of £6.1M.

They have an impressive portfolio of businesses in addition to business incubation units and start-up support including professional recruitment services; a recreation centre; property insulation; energy efficient lighting services and after school facilities.

Workspace were described by Juliet Cornford, Director of Social Enterprise NI as, *"... one of the best examples of how using your profit for community benefit has impact. Their 30 year story*



Audrey Murray of LEDCOM is presented with the Social Enterprise Woman of the Year Award 2015

has created jobs, saved libraries, provided community spaces such as recreation grounds, childcare places and facilities, it really is about profit with purpose. This is the kind of story that really helps the public to understand what social enterprises do for communities and the social impact they have. A very worthy winner of the 2015 NI Social Enterprise of the Year”.

Audrey Murray from Local Economic Development Company Ltd (LEDCOM) was crowned as **Social Enterprise Woman of the Year**. This award recognises women working in the senior leadership team of a social enterprise who not only represent excellence in their field of work but also inspire and empower other women to achieve.

John D'Arcy, Chair of of Enterprise Northern Ireland offered his congratulations to both. He said, “These awards are fully deserved recognition for all the work Audrey does in the social enterprise sector, and for the tremendous impact of Workspace”.

New Enterprise Hub puts Ballymena at the Centre of Business

Ballymena Business Centre officially opened their new Enterprise Hub in Ballymena Town Centre in 2015. The Enterprise Hub provides support for private and social entrepreneurs including exhibition space, retail incubation space, turnkey office accommodation and group meeting rooms.

Officially launching the Hub, Mervyn Storey MLA, Minister for Social Development, said: “I am pleased to launch this Town Centre Enterprise Hub and must commend the Directors of Ballymena Business Centre for their vision. Not only has the Hub transformed a vacant retail space in the centre of Ballymena town, but it also provides opportunities for private and social entrepreneurs in the community to start and grow their own business. It is acknowledged that town centres require more than just retail to survive; an amalgamation of services is required and the significant private investment by Ballymena Business Centre to create this Hub will contribute towards growing a vibrant and sustainable town centre”.



Official opening of Ballymena Enterprise Hub, L-R James Perry (Vice Chair), PJ McAvooy (Chair), Melanie Christie Boyle (Chief Executive), Cllr Audrey Wales MBE and Mervyn Storey MLA, Minister for Social Development

At Causeway Enterprise Agency in Coleraine for the launch of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills Micro Business Leadership Program are Jayne Taggart (Chief Executive, CEA), Dr Karise Hutchinson (Head of Business & Enterprise, Ulster University) and John Armstrong (Chairman, CEA)



CEA launches Lead2Grow Programme for micro firms

Small businesses on the North Coast will benefit from funding from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills, thanks to a new Leadership programme being delivered by Causeway Enterprise Agency. The new Lead2Grow Programme aims to boost the overall efficiency and profitability of micro firms through a tailored Leadership Development Programme, which will look to address the needs of micro firms.

Causeway Enterprise Agency developed their programme in partnership with the Department of Employment and Learning, Causeway Coast and Glens Council, Invest NI and Enterprise Northern Ireland after research revealed that much of the leadership training available in Northern Ireland is more relevant to the SME sector, leaving a lack of provision for micro firms.

The Lead2Grow programme will be officially launched at the first Lead2Grow Conference in February 2016. This conference is open to any business in Northern Ireland, with the subsequent Lead2Grow programme being launched in March 2016.



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