

# Policy Alignment

Prof Noel Purdy

Stranmillis University College, Belfast

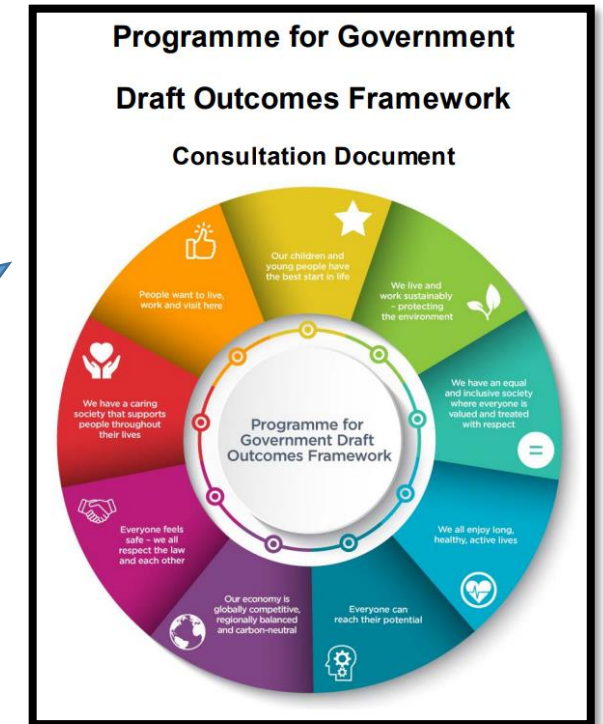
# Links to Policy Context



# Programme for Government (Draft)

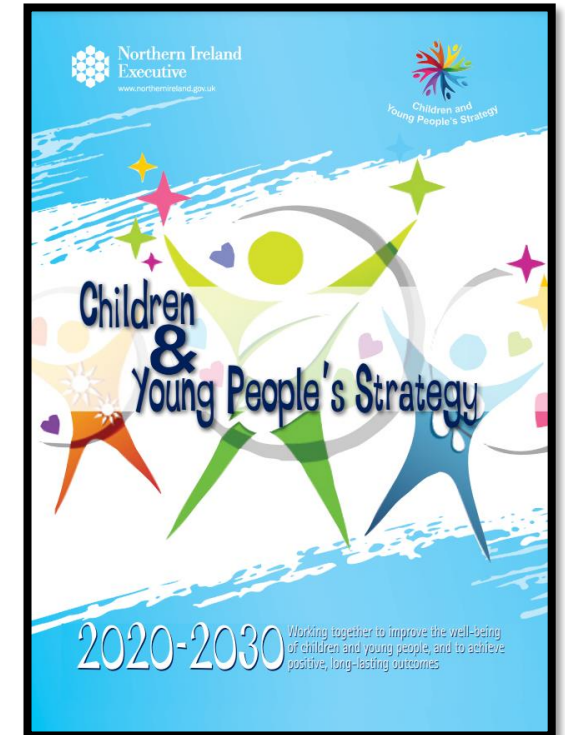
## “Our children and young people have the best start in life”

COVID-19 has exposed flaws in traditional models and approaches to public services, but it has also progressed thinking and practice around new and different ways of working. Most importantly, it has demonstrated very clearly that, when it comes to putting in place fast and effective responses to challenges and problems, governments cannot do it by acting alone. Rather, a whole societal approach is needed – an approach which draws together scientific and technical expertise, combines it with local knowledge and information about what might work at community or individual level, and which uses relevant data to target where need is greatest. That means government working across departmental boundaries and the wider public sector as well as with partners in other sectors – in local government, academia, the private sector, with the community and voluntary sector and beyond.



# Children & Young People's Strategy

- 2.8 This Strategy seeks to build on the many positive outcomes children and young people already experience whilst focusing on those areas of concern where outcomes are poorer or specific groups of children and young people face particular barriers to achieving positive outcomes.
- 2.9 It is essential that we do this with the active participation of our children and young people, and their families, and that Children's Authorities, other public services and the community, voluntary and private sectors work collaboratively to improve the well-being of children and young people.





# Independent Review of Education

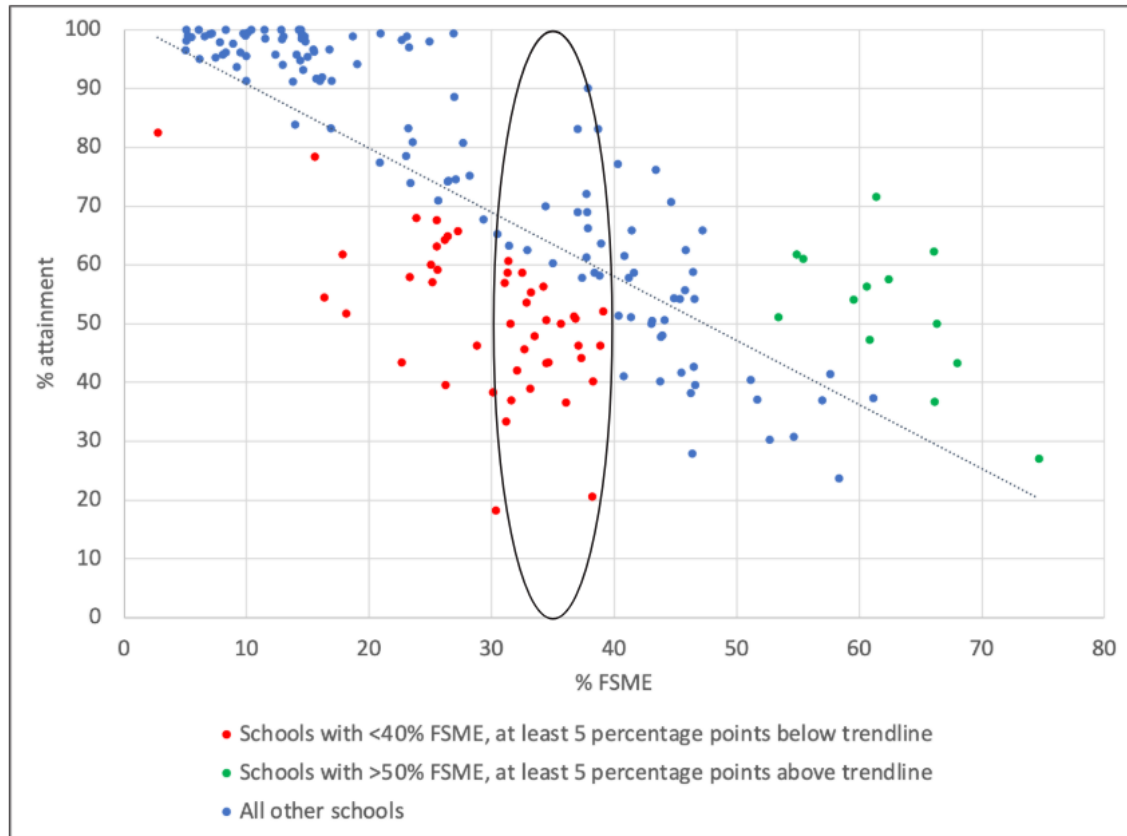
## Combatting disadvantage

2.34 There is no 'silver bullet' when it comes to reducing the educational effect of disadvantage. Ultimately, it is essential that all learners are provided with the conditions where they can remain engaged and thrive in education. Within our Report, we make numerous recommendations that would positively contribute to combatting disadvantage.

2.41 Among the schools with the highest percentage of FSME more are located above the line of best fit than below. It is frequently said that Northern Ireland has 'a long tail of underachievement'. The evidence suggests that this is not the case. Rather, Northern Ireland has a notably large number of schools with a high level of disadvantage performing well above expectations. Both excellence and underachievement are to be found in schools with intakes at all levels of socio-economic disadvantage. Research is needed to allow the system to learn from existing widely varying levels of performance.



**Figure 3. Proportion of pupils achieving five+ GCSEs (or equivalent) A\* to C (inc. English & mathematics) relative to proportion of FSME at school, Northern Ireland, 2018/19<sup>69</sup>**



# A Fair Start

## Summary of Costs within each Key Area

No.	Key Area	No. of Actions	Short Term (1-2 years) (£m per annum)		Medium Term (3-4 years) (£m per annum)		Long Term (5+ years) (£m per annum)	
			2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27 and beyond
1	Redirecting the focus to Early Years.	13	£5.8	£5.8	£22.3	£22.3	£49.7	£49.7
2	Championing Emotional Health and Wellbeing.	1	£0.0	£0.0	£2.0	£2.0	£6.0	£6.0
3	Ensuring the relevance and appropriateness of Curriculum and Assessment.	10	£2.1	£2.1	£3.3	£3.3	£3.3	£3.3
4	Promoting a whole community approach to education <sup>1</sup>	7	£1.0	£11.0	£10.9	£10.9	£10.9	£10.9
5	Maximising boys' potential.	8	£0.8	£0.8	£1.2	£1.2	£1.7	£1.7
6	Driving forward Teachers Professional Learning (TPL).	3	£1.0	£1.0	£1.0	£1.0	£1.0	£1.0
7	Supporting the professional learning and wellbeing of school principals.	3	£0.3	£0.3	£0.5	£0.5	£0.5	£0.5
8	Ensuring Interdepartmental collaboration and delivery.	2	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>47</b>	<b>£10.9</b>	<b>£21.0</b>	<b>£41.2</b>	<b>£41.2</b>	<b>£73.1</b>	<b>£73.1</b>

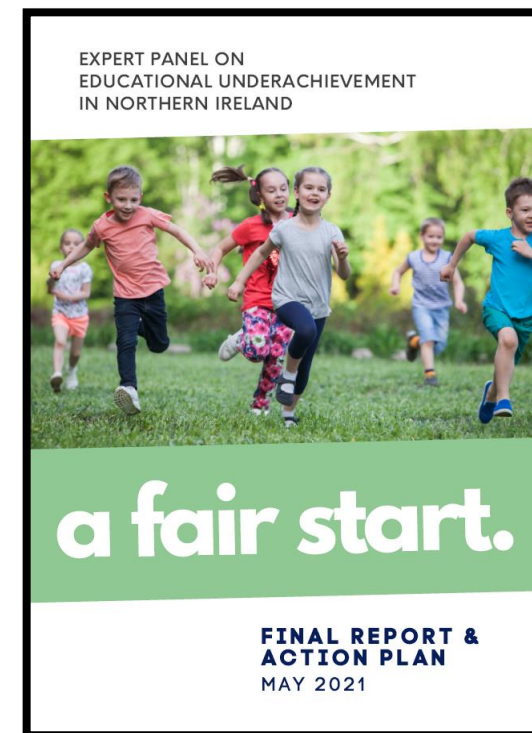
Note 1: Work on the proposed new RED strategy is unlikely to impact in 2021/22 financial year.

Note 2: Figures may be impacted by roundings



**Key Area 4: Promoting a whole community approach to education**

Evidence Gathered	Recommendations	Actions	L D
<p>4.1 There have been consistent concerns amongst schools trying to manage their budgets about whether FSME is an accurate measure of (education) deprivation given the perception of low levels of uptake of FSME in some areas and amongst some communities.</p>	<p>a. DE should commission a review of the Free School Meal Entitlement measure. This should consider the pros and cons of other potential measures of deprivation that could be used for resource allocation purposes.</p>	<p>i. DE should review its measurement of deprivation by commissioning an independent research project regarding alternative deprivation measures to FSME in the 2021/22 academic year. Report to be published.</p>	L D
<p>4.2 Targeting Social Need (TSN) is distributed equitably to all schools but not all schools are reporting upon impact.</p>	<p>b. TSN reporting should be mandatory for all schools.</p>	<p>ii. TSN reporting should be mandatory for all schools with a particular focus on children from low socio-economic backgrounds<sup>78</sup>.</p>	D
<p>4.3 There are a number of national and international programmes with a track record of success. DE should draw from the best features of these programmes to support children from disadvantaged backgrounds more effectively.</p>	<p>c. DE should bring an end to short term funding and develop a 'whole community approach' for the most deprived / disadvantaged communities with weak community infrastructure, across all the contexts in which children and young people learn and develop; bringing together and supporting authentic partnerships to create collective and positive impact. This approach should have interdepartmental support.</p>	<p>iii. DE should co-design a specification for a whole community, partnership approach entitled the "Reducing Educational Disadvantage" (RED) programme. This should be strategic in scale and collaborative in nature, mandating co-design and the building of authentic partnerships between schools and communities using a place-based approach.</p>	D i f r d
<p>4.4 There are major influences on children and young people 'beyond the school gates' - in society, communities, families, peer groups and all the contexts in which they spend their lives. These contexts have positive or negative influences on a child/young person's development.</p>	<p>d. The above should include consideration of the benefits of features such as Opportunity Areas, Children's Zones, Home-school liaison officers for schools in the most disadvantaged areas.</p>		





# What are the benefits?

## Expenditure on Remedial Action

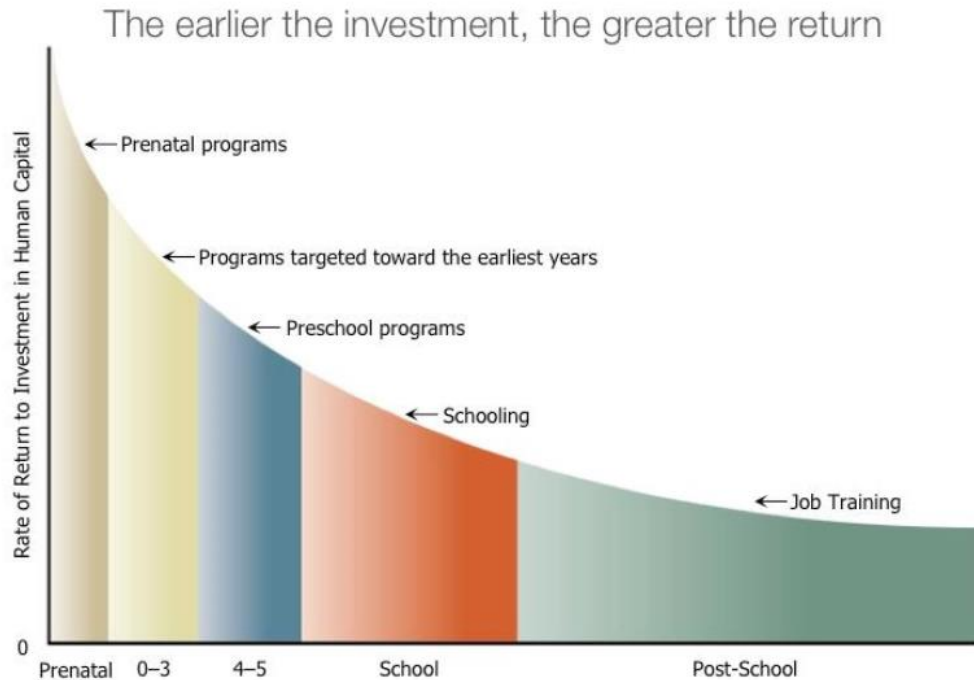
- E.g. The annual short-run cost to the public sector of late intervention in Northern Ireland is estimated at £536 million per year. This is equivalent to £288 for every Northern Ireland resident, or £1,166 per child. (Early Intervention Foundation, 2018)
- E.g. Cost of Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) estimated to be £134m. (EIF, 2018)

## Benefits of Investment

- Improved educational outcomes
- Improved rates of employment
- Greater prosperity in local areas
- Improved services
- Improved physical and mental health
- Improved community cohesion
- Safer, happier, thriving communities

# When should we start investing?

Heckman Curve (Figure 2)<sup>24</sup>



“The highest rate of return in early childhood development comes from investing as early as possible, from birth through age five, in disadvantaged families. Starting at age three or four is too little too late, as it fails to recognize that skills beget skills in a complementary and dynamic way. Efforts should focus on the first years for the greatest efficiency and effectiveness. The best investment is in quality early childhood development from birth to five for disadvantaged children and their families.” (Heckman, 2012)

## What do we need?

- Political support
- Sustained funding
- Policy implementation
- Hard evidence of impact
- **ACTION**

