

Representation

Annual Summary



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# FOREWORD

Brexit has changed the political landscape in both Britain and Ireland. The consequences of the Referendum decision are as yet unknown. Speculation as to the future ranges from fantasy to blind optimism. What wasn't changed is the motivation and conditions that led to the vote to leave particularly those who have borne the worst excesses of Globalisation and Political Governance that is in the thrall to the free market system.

The United Kingdom and Ireland are not unique in expressing anger and alienation. Europe has been shaken by many other EU countries. The United States has voted for Trump, Turkey has voted to give its President a Dictatorial Mandate to govern. There are common themes in all of the effected countries.

Rising unemployment, falling incomes, housing, health, education, job security etc. has led to the fear and uncertainty.

In tandem the wars in the Middle East has created the greatest displacement of people since World War II. Consequently immigration is now the most divisive political issue in Western societies. Rising immigration coupled to the "War on Terror" is creating a religious schism that has demonised Islam.

Foremost in fostering racism and religious intolerance are Politicians from the right on the political spectrum.

Paradoxically, the leader of the Right Wing parties who have prominence e.g. Trump, Le Pen, Farage etc. – have identified the elite in society as those responsible.

Despite themselves and their billionaire funders being members of that elite, they have harnessed the anger and fear into a potent political force.

However, in playing with peoples fears they offer no alternative to the system that continues to benefit the few, including themselves at the expense of the rest.

Recent research by Oxfam has shown that the richest sixty families in the world have more wealth than 50% of the world population. This equates to 3.5billion people. It is interesting while the Right Wing leaders rail at the perceived elite none of them mention these statistics which ensure the continuity of such elites.

Northern Ireland despite voting to remain in the Brexit referendum, the Good Friday Agreement which is internationally recognised, has ensured that the border between the 2 parts of Ireland is a distinct factor in the Brexit negotiations.

Will there be a hard or soft border? To date no one has given clarity on what exactly those two scenarios mean.

The absence of a functioning government in Stormont adds to the complexity. If Stormont isn't functioning who will represent Northern Ireland in the negotiations. The present Tory Government are at odds with people of Northern Ireland and would not be accepted as an honest broker to preserve the interests of Northern Ireland within the context of the UK agreement.

The importance of a functioning Stormont Government should not be under estimated. While Brexit is grabbing the headlines the austerity policy of the Tory Government continues to devastate communities and public services.

For example benefits are being slashed for the unemployed and disabled. Schools have seen their budgets reduced and teachers made redundant. The health service continues to be underfunded. The lack of public and affordable housing continues to ensure homelessness and family break up. Community care is in crisis and our infrastructure continues with underinvestment.

The integration of an increasing migrant population is hindered by a lack of investment and resources to those who are engaged in the resettlement process.

It is imperative that in this time of uncertainty that we hold those, with the responsibility to govern us, accountable, that we do not slip quietly away as victims of another's agenda, that in the voluntary and community sector we stand together to build a brighter future for all our communities, that we continue to support and encourage everyone to take their role in society and be counted.

This year, The Centre was honoured to receive a Transgender Champion 2016 award from the focus identity trust.

BURC would like to take the opportunity to thank those who support our work: Big Lottery Fund; European funders; Belfast City Council; Dept of Foreign Affairs; the volunteers, staff and committee for their tireless work. Thanks also to the many others who help us to create opportunities and resources.

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#### Who we are

The Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre (BURC) was set up in September 1984 and the premises were opened in 1985.

The Northern Ireland Trade Union Education & Social Centre (NITU) is a charitable organisation operating as Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre (BURC) whose aims and objectives are to provide support, education/training and facilities to the unemployed and other groups suffering from social and economic disadvantage.

#### **Vision**

NITU/BURC aims to be recognised as an innovative provider in effecting change towards a fair and inclusive society.

#### **Purpose**

To promote equality, through supporting the participation and inclusion of all individuals, groups and communities.

#### **Values**

The core values of the organisation are to deliver sustainable activities and services, through a flexible creative approach based on partnership, networking, accountability and leadership.



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## R2R Project:



Routes to Resilience "R2R" is one of a number of projects funded by the Big Lottery, this project is for 5 years, we are almost finished our pilot year, which has been a great success. We had our Official Launch at the Crescent Arts Centre in Belfast on the 21st January. The project is in partnership between Play Board NI and Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre.



The families are given the opportunity to take part in bespoke programmes together as a whole family, for children only and for adults only. All our programmes aim

- · Strengthen Relationships
- Build Resilience
- Be active Participants
- Have Fun
- Learn Together
- Advocate For themselves and others
- Increase Connections







#### YEAR 1:

### Families Recruited for Year 1: 61 Workshops completed: 6

- Media & Digital for parents
- Media & Digital for Children/young people
- Mental Health for women
- · Dealing with Change
- Health- Q&A from a qualified Doctor
- Wheelworks: Art Cart digital and craft for the whole family Programmes delivered in Year 1 to all our 44 families
- Children's Participation
- · Language for Health
- Breaking Cycles of Behaviour
- Leadership
- Journeys
- Communication Skills

## 3 Just for fun days:

where over 80 children and adults attended

Quotes from children:

# "So much fun"

"Best day ever"

"Loved playing games"

#### Quotes from the parents group:

"Don't give up easily, keep going, and keep trying" "Learning how to say no to my children"







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## Welfare Advice Project

The Welfare Reform Act has introduced many changes to the benefits system in Northern Ireland. Current benefits are being abolished and replaced with a new benefits system.



## The Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre offers free independent quality advice and guidance on the following:

- Welfare Reform
- Benefits
- Debt & Money
- Housing

- Appealing Benefit decisions
- Better off Calculations
- Budgeting Planner
- The following figures represent the number of enquiries dealt with in 2016/2017

General Enquiries/ Benefits	9432
Home visits	8
Outreach Advice Services	707
Appeals/ Mandatory Reconsiderations	65

Total Enquiries:

10,212

#### **Enquiry Types:**

- Welfare Reform
- Supplementary Payments
- ons Mandatory
  Reconsiderations
  - Personal Independence Payments
  - Bedroom Tax
  - Disability Living Allowance
  - Employment & Support Allowance

- Income Support
- Pension Credits
- Job Seekers Allowance
- · Housing Benefit
- Tax Credits
- · Child Benefit
- State Pension
- Industrial Related Issues (Redundancy Pay, Holiday Pay, Wages in Lieu etc.)



#### **Appeals Enquiries:**

The main benefits subject to Social Security Appeals continue to be Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments, and Employment & Support Allowance.

- Social Security Appeals
- Medical Appeals
- Dispute Resolution (Grievance & Disciplinary Procedures)

#### Home Visits:

During the year, eight Home Visits were conducted to provide advice and assistance to complete forms, this service is primarily delivered to the elderly and the sick.

#### Outreach Advice Services:

We have a Welfare drop-in clinic at Sandy Row on Tuesday mornings and we have a Job Club in Newtownabbey on Friday mornings.

#### **Networking:**

The Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre continues lobbying and adapting to legislative change and we have worked with the following organisations to continue this standard of advice and information service:

- AdviceNI
- Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Law Centre NI
- The Welfare Reform Group
- Irish Congress
   Trade Union
   Northern Ireland
- Housing Rights Service

- Labour Relations
- EURES Cross-Border Network
- Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOU)
- Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service

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## Journeys Belfast City Council



The programme supports women aged 18+ involved within the criminal justice system. We are now in our fourth year of delivering this programme working in partnership with PBNI Inspire Model, NIACRO, WSN, Women's Centres and many more.



The main objective is to assist unemployed women to develop personal skills and build support networks and resilience.

The women have many complex issues and working in partnership with the other organisations means the benefit from a holistic approach whereby they are supported in all areas of development.

#### Programmes delivered

Journeys programme was delivered to 8 women at NIACRO

#### Programmes delivered

Journeys programme was delivered to 8 women at Inspire PBNI

#### Programmes delivered

Journeys programme was delivered to 7 women at Inspire PBNI

- · Think of it this way..., "we cannot control what happens in life, but we can choose our responses and develop our personal resilience to handle situations or events.
- To do that we need to have a better understanding of our emotions.
- Journeys programme will look at different approaches such as emotions, behaviors, communication and our resilience to deal with the pressures that at times are coming from all angles.
- · If you invest time and energy into 'you,' you will get the results.



Criminal Record Checks - Most employers ask all job applicants to apply for a basic check during the recruitment process. There are different levels of AccessNI checks, Basic, Standard and Enhanced,

Most employers ask all job applicants to apply for a basic check during the recruitment process. There are different levels of AccessNI checks, Basic, Standard and Enhanced.

The Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre acts as an umbrella body for AccessNI and we advise and guide employers and employees of the processes, what information they disclose and how to apply and complete.

If you're self-employed, a volunteer or working with children and vulnerable adults the BURC can assist in applying for the Standard and Enhanced checks.

Anyone wanting any further information on AccessNI Disclosures ring the office on 02890 961111 or email Joanne.Farrell@burc.org

Month	Total		
March 2016:	15	November 2016:	13
April 2016:	6	December 2016:	
May 2016:	9	January 2017:	1
June 2016:	11	February 2017:	1!
July 2016:	17	March 2017:	1
August 2016:	9	Total: 149	
September 2016:	13	applications process	cod
October 2016:	10	applications processed for AccessNI Disclosure	





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## **EURES** Cross Border Partnership

EURES (European Employment Services) is a European Commission measure which actively assists and promotes the free movement of labour throughout the member states. Workers coming to work and to live in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland require advice relating to living and working conditions, such as employment rights and representation, housing, health, education, training, job opportunities and benefit entitlement.



#### The Cross Border Partnership comprises of the following organisations:

The Department of Communities; SOLAS; The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU); The Confederation of British Industry (CBI); The Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC); The Chambers of Commerce (North and South of Ireland)



#### EURES funded activities: 2016/2017

English for Employability - Sector Specific English

These are six week courses delivered across Northern Ireland and in border areas to improve the English language skills of participants to improve their opportunities for gaining employment and / or promotion in particular sectors.

**Workplace English 1**: This course helps participants to understand, speak, read and write better English at work. 5 participants completed - Lurgan

Workplace English 2: This course helps you to understand, speak, read and write better English at work. It can help people who need to become more accurate and fluent in using English in the workplace. 5 participants completed - Lurgan

English for Nursing 1: This Course is for people who need to use English in a care home or nursing environment. 7 participants completed – Derry/L'Derry

**English for Nursing 2:** This Course is for people who need to use English in a nursing environment. 7 participants completed – Derry/L'Derry

**English for Beginners:** This course is for people who need to become more accurate and fluent in using English in the workplace. 10 participants completed which led to 4 jobs.

Hotel & Hospitality: This Course helps you to understand, speak, read and write better English at work. It can help people who need to become more accurate and fluent in using English in the hotels, bars and restaurants. 7 participants completed this enabled participants to retain their jobs. - Cavan

English for Job-hunting: This course is for people who need to use English in the job application process. 11 participants completed, which led to 2 jobs & 2 promotions. - Belfast

Communicating across Cultures: Helps to understand, speak, read and write better English at work. It can help people who need to become more accurate and fluent in using English in the workplace. 5 participants completed course - Belfast

#### 5 Day Tourism course for young people aged 18 – 25

(Female: 6 Male: 4)

Delivered a tourism skills focused programme to provide opportunities for young people of working age from various cultural backgrounds in order to create and access employment opportunities. The programme accessed young people from the live register and delivered a tourism focused programme in order to provide employability skills.

Course was delivered in Letterkenny & Fermanagh

#### Overall the course delivered to:

Female: **31** Male: **14** 

Participants were the following nationalities:

<ul> <li>Spanish</li> </ul>	14	• Greek	2
<ul> <li>Latvian</li> </ul>	1	<ul> <li>Romanian</li> </ul>	3
<ul> <li>Czech</li> </ul>	2	<ul> <li>British ( phillipino)</li> </ul>	1
<ul> <li>Portugese</li> </ul>	3	<ul> <li>French</li> </ul>	1
<ul> <li>Polish</li> </ul>	13	<ul> <li>Hungarian</li> </ul>	1
• Italian:	1	Bulgarian	2





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## **Orientation** Project

The Orientation Programme is a new project aimed at newcomers to Belfast, asylum seekers and refugees. It will comprise a series of training sessions, workshops, walking tours that will cover a cultural orientation programme to help newcomers settle in Belfast.

There will be training on rights and freedoms, NI laws, social environment, housing, getting involved in the community and work.

As part of the Programme, BURC will also run Peer Orientation training for asylum seekers. The focus there is to create a group of peers to assist new asylum seekers orientate through the system.

The Orientation Programme will get started in 2017 and will run bimonthly until the end of March 2018. It is a project commissioned and funded by the Good Relations Unit of Belfast City Council.





# **English** for Employability

To improve equality of opportunity for Migrants to access the labour market and break down barriers to employment for people for whom English is a second or other language (ESOL).

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The project is intended to provide three significant benefits:

- Unlocking migrant capabilities, as people develop language and communication skills that will enable them to contribute more to the local community where they live
- Saving costs to public services
- · Promoting social cohesion

The classes are delivered in a supported learning environment. The participants are guided through a set of learning tasks and encouraged to support each other through:

- Sharing the resources
- Access to quality assured online resources that provide open and collaborative learning.

Participants are encouraged to engage in meetups which help groups of people with shared interests to plan meetings and form offline clubs in local communities, to improve their English skills in a collaborative and supportive environment.

Volunteers are an important aspect of the programme, providing support and a welcoming environment; for example, through teaching, 1:1 support for individuals, development of social media and administration.

#### The programme delivers classes in the Centre at the following levels:

- Absolute Beginners
- Beginners
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Job Club

Participants can also make use of a range of good quality language teaching material that has been gathered at BURC, to provide language practice activities for individuals who can visit the Centre for private study, autonomous learning and informal social

This project allows those who need to develop their English, plus volunteers who give it time, to facilitating and teaching classes, an opportunity to be made aware of good and best practice in ESOL provision.

Its unique feature is the use of autonomous self-study, to provide structured opportunities for each individual to develop their language skills. We have developed a Self Access Centre which enables people to use a range of resources to develop their English language skills.

An Absolute Beginners Compendium has been developed and volunteers have provided support to the Ozanam Centre in Lurgan, by training volunteers locally and providing use of the compendium. This will be • Vietnam replicated in other areas of Northern Ireland.

The project works closely with the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Programme, providing newly arrived Syrians with language and cultural awareness skills to help them navigate the new landscape.

Nationalities attending and gaining benefit from the sessions include:

- Belgian
- Lithuanian
- Brazilian
- Moroccan
- Catalonian

Czech

- Nicaraguan Polish
- Eritrean
- Russian
- Egyptian
- Somali
- French
- Spanish
- German Greek
- Sudanese
- Iranian
- Syrian Turkish
- Iraqi
- Venezuelan

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The programme has supported around 60 volunteers from its inception and some have gone on to achieve employment in countries such as:

- France
- Italy
- Japan
- Mexico
- Spain
- Sweden

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## What Price Citizenship?

I would take the opportunity to outline what we have been concentrating resources on during our 1st year in the current Project and have taken on board the recent recommendations that, we work to widen participation in the Project to include those from new communities now living in Northern Ireland, the creation of opportunities for the inclusion of young people in Project activities and an increase in the participation of women in our programmes also

Creating the possibilities for participation and winning over important participant elements has had its own particular difficulties. Migrants and refugees from Somalia who have come to N.I. recently have found the language (English) a difficulty in taking full and active part in organised activities especially discussions on "citizenship". Some Syrian migrants/refugees have also found that a lack of proficiency in the language is also an impediment to them taking part fully in exchanges.

Through co-operation with the on going work of our good friends and colleagues at the Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre we have been made aware that the citizenship discussions aimed at new arrivals should be made as "user friendly" as possible. It is our intention to

The participation of young volunteers from other countries in Europe, who are currently assisting in various BURC programme activities, was a great help in creating an atmosphere of openness and sense of inclusion that recent discussions took place in. Also of assistance to us in the "Citizenship Project" was the participation of one of the longer established migrant groups here, the Polish community. Through the participation and input from the Polish community group, CRAIC N.I. in recent meetings and discussions, it has been possible to highlight to other new arrivals that difficulties with the language are not unique to them alone and is something that many, if not most, newcomers in any country can and do experience.

Events and discussions organised around themes with international dimensions have been very useful a good example being May Day which is celebrated in many countries and cultures around the world. As part of May Day activities in 2016 a short talk on the history of May Day was held with members from the Middle East and

East African groups to talk about what it means to them and how it is celebrated in their respective countries and cultures. This proved a useful way of creating a relaxed atmosphere for people and we will continue to use this method in future discussions. It is our intention to maximise the involvement of migrant/ethnic community representatives in planned activities and programmes for 2017. By involving their experiences and histories in discussions on understandings of the concept of "Citizenship" we can further assist in raising the standard of the debates and challenge some of the introverted, parochial and sectarian confines that can so form the content of historical and cultural discourses here.

That recent engagements and exchanges were taking place during lead up to the U.K. referendum on membership of the European Union was an opportunity that you could not have planned for if you had tried. It added a new and critical dimension to the exchanges on questions of "history, identity and citizenship" that were not just confined to an undemanding and simplistic British/Irish question. It helped put the much talked about and anticipated centenaries of the Easter Rising and the Somme into some kind of recognisable historical perspective. For a short time what was once described as the integrity of our quarrel seemed to have been overtaken for a time by larger more important issues. The "Brexit" situation will continue to be an important part of the discussions and engagements that are planned for 2017. As new circumstances emerge we will have increased opportunities in addressing questions of "Citizenship" and the implications that will arise for us all as a result of the transforming economic, social and political relationships across these islands and Europe.



Our endeavours to create the circumstances where young people can participate in a substantive way in the "Citizenship Project" also encountered some particular difficulties. It has taken some time to get a proposal accepted by funding bodies that fully meets criteria set out by them. Our first 2 attempts were not successful due to the absence of specific geographical information in regard to where in the Council area we would recruit young people from. These details have now been dealt with in co-operation with Good Relations Unit staff. The result is that we have been successful in obtaining support from the Good Relations Unit of Belfast City Council for a trial programme called the "New Citizenship Programme" which has been tailored specifically for young people front line areas in Belfast in the age group 18-24.

The participation of women in meaningful numbers in organised activities continues to be an issue for the Project. We have engaged with representatives of Women's groups and organisations during 2016 in regard to promoting the Citizenship Project. Due to commitments in other work they have all been fully engaged in other programmes of work and could not take part in proposed activities. We will continue to have discussions with the groups in relation to involvement

and will propose structuring some of our activities and engagements in 2017 around specific female contributions. Continuing the good working relationship with BURC and its current programmes also has the potential for us to increase female participation in programme engagements. We have good opportunities to build on recent co-operation for the mutual benefit of both projects and will continue to actively work for this in 2017.

Despite the challenges we have encountered in 2016, and realising that there will be political difficulties ahead in 2017, we are committed to making positive contributions to our current situation through activities in the "Citizenship" Project in keeping important dialogues and exchanges going. We will continue to play our part in helping to create opportunities and spaces where those who wish to progress towards a reasonable, respectful and civil accommodation here in Northern Ireland can continue to engage with one and other in meaningful, positive and tolerant ways.





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## Access Skills Ireland

Access Skills Ireland is a subsidiary company of the Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre and has offices in the Belfast Unemployed Centre and in Pearse Rd, Letterkenny. Access Skills Ireland has a working relationship with Solas and Educational Training Boards (ETB). We are on the Solas/Educational Training Boards (ETB) list of approved contracted training companies, the National Register of Contracted Training Tenderers List (CTTL) as a registered Solas/ETB training provider which means we are part of an extended network of certified training providers.

We are currently delivering Training programmes in all of the regions throughout Ireland. We specialise in working with long-term unemployed, individuals seeking to re-skill, up-skill and provide additional supports for clients and have expertise in working with businesses in addressing their training needs.

## **BURC**

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BURC has been successful in gaining two Training contracts in 2016 through the Educational Training Boards (ETB) in Food & Beverage and e-Business in Limerick and in Dublin.

Access Skills Ireland have successfully gained Twelve contracts for training through ETBS in Dublin, Dundalk Limerick and Kerry for training in the year 2016 such as e-Business, Mobile Technology Social Media, Manual Computerised Payroll & Accounts, Connections Food & Beverage Traineeship Connection, Deciding your Future, Business Administration with Legal and a Hospitality Traineeship courses. Up and coming courses are in Barista and Retail Skills to date. Course can vary from six weeks to forty five weeks.







## John Hewitt Bar & Restaurant

February 2017 seen the appointment of The John Hewitt's third General Manager; David Moore. David started his employment at The John Hewitt in 2001. He was hired as a Kitchen Porter and, through the years, worked his way through the ranks. We see his new appointment as an amazing testament to The John Hewitt's ethos which continues to make the bar truly unique within the city.

The John Hewitt's dedication to staff training and inhouse promoting is second-to-none within its industry. David would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee of The John Hewitt for all their help, support, and trust throughout the years and to ensure everyone that maintaining The John Hewitt's ethos and policies will always remain a top priority.

We would also like to thank Gerry White for his 10 years of service. He managed the bar through some of the hardest times the hospitality industry has ever seen. Where other venues were closing its doors, Gerry made sure our doors opened every day and all the staff kept their hours. We wish him all the very best of luck with his new career.

The John Hewitt's name as one of the top beer venues in town still holds strong, although now with growing competition. With so many Irish craft breweries emerging, and people demand more and more local beers, bars are now refocusing their attention to their draught selection. To stay ahead of this competition The John Hewitt will be installing a rotational pump system, using half of its pumps. This will allow us to keep up with current beer trends and give us the freedom to move along with these trends. It will also allow us to support far more local breweries as we will have the ability to rotate the beers as we see fit. The other half of the pumps will stay as fixed commercial beers. This allows us to offer the perfect mix of commercial and local craft beers.

The John Hewitt is still maintaining its support for the arts. We continue to lend our stage to no less than seven bands per-week, house eleven commission-free art exhibitions per-year, and we still support and strive to be a part of as many of the local festivals as possible.

The John Hewitt still offers a free venue on Wednesday evenings for anyone wanting to hold a fundraising event, and is also still heavily donating prizes for fundraising events elsewhere.

Support, both financial and in kind, has been given to Newtownabbey Racers, Ulster Cancer Foundation, Concern Worldwide, Belfast Blues Festival, Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival, Belfast Film Festival, Festival of Fools, Belfast Pride, Habitat for Humanity, H.I.V Support Centre, The Joe Lamont Trust, Amnesty International and many more both home and abroad, NISA Northern Ireland Somalian Association and Gaith, a Syrian student from the English language classes in the Centre who received a donation towards equipment to start a job.



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#### Committee and Staff Members

Committee Members- Northern Ireland Trade Union Education and Social Centre Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre.

Mr Joe Bowers - Chairperson

Mr. P. Mackel - Treasurer

Kevin Doherty - Secretary

Ms. Avril Hall-Callaghan - Member

Ms Anne Molloy- Member

Mr Brendan Mackin- Member

Ms Noreen Moore- Member

Ms. Mary Gray- Member

William Mc Mullan -User Representative

#### Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre - Staff

Aisling Cartmill – Routes to Resilience Co-ordinator

Aiveen Kavanagh -Routes to Resilience Family Support

Adele Moore - Finance Manager

Joanne Farrell - Welfare Advice

Eileen Millar - Administrator

Claudia Belloni - Co-ordinator Orientation Programme

Harry Donaghy - Co-ordinator Fellowship Messines Programme

#### Access Skill Ireland

Rosaleen Gallagher – Manager Neil Gallagher – Development Worker Pauline Carberry - Administrator





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