

NORTHERN IRELAND UNION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT ANNUAL REPORT 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

NIUSE is a membership-based organisation representing individuals and organisations providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities through Supported Employment.

The aim of NIUSE is: -

“To promote best practice in Supported Employment for people with disabilities and people from other disadvantaged groups in Northern Ireland”

The objectives of NIUSE are:

- To influence relevant public policy (NI, UK and EU).
- To develop skills and knowledge in supported employment.
- To develop and promote best practice in supported employment.
- To communicate effectively with NIUSE’s members and other stakeholders.
- To ensure that NIUSE has the personnel it requires to achieve its aims and objectives and these resources are effectively and efficiently managed and developed.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

NIUSE is a registered charity with the Charity Commission for NI, registration, NIC 1033821 and is a Company Limited by Guarantee Registered in Northern Ireland No. NI058440. There are currently 8 Directors on the NIUSE Board, and they are elected by the members of the association at the Annual General Meeting on a rotational basis. There are three Officer positions: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Treasurer who are elected by the Board of Directors. Decisions are made on a majority vote but if consensus is not met the Chairperson has the deciding vote.

NIUSE’s Accountant is McGorarty, McCafferty & Company Ltd 2 Carlisle Terrace, Derry~Londonderry, BT48 6JX.

NIUSE’s Bank – Danske Bank, 6 Shipquay Place, Derry~Londonderry, BT48 6DF

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE 1 April 2020– 31 March 2021

The accounting period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 was an extremely stressful year for NIUSE and its members with the ending of European Social Fund and the uncertainty of future funding. Although, this was the main focus of the year, NIUSE continued to provide services to its members:

Information and Advice – NIUSE provided members with up-to-date information on a regular basis including ***Current Vacancies and Events*** which was circulated on a weekly basis to regional and local members. Information includes Job Fairs, meet the employer events and skills/training opportunities as well as local and regional vacancies. NIUSE's social media followers increased during the period by 27%.

Training and Staff Development – Training continued to be delivered virtually and NIUSE worked in partnership with other training providers (i.e. Employment Law, Health and Safety, Terms and Conditions). NIUSE also delivered Disability Awareness Training, Recruitment and Selection Training for local colleges, supported employment organisations and councils etc.



NIUSE continued to work with the Equality Commission for NI (ECNI) under the *Making it Work Campaign* and organised four webinars during the period. The webinars focused on specific business sectors i.e. Retail and Hospitality, Creative Industries, Community and Voluntary organisations and Social Value and Procurement (contractors). In each of the webinar's employers shared their experiences of employing people with disabilities and disability organisations outlined their support provided to employers and individuals. The webinar delegates also heard about support programmes provided by Department for (i.e. Workable NI, Access to Work and Condition Management Programme) and positive action measures (i.e. pre-employment, work trails, guarantee interviews and reserved posts) from the ECNI. Over 200 delegates attended the webinars. Future events are planned for 2023/2024. As part of the Retail and Hospitality webinar a video was produced focusing on Jordan's experience of working in Tim Horton's (Coleraine) and supported by Triangle Progression to Employment ([click here to view](#)).



Making it Work' – Jordan Lunday, Tim Hortons / Triangle / NIUSE

Policy and influencing – The main focus for NIUSE and its members during this period was the ending of European Social Fund (ESF) on 31 March 2023 and the design and development of its replacement the UK Shared Prosperity Funding Programme. The one-year extension funding provided by European Commission and Department for the Economy was very much welcomed and provided some breathing space for work to commence on its replacement programme. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme was initially to be administered through the local Northern Ireland Departments (Economy and Communities) however it was decided by UK Government that the UKSPF Programme would be managed and delivered centrally from Westminster by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Community (DLUHC). This caused an added friction between DLUHC and NI Departments as work had already commenced in 2021/2022 in the design and development for a replacement programme for ESF Programme. Furthermore, with the NI Assembly collapsing in February 2022, there were no Ministers in place to address these issues. The majority of NIUSE members were funded through ESF Programme and was the main funding programme for disability employability and social inclusion programmes for over 30 years. The ending of the ESF Programme would have a significant impact not only on the disability sector but young people not in education, employment or training, women's sector, ex-offenders and long term unemployed. Through NIUSE Policy Group activities increased in liaising with DLUHC in planning the new programme. NIUSE and its members participated in co-design workshops as well as meeting directly with the DLUHC. NIUSE Policy Group produced briefing papers for MLA's, MPs and government departments highlighting the impact of the ending of ESF and the on going need to develop similar programmes. A long side the briefing papers the policy group meet with all the NI Political Parties, senior government officials (Department for the Economy, Department for Communities, Department of Health and Department of Finance). This accumulated in an event in the Long Gallery in Stormont, September 2022, host by Kellie Armstrong, Alliance and Liz Kimms, Sinn Féin.



The event focused on the impact of the loss of ESF funding to people with disabilities and impact on the disability sector. Delegates heard directly from people with disabilities and their experiences and the difference the ESF Programme had made on their lives. Senior Government Officials from the Communities, Economy, Health and Finance took part in a panel discussion. The event received cross party support. The event also kicked off an intensive campaign as the amount of funding for the UKSPF was not equivalent to ESF Programme, although it was promised during the Brexit Campaign nor would it address social inclusion which was main area of ESF Programme. The UKSPF would focus on employability programmes for people who were economic inactivity. NIUSE Policy Group joined forces with ESF User Group (secretariate provided by NICVA), ESF User Group and CO3 and collaborated on meeting government officials, MLA's and MPs etc and a media campaign.

The UKSPF Programme competition was announced in early Dec 2022 with a 6 week turnaround (end of Jan 2023). With the ending of ESF Programme on 31 March 2023 there was a collaborative and concentrated campaign from all groups (NICVA, ESF Peer Group and CO3) to announce the outcome for the competition as soon as possible and increase the amount of funding. The impact on services was immense, with organisation having make contingency plans including restructuring, redundancy, protective notice for staff, closure of services and informing service users that service may not be available post 31 March 2023. The announcement for the competition came down to the wire, with media campaign and lobbying, on 31 March 2023 ESF Programme ended and at 10.30am on that day the UKSPF competition outcomes were announced with a start date of the 1 April 2023. Additional funding was allocated, and the majority of NIUSE members were funded but there were many organisations who were not successful and services ended and organisations closed and lives of individuals impacted with the loss of services. The ramifications from this will continue on in to 2023/2024.

For NIUSE members and partners from other sectors, this was the most stressful year with decisions being left to the eleventh hour. NIUSE Policy Group and members worked tirelessly throughout this period under very demanding situation and at the same time delivering services to their participants – disabled people.



NIUSE was involved in other areas of policy work including input into the “co-design” of the Disability Employment Strategy, Disability Employment Strategic Forum, NICS Disability Working Group and Autism Working Group. NIUSE responded to public consultations (i.e. 10X Strategy, Skills Strategy etc) and input into disability employment research (i.e. ECNI research into “Impact of Brexit on Section 75 Groups in NI: EU Funding”, DfC’s research “Disability within the NI Labour Market”).

NIUSE also during this period were involved with Department of Communities Labour Market Partnerships (LMP) which were delivered by the 11 Councils. The priority areas for the LMPs are to address local skills and employability for 4 target groups i.e. people who are Economic Inactivity, Disability, Skilled labour supply and unemployment. The Councils Labour Market Partnerships established local stakeholders groups (employers/employer groups, local colleges, health sector and community and voluntary sector) to implement strategies to address employability and skills gaps in the council area. NIUSE is a member of 3 LMP (Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon, Derry City and Strabane and, Mid and East Antrim Councils).

Projects:

- **Job Match** - NIUSE is a partner Disability Action, European Social Fund (ESF) Job Match Project and continued to work with employers to promote employment opportunities for disabled people. This included working with large regional organisations and promoting positive action measures, co-ordination recruitment for ring fenced posts and working with employers regarding their social value measures (i.e. pre-employment and employment opportunities). NIUSE co-ordinated site visit to employers worksites for members to gain a better understanding of the different types of roles available and the environment in which they operate.
- **International Job Shadow Day 2022** did take place during this period with a few COVID measures in place, for example the IJSD placements took place over 3-month period to allow for social distancing and some placements were held remotely. A celebration event was held for the International Job Shadow Day initiative on the 16th November 2022 as part of the EU Disability Employment Week. There were over 50 IJSD placements and 15 of those with the main employer partner, Northern Ireland Civil Service. NIUSE would like to thank their members, job seekers, employers (placement providers) and NICS for their continue support for the International Job Shadow Day.
- **NI Assembly Work Experience Scheme** – NIUSE worked with the HR Department in the NI Assembly and developed a pilot Work Experience Programme and intend to roll it out in 2023/24.

Networking – all networking moved on-line and NIUSE continued to engage with their members and local, regional and international networks i.e. Disability Employment Network (North West), European Union of Supported Employment (EUSE) and World Association of Supported Employment (WASE). NIUSE attended the 14 EUSE Conference in Oslo and Harkin Summit (Belfast) in June 2022 the first in person conferences since the pandemic.

Board of Directors 2020/21

Norman Sterritt, (Chairperson) Triangle Progression to Employment
Kieran Molloy, (Treasurer) Cedar Foundation
Peter Shields, Action Mental Health
Karen Smith, Disability Action
Paddy Mooney, Include Youth
Liam Burns, Mencap
Michael Walker, Orchardville Society
Tony O'Reilly, NW Forum of People with Disabilities

Staff

Edyth Dunlop, Regional Manager
Catriona McElhinney, Project Administrator

FINANCIAL STATEMENT – Year Ended 31 March 2022

Prepared by McGorarty, McCafferty & Company Ltd 2 Carlisle Terrace,
Derry~Londonderry, BT48 6JX.

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total funds 2023	Total funds 2022
Total Incoming Resources	£16,479	£14,840	£31,319	£21,913
Total Resources Expended	£24,936	£15,186	£40,122	£32,437
Total Funds carried forward	£32,265	£2,729	£34,994	£43,797

NIUSE Balance Sheet – 2022 to 2023

	2023	2022
Net Assets	£32,265	£40,586
Funds		
Restricted Income Funds	£2,729	£9,818
Unrestricted Income Funds	£32,265	£33,979
Total Funds	£34,994	£43,797

This information is available, on request, in accessible formats Braille, large print, audio cassette, computer disk, plain language and PDF

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