



**MAKING LIFE BETTER**

# WELCOME

**NEWS**  
ISSUE 6 - Summer 2024  
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## CMO Foreword

Welcome to the Summer edition of the MLB Newsletter, I hope you have had an opportunity to enjoy some leave.

I am pleased to introduce you to my All Departments Officials Group (ADOG) colleagues Teresa O'Neill, Director - Rural Affairs Division in the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and Michael Kennedy, Director - Programme for Government in the Executive Office.

A lot continues to happen in the MLB world and you may be aware that the Health Minister has identified health inequalities as one of his main priorities and that he recently announced a new targeted, place-based initiative called "Live Better" to help address this issue. Live Better is being designed to help address health inequalities by bringing targeted health support to communities which need it most.

Live Better will build on the good work developed by the Public Health Agency (PHA) and the HSC over the years and will seek to pull existing initiatives and programmes together so that they can be delivered intensively in communities to make a real and lasting difference. It will also provide targeted information and initiatives directly to specific communities, as well as signposting to existing areas of support. A selection process to identify two initial demonstration areas is currently being undertaken by colleagues in the PHA and the outcome of this process will be announced in due course, with the initiative expected to begin in the Autumn.

As always I hope you enjoy this edition of the MLB Newsletter and remember to contact [MLBNetwork@hscni.net](mailto:MLBNetwork@hscni.net) if you want to submit an article for inclusion in a future Newsletter.



## Get In Touch

If you have any questions about the content of MLB News, have work you want to share with the Network or wish to join please email :  
[mlbnetwork@hscni.net](mailto:mlbnetwork@hscni.net)

**Professor Sir Michael McBride**

# All Departments Officials Group (ADOG) - Introductions

Rural Affairs Directorate delivers and manages a range of interventions, often through external delivery partners and other departments, with the aim of achieving a thriving and sustainable rural community.

The Division also provides training and advice to government departments and public bodies on their responsibilities under The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016. The aim of the Act is to improve outcomes for rural dwellers by ensuring that the social and economic needs of people in rural areas are given due regard to by public authorities in their decision making processes and to increase transparency on how public authorities consider rural needs when exercising their functions.

ADOG is integral to building connections across government, sharing knowledge and learning from other strategic policy makers.

As the DAERA representative, I want to ensure that DAERA's extensive and diverse range of policies are shared while making valuable connections.

**Teresa O'Neill**  
**Director - Rural Affairs Division**  
**Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**



Along with the Programme for Government, I am responsible for The Executive Office's excellent team of statisticians. As with a lot of work in the Executive, the Programme for Government has the potential to affect everyone. The MLB work is fascinating and in being focussed on the social determinants of health really helps me and my team think about wellbeing in its full, socio-economic context. In doing so, I hope we can make sure that we understand how the actions we take will improve outcomes in a way that really makes a difference to how people feel every day. The ADOG is fantastic resource and beyond helpful in framing how we, as officials, should be thinking about the society and the impact we are making – the conversations and presentations in the ADOG meetings are always fascinating which doesn't hurt either.

My priority now is my PFG team and its ongoing work to support the Executive to develop a PFG. Unfortunately for me that often drags me away from my stats team's work to develop an interactive wellbeing dashboard and several other pretty exciting digital products visualising data. We really hope that by making data and insight as interactive and accessible as possible that we can help policy teams in TEO use data a bit differently than they've been able to in the past. We're trying to make the best use possible of the technology we have and make it really simple for anyone to understand the context they're working in and what the problems they need to solve are.

**Michael Kennedy**  
**Programme for Government Director**  
**Executive Office**



# Did you know?



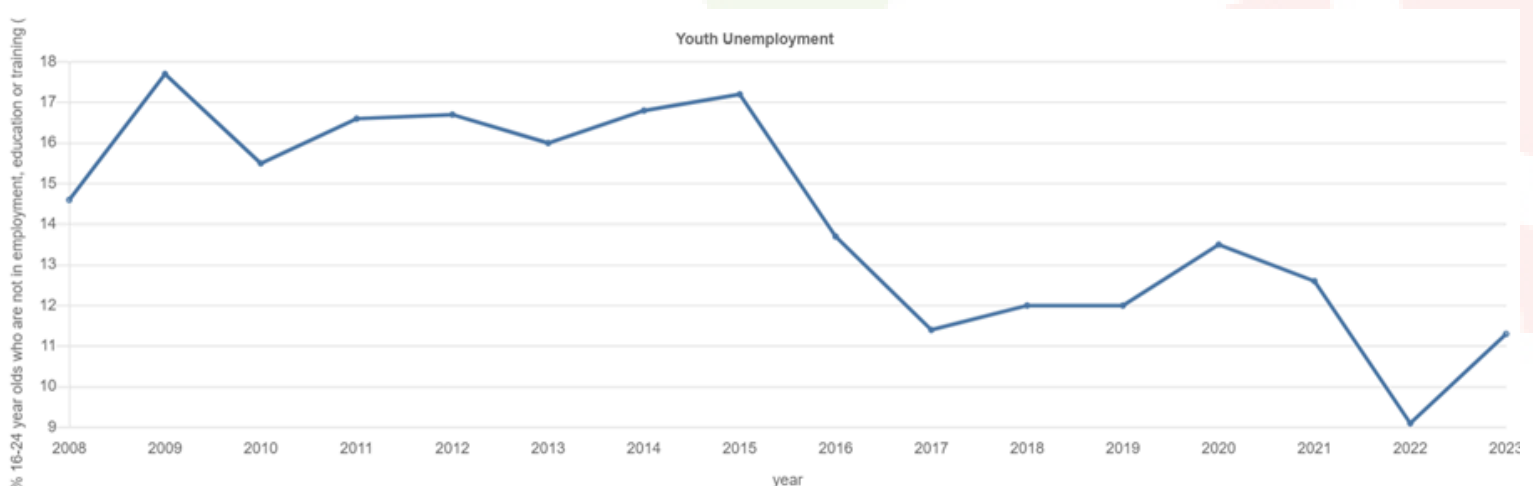
A dedicated section has been developed on the NISRA Data Portal website at [data.nisra.gov.uk](https://data.nisra.gov.uk) to facilitate the high-level monitoring of progress on the key Making Life Better indicators. This is the second article in a series which highlights the data and tools available on the NISRA Data Portal.

## Youth Unemployment (NEETS)

Youth unemployment (the % of 16-24 year olds who are not in employment, education or training) sits under Theme 2 – Equipped throughout life - and is available at NI Level on the Data Portal.

On the portal, you can view and filter the data, download the table, or build your own chart. For example the line chart below was created within the Data Portal application. This can be saved and included in your own reports, or downloaded as ‘widgets’ and saved to your desktop (it will then update automatically when data is updated on the NISRA Data Portal).

To find out more about widgets, why not check out [the user guide and instructional video](#) on the [NISRA Data Portal FAQs and training materials page](#).



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<https://data.nisra.gov.uk/table/NEETS/>

On-line training sessions will also be available. Please contact [mlbnetwork@hscni.net](mailto:mlbnetwork@hscni.net) to register your interest.

If you need further information or assistance relating to the NISRA Data Portal, contact us at [info@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:info@nisra.gov.uk)

*NICS staff requiring statistical input and advice should continue to contact their departmental statistics colleagues in the first instance.*

# News from the Network

Standing articles in this Newsletter are “News from the Network”. These are an opportunity for members to provide an introduction to / update of their work area.

Any queries about the SPACE geoportal should be directed to [Ruth Hunter](#)



Ruth Hunter, Professor of Public Health and Planetary Health, based at the Centre for Public Health, Queen's University Belfast was invited to present her research on health and environment to ADOG in May 2024. Ruth is also a member of the [DfC Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture and Built Environment](#) and [Director of the WHO Collaborating Centre for systems science](#).

Some of the highlights of the research include the SPACE project which explores the impact of the environment on cognitive health. A series of videos, [factsheets and policy](#) reports have been produced to support raising awareness of the impact of exposures such as air pollution, noise and light pollution on preventing dementia and improving cognitive health. In partnership with Ordnance Survey NI, the project developed a [geoportal](#) providing access to over 80 environmental data sources in Northern Ireland to support research, policy and practice in health and environment.

The [GroundsWell](#) consortium focuses on the role of green and blue spaces for preventing chronic diseases, reducing inequalities, and providing inclusive spaces for women, girls and people with disabilities.

Working in partnership with The Executive Office, this work will explore how we can end violence against women and girls in public spaces.



Other transport related research investigates policies and interventions to reduce car dependency in Belfast including recommendations from a Citizens' Jury, and evaluating 20mph speed limits in Belfast.



# News from the Network



**“Every child is happy, learning and succeeding!”**

The RAISE programme is a whole community, place-based approach in **15 localities** across Northern Ireland to support the Department of Education’s vision that “every child is happy, learning and succeeding”. It helps to deliver on the mission, set by the report ‘A Fair Start’, to ensure all children and young people regardless of background are given the best start in life.

## AIMS

- Invest in whole community, place-based approaches to raise achievement to reduce educational disadvantage
- Enhance community-based partnerships helping every child and young person to be happy, learning and succeeding
- A fair start for every child and young person regardless of background

**Cross-cutting projects** - Regional initiatives will complement community-led projects and apply an Inclusion Lens to address specific needs or challenges facing children and young people most vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion.



**Local Strategic Plans** will be developed through a codesign process and public engagement and creative approaches to involve and give voice to people and organisations across localities.



**Local Coordinators** - The Department of Education (DE) wants to enhance partnerships and on-the-ground working relationships with organisations and communities across these localities. This will build the capacity of the Department and local communities to work together and bring about sustainable change.



**Local Reference Groups** - Consultative forums established in each locality to catalyse or enhance connections and relationships in support of whole community approaches. They might be newly formed networks in each place or involve collaborative arrangements with existing forums and other networks in these areas.



**Community informed projects** - Investment in local projects which have been codesigned in localities to address priorities identified in the Strategic Plan for each place.



Any queries about the RAISE programme should be directed to [raise@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:raise@education-ni.gov.uk)