

**Draft Equality Impact Assessment on the Regeneration of Crumlin Road  
Gaol and Girdwood Barracks**

***(EDUCATION)***

***Submission from [your organisation]***

- **Outline the work of your group/organisation**

The Education & Training Services offered at the Ashton Centre, are designed to support residents across North Belfast to participate in a variety of accredited and non-accredited training. The Ashton Community Trust's mission is to 'promote positive change and improve the quality of life of the North Belfast community' in an area where 55% of the population are economically inactive and where 59% of young people leave school without formal qualifications. It aims to achieve this by focusing on employment, education and training

Below is an outline of some of the training / educational projects currently offered through the Centre.

**Progress to Employment programme** funded by ESF/ DEL will engage those most disenfranchised in the labour market by providing them with access to quality accredited training and resources that will improve their skills and improve their chances of a more sustainable future in employment. It will focus on training to match participants' skills with employers' requirements. It provides unemployed groups with access to quality training such as LGV and ADR petroleum Training, Telescopic and forklift Training, Childcare Training etc.

**The Women's Training programme** funded by ESF/ DEL and targets long-term unemployed women, women in low-paid work in receipt of benefits and women returnees, with particular emphasis on female lone parents and those with little or no qualifications. The project encourages and supports women to return to education and training. For many this may be their first experience since formalised schooling.

**The Community ICT project** targets those who have not previously derived full benefit from learning, providing Essential Skills training in literacy and numeracy, as well as ICT training

**North Belfast Works Programme** funded by ESF/ DEL is designed to move long-term unemployed residents of North Belfast into sustained work by offering them specially created temporary jobs for nine months with a wage. During that 9-month period they will also receive training, personal development and job search support. The aim is to give those who are most removed from the labour market a bridge back to the world of work by enabling them to develop skills and experience that will enable them to compete in the job market. The project aims to place 54 people in sustainable employment over a 2-year period.

- **Include interest in the Girdwood site and any involvement in process to date**

Ashton Community Trust would like to be involved in the development and provision of training and employment opportunities on the Girdwood Site. The Chief Executive was part of the steering group and the Board sees huge potential for the development.

It is our understanding that the purpose of an EQIA is to see how equality of opportunity can be best promoted.

To address the education inequalities in North Belfast, a comprehensive analysis is needed. We find that the draft EQIA does not give a proper understanding of educational inequality in North Belfast. It also does not analyse the inequalities between s75 groups.

The EQIA looks at the following info:

- School leavers with 5 or more GCSEs
- Percentage going into higher or further education

There are no statistics presented which relate to a s75 group. While information on GCSEs results outlined could be presumed to relate to 16 year olds, there is no information that relates to adult education or any other differentials. The communities neighbouring the Girdwood site are characterised by low levels of academic attainment (It is estimated that 25% of adults across the UK experience basic / essential skills needs.

***55% of returners in Belfast have no qualifications and 91% are Level II and below.*** (Understanding why people return to the New Deal in NI, CESI and Locus, June07). Although this statistic refers to Belfast as a whole, it is further evidence of the gap which exists with regards to adult educational attainment.

New statistics underline that economic inactivity and low academic attainment operates in tandem. The EQIA document suggests that an on-site training opportunity could assist in skills development and that learning & skills training should be a priority. Although any final EQIA document needs to ensure that concrete actions / proposals are built in to ensure that equality for all with regards to education is protected.

Inequalities which relate to gender, disability, dependent status, marital status, religion, political opinion, race and sexual orientation are completely unexamined.

There is no analysis of how the proposals relating to St. Malachy's College addresses any inequalities, even the few statistics already mentioned. The 'learning hub' included in the Draft Masterplan is not even mentioned in the Draft EQIA. The statistics are insufficient to give an understanding of what inequalities this hub might be targeting.

This Draft EQIA fails to state how the inequalities in our community will be addressed through the expansion of St. Malachy's. This must be done before the regeneration moves to the next stages.