

Connected

newsletter

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Welcome

WELCOME FROM GERRY CAMPBELL CEO COLLEGES NORTHERN IRELAND



Gerry Campbell, CEO

I am delighted to welcome you to this edition of the Connected newsletter. Connected, the knowledge connection for business, has now entered into its sixth year of delivery. As highlighted in this newsletter, the project remains as a unique partnership between HE and FE, which further increases the transfer of knowledge and skills from academia to industry. It provides a pathway for companies, particularly SMEs, to access the support needed to ensure the success of their efforts to innovate and grow their businesses. As Chief Executive of Colleges Northern Ireland, I welcome the continued support for this important programme and its contribution to maintaining Northern Ireland as the UK leader in linking business and industry with academe.

Recently, I had the pleasure of attending and speaking at the recent "Food for Thought" event, organised by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), Invest Northern Ireland, Department of the Environment (DOE) and Connected. The event demonstrated the true value in collaboration and sharing of knowledge and expertise. This well attended event highlighted the key message that we all need to do more with less. Being energy and waste aware is something that both higher and further education sectors have a responsibility for; both across their physical estate and in their curriculum. HE and FE recognise the value of skills and the opportunities in developing and enhancing the knowledge base within key industries, such as renewable and clean energy and I look forward to learning more over this next project year about how Connected is supporting HE and FE in these areas.

Through Connected, HE and FE is offering their expertise not just to businesses but also to our social economy sector. For many businesses and organisations who wish to collaborate with a university/college, the challenge can often be to understand what

is available and identify the relevant expertise. Connected is here to encourage, ease and increase potential knowledge exchange links between academia and industry and the social economy. By providing access to education and research institutes, local companies and communities can suddenly gain access to a significant resource. This was particularly evident at the recent Mental Health conference supported by Connected on the 1st March 2012. Part of a larger project, the conference was aimed at promoting the positive mental health and well-being of older people.

It brought together the clinical and managerial expertise of community agency staff with the academic and research expertise of staff at North West Regional College and the University of Ulster. The work of these partners cuts across all areas of mental health, with a strong focus on collaborating together to design and deliver work of direct relevance to those providing mental health care.

Northern Ireland's Programme for Government, The Economic Strategy and the recently launched Higher Education Strategy, all highlight that innovation is a key element of Northern Ireland's future. As the case studies and sector focus articles in this newsletter illustrate, Connected is clearly playing its role in Northern Ireland's knowledge based economy. This programme of activity has collaboration and knowledge transfer embedded across all its activities. Connected communicates a clear sign that our FE and HE sectors are willing to work together with our business and wider communities in the pursuit of a better economic future for all. I look forward to the achievements of Connected over the next 12 months.

Gerry Campbell.
Chief Executive
Colleges Northern Ireland

Fresh overview

GET FRESH AT BELFAST MET



FRESH at Belfast Met

In March 2010 a delegation of staff from the FE sector, QUB and UU visited California as part of a Connected trip focused on digital media. As part of that trip a visit was organised to the d-school in Stanford and delegates had an opportunity to experience first-hand the approach that the d-school use to develop design thinking. The visit also included a trip to IDEO which is a leading innovation and design firm who use these design thinking principles every day to help organisations build, innovative and grow. On return from the trip Patricia Flanagan, Belfast Metropolitan College, and Conann Fitzpatrick, University of Ulster, adapted and developed a creative thinking approach which could be used to embed employability and enterprise skills and be a model for the delivery of employer led projects. The approach is also designed to be delivered to business to encourage innovation and growth.

Patricia Flanagan explains "Connected was the catalysis for allowing both Belfast Met and University of Ulster to collaborate. Together,

through FRESH we can share innovative concepts from of a world renowned university and company, those being Stanford and IDEO to Northern Ireland businesses and the wider community/ FRESH is focused on developing innovators by encouraging entrepreneurial behaviours. Participants are equipped with the tools to think for themselves and awaken the ability to design and generate creative business ideas. Participants are inspired and motivated to problem solve through a creative process, visualising new approaches to achieving progressive business solutions for an ever changing marketplace. The process is very hands on and focuses on building empathy, encouraging ideation and fostering active problem solving. Using imagination is central in this process, as is building competency in team work, following a process, defining problems and creating solutions".

**For more information on FRESH contact Patricia Flanagan
Tel: 028 9090 0008 or Email: pflanagan@belfastmet.ac.uk**



FRESH for Industry

NEW COMPETENCE CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE ENERGY



A new Competence Centre for Sustainable Energy (CCSE) opened its' doors on 21st November 2011. Part of the Invest NI Competence Centre programme, the centre provides a platform for industry-led research in the sustainable energy field. Supported by Connected, the centre is a collaboration between Queen's University Belfast, University of Ulster, AFBI and industry, and will focus on four main themes – Energy from Biomass; Turbine development, manufacture and decommissioning; Integration and Storage and Energy Efficiency

**For more information contact Sam McCloskey, Centre Manager
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Transferring knowledge to businesses and the wider community, as the following cases studies highlight our colleges and universities are open to business.

PIONEERING PROJECT TO HELP WOMEN MAKE BETTER DECISIONS



L-R Adele Boyd Research Assistant, Ulster; Dr John Winder, Ulster; Karen McCann, Ulster; Liz Atkinson, Ulster Cancer Foundation and Paul Moffett, Axis Three

The University of Ulster has teamed up with the Ulster Cancer Foundation, Axis Three and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to work on a unique project aimed at helping women make better decisions about breast reconstruction following surgery. The project was initially conceived through Connected and funded through InvestNI's Innovation Voucher programme.

Each year in Northern Ireland, approximately 1200 women are diagnosed with breast cancer. With survival rates steadily improving due to faster diagnosis, better treatment and care, increasing numbers of women are considering breast reconstruction following mastectomy for breast cancer.

The project leader, Dr John Winder, a Reader in Rehabilitation Sciences and a 3D medical imaging specialist at Ulster, explained that the pioneering project will lead to the creation of a DVD with three dimensional images of breast reconstruction which will improve communication with patients.

"We are using the latest digital technology from Axis Three Ltd, a hi-tech Belfast based company, to enable women to see how breast reconstruction

may look for them. This is the first time that this technology has been used in this way," he said.

The Ulster Cancer Foundation used the voucher to team up with the University of Ulster for help with developing the DVD to offer support to breast cancer patients. This unique communications tool has the potential to make a significant contribution towards breast cancer care and rehabilitation services across the UK.

Liz Atkinson, Head of Care Services for the Ulster Cancer Foundation, said, *"Currently around 21% of breast cancer patients having a mastectomy opt for immediate breast reconstruction and for many women, these decisions are being made at a very stressful time. Many have expressed a desire to speak to others who have been in a similar situation or have already gone through a similar procedure but haven't had the chance to do so."*

The DVD will be a very useful resource for women as they prepare to make important decisions regarding their health and well-being."

Paul Moffett, Technical Director of Axis Three, said, *"This is a wonderful chance for Axis Three to collaborate on a very worthy project. It is a great opportunity to contribute technically, while tactfully gaining useful insights into the informative process patients go through during a very stressful and emotional time. Axis Three's long term roadmap, plans to offer tools that ensure patients feel informed and confident about the rapid decisions they must make, the experiences recorded during this project will ensure our tools cater for their unique needs."*

Karen McCann, Ulster's Connected Representative in the 'Life and Health Science' sector said, *"This successful collaboration between academia, an SME and a charity demonstrates what can be achieved when expertise is shared. UCF recruit and strategically manage the participants for the study, Axis Three provide the innovative technology and Ulster directs and provides the analysis for this ground breaking study"*

HOLYWELL CONSULTANCY SECURES INVESTNI INNOVATION VOUCHER



**north west
regional college**
Derry-Londonderry • Limavady • Strabane

Holywell Consultancy is a social economy company that works to meet

the engagement, evaluation, planning, and facilitation and training needs of community, private and public organisations. The company offers a range of consultancy services with expertise in a number of areas including, project evaluation, social research, cultural tourism, and public consultation.

The company had identified the need to develop an interface that would enable community and voluntary sector organisations better manage, evaluate, monitor and report on projects and initiatives, which they deliver. They propose to implement a "web-based" subscription service which will enable community and voluntary groups to manage their projects more effectively in terms of

qualitative and financial information; engage more effectively with their clients and key target groups; monitor the delivery of their projects in line with the targets set and evaluate and report on the impact of their projects and activities.

Robbie Hegarty at NWRC explains *"Currently there are no existing online services or 'off the shelf' software solutions which cover all of the areas proposed. The first step in this project is to compile a comprehensive technical requirements audit and report what would be needed to realise the exact requirements of a 'simple, easy to use' system. Holywell Consultancy understand the requirements of the market-place and have developed relationships with key funders and other stakeholders, but lack the technical knowledge to build and deliver such a system. That's where we at North West Regional College come in. With support from Connected I have been able to spend time with Holywell and identify a simple yet innovative solution. We have the expertise and know-how that the company requires and with the support from InvestNI through their Innovation Voucher scheme, Holywell can now buy into our expertise".*

CREGGAN COUNTRY PARK ENTERPRISES INNOVATION VOUCHER CASE STUDY NOVEMBER 2011



Creggan Country Park Enterprises is a Derry based social enterprise which offers a full range of water sports, outdoor pursuits, walking and angling facilities. All income generated by the Park contributes towards improving the local economy through the provision of employment opportunities and facilities for use by local residents, school children and tourists.

Part of Creggan's ethos is sustainability and it has invested heavily in a number of renewable energy conversion technologies for the supply of heat and power at the 100 acre park, including a 75kW Hydro scheme, a conference centre with a turf roof and a wind turbine.

Having committed substantial resources to the technology, Creggan were unsure how to tie the current technologies together to provide the maximum economic return for the park. In particular the renewable energy conversion systems have all had operational problems and the hot water storage tank cannot meet visitor demand.

Through the Connected programme, Creggan entered into discussion with the University of Ulster. The Park was awarded an Invest Northern Ireland Innovation Voucher and was matched to Dr David Redpath from the University's School of the Built Environment.

Dr Redpath initially installed a flow meter and data logger to ascertain the current state of the centre's energy conversion devices. He then analysed the hot water usage patterns, hydro plant and wind turbine power outputs and made recommendations for a new size of hot water tank. Finally a proposal was put forward for a suitable wireless GSM based monitoring system based on the analysis of collected data.

Ultimately with the University's support the potential now exists to correct any identified deficiencies and to harness the generated energy in a more optimized manner. This should help Creggan Country park to become self sufficient in sustainable energy and enable the export of energy, earning the centre a valuable revenue stream.

Gerry Quinn, Manager at Creggan Country Park Enterprises was delighted with the skills and expertise of the University; "Having invested in a range of renewables over a number of years on an ad hoc basis, we felt we needed assistance to map a way forward whereby we got the best return. Going forward we now have a range of useful suggestions from the University as well as ideas for taking things to the next level. The innovation voucher was extremely useful and we have gained a valuable insight into how we can better develop our economic and environmental sustainability."

NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE LAUNCHES A UNIQUE FOUNDATION DEGREE IN RETAILING



Trevor Neilands Director and CEO at Northern Regional College and Dr Stephen Farry, Minister for Employment and Learning along with NRC students.

Northern Regional College has been supported by Connected to lead the development of the employer-led Foundation Degree in Retailing. A showcase event was held at Junction One's Ominiplex cinema in Antrim to give HR, store and training managers from retail organisations throughout Northern Ireland, an insight into the initiative which is soon to celebrate its first cohort of graduates. The unique two year practical and e-learning programme was created in response to employers' and employees' needs in the highly competitive retail sector

Officially launching the course at the event was Dr Stephen Farry, Minister for Employment and Learning. Addressing the retailing employers attending the event, **Minister Farry said:** "One of the ways in which my Department is supporting the up-skilling of the workforce to this level is through our commitment to expand the provision of part-time Foundation Degrees such as the innovative employer-led Foundation Degree in Retailing programme. The work-focused nature of Foundation Degrees means that they offer employers the opportunity to recruit new staff, or up-skill existing staff, with the higher technician and professional skills they require. Foundation Degrees can not only raise the skills levels of your workforce, but also by strengthening our indigenous skills base, support the Northern Ireland economy as a whole."

Head of Faculty, Business and Management at NRC, Sam Bell, said: "The University of Ulster validated qualification is an exceptional example of co-operation and collaboration amongst the six regional colleges in partnership with industry. The retail Foundation Degree has already proved its worth in the career progression of participants and by helping employers develop their business strategies. The retail industry represents 11% of the total workforce in NI and companies such as Tesco and Henderson Group have already experienced the course benefits. We aim to broaden our student base and attract more people from non-grocery retail outlets, as well as small and medium sized companies who equally need to develop skills to combat the current economic climate."

**For details on the 2012 Foundation Degree in Retailing contact Anne Birt-Macartney at Northern Regional College
Tel: 028 9085 5000 or Email: anne.birt-macartney@nrc.ac.uk.**

University Focus

POLYMER PROCESSING RESEARCH CENTRE (PPRC AT QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST)



Alan Clarke, Extrusion Manager carrying out a tube extrusion.

The Northern Ireland plastics industry comprises 80 firms, employs in excess of 7,000 people, has a combined annual turnover of around £800M and accounts for around 8% of the total manufacturing work base in Northern Ireland. (Source Northern Ireland Polymers Association November 2011). Polymers are used in a growing range of applications, across many sectors, including construction, food and drink, telecoms, healthcare and marine.

The Polymer Processing Research Centre (PPRC) at Queen's University Belfast is equipped with both the expertise and facilities required to meet the priorities of the polymer industry and to carry out both fundamental and applied research in polymer processing and related technologies. Under the Directorship of Dr Tony McNally, the specialised and highly experienced team of engineers in PPRC works side by side with industrial and academic partners across the world in developing new processes and innovative products and provide input to the implementation of new technologies. The range of services offered includes consultancy, process design, assessment and troubleshooting in addition to material characterisation, analysis and testing and education and training.

Business Outreach: The Centre engages in co-development partnerships with industrial partners ranging from brainstorming of new ideas for products to developing new processes right through to extensive pilot plant trials before ultimately implementing these new developments in full scale production plants.



Seow Chin is a PhD student and is shown working on a blown film extrusion machine.

Connected supports PPRC in its outreach work with local SMEs from handling enquiries to providing advice and assistance in making applications for funding to carrying out longer term projects such as KTP and InvestNI's Innovation Vouchers as well as EU funded R&D programmes.

Denise Price Business Development Manager at PPRC commented:
"Connected provides PPRC with the resource to undertake those added value engagements with SMEs that are vital, particularly in the early stages of product and or process development. Very often it's this engagement that leads to bigger projects, be they troubleshooting, developing new processes or perhaps identifying training and development needs of staff. The staff at the Centre are both professional and knowledgeable. With a wealth of experience, the PPRC team is dedicated to providing timely technical assistance to the polymers processing industry as well as technical education for the industry's current and future workforce. For example we recently completed a project with Wilson Agri Ltd, Coleraine, who supply and install the innovative Moovapillow product; an adjustable, strong, reliable brisket barrier which ensures cattle are perfectly positioned and beds and cows remain clean and easily managed. Inspection of a batch of products from the manufacturer identified unexplained defects likely to lead to in-service failures which led to Wilson Agriculture engaging the services of the Polymer Processing Research Centre at Queen's University Belfast. Work undertaken in the Centre's Characterisation Laboratory concluded that the wrong material had been used in their production. As a result of the work, the manufacturer accepted liability saving Wilson Agriculture both potential lost earnings and damage to their reputation".

Training and Development: As well as providing the expertise and facilities to improve the research and development capabilities of the plastics processing industry the Centre supports the industry through the provision of training courses delivered by staff drawing on a wealth of industrial experience. Courses offered cover a range of subjects including polymer material appreciation and the principles of a range of processing technologies such as extrusion, rotational moulding and injection moulding concentrating on the importance of polymer properties and processing conditions on product performance.

For more information on PPRC contact the Business Manager, Denise Price Tel: 028 9097 4706 or Email: d.price@qub.ac.uk



Paul Hanna on the left and Mark McCourt on the right Mark and Paul are PPRC Engineers and are shown working on a rotational moulding machine.

College Focus

BELFAST COMPOSITES RECEIVES A ROYAL SEAL OF APPROVAL



HRH The Princess Royal with Composites Engineer Findhan Strain looks at some of the science projects at Belfast Metropolitan College.

The use of advanced composite materials plays a key role in the Northern Irish economy, with companies such as Bombardier Aerospace, Wright Composites, Creative Composites and B/E Aerospace utilising them in their product ranges. The Connected Composites project at Belfast Metropolitan College has identified a definitive skills shortage that is hindering the development of the local composites industry. Through the project, Belfast Met have worked with local industry, universities and sector skills councils to develop a composites training Centre of Excellence, with education delivered in a state of the art campus in West Belfast and due to open in March 2012.

During a visit to the Province in 2011, HRH Princess Anne visited Belfast Met to officially open the College's ultra-modern facility in the city's Titanic Quarter. During this official engagement Princess Anne was presented with some of the most innovative science projects at Belfast Met including composites.

Findhan Strain Composites Engineer at Belfast Met explains:

"Connected has been vital to the successful development of composites development both at a practical and strategic level within Belfast Met. The project has enabled us to develop our networks within FE, HE and industry as a whole, at a local and international basis. The advanced manufacturing capability within the campus will be available for comprehensive training in the further and higher education sectors, as well as encompassing up-skilling, apprenticeships and other aspects of practical training. Additionally, this capability will provide industry with easy access to sophisticated equipment in a local technological hub. I was delighted to demonstrate the composite project to Princess Anne and explained to her how collaboration with both academia and industry is key to the project's success"

For further information contact Findham Strain Tel: 028 9026 5405 or Email: fsstrain@belfastmet.ac.uk.



Findhan Strain, Composites Engineer at Belfast Met at a recent 'Introduction to Composites' course with employees from Bombardier Aerospace, Denroy Plastics and InvestNI.

SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE'S CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR REFURBISHMENT AND RETROFIT

As part of Southern Regional College's aim to take the lead on environmental excellence for the Northern Ireland construction refurbishment sector, the College is developing its expertise in Retrofit through the establishment of a new Centre of Excellence for Refurbishment and Retrofit.

Through the Connected Programme, lecturer Bronagh Harte leads the project. Bronagh joined SRC in 2009 as a lecturer and course director for FdSc Architectural Technology and Construction Engineering. As a University of Ulster Graduate in Architectural Technology and Management with eight years architectural and construction experience Bronagh is highly trained and experienced to drive the project.

The Centre of Excellence will incorporate a living refurbishment demonstrator in the heart of the Southern Region. The College will provide bespoke training and knowledge transfer tailored to directly support the construction industry in the areas of energy audits, building surveys, sustainable retrofitting of existing houses, passive house build, renewable energy technologies, new and innovative construction techniques and materials.

SRC is engaging with local industry to promote the development of new materials testing and demonstration, profile sustainable refurbishment products, showcase innovative homes and buildings demonstrating a range of smart home and building technologies.

For more information contact Bronagh Harte Email: harteb@src.ac.uk



Bronagh Harte

Connected Out and About

NI SKILLSET MEDIA ACADEMY AT FOYLE FILM FESTIVAL



As part of the Foyle Film Festival in November 2011, a series of workshops were delivered to those currently involved or aspiring to be involved in the local media industry and media education. NI Skillset Media Academy supported the festival in bringing Ian Christie (Birkbeck College, University of London), Dr. Baldev Singh (Imagine Educations Ltd.) and John Wagland (British Board of Film Classification) to Derry/Londonderry to deliver workshops covering a wide range of topics including how real life events are classified by the BBFC, how digital resources are used to document real events, how ICT tools can be used by to develop collaboration and creativity, how to market short films, how to write scripts for short films and how to create your own job in digital media.

NORTHERN IRELAND TECHNOLOGY CENTRE AND NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE VISIT TO EMO 2011 HANNOVER, GERMANY.

EMO Hannover is an international trade fair for the machine tool industry featuring the latest machinery, solutions and services for the metalworking industry. Contained within 16 halls and spread over 180,000 m², it hosts 2,120 exhibitors from 42 countries from across the world, a truly global exhibition.

William Bradley Project Engineering at NITC said

"EMO 2011 was a very intense and informative two days, not only in terms of the technology being exhibited and demonstrated but also in terms of the origins of the businesses involved. Although aware of Germany's large Turkish population and the close links between the two countries, I was still none the less still impressed at the number of Turkish companies exhibiting. Not as surprising but impressive none the less was the number of Chinese exhibitors and the product range displayed by those companies. There appeared to be a Chinese supplier for every imaginable metal working process or piece of equipment".

Gordon Kane from Northern Regional College also commented on the show *"The EMO show is an excellent opportunity to view developments in modern manufacturing technologies and allows us to plan future developments within the NRC Centre of Excellence."*

LOCAL COMPANY BENEFITS FROM WIND TURBINE TRAINING



Pictured above is a group of wind engineers from C&F Green Energy, along with South West College's Wind Turbine Lecturer Stuart Morrow (third from right).

C&F Wind Energy are one of the largest providers of small wind turbines in the world. (www.cfgreenenergy.com/about-us) The company approached South West College as they are the only College in the UK and Ireland that offer a City & Guild's Micro-generation Wind Turbine Installer's training programme. Through the Connected programme Stuart Morrow, Wind Turbine Lecturer at South West College, was able to meet with the company to establish their needs and arrange delivery of the programme. During consultation with the company, Stuart established that C&F Green Energy needed this essential training to maintain and upgrade skills levels in their workforce. Stuart Morrow can be contact at stuart.morrow@swc.ac.uk

PPRC FRANCE



Back row from left; Bronagh Millar, Denise Price, Paul Hanna and Alan Clarke (all PPRC), Daniel Vallienne (ISPA Director of Studies) Alan Reid (NRC) Dr Laurent Cauret (ISPA Head of Research). Front Row from left: Denis Jouannet (ISPA Researcher), Clare Horner (ISPA International Development)

In January 2012, Polymer Processes Research Centre at Queen's University travelled to France to meet with the Institut Supérieur de Plasturgie d'Alençon (ISPA) to gain an understanding of the work of the Institute and, in particular, the support provided to companies in respect of training and education including full and part time study through industrially sponsored apprenticeships. During the visit the group were shown some exemplar projects and explored opportunities for collaborative research and development. PPRC was joined on the trip, which included factory visits to some of ISPA's industrial partners, by a colleague from Northern Regional College (NRC).

INTERPLAS



Staff from Northern Regional College and PPRC Queen's University with SMC Pneumatics

Interplas is the ideal forum for anyone who comes into contact with plastics during the manufacturing process to learn of the latest developments in polymer processing technology. From machines to materials to software and contract manufacturing services, Interplas covers the complete spectrum of the plastic industry and enables the visitor to find everything they need to improve their business and stay ahead of their competitors. Attending Interplas in November 2011 was staff from Polymer Processing Research Centre at Queen's

University, Northern Regional College and South Eastern Regional College. The event lived up to the exhibitors' expectations, providing the opportunity to network and showcase Northern Ireland's expertise in polymers. With a busy enquiry book, exhibitors left with plenty of leads and new contacts to develop. The event lived up to the exhibitors' expectations, providing the opportunity to network and showcase Northern Ireland's expertise in polymers.

DOUBLE DELIGHT FOR SERC AT AWARDS CEREMONY

The South Eastern Regional College has scored a 'double' at the Sustainable Ireland Awards 2011, with recognition for its new Ards Campus & Environmental Skills Centre and for taking the lead in sustainable development.

The organisation was presented with the 'Sustainable Building Project of the Year' award, sponsored by Constructing Excellence in Northern Ireland (CEni) and the Centre for Sustainable Technologies, at a glittering ceremony at the Ramada Hotel in Belfast where the keynote speaker was Environment Minister Alex Attwood.

SERC also picked up the award for 'Leadership in Sustainable Development,' sponsored by Wright Recycling.

SERC lifted one of its awards for investing £3.7 million to convert one such old three-storey building in Newtownards into a state of the art centre, creating more space with less cost and incorporating a biomass boiler, solar panels, low energy lighting, water saving devices and even landscaping that encourages biodiversity.

John Ross at SERC commented: "SERC have taken great strides in sustainable development. Our links with Professor Neil Hewitt at the University of Ulster, developed through the Connected project, have helped accelerate our expertise within this area and developed our capacity to take a strong lead in making others more aware of the need and opportunities for sustainable development"



Food for Thought

FOOD AND DRINK COMPANIES URGED TO SAVE MONEY BY REDUCING ENERGY AND WASTE COSTS



Pictured at the 'Food for thought – an Energy and Waste Showcase', on 4 April at Loughry College, are Alan McInnes (BV Dairy), Nigel McClelland (Invest NI), Lynn Connaughton (Connected), Martin McKendry (DARD) and Nicolas Cowan (Tayto Ltd).

Local food and drink companies were urged to reduce energy and waste costs to help meet sustainability targets and increase profitability.

The one-day 'Food for Thought - an Energy and Waste Showcase', held at the Loughry Campus of the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE), in Cookstown, raised awareness of energy and waste support services available to food businesses. Leading food companies aimed to reawaken ideas on energy and waste reduction within Northern Ireland food and drink companies by outlining their experiences in addressing energy and waste issues.

They were taking part in an event organised by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), Invest Northern Ireland, Department of the Environment (DOE) and Connected (NI). At the event, four case studies on successful innovation were presented by; Alan McInnes (BV Dairy, Dorset) Cunningham (Wilson's Country), Nicolas Cowan (Tayto Ltd) and Raymond McCrory (Moy Park Ltd).

In addition to the company presentations there was a series of workshops providing delegates with the opportunity to learn more about renewable technologies, water and effluent reduction, waste reduction and general energy efficiency. There was also a dedicated exhibition area featuring 10 exhibits from a range of government support services.

Speaking at the event, **Gerry Campbell, Chief Executive of Colleges NI** said "This remains both an exciting and a challenging time for the colleges. Colleges need to continue to engage effectively with business, industry

and the universities to promote best practices and the benefits of good environmental management. Strategic collaboration between government, further and higher education and industry can sustain these green and environmental initiatives as well as promoting business growth and economic development. In today's fast changing world, it continues to make good business sense and environmental sense to work together in terms of renewable energy and sustainability".



Pictured at the 'Food for thought – an Energy and Waste Showcase', on 4 April at Loughry College, are Backrow. Alan McInnes (BV Dairy), Fergus Begley (University of Ulster) Gerry Campbell (Colleges Northern Ireland) Martin McKendry (DARD) Front row Lynn Connaughton (Connected), Julie Anne Hanna, (QUESTOR Queen's University), Karen McCann (University of Ulster)

Social Economy Focus



From left Anne McDaid, WHSCT; Liz Mitchell, Lecturer in Nursing UUM, Aidan Gordon, WHSCT; Mervyn Eastman, Change AGents; Eleanor Keanie and Susan McGory North West Regional College, Patricia Donald, Age Sector Partnership

What is mental health? This might sound a simple question, however being mentally healthy is something that most of us take for granted. When you are in good mental health you can make the most of your potential, cope with life and play a full part in your family, workplace, community and among friends. However, 'the economic and social costs of mental illness in Northern Ireland amounted to nearly £3 billion in 2002/03 – more than the total spend on all health and social care for all health conditions. Counting the cost NIAMH 2004

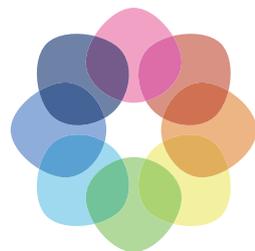
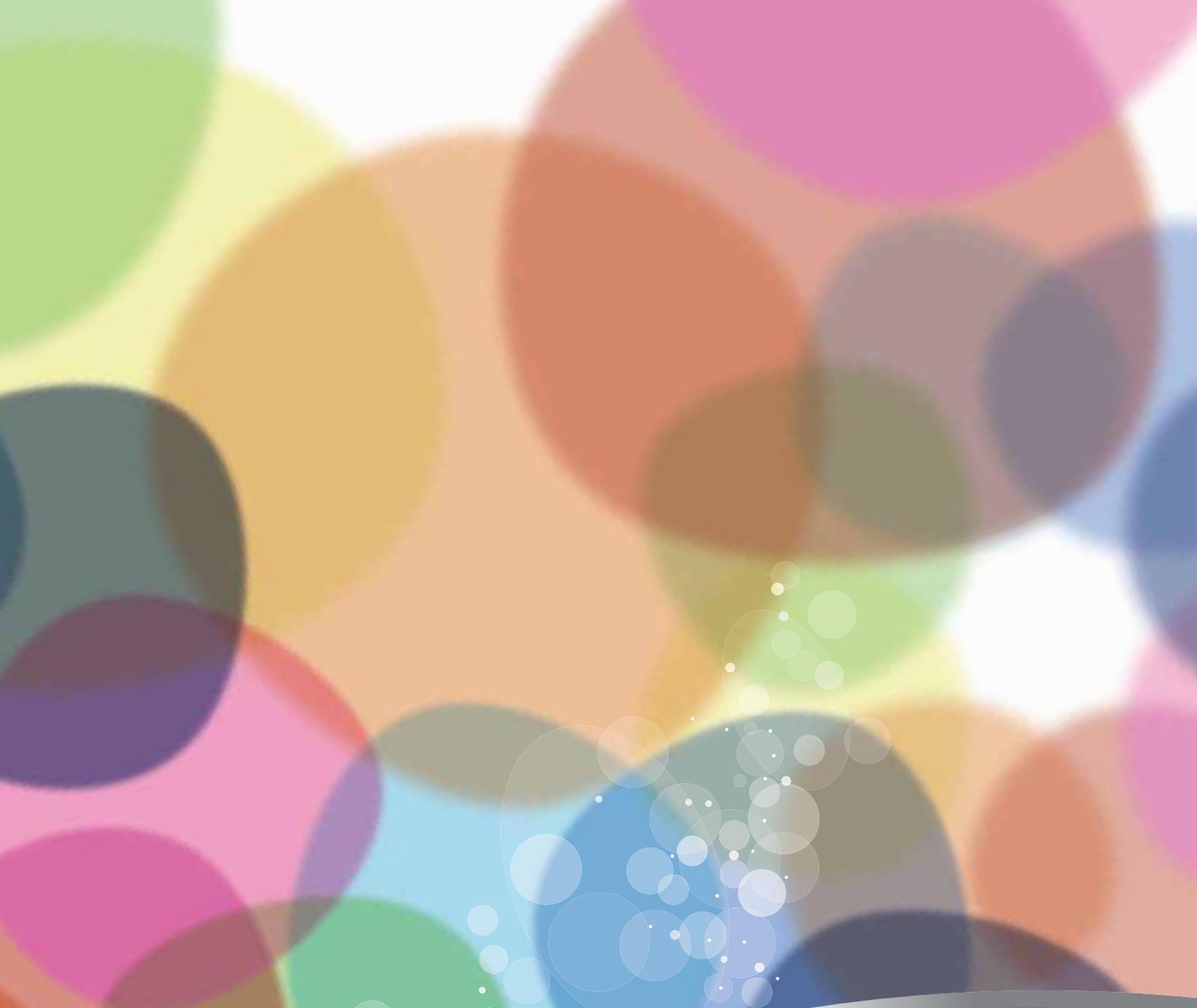
Since 2012, Connected has been supporting the North West Regional College (NWRC), in collaboration with the University of Ulster to address the issues of Mental Health. **Susan McGory at NWRC explains:** "The publication of the Bamford Action Plan (2009) highlighted that there is a significant need for a skilled and adequate workforce to meet the demands of the mental health services in Northern Ireland. Particular population groups identified by Bamford as being of concern in relation to mental health include; older people, ethnic minorities, learning disability, prisoners, people with hearing impairments, substance misuse, Autism Spectrum Disorder and acquired brain injury. We are working in collaboration with the University of Ulster and the Community Agencies in delivering the Bamford vision and making an important contribution to the Northern Ireland Economy. Collectively, with the support of Connected, we have developed our links with the community base, and through a number of conferences and networking events we have identified and discussed with local employers a number of training needs. This process in itself has promoted and encouraged the exchange of best practice both at a local and international basis".

The latest conference supported by Connected was held on 1st March 2012 aimed at promoting the positive mental health and well-being of older people. The conference was attended by a variety of Health Trusts, private and voluntary care organisations, across the North West as well as staff from University of Ulster and NWRC. The line of speakers included; Liz Mitchell, from University of Ulster, who tackled the issues and implications of person, centred care. Patricia Donald, Chairperson, Age Sector Platform, then debated her topic, Adding Years to Life Not Life to Years. Mervyn Eastman, from Change AGents Network UK, and President of the Practitioner Alliance for Safeguarding Adults. Following the success of this conference the project partners now plan to run a series of seminars over the next 2 years that address the other population groups identified in the Bamford Report.

"Activities supported by Connected enable us both as a college but also as a sector to make the necessary inroads in raising more awareness of the adverse effects of mental illness among our educators, employers, policy makers and the wider community. There is a vast need for Knowledge Transfer and innovative thinking in this area. But key to making all this work is collaboration. It's by working together that we can really make a difference to reduce the prevalence and severity of mental illness".

Geraldine Lavery, Head of School for Health and Social Care Northern West Regional College.

**For more information contact Susan McGory or Eleanor Keanie
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