

Inclusive Labour Markets: Opportunities, Challenges and Solutions Ulster University Belfast Campus, 22 January 2024	
08:45-09:15	Registration, refreshments and networking
09:15-09:20	Event Welcome
09:20-09:25	Context and Overview
09:25-09:45	Economic inactivity: who, what, where and why? UU Economic Policy Centre
09:45-10:05	Emerging findings from the Commission of the Future of Employment Support: lessons for Northern Ireland Tony Wilson, Director, Institute for Employment Studies
10:05-10:35	Panel discussion: reflections on the research and emerging Commission findings
10:35-10:55	Comfort break and refreshments – move to breakout rooms
11:00-12:00	Breakout sessions
	<p>Breakout session 1: Health and employment services – working together? <i>More than 110,000 people in NI are sick and disabled and out of work. This figure is proportionately higher than RoI and all other UK regions. This session will focus on ways in which our health and employment services might work together better. What lessons have been learned about effective personal support? Are there local-level interventions that could have a positive impact if they were scaled up? Do we need to develop new programmes in NI and, if so, what should they look like?</i></p>
	<p>Breakout session 2: Future challenges: welfare reform and advice <i>The introduction of Universal Credit is ongoing and further reforms are planned. The implementation of these reforms has been a significant challenge to individuals, JBOs and employment service providers. What will be the future challenges and how are JBOs responding? What role can the advice sector play - working alongside employment services - to ensure that all claimants receive a comprehensive and quality support service that meets their needs?</i></p>
	<p>Breakout session 3: Joining up skills and employment services <i>With unemployment levels at a record low, employers are operating in a challenging labour market. By widening their approach to talent attraction to include engagement with those not currently in the labour market, there are opportunities to address those pressures. But what is the skills journey for those who are not currently in work? And is there more that can be done to encourage training and upskilling for those who are unemployed and economically inactive? How can companies think more laterally about their approach to talent attraction and retention? And what support is available to help them do that?</i></p>
	<p>Breakout session 4: Resourcing the solution: discussion on the future investment model for economic inactivity and labour market support <i>The principal funding source for economic support delivery is currently SPF. With no clarity of commitment beyond March 2025, what should the resourcing model for this support look like? Do we need to think more radically about the system? And who might be involved? What can we learn about good practice examples in other locations and what impact would this have in NI - both in terms of investment levels and in terms of outcomes?</i></p>
12:00-12:15	Comfort Break – return to plenary session
12:15-12:35	Feedback from breakout sessions
12:35-13:00	People Make Places: inclusive labour markets at the heart of successful towns and cities Andy Haldane, Chief Executive, RSA
13:00-13:15	Next steps and close
13:15	Lunch and networking