



Statement on the Northern Ireland Budget

Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI) has welcomed the Secretary of State's announcement of a £30m investment to support programmes to address issues of mental health and severe deprivation.

In its response to the statement, CiNI said there needs to be significant investment in all programmes that tackle deprivation particularly in rural areas.

Children in Northern Ireland Chief Executive, Pauline Leeson, said: "We welcome this investment and commitment to tackling deprivation and the intention to help families in need. We also look forward to further investment in programmes that deal with child poverty in rural areas.

"We believe, however, that there needs to be a concerted investment in programmes such as our Gets Active holiday hunger scheme. The "Gets Active" programme not only ensures children and young people are fed during the school holidays, but it also encourages young people to stay active and helps them understand the importance of healthy living by providing them with the skills and confidence to cook simple nutritious meals on a budget. The scheme offers Open College Network accreditation and shows the possibilities of learning outside of a school setting in a fun and interactive way.

In addition to creating a safe place for young people to be fed a nutritious meal, continue learning and participate in physical activities during school holidays, the programme also fosters relationship building skills and helps develop resilience to improve emotional wellbeing."