

Junior Ministers hail work of Urban Village Initiatives in north and west Belfast

Junior Ministers Declan Kearney and Gary Middleton have hailed the life-changing impact community-led health, educational and training projects are making in Urban Village areas.

Getting things done – Perth Road/Ryehill Lane corner site #dundeewestend



Residents have highlighted to me that Perth Road/Ryehill Lane corner site and seating area is again looking very unkempt.

This was in the ownership of JC Decaux who owned the original advertising hoardings at the rear of the site. My understanding is that the company was some time ago wishing to sell the site but I have written to a contact at JC Decaux to ascertain current ownership to get the area tidied.

I had hoped that a substantive improvement of the site could have been achieved through the Spaces for People funding in relation to district

shopping centres but unfortunately this was not achieved. It is important, however, that the area is improved as it looks very neglected at present.

[OECD Employment Outlook 2021: How does your country compare?](#)

As vaccination campaigns continue and some countries begin to loosen COVID restrictions, economic growth is expected to accelerate. The unprecedented levels of assistance that countries have provided through job retention schemes and income support have saved up to 21 million jobs and helped many households make it through the pandemic. In many ways, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

But this light burns more brightly for some than others. We know that the COVID-19 pandemic has deepened already existing social and economic divides, between those with high skills and high incomes and those without, between generations, between men and women, between those with good jobs and those with precarious jobs or no jobs at all. Unemployment is high and jobs are not expected to make a rapid recovery. Reaching pre-pandemic employment rates may take several years.

A slow rebound in jobs increases the risk of long-term unemployment...

... while the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated social and economic divides, a situation that risks continuing into the recovery

These are steep challenges. But this moment also brings a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to rebuild more resilient labour markets, addressing long-standing structural issues that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. Failing to address inequality and exclusion now is likely to result in deeper social divisions and have a negative impact on productivity and the economic recovery.

After previous crises, most countries quickly tightened the public purse strings. This time, however, countries are committing unprecedented resources to the recovery over the next 5 to 10 years. The United States, for example, has pledged trillions of US dollars, while the European Union is borrowing on behalf of its member countries for the first time to support often large national recovery and resilience plans. Investing in productivity and jobs

will help get people back into work.

How to get your jab

Latest walk-in mobile vaccination clinics – no appointment necessary – for first dose jabs.

Health Minister visits Oasis Caring in Action Centre, Antrim

Health Minister Robin Swann has visited Oasis Caring in Action Centre in Antrim to see the community health development work happening in the area.