

UKSPF Investment Plan Year 1 Project Call

People and Skills E33 - Employment support for economically inactive people

Background

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) was launched in April 2022 and succeeds the old EU structural funds. The fund is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda and seeks to target funding where it is needed most to build pride in place, support high quality skills training, support pay, employment and productivity growth, and increase life chances. The fund will invest in three local priorities: communities and place, support for local businesses, and people and skills.

South Lakeland District Council, Eden District Council and Barrow Borough Council submitted our UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plans to Government on the 1st of August 2022. Government has allocated £3.8m UKSPF funding to South Lakeland, £1.9m to Eden and £2.4m to Barrow. The area is currently undergoing Local Government Reorganisation and from 1st April 2023 will form the new Westmorland and Furness Council. The current local authorities have collaborated closely to develop aligned Investment Plans in readiness for a merged Investment Plan in Year 2 and 3 of the Fund. As such, the project call for Year 1 is being led by the current local authorities working closely together to select projects through a shared approach.

Objectives of the People and Skills investment priority

- Boosting core skills and support adults to progress in work, by targeting adults with no or low level qualifications and skills in maths, and upskill the working population, yielding personal and societal economic impact, and by encouraging innovative approaches to reducing adult learning barriers.
- Reducing levels of economic inactivity through investment in bespoke intensive life and employment support tailored to local need. Investment should facilitate the join-up of mainstream provision and local services within an area for participants, through the use of one-to-one keyworker support, improving employment outcomes for specific cohorts who face labour market barriers.
- Expected cohorts include, but are not limited to people aged over 50, people with a disability and health condition, women, people from an ethnic minority, young people not in education, employment or training and people with multiple complex needs (homeless, care leavers, ex-offenders, people with substance abuse problems and victims of domestic violence).
- Supporting people furthest from the labour market to overcome barriers to work by providing cohesive, locally tailored support, including access to basic skills.
- Supporting local areas to fund gaps in local skills provision to support people to progress in work, and supplement local adult skills provision e.g. by providing additional volumes; delivering provision through wider range of routes or enabling more intensive/innovative provision, both qualification based and non-qualification based.



This should be supplementary to provision available through national employment and skills programmes.

Voluntary and community sector provision

Partners must note that the Fund will focus on communities and place and local business interventions in 2022-23 and 2023-24, alongside support for people through the Multiply adult numeracy programme administered by Cumbria County Council. This complements residual employment and skills funding from the European Social Fund (ESF). UKSPF investment to support people and skills will largely follow from 2024-25, when the funding pot reaches its full extent.

Lead local authorities do have the flexibility to fund targeted people and skills provision in 2022-23 and 2023-24 where this is a continuing priority for 2024-25 and may be at significant risk of ending due to the tail off of EU funds. This flexibility may only be used where provision is currently delivered locally by voluntary and community organisations, having regard for the focus of the Fund and available funding.

In our investment plans we were required to identify ESF projects that met this criteria and our rationale for continuing to support them. The following projects were identified;

The Key: ESF-5002

The Launchpad: ESF-07S20P04070

The Link: ESF-07S20P04140

These projects are delivered by Inspira throughout Cumbria, responding to either the DWP or ESFA as managing authority, on behalf of the Cumbria LEP.

These projects respond to the people and skills challenges that the area faces; barriers to the labour market which includes a relatively high proportion of individuals who are economically inactive, identified skill gaps and shortages which are likely to worsen as the potential labour pool contracts as a result of an ageing population. NEET issues feature; young people can become NEET as a result of many different factors reflecting a range of personal issues, labour market conditions, availability of appropriate provision and other background circumstances. NEET amongst 18-24 year olds is an increasing issue, and we know that being NEET at this age presents serious implications for future outcomes.

They also respond to the significant demographic threat ahead of the area, and the need to retain young people to meet current and future labour supply needs. It also facilitates a responsive skills supply, by equipping young people with the confidence and skills to meet employer demand. The loss of this provision would reduce employer engagement, contributing to less awareness among young people of the opportunities and needs of the area's economy and a further widening of the skills gap.

At this time we are awaiting further information from Government regarding continuation funding for ESF projects and confirmation of the processes required to enable this through the People and Skills priority in 2022-23 and 2023-24. Any award made through this project call will be subject to Government approval of our investment plans and possibly direct Government approval of the project submission itself.



Aim of the Project Call

The aim of this project call is to invite a proposal in response to the People and Skills intervention E33: Employment support for economically inactive people: Intensive and wrap-around one-to-one support to move people closer towards mainstream provision and employment, supplemented by additional and/or specialist life and basic skills support where there are local provision gaps.

Through the development of our investment plans we have recognised that there is a necessity to support local community and voluntary provision which falls under the people and skills investment priority, is currently ESF funded, and is at significant risk of ending due to the tail off of EU funds in 2022-23 and 2023-24.

Revenue funding only will be available through this intervention. The total amount of funding available through this project call in 2022-23 is £151,963. This is made up of £46,147 from South Lakeland District Council, £23,882 from Eden District Council and £81,934 from Barrow Borough Council.

The intended outputs and outcomes of this intervention are to support people to access basic skills, access mental and physical health support leading to employment, engage in job-searching, gain employment and sustain employment. These outputs and outcomes must be quantitatively measured.

The funding must be used for employment support projects in the South Lakeland, Eden and Barrow local authority areas that can respond to the local challenges detailed above, the objectives of the People and Skills investment priority and the relevant Levelling Up missions listed in the UKSPF prospectus. The proposed outputs must be achieved by March 31st 2023. The quantitative outputs delivered in each geographic local authority area must also be reflective proportionally of the different funding allocations from each local authority detailed above.

The successful applicant will have a proven track record of delivering employment support for economically inactive people in the local area and have significant experience of working in collaboration with partners on relevant projects. They must meet the voluntary and community sector provision criteria for ESF continuation funding detailed above. They must also be able to demonstrate a methodology for measuring, monitoring and reporting the intervention's outputs and outcomes.

We anticipate that there will be one successful applicant for this project call who will receive the full funding allocation of £151,963. Match funding is not required; however, applicants must demonstrate that the projects can be fully funded through the UKSPF or with other sources of funding.

This project call will be open in South Lakeland, Eden and Barrow in 2022/23. Following Local Government Reorganisation Westmorland and Furness Council will make further funding available through this intervention in 2023/24 and 2024/25, pending Government approval of our investment plans.

Process and Timescales

The deadline to submit this application is 7th October 2022. A single application from your organisation can be submitted which will be jointly assessed and appraised by the three local authorities during October 2022. Subject to approval of our investment plans from Government, which is expected in autumn 2022, project awards will be confirmed in November or December



2022 with grant agreements then made between the three local authorities and the successful applicant. Delivery of the project will then be completed by 31st March 2022 with monitoring, evaluation and reporting ongoing.

Contact Details

Questions about the details of the project call description can be directed to sam.butcher@southlakeland.gov.uk

Questions about the application process and completing the application can be directed to chris.fox@hatch.com

Reference Documents

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund framework of Objectives, Outcomes and Outputs \(England\)](#)

[UK Shared Prosperity Fund Interventions List \(England\)](#)



Eden
District Council

